

ROME AND ITS  
FRONTIERS:  
THE DYNAMICS OF  
EMPIRE

*C.R. Whittaker*

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## ROME AND ITS FRONTIERS: THE DYNAMICS OF EMPIRE

Can Roman attitudes to subject and frontier peoples teach us anything about the way in which they ran their empire?

Rome and its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire is a collection of ten important essays by C.R. Whittaker, several of them published here for the first time, engaging with contemporary debates and controversies surrounding the Roman frontiers and the concept of empire. Roman relations with their neighbours and those they dominated represent one of the keys to understanding the nature of Roman rule. Each essay presents a different aspect of frontier scholarship, with chapters covering the barbarian invasions in the later Roman Empire, the social and sexual life of soliders on the frontiers, the practicalities of supplying the army at frontier settlements and the wider issues of migration, geography and identity. Traditional theories of Roman frontiers have interacted with experience of other frontiers in history to change the very idea of what is meant by a frontier.

These papers, by a leading authority on the Roman frontiers, range geographically from Britain and Europe to Africa, India and the Far East. Each of them sheds new light on the significance of the frontiers, and adds to our understanding of the way that the Romans perceived the world within and beyond the boundaries.

**C.R. Whittaker** is a fellow of Churchill College Cambridge, and a former University Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Cambridge.



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TO MARGARET

Leaves, like the things of man, you  
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The chapters here span several years of work, starting from the time when I wrote a book about Roman frontiers (Whittaker 1994). Most of them were originally papers produced for conferences, seminars and collections. But all are in one way or another concerned with the frontiers. I have tried to weave them together as far as is possible, but inevitably they bear the marks of their origins.

The various chapters have been read by long-suffering friends, who have made countless improvements along the way. Chapter 1 was made respectable by Bill Hanson's erudition and wisdom. Chapter 2 was approved by Ben Isaac in its first form. In Chapter 3 Roger Hanoune made the French of my original version readable. In Chapter 5 I am grateful to Tony Birley who kindly corrected the flawed first draft, and to Alan Bowman who pointed out other errors and allowed me to see some of the Vindolanda documents before publication. Members of the seminar organized by André Tchernia at Marseille also made valuable suggestions. In Chapter 6 Mary Beard generously aided my reading with expert comments and Peter Garnsey added sensible suggestions. In Chapter 7 Romila Thapar read and corrected my text and I received helpful comments from those who took part in the seminar at JNU, Delhi. In Chapter 8 Jean Andraeu asked acute questions and improved the French of the original version. In Chapter 9 I owe much to Daniel Nordman's expertise and to Gavin Williams for reading the first version. In Chapter 10 Peter Garnsey and Chris Wickham gave me the benefit of their wide experience. I wish I could thank them all adequately.

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am also grateful for permission to reproduce figures and photographs: to the Burndy Library, Norwalk, Conn., who made me a generous gift of the set of prints of Stradanus; and to the keepers of the Aphrodisias Archives at the Institute of Fine Arts for the gift of photographs from the New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias. My thanks also to Hirmer Verlag, Munich, who hold the original photograph of the Lampsacus dish; and to S.V. Flaccovio Editore, Palermo, who allowed me to reproduce the photograph from Piazza Armerina.

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# 1 WHERE ARE THE ROMAN FRONTIERS NOW? AN INTRODUCTION

Frontiers are very much in the news, but polemic is apparently an indispensable tool for discussing them. The eminent French political geographer, A. Siegfried, noticed this when he said:

The subject of frontiers, let us face it, is dangerous for a scholar, because it is so full of political passions and so burdened with prejudice. People have too many interests at stake, when they speak of frontiers, to be able to talk about them coolly. Misunderstanding is permanent.

The reason for such passion may be that identified by another Frenchman, Geouffre de Lapradelle, a professor of jurisprudence, who wrote:

The distinctive characteristic of the concept of frontier is its universal acceptance. From the man in the street or the peasant to the politician and the academic, according to the category and class of the person, it is capable of the most widely differing interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

Everyone, it seems, is an expert on what is assumed to be a simple, straightforward subject and emotions run high when anyone expresses a contradictory view. In the next chapter I shall discuss Roman strategy, which is closely linked to and excites even more passion than frontiers. Here I shall confine myself to the frontiers, as far as possible, by noting some of the current controversies, while at the same time providing an introduction to the later chapters which look at the subject from different angles.

Let me begin by asking why frontiers are in the news and why they are worth discussing. We might almost call our own age the century of frontiers. According to the web site of the International Boundary Research Unit at Durham University, about half of the world's boundaries are less than one hundred years old, and there are at this moment (January 2003) forty-nine

ongoing boundary disputes.<sup>2</sup> The interest most obviously stems from the geo-political consequences of frontiers, which we encounter in the media almost every day of our lives, with origins that are rooted in the past. Whether it be the disputes between Iraq, Turkey and the Kurds or the ethnic ties between the Pashtu of Afghanistan and Pakistan, each has an historical dimension attached to frontiers.

But the geo-political reality contains a tension. While history is moving inexorably, many would predict, towards a 'borderless world' because of economic globalization and the 'deterritorialization' of the state, conflicts over nationality and frontiers inevitably become more acute.<sup>3</sup> In Britain the European debate, which is all about sovereignty, has divided political parties for the last twenty years or more.

The 'Westphalian concept' (that is to say, the model of the modern nation state created by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years War), with its rigid stress upon the principles of sovereignty and territoriality, institutionalized the frontier as an instrument of internal control and self-representation. But it is this concept that is now in crisis and to some extent out of date.<sup>4</sup>

The search is on, therefore, for new forms of political stability, even, it has been suggested, some sort of new 'imperial' formula; imperial, because empires by their nature are incompatible with territoriality. They rebel against boundaries and define themselves as cultural space, the sort of wider political community that is capable of containing the fragments of the old order.<sup>5</sup> We have witnessed recently such formal essays into a new political order in Bosnia and in Kosovo, which have given priority to ethnicity and culture over territory and frontiers.

Similar examples and aspirations in recent history are legion, from Hitler's claim to the Germans of Poland and Czechoslovakia, to the irredentist demands of the Croats and Slovenes of Austria and ex-Yugoslavia, or the *megali idea* of Greek unification with their blood brothers of Albania and Turkey, quite apart from the wider desires of pan-Slav, pan-Arab or pan-Muslim movements. As much strategic as ideological, they are nevertheless assertions that override territorial nationalism and frontiers, and they sometimes seek renewal in the rhetoric of old empires.<sup>6</sup> Best known in recent years is what the Italians call 'Euregione', that is the vision of Europe as a supra-national carapace that will allow minorities to flourish. It is one more erosion of national sovereignty. But more to the point (as was declared at a recent conference held at Saarbrücken), 'Borders and the concept of the "border" are bound to become issues now that Western Europe is discussing the abolition of economic and political borders.'<sup>7</sup> It is not a prospect that pleases die-hards and the debate is often bitter.

At the same time as peoples seek wider solidarities, frontiers are becoming more permeable. An indication of the new mobility of populations and the pressures upon frontiers can be seen from the figures listed on

the web site of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.<sup>8</sup> In January 2002, there were over nineteen million persons of concern to them under the UN mandate, that is, about one in three hundred of the world's population. 'At the beginning of 2000,' it reports, 'an estimated 14 million people were living as refugees, uprooted from their homes and forced to cross an international border.' In the fifty years of its existence it has helped resettle about fifty million people.

Quite apart from these figures which are mostly the effects of wars and political instability, there was also a huge displacement of populations as the consequence of European migrations in the nineteenth century on colonial ventures, from where since the Second World War there has been a reflux to the West of new migrants required by the booming economies. The migrants were aspiring to the extended political rights and the cultural pluralism inherent in the former imperial ideal, but what they provoked was new definitions of citizenship and discrimination that challenge the parameters of the old nation-state.<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 10 I analyse the immigration 'problem' (if that is what it was) in the later Roman Empire.

This is where the Roman Empire comes in. One interesting facet of political reappraisals in history is the constant reference that I have already noted to empires, and in particular to the Roman Empire, as a way of legitimizing wider ambitions. There is nothing new in such pretensions. Ivan III claimed to make Moscow into a Third Rome. The Hapsburgs saw themselves as the heirs to the Roman Empire. Italians and Greeks have used the Roman or Byzantine Empire to buttress their political needs, and the British compared their Indian Empire in detail to that of Rome. This was not just bombast. It was a claim to spread one's own form of civilization and to unite plural cultures. But – and this is central to the imperial idea – empires have distinguished themselves from the nation-state by their recognition of people rather than territory and of borders rather than frontiers.<sup>10</sup> 'The Roman *limes*', a modern political scientist has said recently, 'was a flexible concept: a closed/open strategy where there were zones of exchange and buffers ('marches') surrounding the Empire, exactly as there are today with the EU.'<sup>11</sup> How accurate that statement is is another matter, and there are many fanciful, often inaccurate, notions about the Roman frontiers, some of which are examined in Chapter 9. All the more need that the Roman frontiers should be studied in their own right as well as with the weight of history on their backs. Modern boundary studies might benefit as much as ancient history.<sup>12</sup>

Students of historical frontiers cannot ignore the contribution which social anthropology and geography have made to the current interest in the subject.<sup>13</sup> Locational analysis or studies of space and borders are included in university courses as a matter of routine, and I have made several references to such works in the following chapters.<sup>14</sup> Many stem from Mary Douglas's text, 'All margins are dangerous',<sup>15</sup> since it is at the margins of society that

there is the least structure and most energy. Hence, she argues, the importance of ritual and rites of passage, which give symbolic and visible substance to anxieties about boundary pollution. And hence, too, the use of metaphor, including that of the body, in ceremonies to maintain the culture through frontiers of imagination. In Chapter 6 I have taken up one of Douglas's concepts that 'boundary pollution focussed particularly on sexuality'.<sup>16</sup>

Rites of passage and the transition between the sacred and the profane are well documented in Roman history. Rivers, ploughed lines and walls to demarcate a magico-religious boundary figure prominently in Roman foundation myths, and they remained intensely real to the Romans on the frontiers of the Empire.<sup>17</sup> But van Gennep's classic study of rites of passage underlines the points of crossing, through portals, statues, arches and bridges, as much as the boundaries themselves. The profane, he claimed, is what is outside the sacred, but the rite of passage aims not to exclude but to incorporate.<sup>18</sup> So the Roman imperial edict in AD17/18 ordering the erection of triumphal arches and statues on the borders of the empire was not a statement of the termination of empire, but defined a sacred threshold that assumed a transition to the world beyond.<sup>19</sup> The same argument can be applied to rivers and bridges, which in Roman imagination were ritual boundaries to be crossed, not defensive frontiers. The discovery of a new cadastral stone on the borders of Roman North Africa, which was clearly not a frontier, prompts the comment by its discoverer, 'It is first and foremost the signature of a conquering power that is exploring and constructing its space.'<sup>20</sup>

Roman historians will be familiar with many examples of such 'representations' and metaphors. They were the subject of two recent collections of papers, one entitled *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l'antiquité*, the other *Shifting frontiers in late antiquity*. Their aim was to illuminate how the image and the reality of walls, gateways and boundaries fed upon each other in a seamless sphere of sacred and secular.<sup>21</sup> It is important to stress, however, that the boundary of imagination in ancient societies was not determined by ethnic or territorial limits but by self-ascription, which was continually changing. That is to say, the rigidity of the physical boundary, which may persist, 'does not imply a similar rigidity in the patterns of recruitment or ascription to ethnic groups'.<sup>22</sup>

On the contrary, there are relationships between groups across boundaries which blur the line. Assimilation is not the important factor, but the symbiotic functions that the groups serve and their relations to productive resources. The southern Pashtu, for example, integrated into the social system of Baluchistan as clients on the land of the Baluchi chiefs.<sup>23</sup> Between Mexico and the United States, despite the apparently rigid maintenance of the border by United States legislation, which is enforced at huge expense through border patrols, lights and chain-link fences, not to mention local hostility to immigrants, patrols are surprisingly lax in allowing people to

cross, since ultimately the migration is caused by the demand for migrant labour.<sup>24</sup> In the Roman Empire there was a similarly relaxed but well-planned policy towards Frisians from beyond the frontiers in Holland and towards the Germans. They were regularly recruited into the Roman army and some were perhaps also employed as seasonal workers.<sup>25</sup> What I try to show in the last chapter is how Romans in the Later Empire coped with the large influx of migrants, many of them welcomed as contributing to the Roman economy and army.

A more mundane reason for the continuing interest, in Roman frontiers, at least, is the stimulus that comes from archaeology, which is constantly adding new finds in the form of material remains and military documents. They are disseminated through publications of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies and new collections of papyri, inscriptions and writing tablets.<sup>26</sup> Theoretical archaeology has established its own peculiar niche in studies of space and centre-periphery relations, although there is considerable overlap with geography and sociology. Nor is the archaeology confined to the ancient world, as can be seen in the collection of papers, *The archaeology of frontiers and boundaries*, in 1985,<sup>27</sup> which reaches some suggestive conclusions. Change, the contributors argue from the communities they have examined, is often most dynamic and most visible archaeologically on the periphery of society, while economic surplus is what most differentiates the periphery from the core. Both are observations about frontiers viewed from within, so to speak, which put us on our guard about how to interpret material remains as indices of community and assimilation.<sup>28</sup>

New archaeological models of information networks, too, challenge the frequent supposition that changes on the frontier are dictated rationally from the centre rather than in response to conditions on the periphery. 'The assumption of an omniscient decision maker robs an important dynamic from our models of social change', says one modern study.<sup>29</sup> It reinforces Isaac's point in discussing Roman frontiers, that perspectives from the centre differ widely from those from the periphery in terms of ideology, strategy and practice.<sup>30</sup> It also goes to the heart of the broader debate about Grand Strategy, discussed in the next chapter, and about the extent to which economic systems and information processing did or did not determine Roman imperial frontiers.<sup>31</sup>

One source of confusion and controversy is the assumption that frontiers are the same as boundaries. That is not so, or certainly not before the nation-state. The difference is generally acknowledged since at least the work of Febvre, although it continues to be a source of confusion in some recent contributions to Roman history.<sup>32</sup> This is, I suppose, because it is not always easy to find a satisfactory way of separating them. One difference is that frontiers look at the edges of society, boundaries at the relations between societies lying on the edges. Frontiers, therefore, reflect political and economic expansion and their effect upon those who lie beyond; boundaries



concern two social and economic systems and how they interact with each other through exchange.<sup>33</sup> That description, however, does not bring out fully the fact that, while Roman boundaries could be identified territorially (sometimes by marker stones, cadasters, monuments and the like), frontiers remained dynamic, but ill-defined zones of power.

A good illustration is provided by the frontiers of Roman North Africa and of Arabia. In both cases the semi-nomadic populations were not excluded by the frontier but were part of it, although sometimes, as on the road between Palmyra and Sura in the Later Empire, there were no fortifications or boundary markers, beyond the road itself. The celebrated debate about two supposed frontiers, the 'inner' and the 'outer' *limites* of Arabia under Diocletian in the late third century, based on the texts of Ammianus Marcellinus, Malalas and Theophanes, is resolved if they are understood as the nearer and remoter parts of the same zone. The word *limes* is best defined as 'the land that forms the furthest extent of a country's settled or inhabited region'.<sup>34</sup>

Let me now examine in detail one of the most prominent, current debates about Roman frontiers. The question is whether the frontiers developed from mobile instruments of imperial aggression into static lines of defence. I shall try to present the arguments for and against as dispassionately as possible.

Baldly stated, the proposition is that a radical change in Roman frontiers and frontier policy took place in the last years of the Emperor Augustus that was followed by the second Emperor Tiberius and reached its apogee in the mid-second century under the Emperor Hadrian and his successors, the Antonine emperors. In place of the old strategy of open, expansionist and zonal frontiers that existed under the Republic and the early years of Augustus, there evolved a system of closed, linear and defensive barriers. Instead of frontiers which were casual, adventitious and tactically illogical, there developed fixed lines that showed a strategic awareness of natural defences, communications and resources. The strategy was most visible in the impressive military constructions of Britain, Germany and Africa.

That is how the argument goes. It is an old controversy but it continues to be a major subject of contention, and much ink has been spilt on the subject in the last decade. It was a central question posed for study by a group of archaeologists at the XVIth Congress of Roman Studies in 1995 (published in 1997).<sup>35</sup> Some of the arguments concern general strategy or ideology and will be picked up in the next chapter. Here I shall look at the evidence on the ground, as it were.

Many modern writers simply declare in favour of Hadrian's radical reappraisal without adding any new real arguments or evidence.<sup>36</sup> But there have been some new considerations in favour of the proposition. One is the importance to the Romans of natural, linear frontiers, and in particular the great rivers of the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates, which have been underestimated as

defensive barriers.<sup>37</sup> In the first century AD there is no positive evidence to prove that the Romans built permanent bridges over the Rhine until after the Flavian advance beyond the upper Rhine in the latter half of the century. That demonstrates, according to the argument, that the left bank was regarded as the definitive, defensive frontier, which it continued to be along the lower Rhine. The same principle led to the building of the walls in Britain by Hadrian and by Antonius Pius in Germany, when the empire became 'defensive and literally entrenched'.<sup>38</sup> The physical importance of rivers was reinforced by religion in the minds of Romans, for whom they were markers of identity and sacred space.<sup>39</sup> The Euphrates in the East, however, was unlike the Rhine and the Danube in so far as the geographic conditions and shortage of water meant that it was regularly used of necessity as an invasion route alike by both Romans and Parthians (or, later, Persians), and hence it was always fortified.<sup>40</sup>

A number of inscriptions, some new, some old, relating to the frontiers have been cited in support of this idea of a linear, defensive frontier. Foremost is the *Tabula Siarensis*, recently discovered in Spain, recording the triumphal arches of Germanicus Caesar that were to be set up on the Rhine and on the borders of Syria-Cappadocia after his German campaigns in AD 16, demonstrating that the concept of static frontier lines had been set.<sup>41</sup> Another inscription comes from a stone column set up in AD195 to mark the boundary (*finis*) between the new province of Osrhoene and the kingdom of Abgar of Edessa, which thus challenges the claim that the frontiers of the empire were never signposted.<sup>42</sup> So, too, does a legal inscription from a customs post (*lex publici portorii*) on the border of the province of Asia, which refers to 'the free boundaries (Greek *borous*) of the province'. The 'free' borders in this inscription are interpreted to mean the outer frontiers of the empire.<sup>43</sup>

I shall return in Chapter 2 to the *Tabula Siarensis*, when discussing strategy and ideology.<sup>44</sup> More recently Potter has examined a number of imperial commands (*mandata*) recorded in Roman literature concerning the first and second centuries, in order to demonstrate how all the emperors from Tiberius to Hadrian restrained territorial expansion, unless, he says, they were 'troubled characters'.<sup>45</sup> But he presents a strong case from the sources in support of the claim that the Emperor Hadrian pursued a policy that was markedly more defensive than that of his predecessors, even if it was forced upon him and hugely unpopular. LoCascio's important recent book on the Roman Empire accepts Potter's arguments that Hadrian was the initiator of a radical new strategy of defensive alertness. He regards this as a cost-benefit resolution to the conflicting tensions between ideology and reality, although he argues that it also involved abandoning the systematic use of allied kings.<sup>46</sup>

This conclusion comes from a new look at the literary and epigraphic evidence. As for the archaeology of the frontiers themselves, and in partic-

ular that conducted on the walls in Britain, Germany and Africa, there have been few decisive new discoveries or interpretations that contribute to the debate. But again a case has been put for the Emperor Hadrian to be considered as an original thinker. A number of archaeologists believe that the turf and stone wall in Britain that bears his name really was conceived as a barrier 'to divide the barbarians from the Romans', as Hadrian's fourth-century biographer says, although the plan was never finished.<sup>47</sup> There are still those who believe that the earth works and walls in North Africa, the so-called *fossatum*, was the work of Hadrian, too, and with the same purpose, although the problem remains, as always, shortage of dateable evidence for the constructions.

In Dacia, where most of the military installations were begun by Hadrian after Trajan's death, an attempt has been made to interpret them, too, as 'unique', although in this case because he constructed not a linear barrier, but an all-round system of defence in depth that, it is claimed, anticipated those of the fourth century.<sup>48</sup> Along the German Rhine frontier of the first century a rather different argument is used, concerning military supplies, to demonstrate a defensive mentality. The claim is that the army 'cut itself off' from the economy of free Germany, since an examination of animal bones demonstrates there was no import of livestock, and that this separation persisted into the later Empire along the Lower Rhine.<sup>49</sup>

That is how the case for the defensive frontiers runs. Against the proposition of a radical retrenchment of Roman frontiers the argument has always rested heavily on the historical behaviour of the Romans. The Emperor Tiberius did not, after Augustus' death, immediately renounce expansion or military expeditions, since he sanctioned the advance of his nephew, Germanicus into Germany in AD15, whatever his private feelings may have been.<sup>50</sup> Nor did Tiberius' successors hold back, as we see from Claudius' action in Britain and North Africa, Nero in Britain and the East, Vespasian and Domitian in Germany and North Africa, Trajan in Africa, Dacia and the East, Antoninus Pius in Britain, Marcus Aurelius and Verus in Slovakia and the East, the Severan emperors in North Africa, Britain and the East. That is quite an impressive list of emperors after Augustus. They cannot all be dismissed as psychologically troubled spirits. Indeed, it begins to look as if it was Hadrian that was the misfit.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that Hadrian's governor, the writer Arrian, was quite prepared to launch an aggressive counterattack against the Alani in East Pontus which may have extended the boundaries of Roman administration.<sup>52</sup>

It is simply incorrect that the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates were 'regarded as definitive frontiers of the empire', as has been claimed. The abandonment of the Upper Rhine that was begun as early as Claudius and was finished by the Flavians proves the contrary.<sup>53</sup> So, too, do the wooden forts built beyond the Danube in Wallachia, which predate Trajan's wars.<sup>54</sup>

Hadrian's next but one successor, Marcus Aurelius, advanced across the Danube deep into Slovakia, and Severus abandoned the line of the Euphrates. True, the Euphrates retained its forts, but this did not restrain the Romans from establishing an offensive, long-range network of roads, like the one between Palmyra and Sura, that were anchored on the river.<sup>55</sup> Nor is there any reason to conclude that the positioning of forts on the Rhine and the Danube make sense 'only in terms of military defence', since there is plenty of evidence to show that the rivers served regularly as supply routes. This is not to say that rivers did not act as useful tactical impediments of sorts. Delbrück cited the opinion of General Gustav Schröder that the rivers were only an 'obstacle to withdrawal' against raiders loaded with booty.<sup>56</sup> Although the rivers were ideological confines, the Romans had no problem in surmounting the sacred boundaries of rivers, as we can see by the iconography and ceremony they adopted to proclaim their mastery of rivers and bridges.<sup>57</sup>

The difficulty about the epigraphic evidence that has been cited in favour of the defensive frontier theory is to see its relevance to the debate. Two of the inscriptions concern administrative and taxation boundaries, not military frontiers, and the third, the *Tabula Siarensis*, does not mention frontiers at all.<sup>58</sup> In the case of the boundary stone between the new province of Osrhoene and the kingdom or Edessa in the third century, the discoverer of the stone himself interpreted it as a restriction laid upon the disgraced king, who had been forced to become a client.<sup>59</sup> But in no way did it mark a military frontier of the empire. That also applies to the Asian customs posts. The Osrhoene inscription also illustrates how Hadrian and his successors did not abandon the use of friendly kings beyond the frontiers, as is so often asserted by those who imagine the empire isolated in a sort of protective cocoon. There are plenty of literary, epigraphic and numismatic references to the contrary. On the Dacian frontier there are two such examples in an inscription recording king Pieporus of the Costoboci in about AD170, and an alliance is recorded between the Dacringi and the emperor Caracalla in the third century.<sup>60</sup>

Recent archaeological studies mostly come down against the notion of closed frontiers. There is, however, now a growing body of opinion that beyond some parts of the north-western German frontier there was a relative lack of regular, transfrontier access, which raises important questions that are discussed below. Archaeologists have not hesitated, however, to distinguish between the administrative use of walls for civil control, their symbolic significance, or even their tactical value as impediments, but to separate all that from the strategic concept of walls as frontiers for defensive warfare. If Hadrian's Wall in Britain had originally been designed as a closed, defensive barrier, careful detection reveals that it was necessary, even before it was finished, to improve its 'offensive capability' and its control of the North, says one study, which in its turn almost inevitably led the army

to further advances within a few years.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, it is hard to understand why the wall was maintained at all after the Antonine Wall was built or after Severus had campaigned deep into Scotland and established forward bases at Carpow and (probably) Cramond. Both walls, says one of the most knowledgeable experts, were 'bureaucratic in concept, not military'.<sup>62</sup> The presence of officers' wives at High Rochester and Risingham, posts well in advance of Hadrian's Wall, make it an unlikely defensive war zone.<sup>63</sup> The North African *clausurae* (short stretches of walls) belonging to the *fossatum*, despite superficial similarities to the British wall, were in fact associated with a series of tribal land allotments and oases forts which, again, lay well forward of the wall system, whose function was almost certainly to control transhumance.<sup>64</sup>

On the Rhine frontier, an examination of Roman goods in the 'terpen', the raised clay settlements of Friesland, comes to the remarkable conclusion that, despite the Roman general Corbulo's formal withdrawal from the territory in the mid-first century AD, 'this was part of a well-planned frontier policy in which the Frisian area was kept under military and economic control'.<sup>65</sup> No defensive line there, therefore. The German Antonine wall and fort system beyond the Upper Rhine from Miltenberg-Alstat to Lorch must have been, as even advocates of the linear defence theory admit, 'negotiated', since it runs dead-straight in parts, with no attempt to follow a strategic line.<sup>66</sup> There are tantalizing hints that this 'Antonine' sector may in reality have begun as early as in Trajan's reign.<sup>67</sup>

In the Lahn valley beyond the German Wetterau frontier a research project to study Germans and Romans in Thuringia and Hesse was first thought to show 'a sort of ultra-frontier symbiosis' that began with Augustus. This included the rapid development of a civil market and administrative centre at Waldgirmes, which looks as if Augustus intended to absorb the region into Roman territory. But all that changed drastically after Varus' defeat, and thereafter the limited Roman finds are now believed to indicate low levels of Roman influence until the second century AD. This, however, appears to contrast with the Odenwalt and Wetterau sectors further south. And on the frontier itself, there is so much German pottery in the forts and attached to *vici* settlements that some archaeologists believe that German auxiliaries must have been stationed on both sides of the line.<sup>68</sup> As I have noted later, there is good reason to believe that between Romans and free Germans there was also transfer of farming technology.

On the Danube frontier, whether or not we believe that Marcus Aurelius was on the point of forming two new provinces beyond the river when he died, as Herodian and the Augustan History claimed,<sup>69</sup> the settlements north of the Danube in Slovakia are impressive. They have been studied again recently and show 'intensive contact' with the province of Pannonia lasting into the third century, though they diminish in the later Empire. Roman goods have turned up on four times as many sites as recorded before,

but their distribution suggests that not all necessarily came through trade rather than by ‘displacement’; that is, as gift exchanges with friendly kings.<sup>70</sup> On the Roman Dacian frontier the so-called *limes Alutanus* was only a road across the Wallachian plain with no defensive purpose, which intersected ‘a homogeneous ethnical and cultural area’, says one study. It emphasizes the zones of interaction and the evidence of Roman soldiers and officials in native territory.<sup>71</sup>

The walls and barriers which have been found in the Balkans and the Alps were either not frontier lines, or, in the case of the Alpine constructions, were probably intended to impede rivals in the civil wars of the later Empire rather than to repel invaders.<sup>72</sup>

There is disagreement about the interpretation of the archaeological evidence that comes from the so-called nomad frontiers of the empire. The African *fossatum* has already been discussed. On the Transjordanian frontier, where the remains mostly date from the Later Empire, it is a question of whether the fortifications were designed to control the movements of external transhumants coming across the frontiers or whether the ‘nomadic menace’ was a chimera and that there were no military garrisons along the desert fringes.<sup>73</sup> The forts and stations along the frontier road were, it is argued, largely to protect communications against internal disorder.<sup>74</sup> Whatever view one takes, and there is something to be said for the notion that raiders could be both external and internal, it is clear that on the Arabian frontier there was no defended line, only a district that was open. In the words of one study, ‘The word “frontier” is an elastic one and does not require definition in terms of boundaries or lines of separation between states, provinces, ethnic groups, etc.’<sup>75</sup> There is no hint here that Hadrian turned around the policy in the province founded by his aggressive predecessor, Trajan.

To round off the argument against the proposition, the archaeological evidence, at least, does not support the theory of a permanent reinvention of Roman frontiers, despite some suggestion that Hadrian might have considered the idea. In Chapter 4 I look at Roman cartography, which, of course, has an important bearing on Grand Strategy, but also on the question of imperial defence. Isaac comes down decisively to the conclusion that even by the time of Eusebius in the fourth century AD, there were only the most rudimentary maps available to those who had to take military decisions.<sup>76</sup> It complements my own conclusion that even when there were road itineraries or geographic descriptions, they seem to have ignored frontiers as limits to the empire.

Let me now turn to other current frontier debates that concern ecology, society and the economy. Although in Chapter 2 I reject the theory that conscious cost–benefit analysis played any part in Roman strategy and expansion, there were nevertheless practical limits to the sustainable ecology

that the Romans encountered, which of necessity operated as a check upon their advance. The ecological limits to empire was a theme of the book that I wrote in 1994, *Frontiers of the Empire*, and I shall not repeat what I said then. The idea, however, has received support from an archaeological study of Upper Rhine, which draws upon comparative material from both neolithic and nineteenth-century frontiers,<sup>77</sup> and from recent descriptions of the Arabian frontier as a 'transitional zone' between western agricultural regimes and the eastern desert.<sup>78</sup> There has also been discussion of the frontiers of north Britain and Scotland in terms of local agricultural production that had developed before the Romans arrived. This seems to have been a factor in determining the course of the advance into the Scottish Highlands, in particular. The simple fact remains that no army can outstrip the resources of the land it masters. As has been pointed out recently, a huge invasion army of some 80,000 men, such as that in northern Gaul and Germany in the early first century, could not have sustained itself for very long by depending on local agricultural regimes.<sup>79</sup> Hence the importance of long-distance supplies was immediately apparent. They required easy routes, particularly rivers, for transport. Hence, also, the sheer physical necessity of dispersing the military units, once the main fighting was over.<sup>80</sup>

Nor could an army, once established, continue to forage and confiscate forever, since such actions would have destabilized the communities far too much. The soldiers needed to develop local agriculture and pasture to satisfy their enormous requirements beyond, that is, what they could obtain by long distance transport, which also consumed enormous resources. Just to give one example. One legion, it has been estimated, needed the services of over a thousand pack animals, and a mounted unit of auxiliaries required as many as one thousand horses and animals.<sup>81</sup> So, if one horse eats approximately the grass and hay of one acre (0.40 ha), quite apart from barley and oats, one can begin to guess the immense area required to feed these numbers.<sup>82</sup> A recent calculation for the sector of the Upper German limes between Jagsthausen and Lorch-Rems estimates that the military camps would have needed some sixty-five square kilometres to provide fodder for the horses, the equivalent of sixty-five villas of an average 100 km<sup>2</sup> size, if they were entirely devoted to growing hay, and twice as many if there was mixed farming.<sup>83</sup> The ecological point is that, once the Roman army had developed its basic resources and become embedded in the regional economy, it inevitably became less mobile.<sup>84</sup> But no one should mistake immobility for defensiveness.

The concept of the frontiersman and frontier culture has always had some resonance with American historians because of their own history of the West. But the comparison is probably misplaced. There is no reason to believe that Roman settlers from Italy, unlike their Wild West American counterparts, were a significant element in the colonization or settlement of



the frontiers, although non-Italian military veterans did frequently remain near the camps where they had served.<sup>85</sup> Certainly there is no comparison between the American frontier history of disintegration, reservation and impoverishment of Native American societies on the one hand and the increasing wealth, political coherence and integration of Roman conquerors with native peoples beyond the frontiers on the other. But the comparison contains aspects of the frontiers that have become subjects of current debate concerning military supplies, transfrontier exchanges and the extent to which military zones were isolated from the communities in which they were located.

Much of the argument revolves around military supplies. How were essential military supplies procured? By tax, requisition and compulsory purchase or through markets and traders? How were they transported? By the state and the army itself, by official contractors or by traders (who could also be contractors)?<sup>86</sup> The answers to these questions affect the answers to others. What impact did the army have upon the Roman economy as a whole in terms of monetization against exchange in kind, or by establishing free trade against a command economy?<sup>87</sup> And what impact did the army have upon local societies on both sides of the frontiers? Did it lead to their Romanization or homogenization, one with the other? In the Later Empire, so I have argued, the frontier culture ultimately broke down the social and political barriers that were artificially drawn between the two.<sup>88</sup>

The surprising thing about these questions is how difficult they are to answer from the facts as we have them. This is not the place to resolve them, only to identify the different responses. Even in Gaul, where a substantial number of inscriptions and reliefs provide evidence of traders and transport, it is impossible to arrive at any quantitative comparison between the state and the private sector in the proportion of goods they transported.<sup>89</sup> In Chapter 6 I have contributed some evidence to the supply debate from North Britain, drawn from the documents found at Vindolanda in Britain.

In recent years the strongest supporter of the importance of the state's role in military supplies has been Remesal Rodriguez, deriving arguments from his work on Spanish olive oil. Oil, he believes, was always, like wheat and other essential military goods, the responsibility of the Prefect of the *annona* supply, who provided inducements and contracts with traders for its transport, although different sectors of the frontiers, judging by the distribution of amphorae stamps, evidently entered into attachments or special relations with regional Spanish producers.<sup>90</sup> But a powerful counterattack has been mounted by Wirschowski, whose criticism is largely based upon the lack of hard facts, insufficient evidence and dating inconsistencies.<sup>91</sup> Although he favours the idea that supplies were requisitioned in the early Empire, and that transport was privately contracted, rather than provided by the state, he thinks taxes were raised in money, and goods were purchased in



the market, wherever possible. He also denies that oil was ever part of the *annona* or that the pottery stamps are sufficient to prove directed supplies.<sup>92</sup> This does, however, make it difficult to understand how market information ever stimulated producers in the first place without some state aid, and there appears to be evidence that wine, for example, was sometimes transported by the army. Maybe we are too anxious to separate civil and private from state and military.<sup>93</sup>

The lack of evidence that wheat was levied as a tax in kind, as opposed to compulsory purchase, is puzzling, although, if Republican Sicily is supposed to be a guide, it may be that both forms of provisioning were practised, when necessary. It may depend on what period of the Empire is under review, since very early or very late periods were perhaps more likely for requisitioning.<sup>94</sup> It is also true that imperial estates, such as those in Africa, sometimes demanded rent-tax in kind, which shows that this kind of non-market supply was widely known. Most studies (rightly in my view) eliminate private contractors entirely from the collection of the *annona* wheat, but some go further and question their role as military carriers with privileged customs immunities. That is an attack on my proposition that a non-market mechanism gave frontier zones access to subsidized market goods, unlike other sectors of the empire.<sup>95</sup>

But how exactly military supplies were transported is still contentious. If private companies (*societates*) were, as one writer claims, 'the middlemen between the olive-oil producers and their clients, private and state alike' in the West,<sup>96</sup> from Egypt the evidence suggests otherwise. There we find military officers collecting tax-grain from long distances and using the state service of liturgic (that is, *corvée*) or requisitioned transport.<sup>97</sup> Similar claims have been made that the *classis Britannica* fleet was used to bring supplies to the British army within an elaborate system organized by the Prefect of the *annona*, although that now seems doubtful.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the essential conclusion to be drawn from these inconclusive controversies is that military supplies always had a 'pull' on the distribution of goods to the frontier zone, no matter whether traders were attracted by tax immunities or simply by a flourishing consumer market.<sup>99</sup>

Some bold and contradictory statements are made about what was supplied to the army from local resources: on the one hand that all local supplies came through local markets, but on the other that the local population was exploited by the army, implying a non-market operation.<sup>100</sup> The contradiction reflects a very real difficulty once again with the evidence, and it encourages guess work and fantasy. In Scotland Roman demand for barley may well have stimulated trade surpluses. But, by contrast, in the frontier area of North Yorkshire the lack of Roman material culture or prosperous farms probably indicates that the frontier army depressed the development of native society by appropriating land for military use and making compulsory collections of food and transport.<sup>101</sup> In Judaea Jewish sources suggest

that owning land near a garrison was distinctly uncomfortable for this reason.<sup>102</sup>

But we have been given a salutary warning not to exaggerate the concept of a 'military zone', nor to extrapolate too much from the example of North Britain, since there is no doubt that military roads, buildings and small towns are signs that the army brought economic benefits to some.<sup>103</sup> In general the archaeo-botanical and archaeo-zoological evidence gives support to the unsurprising conclusion that, after the initial period of the invasion, when supplies came mainly through long-distance carriers, the army came to rely more and more heavily on local resources.<sup>104</sup>

But that does not tell us much about who produced the food. A number of recent studies have discussed the importance of veterans and the *prata legionis*, the territory and lands belonging to the army. Although it is not certain that every unit possessed land for farming or pasture, there is enough evidence from the Rhine, Danube, Britain and Spain to indicate that such land was an important source of food for men and beasts.<sup>105</sup> Some of the land, at least, seems to have been farmed directly by the soldiers or civilians attached to the camps, as we can see from the titles of men, such as *bubulcaris* or *ad porcos*, on the Vindolanda tablets, who drew rations in the camp.<sup>106</sup> The territories could be very large, as much as between thirty and seventy square kilometres at Caerleon in Wales. In the case of camps on the Rhine and Danube, for example, at Bonn or opposite the Roman forts along the middle Danube in Slovakia, the *prata legionis* are thought to have extended well beyond the river line.<sup>107</sup>

Other parts of the military territory may have been farmed by veterans, who paid rent for what was imperial land, although the farms are not easy to identify specifically. But we do have evidence, on inscriptions from all over the empire and on the writing tablets at Vindonissa, that suggests veteran villas were an important source of the local, rural produce supplied to the army.<sup>108</sup> A charming example comes from Caesarea-Hadrianopolis in Pamphylia, where one veteran (of Trajan probably) recorded verses of agricultural advice from Hesiod, the Greek poet, on his funerary inscription.<sup>109</sup>

This is not the place to enter into the controversy about the isolation or otherwise of the army from the local population. How much the legionaries, auxiliaries and veterans fraternized with, and had a cultural impact upon, provincials outside their own *vici* and camps is obviously of some relevance to the issue of exploitation. But it has more to do with Romanization in general, and the extent to which the military community assimilated foreign soldiers into a closed, citizen society, in contradistinction to impoverished, non-citizen civilians of the region.<sup>110</sup> A collection of papers on the subject takes up the debate with examples from different provinces, but does not come down firmly on one side or the other.<sup>111</sup> Much of the argument revolves around numbers. How many veteran and auxiliaries can be estimated to have survived after their service.<sup>112</sup> For how long? Where did they

settle? Did retired auxiliaries follow the same practice as the legionaries?<sup>113</sup> And since we are talking about closed communities, where did the wives or partners come from, who built up the stock of young recruits, from inside or outside the military society?<sup>114</sup> These are all imponderables that lead to widely different answers. I discuss some of the evidence about women in Chapter 6.

This brings me to supplies that came from beyond the frontiers. The subject has been much discussed, not only for the intrinsic interest of how the Roman military machine operated, but also as a crucial half of the equation contained in the hypothesis that it was only through the long period of exchange of material and manpower across the frontiers that the transformation of the Later Empire into the medieval world became, in a sense, possible.<sup>115</sup> Many of the recent studies have a bearing on that model. We are talking of two-way traffic. For Roman exports into what they thought of as 'barbarian' lands beyond the empire there has never been a shortage of evidence, and the discoveries of archaeology increase the proof every year.<sup>116</sup>

But recently serious doubts have been raised about the interpretation of that evidence in parts of free Germany.<sup>117</sup> A comprehensive review of Roman finds in north-west Germany (Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein) and parts of Holland does not support the previous received opinion of continuous or increasing trading from the earliest Empire until the third century AD. Rather, there were irregular phases or 'waves' of imports tied to specific events of diplomatic or political interaction, sometimes after the mid-first century, linked to the use of German auxiliary troops, that came to an end in the second century. Thereafter, so it is supposed, the Roman artefacts and coins that are found in the Elbe-Schleswig-Holstein region entered free Germany from the Danube.

The contrast is with the Low Countries, especially Friesland. Roman traders were 'all over the place', Tacitus said in AD69, talking about the land of the Frisians beyond the Rhine.<sup>118</sup> More and more confirmation comes from Roman artefacts continuing right into the fourth century AD in native 'terpen' settlements beyond the Lower Rhine, one of which is Hatsum, near Tolsum where the famous tablet was found recording a contract for Friesian cattle to be supplied to the Romans. Significantly, for the argument about the assimilation of the zones on either side of the frontier, the percentages of different types of pottery in most 'terpen' closely shadow those at military camps on the Rhine, suggesting common suppliers.<sup>119</sup> It has to be stressed, too, that this reappraisal does not cover all free Germany. In South Thuringia and parts of Franconia, for example, some 68 sites with Roman coins have been recorded between the Becken and Saale rivers.<sup>120</sup> Nor does such a survey take into account the disparity between goods from settlements (as in Friesland) and graves (as in most other German sites), which can produce distorted comparisons.<sup>121</sup>

In many cases the Roman centres of production and the regions they

served can be traced: the pottery of Trier that went to the north-west, Rheinzarben ware that was exported to the Oder and Main basins, and so on. Striking concentrations of miniature bronze statues of Roman gods have been found on sites in Friesland, Westphalia and northern Saxony, which give possible clues to German auxiliaries returning after service in the Roman army.<sup>122</sup> From their distribution in the Wetterau and Thuringia some Roman goods look as if they were channelled through local élites.<sup>123</sup> That, too, is important, when one considers that it was these élites who often became Roman army officers in the Later Empire. The same characteristic appears to be the case in Slovakia, where far more Roman objects and sites are known than when Eggers wrote his classic survey in 1951.<sup>124</sup> On the Dacian frontier with eastern Wallachia and southern Moldavia the distribution of Roman goods gives the impression to one archaeologist of a sort of 'economic integration', which included exports along the line of the River Mures of iron, beads and salt from the Transylvanian mines.<sup>125</sup>

The puzzle is to know what the Germans and other frontier communities gave in exchange. There is a lot of literary evidence, particularly in the Later Empire, referring to the service of foreign army auxiliaries or migrant workers, who would also account for some of the Roman coins found in their homelands.<sup>126</sup> Roman import of labour, therefore, must count as a major item. Cash purchases of Roman goods is a possibility sometimes, although talk of a cash economy in most frontier communities is a fantasy.<sup>127</sup> We know, of course, about amber from the North, which was much sought after by the Romans and which entered the Empire through Carnuntum on the Danube or Cologne on the Rhine. But luxury exports like that were of no use to the army. That applies to most of the exotic imports from the East which arrived through Egypt or desert ports, such as Palmyra, although Indian pepper was a common spice, found in Roman camps as early as the reign of Augustus.<sup>128</sup> Those who have studied German exports to the Roman world have listed some evidence of grain (wheat, barley, etc.), fish, and even hair, but almost none for raw materials such as iron or silver, which are often supposed but cannot be proved.<sup>129</sup> The presence of Roman officers, such as *beneficarii*, and customs posts on the frontiers, certainly indicates imports. And we have some well-known evidence on the African frontier of customs tariffs.<sup>130</sup>

It has always been thought that the only serious imports from beyond the frontiers were cattle and horses, for which the army had a massive requirement in both beasts and leather hides, as we have seen.<sup>131</sup> That still remains the case, if we accept the weight of circumstantial, ecological and literary evidence.<sup>132</sup> But recent, hard archaeological evidence of animal bones has raised some doubts. In Roman Britain and in the German-Gallic provinces the bone size of cattle and horses is, according to the survey, much larger than that of breeds in free Germany and Britain, where they remain

unchanged from the Iron Age.<sup>133</sup> And it is the larger bones which have been found at a number of sites south of the frontiers.

There is, however, other archaeological evidence that suggests, if it does not prove, that 'barbarian' cattle were supplied across the frontier. At some sites in Germany, archaeologists think there were livestock markets, which must have served both sides of the frontier. At Elginhaugh (near Edinburgh) in Scotland, the site abandoned by the Romans appears to have continued in use for herding under Roman direction.<sup>134</sup> Since some smaller-boned animal remains have been found south of the frontiers, it has been thought possible that, in Britain, the larger bones could be those of special sacrificial beasts.<sup>135</sup> On the Dacian frontier the Iazges were well known cattle breeders. The Sarmatians and Quadi bred horses that were faster than those of the Romans, which the sources explicitly say were supplied to the Romans. The same is said about German cattle, sheep and horses from beyond the Upper Rhine.<sup>136</sup> Even if the horses from the transfrontier people were often smaller than Roman requirements, the huge demand for mules and oxen as pack animals must have made even smaller breeds attractive. An African ostracoon records animals being supplied by the Garamantes.

Perhaps the most convincing argument about cattle imports is that produced in a fine study by Stoll, who builds upon Tacitus' statement that Germany was 'a land rich in flocks but mostly undersized'.<sup>137</sup> The Germans, he argues, knew about larger cattle and horses, and indeed Tacitus tells us that the Frisians had larger, wild breeds in their forests. On some native, free German sites in Thuringia (Oberdorla, Mühlberg, Haarhausen), not only have bones of larger breeds been found, but also evidence of Roman animal-breeding techniques, probably adopted in order to export to the Roman market. But the smaller breeds persisted, too, not because of backward Germans but because they were better suited to German ecological conditions. It would have been strange if the Roman army had not made some use of these resources, just as it is clear that those beyond the frontiers profited from Roman breeding technology.<sup>138</sup> Several studies have come to the conclusion that the most intense contacts, including the transmission of technology, went through free German élites and princes.<sup>139</sup> It is one more example of the homogenization of communities on either side of the frontiers.

Before leaving the economic role of frontiers it is worth noting a recent attempt to understand the different roles played by frontier cities. The author makes use of Bartel's ideal-type categories of 'colonial' and 'imperialistic' cities, in order to define their degree of economic dependence upon, and administrative or military integration with, the centre.<sup>140</sup> The first type he illustrates by the towns of Cologne and Carnuntum on the northern frontiers, which lay in regions where expenses outran production and where they were heavily dependent upon the resources of the imperial system. For the second he cites Palmyra and Lepcis Magna on the desert frontier of Arabia

and Africa, which became centres of surplus production and expansion. The work provides a valuable refinement of the crude tax and consumption model that supposedly united the frontier with the periphery, but is less useful in understanding the social and economic symbiosis between frontiers and the regions that lay beyond.

The Later Empire has not been neglected in recent publications. They are far too numerous to be reviewed rapidly, although many are cited in the two chapters included here which concern two particular questions that interest me because they have a frontier dimension. The first (Chapter 3) is the question of how critical was the crisis in the Great Invasions of the West during the third to fifth centuries and the extent to which the Roman army, and with it the frontiers, actually collapsed. The second (Chapter 10) is the process by which the frontiers by their very nature, by their porosity, let us say, created the conditions for the successful transformation of late antique into early medieval society.

An archaeological study of weapons and fortifications concludes that the collapse of the frontiers occurred because the army simply fell apart at the seams, not so much through shortage of manpower as due to an under-supply of trained soldiers and an over-supply of sleaze.<sup>141</sup> But the conclusion depends heavily upon worst scenario sources without distinguishing between rhetoric and reality. For a very different and more detailed view we must look at an important study of the whole army, which argues that, notwithstanding horror stories of frontier pressures and the corruption of the late Roman army, the political unity, and hence the effectiveness, of foreign forces from beyond the frontiers, those of the so-called barbarians, was so fragmented and ephemeral as to be negligible. Culturally, however, the foreign border folk had developed in fashions, particularly those of warfare, which closely resembled those of the Romans on the other side.<sup>142</sup>

It is this last point which makes the open character of the frontiers assume such importance. Another study of the late Roman army, although more concerned with its organization and the strategic consequences, agrees that the crack forces of the Roman army were composed of a high proportion of foreign soldiers, but that the concept of 'barbarization', a word traditionally coded to denote deterioration, has been exaggerated.<sup>143</sup> In other words, the defectiveness of the Roman army, the superiority of the 'barbarians' and, therefore, the crisis of the invasions is to a great extent an historiographic myth.

'The Transformation of the Roman World' is the title of a five-year research project sponsored by the European Science Foundation, which has produced 11 volumes between 1997 and 2000 under the overall editorship of Ian Wood.<sup>144</sup> This is only one of several initiatives and conferences in recent years on the subject of what happened when the Romans and the worlds beyond the frontiers met.<sup>145</sup> There has always been much debate

about exactly what the strange, anonymous pamphlet, entitled *de rebus bellicis*, was all about. It was written sometime towards the end of the fourth century AD and purported to be advice to the emperor on how to deal with the barbarians on the frontier. But recently a distinguished historian believes that quite the opposite was intended. The author, he argues, believed 'The barbarian would have to be accommodated, and some barbarian people would have to be made partners of the Empire to keep the others out.'<sup>146</sup>

The accommodation of immigrants within the Late Empire is very much at the heart of current interest. It involves questions of citizenship and integration and how outsiders from beyond the frontiers became insiders, whether as élite officers in the army and at court, or as ordinary soldiers and labourers. Many studies believe that citizenship mattered less than culture, and behaviour more than status.<sup>147</sup> It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Roman army as a vehicle for this kind of acculturation. Citizenship, however, had not lost its value to those who had the means to benefit from its legal rights.<sup>148</sup> But it mattered less for the deprived, who joined the community of the poor. Despite appalling propaganda and stereotypes, the immigrants were nevertheless admitted, helped by the systems of patronage and clientship that constituted such an important, structural prop of Roman society.<sup>149</sup> There was a relative absence of rigid, ethnic markers. Rather, a series of negotiated relationships in which military service and weapons in common assisted.<sup>150</sup> What stands out, however, from many studies is the Roman capacity for assimilation. Entry and integration were possible.<sup>151</sup> This was the consequence of lax border controls, where the roads that led beyond the frontiers were usually, except in time of war, open.<sup>152</sup>

Finally, in this book, I have included the subject of Rome beyond the imperial frontiers. The unarguable virtue of Mortimer Wheeler's book of that title was its global view of the Roman fringes, a part of the Roman world as it had never been previously studied, and it was his discoveries in India that inspired Wheeler. Fifty years on we need another such overarching perspective, which is my reason for looking at India in Chapters 7 and 8.<sup>153</sup>

So, how much more do we know now than Wheeler did? He devoted four chapters to India, five if you count the one about the route to India through Egypt, more than to any other region beyond the frontiers. In Chapter 7 I begin by asking whether perhaps the very idea of 'Rome beyond the frontiers' may have changed, particularly in relation to India. But there are four other aspects of the question where recent research has changed or modified Wheeler's conclusions: those about the monsoon, South India, the Egyptian route and the Indian perspective.

At one stage the supposed 'discovery' of the monsoon obsessed ancient historians and Wheeler was no exception, perhaps because his book, as he said, 'took shape on a hot May morning' in South India, when everyone



would have been panting for the rains that come with the monsoon south-westerly winds of June/July. The 'discovery', he believed, was made by an individual called Hippalus – whom he called 'one of the great names of the history of navigation' – in that he made possible the Roman Augustan boom in Indian trade by finding a way to take the direct route across the Indian Ocean. Ahead of his time in avoiding an archetypal, imperial conceit about superior Western knowledge, Wheeler conceded that Indians and Arabs *possibly* knew the 'trade secret' before this. But for Wheeler this Augustan 'discovery' was proved by the flood of Roman coins reaching South India and the *terra sigillata* that was emerging from the trench at Arekamedu where he was digging that hot May of 1945.

Today the gallant, colonial explorer, Hippalus, has been airbrushed out of history.<sup>154</sup> By 100BC geographers and mariners knew that if you steered a steady course by the stars on the 12<sup>0</sup> parallel from Cape Gardafui in East Africa you could not miss a landfall in South India.<sup>155</sup> Although Wheeler was quite right about the Augustan boom, it was not due to either Hippalus or navigational discoveries but to more banal causes – the Roman victory over Cleopatra's Ptolemaic Egypt and other events that vastly increased circulating currency and cash liquidity. Money was looking for investment. That is the theme I develop in Chapter 8.

Our understanding of the traffic to and from India through Egypt took a dramatic turn with the publication in 1985 of the sensational second century AD papyrus *P.Vindobona* G 40822, which recorded among other things an Egyptian contract for trade goods from India and a reference to Muziris, the premier port on the Indian Malabar coast. Important Indian evidence is also being unearthed in Egyptian sites along the Red Sea that confirms the prime importance of the black-pepper trade with South India. Surprisingly little, however, is actually known about Muziris for all its importance, as I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>156</sup>

That brings us back to South India itself where over 6,000 silver denarii and 1,000 gold aurei have now been documented from 79 sites, far more than Wheeler knew, and the numbers are still growing. They show that it is dangerous to date the rhythm of Roman trade by the coin finds, as Wheeler and others tried to do. Far from a decline in trade after the Julio-Claudians, the ancient sources, papyri and archaeology prove that it was alive and well in the second century AD and continued into the Later Empire. As for Arekamedu and the sherds of *terra sigillata* and amphorae that set Wheeler's imagination racing, re-excavations and the resulting conclusions make us more cautious about claiming the port to have been an Indo-Roman trade station or even a regular port of call for Roman ships. Other Indian ports have shown up similar Roman goods since Wheeler's first discovery.

'From the Indian Standpoint' was the title of Wheeler's last chapter, an enlightened and, hitherto, rare attempt to use Indian sources and conjunctures in Indian history in order to understand Roman trade. For this he



turned to early Tamil poetry and inscriptions in Buddhist caves. His approach was right, even if his conclusions need modifying. That is being done by Indian historians and archaeologists of the South Indian megalithic culture. Where Wheeler was right was in perceiving that the huge South Indian trade with the Roman world was not simply the consequence of Roman demand but was reciprocated by political and economic conditions in India. Although we still know all too little, the results of study add a piquant flavour to Strabo's information that among the delegations to Augustus was one from an Indian king called 'Pandion' – obviously a Pandyan raja. It was this, I believe, which made Romans think that South India was *within*, not beyond, the Roman frontiers.

Just as Wheeler was stimulated by India to study Northern Europe beyond the frontiers, so, too, some of the new perspectives from India may add to how we view other lands 'beyond the frontiers' where the Roman army and traders ventured.

### Notes

- 1 Siegfried quoted by Ancel 1938: vii; Lapradelle 1928: 9.
- 2 www.ibru.dur.ac.uk. Summarized by Blake in the recent publication of the IBRU; Pratt 2000.
- 3 Pratt 2000: ix; Newman 2000: 17.
- 4 Badie 1995: 12–17; Newman 2000: 20.
- 5 O. Hinze, cited by Badie 1995: 20–1. It will be obvious here and in Chapter 9 how much I am impressed by the ideas of Bertrand Badie.
- 6 Chazan 1991: 1–5, 24–5, etc.
- 7 Haubrichs and Schneider 1993: 19; Strassolo 1998.
- 8 www.unhcr.ch.
- 9 Sigurdson 2000.
- 10 Badie 1995: 28: 'Cette usage du territoire et de la frontière, complexe et multi-forme, mais toujours souple et incertain, est bien éloigné de la territorialité stato-nationale: il n'appartient pourtant pas seulement à l'Histoire.'
- 11 King 1998: 111.
- 12 Cf. Isaac 1998: 405, who says that, although we might conclude 'that attempts to produce a set of reliable theories about international boundaries have failed', yet 'there has been notably more success in devising a set of procedures or guidelines by which boundaries can be studied'.
- 13 Most of the interest starts from Douglas 1966, van Gennep 1960 and Barth 1969, whose studies of ritual and boundaries are still important sources of ideas.
- 14 I am grateful to S. Robertson and D. Crawford for sharing with me their reading list for the seminar on 'Borderlands' at the University of California (Santa Barbara). As other examples, I refer later to Gregory 1994 and Anderson 1991 for two particularly stimulating studies of imagined geography.
- 15 Douglas 1966: 121.
- 16 Douglas 1966: 122.
- 17 Whittaker 1994: ch. 1 (foundation myths); Braund 1996 (rivers).
- 18 van Gennep 1960: 15–17.
- 19 *Contra* Potter 1987, discussed in the next chapter.
- 20 Troussset 1997: 10.

- 21 Rousselle 1995 (reviewed by me in *Annales (ESC)* 51 (1996)); Mathisen and Sivan 1996.
- 22 Barth 1969: 21.
- 23 Barth 1969: 124–7.
- 24 Chavez 1992: 41–8.
- 25 Galestin 1997 talks of ‘part of a well-planned frontier policy in which the Frisian area was kept under military and economic control’. Stoll 2001: 494 suggests seasonal labour from free Germany. Cf. also Lewin 1994 for the view that in Arabia Roman military control and taxation extended far into the Hejaz (although I doubt whether it was ever considered a formal part of the administered province).
- 26 I have provided a complete list of these up to 1991 in Whittaker 1994, since when Groenman-van Waateringe 1997 *et al.* (Limeskongress XVI), Gudea 1999 (Limeskongress XVII) and Freeman *et al.* 2002 (Limeskongress XVIII) have appeared. A useful list of major frontier-related publications is given by A.R. Birley in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 8–10. For publications of the written documents, see Ch. 5.
- 27 Green and Perleman 1985, although the heavy concentration on studies of centre–periphery relations, to the detriment of those of frontier societies or of interaction beyond frontiers, is disappointing.
- 28 Green and Perleman 1985: 9, especially the contribution by R. Paynter at p. 204.
- 29 J.A. Moore in Green and Perleman 1985: 96.
- 30 Isaac 1998: 406.
- 31 The debate is published in Brun *et al.* 1993, in the contributions by van der Leeuw and Brun, against Woolf and Isaac (cited in the previous note).
- 32 Febvre is cited in Whittaker 1994: 7.
- 33 Green and Perleman 1988: 4.
- 34 Mayerson 1994: 301–3.
- 35 Groenman-van Waateringe *et al.* 1997; the project is explained by Hanson 1997a.
- 36 For example, Drummond and Nelson 1994; Williams 1996; Hodgson 1997; Nicasie 1995 (although the last two are mostly concerned with the Later Empire).
- 37 Underestimated, notably, by Whittaker 1994, *passim*.
- 38 Austin and Rankov 1995: 111–12, 174–5 (rivers), etc.
- 39 Braund 1996.
- 40 Dabrowa 1997.
- 41 Potter 1991, whose interpretation is accepted by LoCascio 2000: 82–3.
- 42 J. Wagner in Mitchell 1983: 113–14, which LoCascio 2000: 85 claims ‘signa il confine dell’impero’.
- 43 *AE* 1989, 681, interpreted by LoCascio 2000: 85–6.
- 44 Potter 1987.
- 45 Potter 1996.
- 46 LoCascio 2000: 81–93.
- 47 Crow 1986a; Napoli 1989; Breeze 1996: 61.
- 48 Zahariade 1997.
- 49 Wierschowski 2002: 268 (first century); King 1999 (bones).
- 50 Tacitus (e.g. *Ann.* 2.5) notoriously claimed that Tiberius hated Germanicus’ popularity, not his aims.
- 51 Hanson 2002 reaches the same conclusion.
- 52 J. Bennett in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 306; Mattern 1999: 11, with bibliography.

- 53 The quotation is from Austin and Rankov 1995: 26. Their assertion that there were no permanent bridges over the Rhine in the first half of the first century AD is at best negative evidence. Although wooden piles discovered at Xanten, Koblenz, Mainz and Neuwied, most of them early (although not all are dateable), show no sign of repairs, piles preserved in water must be the least likely part of a bridge to rot and need repairs. A wooden structure is no guide to permanence, since the wooden bridge over the Liris at Minturnae in Italy lasted 800 years. Archaeologists now believe that the fort of Kastel on the right bank opposite Mainz was the site of the arch of Germanicus, which could not have been so, if the bridge had been destroyed (see Frenz 1989). The bridge at Xanten (Vetera) must also have been in service if the Frisians were kept under tight control in the first century, as argued by Galestin 1997.
- 54 Opreanu 1998.
- 55 Dabrawa 1997: 110.
- 56 Austin and Rankov 1995: 173; Delbrück 1990: vol. I, 153–5.
- 57 Braund 1996 provides excellent examples.
- 58 See below; noted also by Isaac 1998: 262.
- 59 P. Wagner in Mitchell 1983: 114. The tortured history of Abgar of Edessa is listed in *PIR2* A8.
- 60 *ILS* 854, Dio 78.27.5; Opreanu 1998: 248–9. Potter 1996: 55 claims that Antonine policy in the North and the East was ‘to secure client kings’.
- 61 Johnson 1989: 59–70.
- 62 Breeze 1996: 69; Johnson 1989: 73. The Severan occupation was perhaps too brief to count (Hanson, personal communication).
- 63 *RIB* 1388, 1209, although we cannot be sure whether they were there while the Antonine Wall was occupied; Allason-Jones 1999: 42.
- 64 See most recently the assessment by Cherry 1998: 65.
- 65 Galestin 1997; Galestin 2002 believes that the early control may have been exercised by the Roman fleet.
- 66 Napoli 1989: 829; Hanson 1989. I see no reason to believe this changed in the third century, as Hodgson 1997 argues, since the line remained exactly as before.
- 67 Sommer 2002.
- 68 For the DFG-Schwerpunktprogramme begun in 1993/4, see Wigg 1995 and in Groenman-van Waateringe *et al.* 1997: 222 – ‘eine Art grenzüberschreitende Symbiose von Römern und Germanen’. But later studies play down the amount of Roman cultural influence that crossed the frontier in the Lahn valley, in contrast with areas such as the Odenwald and Main. For the most recent conclusions of whole DFG-Schwerpunktprogramme, see now Haffner and von Schnurbein 2000, especially the article by A. Wigg, D. Walter and S. Biegert, pp. 55–65.
- 69 Potter 1996: 55 does not believe them, although he does believe the *Historia Augusta* evidence concerning Hadrian.
- 70 See the contributions of K. Elschek, E. Krekovic and K. Kuzmová in Groenman-van Waateringe *et al.* 1997. Stoll 2001: 487 stresses that agriculturally the trans-Danubian land looks like provincial land.
- 71 Opreanu 1997.
- 72 See the examples in Christie 1991; Crow 1986a.
- 73 The opposing arguments are clear in Parker 1997 against Graf 1997, repeated by the two authors in Freeman *et al.* 2002.
- 74 Isaac 1990: 128 says, ‘The significance of military works ... must be based on an understanding of communications.’

- 75 Mayerson 1994: 268; cf. Isaac 1998: 419, 'The frontier in the East was an open one.'
- 76 Isaac 1998, ch. 19.
- 77 Okun 1989: especially 16–19.
- 78 Parker 1997: 116, incidentally contradicting the common fallacy that the nomad frontiers were situated on natural frontiers along the edge of the desert, as Nicasie 1997 claims. Most recently, see G. Findlater in Freeman et al. 2002: 137–52 on the 'environmentally determined road system' along the *limes Arabicus*.
- 79 Wierschowski 2002: 264–8.
- 80 Bishop 1999.
- 81 Herz 2002: 33–7.
- 82 Hyland 1990: 91–3 (fodder and hay), citing *CTb* VII.4.7 and 9, where soldiers are required to collect their fodder up to 20 miles from the camp.
- 83 Stoll 2001: 451; Hanson 1997b thinks the supplies could have been produced more easily than this.
- 84 Davies 2002: 180–2, for the strain on local communities in Wales.
- 85 The comparison is made most recently by Drummond and Nelson 1994: 3–4, 30, 42–3, etc., with Roman colonists, villas, slave gangs and all (although p. 48 seems to contradict this).
- 86 Good summaries of the questions have been made recently by Breeze 2000 and Erdkamp 2002: 5–16.
- 87 For some recent discussions, see Ch. 5: note 8.
- 88 Whittaker in Brun *et al.* 1993.
- 89 Goudineau 2000: 476–7.
- 90 Most recently Remesal 2002, where his earlier work is cited. Funari 2002: 238, cites a recently discovered inscription at Hispalis (Seville) in Spain, recording an oil supplier to the city of Rome ('*diffusor olei ad annonam urbis*'), to prove that oil was part of the *annona*; see also, Veget. 3. 3 – '*frumentum ceteraque annonariae species*'.
- 91 Wierschowski 2002 cites his earlier works. The arguments are summarized by Tchernia 2002.
- 92 Wierschowski 2002: 288–90.
- 93 Tchernia, 2002, although he does not believe that wine was part of the *annona*.
- 94 Herz 2002: 30 and 39.
- 95 I have explained this at greater length in Whittaker 1994: 130–1; although Erdkamp 2002: 55–6 misunderstands me to mean that *negotiatores* collected the taxes.
- 96 Funari 2002: 245; Davies 2002: 179 uses similar language for cereal imports.
- 97 Adams 1999.
- 98 Carreras 2002, citing Cleere, who offers no evidence except that for private traders. *Contra* Is Kolb 2002, citing C.G. Starr, *The Roman imperial navy 31 BC–AD 3242*, Chicago, 1993, p. 187. Kolb also notes that the example of Pliny, *Ep.* 10. 27, referring to an imperial procurator going to Paphlagonia for grain on behalf of the governor of Bythinia, does not say that state transport was used (*contra* Erdkamp 2002: 56 and Carreras 2002: 75); A.N. Sherwin-White, *The correspondence of Pliny*, Oxford, 1960: 597 points out that the passage need have nothing to do with the army, since the procurator of Pontus and Bythinia was responsible for imperial estates.
- 99 Funari 2002: 257, giving the example of Wales after the military presence dwindled.
- 100 Drummond and Nelson 1994: 43 and 73.
- 101 Hanson 1997a: 212; Wilson 1997, with earlier references; cf. Ch. 5.

- 102 Roth 2002: 303–4, citing Josephus, the Talmud and the New Testament.  
 103 Haynes 2002; Bishop 1999: 112–13.  
 104 Davies 2002: 181–2.  
 105 The bibliography is in Hyland 1990: 91; Stoll 2001: 488–91.  
 106 *Tab.Vind.* II. 80; see below, Ch. 5.  
 107 Kunow 1990 (Bonn); Wigg 1995 (possibly the Lahn Valley); Stoll 2001: 483–7 (Slovakia).  
 108 Stoll 2001: 467–82, gives the references. Herz 2002: 40–2 records his work on a villa-estate near Regensburg.  
 109 *SEG* 43 (1993), no. 911; discussed in Stoll 2001: 479–80.  
 110 For example, the much argued case of Africa; Cherry 1998: ch. 3 denies much cultural contact; vigorously contradicted by Morizot 2002.  
 111 Goldsworthy and Haynes 1999, summarized in the introduction by Haynes, pp. 7–14, and by Alston with references to earlier studies, pp. 175–7. A good account of the debate is given by Phang 2001: 390–2.  
 112 Not surprisingly estimates vary wildly. Drummond and Nelson 1994: 188–9, followed by Cherry 1998: 97, suggest about 50,000 legionary families at any given time and about 37,000 ex-auxiliaries.  
 113 See, e.g., Roxan 1997, suggesting about 30 per cent of auxiliary veterans left the military zone, but each province varied.  
 114 Auxiliaries' wives sometimes followed their men (Haynes 1999); citizen veterans could find 'daughters of the regiment' to wed (Wells 1997); most recruits in one legion on the Danube had native Thracian and Illyrian names from outside the military zones (Wilkes 1999); many wives were freedwomen, i.e. ex-slaves (Phang 2001: 331–2).  
 115 This was the proposition I presented in Whittaker 1994.  
 116 Wolters 1995 gives a good summary of the evidence in free Germany.  
 117 Erdrich 2001.  
 118 *Tac.Hist.* 4.15.  
 119 Galestin 1997.  
 120 F. Teichner in Haffner and von Schnurbein 2000: 77–93.  
 121 Hunter 2002.  
 122 Stupperich 1995.  
 123 Wigg 1995, citing S. Dusek, *Römische Handwerker im germanischen Thüringen. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen in Haarhausen, Kreis Arnstadt*, Stuttgart, 1992.  
 124 See above, note 68. H. Eggers, *Der römische import im freien Germanien*, Hamburg, 1951.  
 125 Opreanu 1997.  
 126 Wolters 1995: 114.  
 127 As Drummond and Nelson 1994: 109; although in Wallachia, Roman coins are common (note 71).  
 128 See below, Ch. 8.  
 129 As I did in Whittaker 1994: 119. What we know of German exports is listed by Wolters 1995.  
 130 See recently, Cherry 1998: 62–5, although I have doubts that the African *fossatum* was designed to steer nomads to the customs posts, if the section Seguia Bent el Krass (near Biskra) lay some 130 km south of the Zarai post.  
 131 Note 82; the classic study is still Breeze 1984.  
 132 Summarized in Whittaker, 1994, 113–21.  
 133 King 1999; of the sites recorded (Boulogne, Mirebeau, Aulay-de-Saintonge, Valkenberg, Liberchies, Braives), only Valkenberg is really a frontier fort and active in the high Empire; some are over 100 km from the Rhine, and several date from the Later Empire.

- 134 Germany – Sommer 1991; Scotland – Hanson 1997a. Cf. also my discussion in Ch. 5.
- 135 Davies 2002: 83–4.
- 136 Dio 71. 11. 2 (horses and cattle); HA *Prob.* 14. 3 (cattle and sheep); Veget. *Mulomedic.* 3. 6. 2 (horses); cf. Strabo 7. 4. 8, Tac. *Hist.* 1. 79, Amm.Marc. 17. 12, Cassiod. *Var.* 4. 1, etc.
- 137 Tac.*Germ.* 5–6.
- 138 Stoll 2001: 421–51. Similar conclusions for the Danube are drawn by S. Bökönyi, 'Animal breeding on the Danube', in C.R. Whittaker (ed.), *Pastoral economies in classical antiquity*, Cambridge, 1988: 171–6.
- 139 Stupperich 1995: 97; Wolters 1995: 103–4; Stoll 2001: 339 notes the examples of the *Fürstengräber* at Hassleben and the large *Herrenhof* at Dienstadt in Thuringia for Roman-style intensive farming.
- 140 Savino 1999, citing B. Bartel, 'Colonialism and cultural responses: problems related to Roman provincial analysis', *World Archaeology*, 12, 1980, 11–26.
- 141 Southern and Dixon 1996; review by me in *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 May 1997.
- 142 Elton 1996b, review by me in *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 May 1997.
- 143 Nicasie 1997.
- 144 A list of the publications is included at the back of *TRW*, vol. 10 – Pohl *et al.* 2001.
- 145 For example, Mathisen and Sivan 1996; Drinkwater and Elton 1992.
- 146 W. Liebeschuetz in Dabrowa 1994: 135. It is difficult to believe J. Arce in Pohl *et al.* 2001: 5–13 that the work reflected practical realities.
- 147 Chauvot 1998: 42; cf. Heather 1994 on the literary aspects 'by which the ruling élite of the Empire could recognize each other'.
- 148 Garnsey and Humphress 2001: ch. 5; I have discussed this further in Chapter 10.
- 149 Heather 2001.
- 150 Both the introduction and the chapter by W. Pohl in Pohl 1997 are fundamental.
- 151 Pohl 1997: 4.
- 152 See the examples in Lee 1993: 55–6, and my comments in Chapter 10.
- 153 R.E.M. Wheeler, *Rome beyond the imperial frontiers*, London, 1954.
- 154 In 1982 Santo Mazzarino proved almost conclusively that Hippalos was the name of the on-shore monsoon wind (*hypsalos* = 'from the deep') which was typically personified by mythical aetiology; First published in *Helikon* 22–7 (1982–7), vii–xi; reproduced in English in De Romanis and Tchernia 1997: 72–9.
- 155 Tchernia 1997b: 250–76.
- 156 The relevant evidence is presented in Gurukkal and Whittaker 2001.

## 2 GRAND STRATEGY, OR JUST A GRAND DEBATE?

Edward Luttwak's *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, published in 1976, proved to be the catalyst that saved Roman frontiers from the spades of the archaeologists.<sup>1</sup> Up until then Roman frontier studies had more or less confined themselves to a series of international, archaeological congresses, begun in 1949 under the inspired leadership of the late Eric Birley which, while vastly increasing the data available from Bearsden in Scotland to Bostra in Syria, had added little to our overall understanding of what precisely constituted a Roman frontier.<sup>2</sup>

Luttwak may not have been a classical scholar but his background as a military analyst equipped him with the skills needed to theorize and generalize. He opened up the subject to debate through his attempt to prove the existence of a centrally directed and rational evolution of Roman frontiers from the early to the Late Empire, based upon certain grand strategic concepts. To put it simply, he proposed that Roman frontiers evolved from undefined zones of dynamic expansion in the first century AD into static, scientific and highly visible lines of defence in the second century that made use of rivers and artificial barriers of the sort familiar to any visitor to Hadrian's Wall in Britain. Such a development was, he argued, the prelude to a loss of impetus in the third century that transformed the frontiers of the Later Empire into mere trip-wires within a laager-like system of defence-in-depth that was ultimately doomed.

Luttwak's thesis, however, did not please all archaeologists or historians. They found a single strategic theory of linear frontiers too constricting to explain the diversity of 4,000 miles of Roman frontiers, too modern in conventional, military terms to accommodate Roman concepts of space and power, and too simplistic to highlight the complementarity between political and administrative control.

The book, therefore, attracted almost immediate opposition from a number of directions. The earliest was that by John Mann, a Romano-British archaeologist of repute, who from his empirical and archaeological experience, made a powerful claim for the uniqueness of each Roman frontier and the futility of trying to detect any Grand Strategy.<sup>3</sup> In a sense Mann



was reflecting a historiographic trend which had been taking place since the Second World War against the general classification of boundaries and against a politico-geographic tradition that went back to Turner, Ratzel and Febvre.<sup>4</sup> After Mann a number of historians, of whom the most prominent were Millar and Isaac,<sup>5</sup> implicitly challenged the possibility of a Roman Grand Strategy. Such a concept did not accord with the image of an emperor, such as Millar proposed, who took the initiative only rarely and mainly reacted to events, nor with an empire of low efficiency and limited information services.

Isaac's opposition was more comprehensive, though concerned primarily with the Eastern Empire. Throughout the period of Roman contact with the East, that is from the late Republic to the Late Empire of the sixth century AD, a succession of wars reveals 'a consistent pattern of Roman expansionism' against Parthia and later Persia. The wars, he argues, were usually provoked by Rome, who displayed a progressive desire for annexation or control, but no defensive intent and certainly no Grand Strategy in search of scientific, defensible frontiers. Eastern frontiers, in so far as they could be determined at all, consisted largely of cities as legionary bases with roads between them protected against petty raiders.

Isaac was severe. A grand system of *limites* encircling the Roman Empire like a protective barrier, he said, is a modern invention that historians and archaeologists have foisted onto Rome. Given the lack of any explicit Roman writing about Grand Strategy, it is difficult to believe that 'The Romans were capable of realizing in practice what they could not define verbally'.<sup>6</sup> What looks like strategic decisions from the centre were frequently based on incorrect information, political tensions and, above all, on ideological ambition. There is, for example, simply no cogent strategic explanation, nor any evidence of long-term planning for Rome's advance into the Parthian (and later Sassanid) heartland over seven times, only for the territories to be abandoned.<sup>7</sup>

My own reaction to Luttwak came not so much from the standpoint of military strategy, since my book was a social and economic study of frontiers, as from an unwillingness to believe that emperors had an ideological interest in defensive strategy or in defining the point at which expansion was to stop.<sup>8</sup> Yet stop they did and the question to be answered was whether this was fortuitous, as Mann argued, or determined by social and economic factors. A strong case for ecological frontiers, such as Lattimore had suggested in the history of China, was supported by Troussset's studies of Roman Africa. Both seemed to offer a key to our understanding. Frontiers were not to be seen as lines that were strategically determined but as broad zones where expansion stopped for lack of resources.<sup>9</sup> More recently other facets of frontier studies have been fashioned to cast light on the issue of Grand Strategy. Austin and Rankov, for example, have constructed from a multitude of inscriptions a sensational picture of a massive panoply of



Roman military intelligence agencies on the frontiers.<sup>10</sup> But the crucial conclusion they draw is that emperors used the operators to control their own commanders, not to construct a Grand Strategy.

The most entertaining and most recent contribution to the debate is that by Mattern who claims that the time has come to rethink the definition of Grand Strategy. Grand Strategy must be detected, she argues, 'in the realm of psychology' and not in terms of long-term military planning.<sup>11</sup> While Roman military actions were basically *ad hoc* responses of emperors and their advisers, they were consistent within the parameters of their own (essentially aristocratic) values of glory, shame, ostentation and revenge. The book is a powerful contribution to the force of ideology in Roman behaviour, which argues strongly against any defensive mentality. But if Grand Strategy is no more than action (or reaction) that appears rational to the society that defines its own rationality, the concept is tautologous. No nation, after all, ever perceives itself as irrational. Is the Grand Strategy debate, then, simply self-indulgent?

Some authors, while broadly supporting the notion that Roman Grand Strategy is a fashionable figment of modernizing historians, throw up their hands in despair that we can ever decipher Roman intentions.<sup>12</sup> That is too pessimistic. Roman history is full of occasions when, for lack of information, motives have to be deduced from behaviour. If pragmatism, not policy, dictated the stationing of frontier units in places that were manageable for supplies,<sup>13</sup> that is itself relevant to discussions about strategic rationality.

But Luttwak has not lacked his admirers and defenders. Immediately after publication, reviewers of repute were full of praise for the fact that order had at last been imposed on frontier studies. Not just historians but archaeologists were enthusiastic. One distinguished Romano-British archaeologist with experience in Roman Africa found Luttwak's periodic scheme enlightening for understanding the problems of Hadrian's Wall.<sup>14</sup> Another, in explaining the Batavian Rhine frontier, found Luttwak a useful framework for his studies.<sup>15</sup>

Since then there has been, in the words of one writer recently, 'a frenzied scientific debate', to which he himself contributes by a study of Dacia, annexed by the Emperor Trajan, in order to examine whether the Romans had any 'general strategic principles'.<sup>16</sup> Zahariade gives the question a positive answer, in so far as an effective salient was established to control the Carpathians and provide strategic cover for the Balkans and the Danube provinces. In the all-round defensive system for Dacia, indeed, he discovers an anticipation of Luttwak's description of a defence-in-depth strategy of the fourth century AD; while in the acquisition of Dacia's material resources he perceives evidence of long-term strategic planning. The economic principle of cost-benefits is taken up by other historians as a reason for defending Luttwak's concept of 'preclusive defence', the new strategy for maximizing

peace and profits.<sup>17</sup> I shall come to both Dacia and economic planning in a minute.

Military buildings and frontier constructions are considered by some as proof of central, strategic planning. Inscriptions often refer to the person responsible for the work, a governor or a legate, for example. Some inscriptions, however, name the emperor himself, creating the impression that there was 'a centralized building administration' and implying to one historian an overall strategic control of the frontier system.<sup>18</sup> To another, writing about the Later Empire, the 'frantic building' throughout the Empire shows that there was a Grand Strategy of defence in depth which differed markedly from that of earlier period.<sup>19</sup> That is how the arguments run.

The problem is that inscriptions regularly gave a formulaic attribution to the reigning emperor, which were mere routine and not a reflection of any personal, grand design. It is difficult to believe, for instance, that Nero himself personally commanded the building of *tabernae et praetoria per vias militares*, as the inscription claims, as a strategic design for Thrace.<sup>20</sup> As for the Later Empire, it was demonstrated long ago that, of the buildings it is possible to date on the Rhine frontier, just as many stemmed from the period of Diocletian, who was reckoned to be an advocate of the old kind of linear defence, as from that of Constantine, who supposedly initiated the new in depth policy.<sup>21</sup> Nor can one by any stretch of the imagination dismiss Constantine's campaigns against the Franks or Julian's against the Alamans and the Persians or Valentinian's buildings on both sides of the Rhine as examples of defensive strategy.

The most sustained defence of Luttwak's proposition that the Romans were capable of strategic thought, however imperfect, has come from two scholars, Ferrill and Wheeler, the former a historian, the latter more of an archaeologist. Despite the lack of direct evidence, both insist it is possible to infer from their actions that the Romans were capable of devising a Grand Strategy. More recently Wheeler has also brought into the argument a work called the *Kestoi*, by a Christian writer, Julius Africanus, which he believes to be 'an example of Roman strategic thought'.<sup>22</sup> It is a curious work from the 'lunatic fringe', which Wheeler himself describes as a hotchpotch of 'schemes and magical recipes' that were concocted to defeat the Persians in the third century AD. In reality, it resembles nothing so much as another collection of military fantasies that dates from the later fourth century, the anonymous *de rebus bellicis*, which contains a series of Heath Robinson mechanical inventions designed to dispose of the barbarians on the frontiers.<sup>23</sup> They do not say much for strategy, and it is difficult to take either seriously.

Both modern authors, however, go some way towards accepting that Roman frontiers were more than simply lines of defence. Ferrill, for example, criticizes Luttwak for believing in a Roman 'Maginot Line mentality' of fixed defences, instead of perceiving that the visible frontiers of

the second century were not, in fact, front lines but part of a system of 'defence in exterior depth'.<sup>24</sup> Wheeler rightly notes that even Luttwak did not believe that fixed frontiers meant tactically static lines.<sup>25</sup> But he also goes beyond Luttwak by including within the debate, rightly in my opinion, the Roman ideology of war. The only question is whether ideology is evidence of strategic thinking.

The central concern for Ferrill and Wheeler is, however, less for Roman frontiers as such than for Grand Strategy. Both aim to demonstrate that emperors spent a good deal of time thinking about 'defence of the empire' and 'military planning and action over an extended period'.<sup>26</sup> But both note the semantic problems of the definition of Grand Strategy, as opposed to mere strategy or tactics, since it is 'an elusive concept' with 'gray borders'.<sup>27</sup> Because it is so elusive, it is worth looking at the list of arguments in support of its existence.

First comes the evidence from purely military organization. Strategy implies, so it is argued, the posting and movement of legions; the efficient use of manpower, such as the tactical superiority of legions; central military inventories, muster roles and orders of battle; information services, such as spies, strategic reports, maps, and so on. Of that there is plenty of evidence. It is also clear that the Romans had an understanding of what was needed for support services; the logistical organization; officers and committees for supply and planning; the construction of roads, colonies, alliances. More generally, there must have been planning; appreciation of the different roles of diplomacy; policing and military action and the need for defence in depth. And finally there must have been a central decision-making process: rational objectives of war; discrimination between wars of survival and wars of glory; maintenance of the plan bequeathed by Augustus, which Tacitus called his *consilium*, of limited expansion, especially when it came to economic considerations.

I shall come later to some of the evidence for all this, and whether it fully supports these assertions. Here let me limit myself to the central targets of the debate, which seem to be two important items. The first is the relationship of strategy to Grand Strategy, and how both relate to what actually took place on the frontiers. The second is to what extent Roman frontier policy, or strategy, if that is what we should call it, was defensive. But before I come to those two points, let me try to clear away some dead wood from the argument.

It is obviously correct to insist on the central role of warfare in Roman history and the preoccupation of Roman leaders with its conduct. That is an axiom of Roman life and I know of no Roman historian who would deny that the Romans were capable of military planning. I have argued in the past that the logistics of supply for the Roman army were not left to casual or free enterprise, and the theme has been reiterated by many others.<sup>28</sup> In the very first chapter of his book Isaac concluded that Rome had a long-

standing aim to take over parts of the old Persian Empire, but 'only what was profitable to acquire'.<sup>29</sup> All these actions, self evidently, required some degree of forethought based upon prevailing economic and geographic conditions.

What is at issue, therefore, is not whether we can find examples of Roman planning, which must exist on almost every page of Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. But if any and all planning is to be defined as strategy, the term becomes so all-embracing that it ceases to be a useful instrument of analysis. Any Roman army that was attacked had to decide (that is, to plan) how to retaliate; generals and emperors in search of battle glory had to make decisions (that is, plans) about how to realize their aims; the type of terrain on which battles were fought required some application of the principles of war and a degree of planning. But these are mere banalities. Strategy has many levels of planning and even tactics can involve manoeuvring an entire army.

For this reason modern military historians have felt the need for something broader in aim and policy, extending beyond the immediate circumstances, to qualify for the description of strategy, and *a fortiori* of Grand Strategy. An attempt to arrive at such a description is laid out well in a series of papers written by eminent, modern military historians.<sup>30</sup> Grand Strategy, says one, is not only 'the art of controlling and utilizing resources of a nation' but it requires also 'the successful integration of policy and arms to achieve political ends'.<sup>31</sup> Translated into Roman terms, it means that constructing inventories like the *breviarium totius imperii*, the list of the resources of the Empire that Augustus left on the files at his death, is not in itself evidence of strategy. The political ends should not just be winning wars, but using wars to achieve a better peace. The wars themselves should not be mere battle plans, but they should make use of financial, commercial, diplomatic and ethical pressure 'to weaken the will of the enemy', in the words of a modern military strategist.<sup>32</sup> In other words, a single, ideological aim to win victory and glory, the sort of proclamation so prominent in Roman propaganda, was not a Grand Strategy in itself, since it was not a balanced decision that took into account the effects of war.

In short, modern theory sees the crux of Grand Strategy to lie in 'the constant and intelligent reassessment of the polity's end and means'.<sup>33</sup> But even to this teleological ideal of Grand Strategy experience adds a pessimistic coda. Although military strategy *should* be planned to achieve the political objective, 'Normally the priorities are reversed. In spite of himself, the strategist finds that his plans are shaped by immediate military and political necessities, which continually shape the object of the war'.<sup>34</sup> Even when a Grand Strategy exists, generals and officers in the field have throughout history frustrated the strategic aims of home governments.<sup>35</sup>

The question we have to ask ourselves, therefore, is this. How far did various decisions and plans of the Romans, which we all know about, conform to these broader definitions of Grand Strategy? Clearly, as I have

said, there was *some* planning of wars. It is difficult to imagine any nation that does not do that in wartime. No one doubts that there was *some* assessment of resources for war. Velleius Paterculus, who was a soldier and contemporary, praised the 'fortune and care' of Tiberius for arranging that the fleet should meet the army with provisions on the Elbe during his German campaign.<sup>36</sup> It is almost certain that there was *some* assessment of the economic consequences of annexation, if we can assume that Strabo's and Appian's comments represent imperial thinking about the profitability of the barbarian fringe (as I discuss later).<sup>37</sup> We may rest assured that Romans were perfectly well aware of some of the diplomatic advantages to be gained from, what Tacitus calls, their 'long-standing custom of employing kings to make others their slaves'.<sup>38</sup> And we can easily believe that propaganda to weaken the enemy's resolve was a weapon they had long known, when we read, for example, that Tiridates laid down his crown at the feet of Nero as 'a spectacle for the tribes' (*ostentui gentibus*).<sup>39</sup>

But does all this add up to consistent, integrated and long-term political ends? Or the objective of a better peace? Or a genuine economic accounting of resource expenditure against estimated gains? Or a constant, intelligent reassessment? Even if we concede that much was discussed behind closed doors and unlikely to reach the history books, this is not a problem confined to ancient history, and judgements usually have to be made from behaviour.<sup>40</sup> The answer is not easy and we must not jump to facile answers.

There are plenty of examples of Roman behaviour which are not consistent with this image of Grand Strategy. Roman ideology aimed basically at world domination not peace. The arts of peace which the Romans were asked to remember were those of sparing only those who submitted, or, more cynically, creating the peace of desolation.<sup>41</sup> It could be argued that when Augustus gave great propaganda publicity on his coins and his monuments to the token return by the Parthians of the military standards (*signis receptis*) that had been lost a generation before,<sup>42</sup> he had devised a way of winning the war against Parthia by other means. But it is difficult to see when, if ever, Rome actually renounced hostile intentions against Parthia.<sup>43</sup> The political game was not to achieve a better peace.

Or, to take another prominent example, much has been made of Trajan's motives for war and his supposed strategy in annexing Dacia in the early second century AD. Trajan's aims are ascribed by Roman authors, some of them contemporaries, to revenge or desire for gold and glory,<sup>44</sup> but never elevated to a grand, strategic aim for the defence of the Balkans.<sup>45</sup> The results, if we are meant to believe Trajan had secretly planned some wider, strategic aim behind closed doors, are hardly convincing. Trajan had no time to organize the defence of Dacia before rushing off to Parthia. While the Dacian army tied down some 55–60,000 men by the early third century (one eighth of the Roman army), it still failed to deter the Marcommani invasion of Pannonia in the later second century or the Gothic incursions of

the third century, which led to the abandonment of the province. By destroying a stable Dacian kingdom, Trajan created a threat from the now invigorated Sarmatians and Iazyges that continued to plague the Empire for the next two hundred years.<sup>46</sup> If the annexation of Dacia was really strategically determined, why on earth did the province not include a frontier across the Hungarian plain, which would have shortened the defences of the middle Danube by some 500 km?<sup>47</sup>

In fact, the action does not appear to have been based on any geo-political assessment of the military viability of the annexations. That is what Hadrian, Trajan's successor, realized, although he could not reverse the decision, according to Dio. It was also what Aurelian must have discovered when he finally abandoned the province in the next century.<sup>48</sup> Hadrian did in fact withdraw from Trajan's other conquest in Parthia, much to the anger of the military establishment. That may have been due to an intelligent reassessment of ends and means. If so, it was unpopular with the Roman public and reversed by Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus. Commodus' reassessment of Marcus Aurelius' intentions to annex two provinces north of the Danube may, by some stretch of the imagination, also have been strategic, rather than due to his depravity, as the sources say. If so, the decision was taken against the advice of his military council.<sup>49</sup>

Did the Romans follow a strategy of cost-benefit analysis before annexation, as some have maintained?<sup>50</sup> It is true that Strabo in the first century AD and Appian in the second did make statements about unprofitable barbarian lands. But the question is whether their preaching conformed to imperial practice. Strabo's famous declaration about the unprofitability of a British invasion, for example, was completely disregarded by Claudius.<sup>51</sup> If this action was taken because of an intelligent reassessment that was counselled once again by the emperor's advisers, according to Dio, the motives they put forward were not strategic at all but personal, for the greater glory of the emperor.<sup>52</sup> With a final garrison that was the largest concentration of military forces of any province, Britain cannot have ever been in credit on the profit-loss account.

Appian, as I argue later, was making a general, highly ideological observation about Roman hegemony. But his thinking finds no mirror of restraint upon Marcus Aurelius' plans to expand beyond the Danube nor upon Verus' and Severus' campaigns into Mesopotamia.<sup>53</sup> If economic profit and loss were strategic concerns, the rumours of El Dorados in the East, that always excited Roman cupidity, never seem to have been investigated seriously.<sup>54</sup> Palmyra was eliminated in the third century because it posed a political danger, despite its economic profitability.<sup>55</sup> We have to accept, of course, that the political stability of an imperial regime depended upon an emperor's image as a victorious conqueror. But that is not an economic principle, and it is not Grand Strategy.

It comes down in the end to what we think were the priorities for a

Roman emperor. Security must have figured high in his preoccupations and the means by which to pay for it (that is, by taxes). But what we want to know is whether, when he sat down with his advisors, he took a global view of all the factors over the whole Empire, or whether he simply discussed *ad hoc* measures; how to patch up a truce here while moving troops there; whether to raise an emergency legion; or even whether to create an overall regional commander to co-ordinate troops drawn from several, different provinces. Did the council go further by debating, say, the strategy of coalition and balance of power, the virtues of limited against total war (in the Clausewitzian sense), the consequences of a war of attrition on the economic resources of the Empire? And above all, since this concerns frontiers, did they plan for the peace after the war?

I have deliberately tried here to list some possible Grand Strategic aims which are plausible within the context of our historical information, and for which we have some evidence. Caracalla, for instance, is said to have wanted a grand coalition with Persia,<sup>56</sup> which looks like an attempt at strategic alliances. But the trouble is that our ancient sources did not believe it was a serious proposition. Augustus and his successors are supposed to have made a rational plan to abandon the annexation of greater Germany. Yet not a single source, nor the behaviour of the emperors themselves, gave a hint that this was part of an overall strategy; not even Velleius Paterculus, a military officer who took part in the German campaigns, nor Strabo, who was the best political geographer of the age.<sup>57</sup> Both, in fact, suggest that the reverse was always on the cards.

When we do have information about what was discussed in imperial councils, which is not quite as meagre as one might think (and some has been cited already), we get the impression that the discussion was not so much about strategy as simple crisis management. That is how the meeting of Nero's *consilium principis* is presented by Tacitus, when it discussed Parthia. And it was how Ammianus reported the discussions in the consistory council of Constantius II that met to deal with the rebellion of Silvanus.<sup>58</sup> Some meetings did perhaps come closer to strategic thinking, such as when Hadrian's councillors, the *amici*, advised him against abandoning Dacia for fear of encouraging barbarian attacks.<sup>59</sup> But the strategic vision of Marcus Aurelius' military advisers, to whom young Commodus was entrusted, was no more sophisticated than declaiming vague ideas of expansion to the limits of the Ocean (*usque ad Oceanum*), a traditional Roman ideology.<sup>60</sup>

In general, such information as we possess suggests that imperial *consilia* were more concerned with regulating internal, administrative and organizational matters than with integrating resources towards specific, external objectives within the framework of a Grand Strategy.<sup>61</sup> News from the frontiers was, according to a recent analysis of the evidence, mainly assessed for what it told the emperor about his own commanders, not for its strategic



implications.<sup>62</sup> So, although we must accept that many decisions were arrived at *in camera* and will never be known to us, the subsequent behaviour of the armies and their commanders does not make the Grand Strategic aims any clearer.

My conclusion is that, while there was some, low-level, strategic thinking, it is difficult to detect any Grand Strategy, in the sense of an integrated effort towards a political end. There did exist the broad, ideological desire, deeply entrenched in the Roman psyche, to extend imperial power forever, *sine fine*. But to call that a Grand Strategy would be like describing Bismarck's foreign policy as *Deutschland über alles* without the integrated components of Prussianization, the struggle with the Reichstag and the complex balance of alliances he formed between Austria, Italy and France in order to achieve his ends.

If there is a link between Grand Strategy and frontiers, then it lies in the disposition of the troops.<sup>63</sup> Much has been made of this point. But, of course, ancient references to military numbers, army supply officers and reports of generals by themselves have no necessary relationship to frontier strategy. The same is true of military planning. Some of the examples from Frontinus, for example, which are cited in support of strategic thinking, have nothing at all to do with frontiers. They only concerned battles and wars; how Fabius Celso spied on the Etruscans in the Cimminian forest, or how Cato made a surprise raid, and so on.<sup>64</sup> The same is true of other historical examples of military planning that our sources describe in the imperial period. Vespasian's council of war to plan against his rival, Vitellius, for instance, discussed only how to muster the eastern armies for the civil war without abandoning security. No military strategy seems to have been discussed, since it was very obviously primarily a political exercise to keep the various legionary commanders on side.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, it is not clear how much even military dispositions reveal about frontier strategy. It is probably true that the movement of troops eastwards by Flavian emperors was the result of perceived needs on the Danube and the Euphrates, and in that sense it was relevant to frontier policy. But a policy to do what? Tacitus notoriously attributed Domitian's removal of troops from Britain to Germany to personal jealousy of Agricola's success.<sup>66</sup> We should, of course, hesitate in believing Tacitus, Agricola's son-in-law, on such an emotive subject. But it is not easy to understand from the military dispositions in either the West or the East what is meant by the new Flavian 'scientific' frontiers, which was one of Luttwak's key, evolutionary stages of Roman Grand Strategy.

In Britain, for example, Agricola deliberately ignored what might be considered the most 'scientific' frontier of the Forth–Clyde line, the shortest distance between two oceans, in his quest for 'the glory of Rome'. In this case Tacitus must surely be trusted to know about his own father-in-law's aims.<sup>67</sup> On the Danube the concentration of troops along the river line are



now proved, from the discoveries at Devin-Bratislava, to have antedated the Flavians and to have been intended as a means of control well beyond the river against Dacians, Marcomanni and Quadi deep in the Hungarian plain as far as the River Tisza, at least.<sup>68</sup> In the East archaeological studies prove that the legionary dispositions on the Euphrates are not evidence of static frontiers nor of the political and military boundaries beyond the river.<sup>69</sup>

The annexation of the Agri Decumates in Germany and the military dispositions of the Taunus–Odenwaldt–Neckar line must be the best case for a rational, frontier strategy, insofar as they do look like a serious attempt by the Flavian emperors to shorten communications between the Rhine and the Danube. Our only ancient source about the matter is Tacitus, very probably a junior officer at the time. His silence, however, about any strategic aim is deafening, even if not conclusive. But if there is one conventional view which archaeological research in Germany has altered it is about the originality of the Flavian contribution. The roads into the Black Forest and the forts which supported them had been slowly evolving from long before the Flavians. That makes it unlikely that they were motivated in the first instance by any strategic aim to shorten the frontiers.<sup>70</sup>

The real issue here, as earlier, is whether the changes in frontier dispositions were ever motivated by more than fairly simplistic, *ad hoc* responses to pressures, and by the traditional desire to control as far as possible. I do not hold so low an opinion of Roman intelligence as to suggest they never attempted to anticipate trouble. But it is hard to find evidence of how this was translated into Grand Strategic dispositions. We may assume that the decision to allocate the exceptionally high number of nearly forty thousand men to the invasion of Britain was because the native ‘strength is in their infantry’, as Tacitus says.<sup>71</sup> But it is difficult to see why so many were kept there so long after the conquest. The view from Vindolanda seems to suggest that by the turn of the century it was contemptible *Brittunculi* cavalry that were the main nuisance.<sup>72</sup> No one to my knowledge has explained the strategic implications, much less the Grand Strategy, of why Hadrian’s Wall was manned by auxiliaries while the Africa *fossatum* and Libyan Valleys were manned by vexillations of the African legion.

The single most quoted piece of evidence for Grand Strategic design is that of Zosimus, when he described the way that Constantine destroyed the security of Diocletian’s frontiers by moving the troops back from the front lines to the cities. This has been called ‘the most straightforward statement in ancient literature on Grand Strategy’. If so, it is also the most fanciful and can be disproved again and again by archaeology, all the way from Constantine’s massive fort which he built at Deutz-Cologne on the frontier line of the Rhine to the famous bridge he constructed over the lower Danube line at Daphne.<sup>73</sup> These were hardly examples of a Grand Strategy of in-depth defence.

Nevertheless, it is at this point that I find myself closest to believing that

we may see in the pressures generated by the Later Empire something quite like a unified frontier policy over a wide area. Remarkable as the *Notitia Dignitatum* is as a record of army deployment, it does not support Luttwak's theory that the Grand Strategy of the frontiers in the Later Empire was an elastic system of defence in depth behind the front line. But it does seem to indicate some kind of general policy for the frontiers. The most plausible and careful interpretation I have yet seen of the troops' dispositions on the frontiers argues that the new units of *ripenses* and *limitanei*, far from being 'a rag-tag local militia', as once thought, with a secondary, defensive role, were in fact made up of both defensive and offensive units (the *cunei* and *auxiliares*).<sup>74</sup> But even here there are questions. If the reason for these dispositions was strategic and covered the entire Rhine–Danube frontier, it was nevertheless a strategy which was not applied in the East nor in Africa nor in Britain, since it was devised to meet the peculiar problem of the infiltration of the northern frontiers by small bands of foreigners. So it was a strategy, perhaps, but not a Grand Strategic plan for the whole empire. Nor was it defensive. The twin forts on either side of the Rhine and Danube established by Constantine and Valentinian were an unambiguous claim that the empire intended to control *in barbarico* in true Roman tradition.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from the question of Grand Strategy, a secondary debate to emerge is whether, in the course of Roman history from the Republic to the Late Empire, a change took place from aggressive expansion with vaguely defined frontiers to well-defined frontiers with a defensive strategy. Though crudely put, this is the central theme of Luttwak's book, and I have dealt with some recent contributions to the discussion in Chapter 1. No one, of course, would deny the fact of borders in the Roman Empire. The real question again is what sort of borders and for what purpose. The Roman tradition of *limitatio*, the 'purifying enclosure of land' by boundary stones and *termini*, was never an act to limit expansion.<sup>76</sup> On the contrary, it was, like *terminatio*, an instrument to bring order to territory that had been annexed to *ager romanus*. In such land the notion of an external frontier-limit was specific and distinct from the internal borders of cadastrated land. Indeed, it was sometimes separated physically by territorial space (*extra clusa*), also called *ager arcifinius*, according to Roman surveyors' lore.<sup>77</sup>

This distinction between administered and unadministered land was a fundamental distinction in the period of the Republic that never disappeared from Roman frontier ideology. The *fossa regia* of Africa, for instance, was never the frontier of Roman Africa in our sense of the word but the administrative boundary listed in the *forma provinciae*.<sup>78</sup> The Taurus–Halys line established by the Treaty of Apamea in 188BC was by contrast an external border, not of Roman territory but of hegemonial control, established long before Rome had annexed Asia.<sup>79</sup> Like the Alps in the second century BC or the Rhine before Caesar's conquests, these geographic markers were in no sense the border of Roman administered territory.

The distinction I am trying to make is captured by the Greek words *arche* (direct rule) and *hegemonia* (indirect rule). The Parthians asked Pompey to recognize the Euphrates as the boundary to Roman *hegemonia* (in Plutarch's language of the second century AD);<sup>80</sup> that is, as the limit to Roman power not as the boundary of provincial territory. But he prevaricated, since Roman Republican ideology proclaimed the right of the Romans to control the *gentes* beyond the *termini imperii* through kings and alliances and to extend the *termini* from time to time.<sup>81</sup> The conduct of war, according to the principles of *bellum iustum*, meant that Romans waged not 'just wars' but 'justified wars'; justified, that is, by the aggression of the *gentes*, of which Rome was the sole arbiter by her right to rule.

The articulation of these ideological concepts of power reached their acme in the blaze of propaganda surrounding Augustus' wars of succession and conquest. The contemporary cosmological view, which we know Augustus personally helped to propagate and which has come down to us in the various cosmographic writings now collected in the *Geographi Latini Minores*,<sup>82</sup> established that beyond the core of the civilized world, but still within the *provinciae*, lay the *gentes*, the 'tribes'. The term *provinciae* here had nothing to do with the administered 'provinces', as the context makes clear, but meant the spheres of control. Beyond the inner *gentes* lay the *gentes externae*, stretching as far as the *oceani*. There were thus three bands of space, the administered territories, the unadministered territories under Roman rule and the outer periphery. Vergil's prediction of *imperium sine fine* did not signify unlimited rule but the unlimited *right* to rule as far as Oceanus.<sup>83</sup>

One can see the same distinction between *provinciae* and *gentes* and their relationship to Roman power throughout the *Res Gestae* that was written by Augustus at the end of his life. 'From me', he says, 'the Parthian *gentes* received the kings they sought' (32). 'When I might have made Armenia a *provincia* [an administered territory], I preferred to hand it over ... following the example of our ancestors' (27). 'I subjected the Pannonian *gentes* to Roman *imperium* ... I carried forward the *finis* of Illyricum ... I forced the Dacian *gentes* to accept the commands (*imperia*) of the Roman people' (30). 'I extended the *finis* of all those *provinciae* of the Roman people on whose borders lay *gentes* not subject to our *imperium*' (26). The two examples of *finis* here, which refer to boundaries of the administered provinces, are the only two in the whole *Res Gestae* which are translated in the Greek version by *horos/horion*, normally meaning a fixed boundary marker. All other examples of *finis* are translated as *ethne*, the Greek word for tribe (or *gens* in Latin). For example, 'My fleet sailed to the *finis* of the Cimbri' in northern Germany (26).<sup>84</sup>

All this needs to be said as a preliminary to understanding the famous *consilium*, the supposed blueprint for strategy given by Augustus to Tiberius in a codicil to his will. The advice, as Tacitus recorded it, was 'to keep the empire within its boundaries' (*coercendi intra terminos imperii*).<sup>85</sup> It has been

hailed as a new, strategic departure in frontier policy, brought about as a result of Varus' defeat in Germany. But it has also puzzled historians as to how Augustus could have renounced, and have expected his successors to renounce, traditional Roman imperialism; so much so, that some have even believed that the *consilium* was a posthumous invention by Tiberius to justify his own quietism and to use as a weapon, in order to restrain the ambitions of young Germanicus.<sup>86</sup>

But if Augustus was only advising that the *termini* of the present *arche* (the administered provinces) should not be extended and was making no reference to Roman *hegemonia* (their control) over the *gentes*, then his *consilium* was a far less radical reappraisal of Republican ideology than it appears, and it conformed more or less to Augustus own practice. For example, in a speech which Dio says was communicated to the senate as early as 20BC, it was reported that, 'Augustus administered the subject territory according to Roman customs but permitted the allied territories to be ruled according to their native manner. And he did not think it worth adding to the first nor to acquire more of the second'.<sup>87</sup> The phrase, 'adding to the first', that is, to the subject territory, could not have referred to the boundaries of the existing provinces, since Augustus boasted in the *Res Gestae* (26), as Dio must have known, that he had extended the *boroi* (*fines auxi* in Latin) of every province.<sup>88</sup> What we sometimes forget is that, despite the many wars beyond the Rhine and Danube, Augustus never claims in the *Res Gestae* that he had added a single new province to the Roman Empire.

So, if we now return to Augustus' posthumous *consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii*, Dio's version makes Tacitus' bare phrase more intelligible.<sup>89</sup> The advice, he records, was, 'Be satisfied with present possessions and in no way to seek to increase the *arche*'. For, the emperor added, 'He had always followed this principle in word and action, since, although it had been possible for him to take much barbarian land, he had not sought to'. The Emperor's insistence on the fact that he had not voluntarily 'sought' wars is a simple repetition of the Republican ideology of *bellum iustum*, justified war. You must never fight without being provoked. But he was also acknowledging that punitive wars against the *gentes* might be necessary to maintain Roman control, and perhaps even that the boundaries of the provinces might need to be adjusted, exactly as Augustus himself had done. Even in his lifetime, says Dio, Augustus had never wished to acquire anything, except when compelled to do so.<sup>90</sup>

This same policy of *bellum iustum* is contained in the famous speech that Dio invented and put into the mouth of Augustus' counsellor, Maecenas.<sup>91</sup> But the idea was no invention. Suetonius says exactly the same thing.<sup>92</sup> Strabo, who was a contemporary, says that Augustus restrained his generals from crossing the River Elbe when there was no provocation.<sup>93</sup> Yet at the same time Strabo gives no hint that the Elbe was regarded by Augustus as the frontier of Roman power. And the altar that was set up on the northern

bank of the river was a standard Roman method of making a symbolic claim to control a territory.<sup>94</sup> If Tiberius regarded Augustus' advice as sacrosanct, as Tacitus says, that does not mean that he reverted to a defensive strategy for the frontiers. Too often this is given as the reason why he withdrew Germanicus from Germany. But why would he have given permission for an invasion in the first place?

Germanicus introduces one other piece of evidence which has been brought into the debate to support the theory that a defensive strategy was emerging in Rome. I refer to the *Tabula Siarensis*, an inscription of an imperial edict issued by Tiberius, recently discovered in Spain, which orders amongst other things that triumphal arches surmounted by statues should be set up at Rome, on the Rhine and on Mount Amanus on the Syrio-Cappadocian border in honour of Germanicus' victories of AD16/17 in Germany.<sup>95</sup> Although we already knew of this edict from Tacitus, the fuller wording of the inscription, despite its lacunae, has led to the conclusion by the commentators that now, for the first time after Augustus, the Romans publicly conceded that the Rhine was the strategic military frontier of the Empire.<sup>96</sup>

I shall quote the critical words of the inscription since much has been made of them:

... *supraque eum ianum statua Germanici Cae]sar*is constiteretur  
*re(?ac)ipienti[s signa militaria ab Germanis: et praecipetur Gal]lis*  
**Germanisque qui citra Rhen[um incoherent, quorum civitates missae**  
*essent ab divo] Aug(usto) rem divinam ad tumulu[m Drusi facere*  
*eodem loco publice facerent alterum simi]le sacrificium parentant[es*  
*quotannis ... etc.*

I have to say that, even if one accepts the restorations above, as proposed by Lebek, it is difficult to see quite why such wide claims have been made for the inscription or how it reverses the boast made by Germanicus, who, according to Tacitus, claimed that he had conquered Germany as far as the Elbe.<sup>97</sup> The decree commands no more than that Germanicus should be portrayed receiving the standards of Varus, and that there should be an annual sacrifice at the arch by the assembled tribes of Germans and Gauls from the left (near) bank of the Rhine at the same time as the annual ceremony of commemoration at the tomb of Drusus (at Mainz). At one stage it was thought that the arch must have been next to the tumulus of Drusus, the present day Eichelstein, which is on the left bank and that this, therefore, showed that the free German side of the river had been renounced. But archaeological discoveries have revealed that the emplacement was on the far, right bank of the Rhine at Mainz-Kastel, almost certainly accompanied by a wooden fort.<sup>98</sup> In other words, the arch had been deliberately

constructed to demonstrate that Rome had no intention of relinquishing control of the North.

Strabo's account of the region between the Rhine and the Elbe, written after the triumph of Germanicus, confirms this. Referring to the Langobardi, for instance, he says, 'They have been driven to flee out of their country to the land on the far side of the river (Elbe)'.<sup>99</sup> The symbolic function of a Roman arch was to mark a route of transit, often at the point from where a route began, as is recorded, for example, on the inscription at Baetis in Spain, from whose arch the road supposedly led on as far as Oceanus.<sup>100</sup> The arch of Germanicus, therefore, conformed precisely to the ideological world vision of Augustus, that the *fines imperii* lay beyond the administered provinces to include the unadministered but subject *gentes*. It represents no new defensive strategy.

The second central question is whether a defensive strategy on the frontiers developed by the second century AD and what evidence there is to support such a reversal, if such indeed it was.

The evidence on the ground has already been discussed in the last chapter. Here I want to look only at the broader strategic aspects, beginning with what has always been regarded as the most explicit proof of the new *Weltanschauung* of a Roman Empire surrounded by barriers. The evidence comes from three Greek writers who wrote in the second and third centuries AD: Appian, Aelius Aristides and Herodian. Herodian we can dismiss straight away, since he claims that the frontier defences, which were 'like a wall of the Roman empire (*teichos tes arche*)', were already in place under Augustus.<sup>101</sup> Aelius Aristides in his speech in praise of Rome is more credible but not entirely straightforward. He, too, claims that the army of the frontier 'Like a rampart encloses (the world) in a ring', but he also says that '(The emperor) does not reign within fixed boundaries, nor does another dictate to what point your power reaches'.<sup>102</sup> So his evidence is ambiguous but consistent with what I have described as Augustus' policy.

The most important of the three is Appian. The passage that is always quoted comes from the introduction to his history, when he says of the Romans, 'They surround the empire (*arche*) with great armies and garrison the whole stretch of land and sea, like an "estate".' The word he uses for estate is *chorion*, which can also mean 'a fortified post'.<sup>103</sup> But a careful reading of Appian shows that he is making the same distinction we have already encountered between the administered *arche* and the unadministered *hegemonia* of the Roman *imperium*. The whole passage reads as follows:

The Roman emperors have added certain tribes to those in the *hegemonia*; others they have put down when they rebelled [that is, the *externae gentes*]. In general, while holding the best part of the earth and sea by prudence, they prefer to preserve the *arche* rather than



extend it infinitely to barbarian tribes who are poverty-stricken and profitless.

Appian then goes on to say that ambassadors have come from these latter barbarian tribes to offer themselves as subjects, but they have been refused. 'And to others, infinite in number, the emperors themselves give kings, not needing any of them in the *arche*.' It is at this point that the sentence first quoted comes, 'They surround their whole *arche* ...'

Although it is not entirely plain who 'some' and 'others' are, the general sense is clear, that the Romans controlled all the barbarians. But only some were given kings and were admitted to the *hegemonia*, while the *arche* itself was an even more restricted central core. The camps in a circle around the *arche* are not said to be there for the defence of the inner core, although this might be inferred from the term *chorion*. But the context shows they were at least equally important in bringing order to the *gentes* when they rebelled. We may have some doubts about the credentials of Appian as an accurate reporter of the strategic thinking of the inner councils of the imperial high command, since all we know about him is that he was a lowly, Egyptian financial official, lucky enough to be elevated in his old age to an unspecified procuratorship through the patronage of Fronto. But his view here is remarkably close to that described by Dio as the policy of Augustus, and does not contradict the praises of Aelius Aristides above.

In short, the ideology which we find in the second century AD, which I persist in believing to be ideology rather than Grand Strategy, had not changed from that of the first century. Some attempt has been made recently to argue that the supposed change in imperial ideology and the shift to a defensive frontier strategy took place not under Hadrian, the great wall builder, but under Antoninus Pius; after, that is, Tacitus had written his histories but at the same time as Appian and Aelius Aristides were active.<sup>104</sup> The reason proposed for postponing the change to the period after Hadrian is, interestingly enough, because there is some evidence to show that Hadrian's withdrawal from Trajan's conquest of Mesopotamia did not signify a relaxation of Roman control beyond the Euphrates. The client kingdom of Mesene (Charax), in particular, seems to have retained its loyalty to Rome, Roman officials were present on the Euphrates and a temple to the Augusti was built by a Palmyran merchant in the very Parthian capital of Vologesias.<sup>105</sup> So much, then, for Hadrian as the great defensive strategist.

Apart from the evidence of the Greek writers, the new mentality is supposedly illustrated by references to frontier walls in the Sibylline oracles which circulated widely in the Greek East during the Later Empire.<sup>106</sup> There are three passages. The first speaks of tribes hostile to Rome which will come 'against the walls of Rome' (*epi teichea Romes*); the second predicts a fearful ruler from Asia who will bring war 'even against the famous walls of Rome' (*kai ep'aglaa teichea Romes*); and the third forecasts that three kings

will come 'against the famous walls of Rome' (*ep'aglaa teichea Romes*).<sup>107</sup> The interpretation of these oracular utterances is not my concern. The context of the phrases, however, which are all very similar, shows that they refer, as far as I can judge, to the actual walls of the city of Rome and are not a metaphor for the frontiers of the Empire. The use of the metaphor of a 'wall of men' was common to describe the frontiers of the empire.<sup>108</sup> But this is hardly strong evidence of change.

The notion that Antoninus Pius was responsible for abandoning the Augustan policy of regarding kings of the *gentes* as *membra partisque imperii*, to use Suetonius' words, is belied both by the fact of the wars of Verus and Marcus Aurelius in Parthia and by Pius' own publicity for the client kings he installed. The slogans *REX QUADIS DATUS* and *REX ARMENIIS DATUS* were inscribed on his coins, and there are many references to the client kings established by Pius, quite apart from Appian's contemporary testimony that kings figured prominently in imperial ideology. Parthia and Scythia were included in the Antonine 'provincial series' of coins.<sup>109</sup> The Quadi, Armenians, Parthians and Scythians, of course, lay beyond the administrative boundaries of the Empire.

Perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence cited for a strategic concept of frontiers is that associated with Septimius Severus, when Dio says that Severus claimed (wrongly as it turned out) that the annexation of northern Mesopotamia provided a 'bulwark' (*probolos*) for Syria.<sup>110</sup> The term is a tactical one for an outwork but it does suggest some sort of strategic thinking not, however, a 'grand' idea which was extended to other parts of the Empire, as far as I can see, although the same claims have been made for Trajan's annexation of Dacia.<sup>111</sup> Dio, of course, also suggested other motives for Severus; the desire for glory and perhaps the need for money.<sup>112</sup> But whatever we may think of his strategic thinking in this example, which I think is just possible, Severus can hardly be regarded as an advocate of defensive strategy. *Propagatio imperii* figured high on his list of advertised virtues and his campaigns in Britain and Mesopotamia reinforce the claim.<sup>113</sup>

I have deliberately not discussed the Later Empire at any length, since Luttwak's book never attempted to extend his theory of elastic defence to the post-Constantinian era, and most of the debate has focused on the earlier periods. More recent studies have not supported the portrait of a Roman army fighting on its back foot against the barbarian hordes.<sup>114</sup> On the contrary, Elton's careful study of warfare in Roman Europe finds that, notwithstanding horror stories of frontier pressures and the corruption of the late Roman army, the political unity, and hence the effectiveness, of enemy forces was so fragmented and ephemeral as to be negligible.<sup>115</sup> Austin and Rankov go even further and argue that the whole process of intelligence gathering in relation to frontier outposts was transformed by a more aggressive



penetration into *barbaricum*, which reached its climax in the post-Constantinian army.<sup>116</sup>

The development of the *comitatenses* field army, supposedly the key element in a new Grand Strategy of defence that distributed a mobile reserve throughout the provinces, was almost certainly not strategic thinking in origin but the historical result of the wars of succession, when each heir of Constantine attached to himself a mobile *force de frappe*.<sup>117</sup> Its creation was not the signal to strip the frontiers, as Zosimus asserts, since the *limitanei* and *ripenses* on the Rhine–Danube frontiers were far from the defensive low-grade militia they were once supposed to be.<sup>118</sup> It is hard to detect any change in the traditional ideology of aggressive expansion and control of the *gentes* between the policy of Augustus and the inscription on Constantine's fort at Cologne–Deutz announcing 'the subjection and control of the Franks' or the praise given to Theodosius for extending his rule beyond the very boundaries of the natural world – *ultra terminos rerum metasque naturae*.<sup>119</sup> Despite territorial losses, the frontiers remained as important under Constantine and Valentinian, and their desire to control beyond the organised territories as great, as under earlier emperors. The event that reveals most about late imperial attitudes is the death of Valentinian, who choked from apoplexy when the Quadi, a people who were beyond the frontiers and not part of the administered province, dared to complain that the Emperor was not entitled to build forts in their non-Roman land.<sup>120</sup>

My conclusion is that, in spite of the static (though never totally static) frontiers or *termini imperii* of the administered provinces, which was advocated (though never rigidly) by Augustus and developed (though with much licence) by his successors, there is nothing in the evidence of either the sources or the behaviour of the Romans to make a convincing case for a reversal of the ideology of *propagatio imperii* and *imperium sine fine*. Although there is some limited evidence of strategic planning, and perhaps in the Later Empire of something more general and sophisticated, there is nothing which really qualifies for the description of Grand Strategy.

The nearest we come in Roman history to a global overview of the frontiers is, indeed, the Augustan *consilium*. But I do not take this view because the *consilium* marked the start of a new policy of retrenchment and defence, but because Augustus was here attempting to reformulate a deeply embedded, Republican ideology into some sort of a wider policy for the Empire. Nevertheless, I have hesitated to call the policy a Grand Strategy, since it was too broad and too general to constitute a strategic plan, as later Roman history proved. What it did was to sharpen the perception of the difference between a boundary, which defines and is inwardly orientated, and a frontier, which expands and is outwardly orientated. Such a description follows almost exactly the definition given by a modern political geographer of the characteristic of all frontiers in history.<sup>121</sup> Yet it is self-evident that nations in history have never followed the same strategy within these parameters. Nor have they necessarily even understood them.

## Notes

- 1 Luttwak 1976.
- 2 A history of the Limescongress meetings is given by A.R. Birley in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 1–11.
- 3 Mann 1979. The same position is adopted by Z. Visy in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 71–5.
- 4 Prescott 1965: 23–4.
- 5 Millar 1982; Isaac 1990.
- 6 Isaac 1990: 31 and 375; cf. my review of Isaac in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 March 1991.
- 7 Isaac 1998.
- 8 Whittaker 1994.
- 9 Troussset 1987; Whittaker 1994: ch. 3.
- 10 Austin and Rankov 1995.
- 11 Mattern 1999: especially 81–122.
- 12 Bishop 1999; Cherry 1998: 25, but Cherry sees no obvious strategic purpose, for example, in the Severan forts in North Africa, pp. 55–6.
- 13 Bishop 1999: 117.
- 14 Jones 1978.
- 15 Willems 1986.
- 16 Zahariade 1997; cf. J.-M. Carrié in Rousselle 1995: 31–4.
- 17 LoCasio 2000: 93.
- 18 Reuter 1997.
- 19 Nicasie 1997: 459 says that, ‘The defensive function of fixed defences was so self-evident to ancient authors that they did not deem it necessary to explain it for the benefit of all too sceptical modern scholars.’ But I fear that is rhetorical evasion.
- 20 *CIL* III.6123 (AD 61).
- 21 Schönberger 1969.
- 22 Wheeler 1997.
- 23 See W. Liebeschuetz in Dabrowa 1994, who describes the work as fantasies ‘not intended to be implemented’. For an assessment of the lack of strategic value in the geography of Eusebius, another later Roman writer, see Isaac 1998: ch. 19.
- 24 Ferrill 1991: 72, 75, citing Luttwak 1976: 61. All references to Ferrill are to the article which summarizes his book, *Roman imperial grand strategy*, New York, published in the same year.
- 25 Wheeler 1993: 25; Luttwak 1976: 69
- 26 Ferrill 1991: 73; Wheeler 1993: 216
- 27 Ferrill 1991: 28; Wheeler 1993: 236
- 28 Whittaker 1994: ch. 2; Fulford 1992. I have returned to this theme in Ch. 5.
- 29 Isaac 1990: 52.
- 30 Kennedy 1991, cited with approval by Wheeler.
- 31 Earle 1943, viii.
- 32 Liddell Hart 1974: 357.
- 33 Kennedy 1991: 6.
- 34 Howard 1991: 31.
- 35 I have cited the example of the French in North Africa in the nineteenth century; Whittaker 1994: 13.
- 36 *Vel. Pat.* 2. 106.
- 37 Strabo 2. 5. 8, Appian, *pr.* 5; cf. Lassère 1983.
- 38 *Tac. Agr.* 14.
- 39 *Tac. Ann.* 15. 29.

- 40 Hattendorf 1991: 11–13.  
 41 Verg. *Aen.* 6. 851–3, Tac. *Agr.* 30.  
 42 Cf. Zanker 1988: 186.  
 43 See Isaac 1990: *passim*. E. Wheeler in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 287–92 does not believe that Parthia was the perpetual victim of Roman aggression; more a partner in a cold war. But he agrees that Rome never recognized Parthia as an equal, nor the Euphrates as a border until the third century AD.  
 44 Pliny, *Pan.* 8. 4, 16. 5, Dio [Xiph] 68. 6. 1, 68. 17. 1; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12. 16–20 talks of ‘strong men contending for empire and power’.  
 45 As Zahariade 1997 claims.  
 46 Mócsy 1974: 95 lists wars in AD 173–179, 236–238, 258–260, 284, and throughout the fourth century.  
 47 As was perhaps intended; Opreanu 1997 – and as the present frontiers of Hungary are drawn. M. Mikovic in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 757–64 tries to make strategic sense of the Dacia–Moesia frontier after Trajan’s annexation, but shows instead how it was constantly being adjusted pragmatically.  
 48 Dio [Xiph], 68. 13. 6. Hadrian misguidedly stopped the subsidy paid to the Roxolani that led to further fighting, and then he renewed the subsidy. Is this strategic thinking?  
 49 Dio [Xiph] 72. 1. 2, Herod. 1. 6. 3.  
 50 LoCascio 2000: 93.  
 51 Strabo 2. 5. 8.  
 52 Dio 66. 19. 2–3. Hanson 2002: 26–27 discusses Claudius’ propaganda.  
 53 Appian, *pr.* 7.  
 54 Braund 1986.  
 55 Isaac 1998: 420.  
 56 Dio [Xiph] 78. 1. 1, Herod. 4. 10. 2.  
 57 I have discussed the issue of defensive frontiers in Ch.1.  
 58 Tac. *Ann.* 15. 25; Amm.Marc 15. 5. 18 ff.  
 59 Eutrop. 8.6.2. The advice was bad, as it turned out, as I have explained above.  
 60 Herod. 1. 5. 6.  
 61 See Crook 1955: 116, for an analysis of the evidence.  
 62 Austin and Rankov 1995.  
 63 Ferrill 1991: 71.  
 64 Front. *Strat.* 1. 2. 2–9; Fronto is cited by Wheeler 1993: 235.  
 65 Tac. *Hist.* 2. 81–2.  
 66 Tac. *Agr.* 39–40.  
 67 Tac. *Agr.* 23.  
 68 Dio [Xiph] 68. 10. 3; Ptol. *Geog.* 3. 7. 1.  
 69 Wheeler 1991, Crow 1986b.  
 70 Todd 1992: 328, surveys the archaeological reports. A recent survey of S.-W. German archaeology is given by Sommer 2002, including Claudian–Neronian fortifications on the Upper Danube.  
 71 Tac. *Agr.* 12.  
 72 *T. Vindol.* II. 163.  
 73 Zos. 2. 34; Ferrill 1991: 82.  
 74 Brennan 1972; *contra* Ferrill 1991: 28.  
 75 Brennan 1980.  
 76 The quotation is from Latte 1960: 41.  
 77 Hygin.Grom. *Cons. limit.* 161 (Thulin). I have summarized here Whittaker 1994, ch. 1.  
 78 Cf. Appian, *Pun.* 135.  
 79 Livy 38. 38. MacDonald 1967; *contra* Liebmann-Frankfort 1969.  
 80 Plut. *Pomp.* 36.  
 81 For example, Cic. *Prov.Cos.* 12. 31, 13. 33.

- 82 Dalché and Nicolet 1986.
- 83 Cf. Ovid, *Fast.* 682–3, ‘To other people land may be given with fixed limit (*limite certo*), but the space of the city of Rome is the same as the space of the world.’ Discussed further in Whittaker 1994.
- 84 Vanotti 1987: 248.
- 85 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.
- 86 Ober 1982.
- 87 Dio 54. 9. 1–2.
- 88 The idea that Augustus somehow forgot to revise the *Res Gestae* at the end of his life, as Vanotti 1987 believes, seems to me too improbable to be true.
- 89 Dio 56. 33.
- 90 Dio 56. 41. 7.
- 91 Dio 52. 37. 1. Potter 1996 goes so far as suggest this speech was inspired by post-Hadrianic defensive policy; but that does not account for the references in Suetonius and Strabo.
- 92 Suet. *Aug.* 21. 2.
- 93 Strabo 7. 1. 4. This principle is used by Glüsing 1989 to explain the ‘Elbeprobem’, when Rome intervened to assist their allies, the Cherusci, against the Suebi and others; cf. Erdrich 2001: 16–17.
- 94 Dio 55. 10a; Helgeland 1978: 1500 ff.
- 95 Lebeck 1989; Potter 1987; Lehmann 1991.
- 96 Tac. *Ann.* 2. 83.
- 97 Tac. *Ann.* 2. 41; Lehmann 1991: 90–1.
- 98 Frenz 1989.
- 99 Strabo 7. 1. 3–4.
- 100 Toutain 1900: 611.
- 101 Herod. 2. 1. 5.
- 102 Ael. Arist. *ad Rom.* 82 and *ad Rom.* 10.
- 103 Appian, *pr.* 7.
- 104 Potter 1991.
- 105 Teixidor 1984: 28–31; Teixidor 1987.
- 106 Potter 1987; Potter 1991.
- 107 *Orac. Sib.* XIII. 103 ff.; *Orac. Sib.* XIV. 163 ff.; *Orac. Sib.* XIV. 246 ff.
- 108 E.g. Liban. *Or.* 20. 17 – ‘the emperor who set a wall of armed soldiers to defend the Roman empire’.
- 109 *RIC* III. nos 620, 1059; Toynbee 1934: 146 explains the inclusion of Parthia and Scythia as ‘symbolic of the great tracts of the world outside the Empire’, but they are portrayed presenting the emperor with the *aurum coronarium*; see my comments in Ch. 6.
- 110 Dio 75. 3. 2, cited by Wheeler 1993: 224.
- 111 For this use, see Xen. *Cyr.* 5. 3. 11, etc.
- 112 Dio [Xiph] 75. 1. 1, 75. 3. 2.
- 113 Birley 1974.
- 114 I have tried to give a more measured view of the great invasions of the later Empire in the next chapter.
- 115 Elton 1996b.
- 116 Austin and Rankov 1995.
- 117 Mann 1977: 12; Whittaker 1994: 89. Nicasie 1997: 79–82 agrees that the divisions of the army into regional commands were probably political, but he then assumes they remained in place for strategic reasons.
- 118 Brennan 1972; Mayerson 1994: 36.
- 119 *CIL* XIII. 8502; *Pan.Lat.* 2(12). 22–23.
- 120 Amm. Marc. 30. 6. 2–3.
- 121 Kristof 1969.

### 3 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INVASIONS OF THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE CAN HISTORIANS BE TRUSTED?

We cannot begin to read the literary sources for the Later Empire before we understand not simply *where* they are wrong but *why*. Three problems have to be dealt with: the perversions of modern historiography, the distortions of ancient historiography and the problems specific to individual authors. Let me take each in order.

We are still paying the historiographic price for biological theories of Decline and Fall, which have forced the events of the third to fifth century into a straitjacket of periodicity. 'The Barbarian Invasions' marked the end of an age of Roman corruption and heralded a new medieval dawn. It was a construct which suited the propagandists of Charlemagne, the cultural evolutionists of the Enlightenment and the ethnic purists of 'Das deutsche Altertum'. Out of it arose modern migration myths, unsupported by ancient sources, of vague, central European stirrings and of pressures that burst out from an overcrowded *Barbaricum*, which have exaggerated the strength of the barbarian forces and the ferocity of their attacks<sup>1</sup>

There is no literary evidence, for example, to say that the crossing of the Rhine in AD406/7 by Vandals, Sueves and Alans was a great tribal movement caused by external coercion from the Carpathians. If modern Roman historians view invasions and 'Germanization' from the imperial centre by stressing conformity and unity, they distort the fact that the provinces of Belgica and Germany looked North not South, which is what Caesar said. The provinces were as much a part of trans-Rhine Germany as of cis-Rhine Gaul, with a strong military tradition of arms, and they were held within the Empire more by the presence of the court and army than by strong ethnic bonds<sup>2</sup>

More recently historiography has been methodologically bedevilled by its collaboration with archaeology and their mutual reinforcement of errors. In order to give substance and dates to unsatisfactory documents, especially those in the later third or later fifth centuries, where a consecutive, historical narrative is almost impossible, historians have turned to archaeology and numismatics. At the same time archaeologists have used weak historical evidence to identify and date what are often purely relative archaeological

phenomena of burnt strata, ruined buildings and coin hoards. The invasions of the later third century, for example, are historically documented only in the crudest fashion, mainly by the epitomes and the unreliable *Historia Augusta*, both written in the late fourth century. These sources regularly attributed a great Gallic catastrophe to every reign between Decius (c. AD 51) and Probus (AD282), repeating phrases of doom, such as *Gallias pervagantes, cum omnes Gallias vagarentur, Galliae a Germanis possessae, Gallis parte maxima obsessis, subita irruptione, nutante Gallia*.<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to measure the intensity of the attacks from this hyperbole, let alone whether the events ever took place.

On at least ten separate occasions between 253 and 298 there are literary references to barbarian attacks. Only for one date, at the death of Aurelian in 275, are any details given of the scale of the invasion by a writer in the Augustan History, the worst of all the sources. Sixty *nobilissimae civitates*, says the biographer, were captured and seventy *nobilissimae civitates* were retrieved<sup>4</sup> The first figure manifestly reflects the number of cities of the great provincial council, the Concilium Galliarum, the second is lifted from the Emperor Julian's figure for all the cities restored by Probus in seven years over the whole Empire<sup>5</sup> Granted the general instability of the later third century, only a historiographic commitment to *Katastrophen-theorien* could call the invasion of AD275, on the basis of this information, the greatest disaster ever suffered by Gaul in all her pre-modern history, as Camille Jullian picturesquely put it<sup>6</sup> Only a similar commitment could persuade archaeologists to attribute so many numismatic hoards with no firm *terminus post quem*, and so many undated ruined buildings or city walls, to this single event or, for that matter, to any violent invasion, since we have many, alternative literary explanations for hoards and destruction which were not the result of catastrophe.<sup>7</sup>

In ancient historiography most of the commentators of the age of 'The Great Invasions' were too close to the incidents they described. We perhaps forget, after the poverty of the third century, that there are more contemporary literary sources in the fourth and early fifth century, many of them implicated in the events, than in any other period of ancient history: Victor and the epitomators, Ammianus, Julian, Libanius, Jerome, Priscus, Eunapius, Olympiodorus, the Gallic Panegyricists, Ausonius, Orosius, Salvian, and others. Contemporaries are always tempted to elevate modest misfortunes into catastrophe and decline since, in the words of Ammianus, 'Those who are mesmerised with amazement at recent ills make errors'.<sup>8</sup> They bring us the immediacy of journalism with all journalism's faults of exaggeration, lack of perspective, political or religious bias or simply down-right error. The savagery of the barbarian incursion was a device to praise the emperor's achievements.<sup>9</sup> Atrocities at Christian churches became a *topos* for general barbarian destruction; see, for example, Jerome's exaggerated indignation over the attack on Mainz and Worms.<sup>10</sup> Attila the Hun became a

symbol of 'the Other' in order to heroicize ancestors and even Goths or Franks.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the authors of the invasions reflect the views of the rich and urban classes, those ideologically most committed to keeping the worlds of Romania and Barbaria apart. They inevitably felt the losses most, since it was they who either abandoned or were expelled from their properties, while the poor remained; as, for example, happened in the Alan settlements of AD 42.<sup>12</sup> The Gallic panegyricists, some of whom were related to each other, came from the same social milieu that provided imperial place men. Many of the *litterati* of the fifth century were also related, or they were linked to the same social and economic nexus. An author like Prosper of Aquitaine was more concerned about the politics of pretenders of the early fifth century than about the invasions, which he only recorded casually.<sup>13</sup> Eunapius (as preserved in Zosimus' text) was obsessed with paganism and simply uninterested in barbarian invasions, but Olympiodorus (also in Zosimus) was Romano-centric.<sup>14</sup>

Christian prophets of doom were more determined to draw the analogy between moral failure and lack of resistance to the barbarians than to give an accurate analysis of the destruction. The invasions of the fourth and fifth century are described in the same apocalyptic terms as those used by Cyprian and Lactantius in the third century; that is, as the decline of a world that had grown too old and tired.<sup>15</sup> There is not much chance of assessing social, demographic or economic information from these sorts of reports, unless by accident. Paulinus of Beziers, for instance, writing soon after the invasions of 406/7, attacked the moral degeneracy of his countrymen who preferred to repair their vineyards and their windows to searching out 'hidden' raiders.<sup>16</sup> Evidently not all had been lost. One would hardly guess that, except for Adrianople, no major defeat was suffered by the Roman army anywhere in the Roman world between 350 and 500.<sup>17</sup>

The shrill tones of Salvian, as he proclaimed the decadence of the fifth century, ironically offer testimony to the prosperity of the North in the fourth.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, the image of the whole land going up in smoke changed after the fall of Majorian (AD 461) had proved that the break with Rome was irrevocable.<sup>19</sup> It is as though there was no more mileage in misery. Faustus of Riez (*c.* 477) found conditions were not so bad after all; Remigius, Bishop of Reims (*c.* 481), accepted Clovis, the Frank, as a Roman administrator with good grace; Ruricus of Limoges (AD 485–508) did not use the word 'barbarian' once in his entire dossier of 82 letters and says that although Volusianus of Tours feared the 'enemy' (probably the Franks), he was more afraid of his wife.<sup>20</sup> How great was that terror?

Turning to the problems in individual texts, the ancient authors cited for disasters were frequently not historians, and they had axes to grind. A banal observation. But observe the weight carried in modern accounts by the famous letter of Jerome in AD 409 as evidence for the invasion of 406/7.<sup>21</sup>



The letter was written to persuade the lady Ageruchia not to marry because of the collapse of civilisation, sent by a morose old man of over seventy, living in distant Bethlehem, from where there issued a stream of unpleasant letters and sermons proclaiming the horrors of barbarians and the devastation all over the Roman world. But with more attention to rhetoric than truth. In his home region in Pannonia, for instance, he said 'all had perished' in AD 391, but soon after he was engaged in selling his family farm, which apparently had not gone up in smoke.<sup>22</sup> After a similar letter, cataloguing disasters on the Danube in 396, Jerome adds, 'I do not propose to write a history ... It is by reason of our sins that the barbarians are strong. God's anger vents its fury on us by the barbarian's madness.'<sup>23</sup> This is not serious history.<sup>24</sup>

There are other Christian pessimists and optimists. Many of them wrote devotional records of saintly men. But hagiographies are not history. The letter of Paulinus of Nola to Victricius of Rouen (dated *c.* AD 403) is frequently cited as evidence of the desolation of North-West Gaul, containing phrases such as 'the shadow of death, ... deserted shores, forests full of robbers' and so on. But the rest of the letter is not always quoted: 'Then Victricius appeared and from everywhere light shone ... angelic and holy choirs of saint fill the cities, the forts, the islands and the woods.'<sup>25</sup> Is this evidence of disaster or deliverance?

Apart from the Christians, whose sense of sin darkened their vision, many serious authors could not avoid their personal involvement in the political events of their time. Julian's own account of the Battle of Strasbourg and the lamentable condition of Gaul before he appeared as its saviour cannot be the last word. Libanius, a great admirer, is not an independent source, since he admitted using Julian's own account of Strasbourg. In any case, Sozomen tells us that Julian 'industriously circulated letters' to blacken the name of Constantius II and the role he had played in calling in the barbarians.<sup>26</sup> That is confirmed by Julian's own public letter to the Athenians. There was a war of propaganda, as Libanius and Julian himself admitted.<sup>27</sup> Ammianus, the best historian of late antiquity, was openly partisan. Can we, therefore, believe Libanius, when he tells us that Magnentius left the cities on the Rhine 'in ruins', yet at the same time ruled 'with care for the laws'? Is it credible that at the battle of Strasbourg 6,000 Alamanni (Libanius says 8,000) died but only 247 Romans.<sup>28</sup> These were days before missiles of precision and weapons of mass destruction. Questions must be asked.

Allowing for this historiographic background, how do we arrive at a more balanced picture of the size of the invasions? All ancient texts suffer from the endemic problem of carelessly transmitted numerals, which may not always be evidence of original sin; sixty or seventy cities destroyed in 275; 30,000 or 35,000 Alamanni soldiers mustered at Strasbourg, 400,000



Germans killed by Probus.<sup>29</sup> Grand theories cannot be built on such evidence. Estimates of numbers are also susceptible to prejudice. No political demonstration ever takes place today without wildly differing figures, sometimes by a multiple of ten, according to whether they are put out by the protesters or the police. We must expect the numbers of the dead at Strasbourg to be distorted by both sides. But we possess only the Roman propaganda.

Furthermore, military numbers for barbarian invaders are always rounded up and the same figure is repeated suspiciously often. The most plausible circumstantially is the 80,000 Vandals, who were supposedly carefully counted in AD 429. Yet the number was the same in AD 480 and again the same in the sixth century.<sup>30</sup> The same figure appears for Burgundians on the banks of the Rhine in AD 370, and still the same for the army of Saxons and Burgundiones (Burgundians) when attacked by Valentinian.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps they were multiples of the nominal strength of units, 8,000 for a Greek phalanx, some have suggested.<sup>32</sup> But I doubt if anyone counted.<sup>27</sup> When the Goths crossed the Danube in AD 376, they were so numerous, says Ammianus, that Roman officials gave up trying to count them. Yet the Gothic army before Adrianople was reported to be 10,000. Even if that figure was an error, I doubt whether there could have been more than double the number at the crossing of 376.<sup>33</sup>

This figure at Adrianople was one of those seized upon by Delbrück to cut the German *Völkerwanderungen* down to size and to refute 'the concept of hundreds of thousands in the German armies'.<sup>34</sup> It should put us on our guard against reports of 'innumerable and most ferocious' Vandals, Sueves and Alans pouring into Gaul in AD 406/7, as reported by Jerome, or of 'about 20,000 frontline troops' of the Vandals killed at that time by loyal Franks, according to Gregory of Tours.<sup>35</sup> Salvian himself thought the Vandals were *infirmisimi hostes* and 'feeble' when they entered Gaul and Spain.<sup>36</sup> All pretence to accuracy is wasted effort.<sup>37</sup> But the language of waves, floods, funeral pyres and boiling pots in the historiographic tradition of 'The Barbarian Invasions' has encouraged uncritical acceptance of massive 'nations on the move', a phenomenon which is in any case uncharacteristic of the history of any period.<sup>38</sup>

It is more important to note that the sources give prominence to the incoherence, lack of unity and poor organization of the enemy. But, above all, the majority of the references to troubles speak of attacks *per furta et latrocinia*, small groups infiltrating through the frontiers, not massive frontal attacks.<sup>39</sup> At Langres, about 150 km inside the frontier, Constantius Chlorus was attacked about AD 298 by a small band of Alamanni and saved by the fort. Although I have argued that this kind of intrusion represents the true nature of the pressures on the Roman frontiers in general, I have the impression that it is particularly true of attacks in the North by Franks and Saxons; for example, 1,000 Franks raided a deserted fort in 358; Charrietto's Frankish

gang in the territory of Trier *c.* 350 plundered other small Frankish gangs; Saxon sea raiders in 370 were defeated by a small *cuneus* unit of horsemen.<sup>40</sup>

It would be more sensible to ask, what was the impact of the invasions. Small raids can be no less devastating than large assaults. Scales of disaster are never easy to measure, even with statistics. But such assessments in the Later Empire have inevitably suffered from the historiographic bias of immediacy and periodicity that I have just discussed. Archaeology is best placed to contradict false impressions, by proving, for instance, that a city like Boulogne was not abandoned in the fifth century. But a more careful reading of the sources, as in that example, also helps sometimes.<sup>41</sup>

Take the ruin of cities, a theme which recurs throughout the invasion literature. I have already noted the weakness of the literary evidence concerning the number of cities which were captured during the invasion of AD 275 and the many third century dates recorded for other attacks on Gaul. The invasion is regularly stated to have reached Spain, but the only (unreliable) source which mentions Spain at all says nothing of the sort. Only for one date, in the reign of Gallienus, is there a reference to the occupation of Spain by Alamanni and Franks.<sup>42</sup> If archaeology wishes to assert a general destruction of cities throughout Gaul, it will have to rely on its own evidence for dates and place and not that of literature. A detailed archaeological review of the Gallic Narbonnaise in the third century AD, which is not far from Spain, is thoroughly sceptical. There is evidence of third century destruction in some cities like Arles and Vienne that cannot be dated with certainty to a single great invasion, but all that can be shown for other cities like Nîmes, Aix, Fréjus and Glanum is a certain 'doziness' (*assoupissement*) that suggests not so much a crisis of invasion as a slow withering of urban life over a long period.<sup>43</sup>

Similar ambiguities surround the destruction of cities in the fourth century. Before his arrival, Julian, followed by Libanius, says that the barbarians had sacked forty-five *poleis*, using the normal Greek word for cities. But Ammianus, who must surely be a preferred source, lists only seven centres taken by the Alamanni, of which no more than four were *civitates*, recognized urban administrations.<sup>44</sup> Does the forty-five, therefore, include villages (*vici*), since Ammianus says the Alamanni did not actually occupy the urban *oppida*? Earlier Ammianus said that Cologne fell to the Franks but Julian was apparently able to re-enter the city subsequently with no difficulty. We must ask whether the powerful fort at Cologne-Deutz did not actually remain in Roman hands. That doubt now seems to be reinforced by archaeology, which finds no evidence of damage to the fort.<sup>45</sup>

In the invasion of AD 406/7 we have little detail of 'the madness of hostile people who tore Gaul to pieces', as the Gallic Chronicle colourfully describes it. Jerome, whose evidence is suspect, lists the sacked cities as Mainz, Worms, Reims, Amiens, Arras, Thérouanne, Tournai, Speyer, Strasbourg, but not Trier.<sup>46</sup> Although Salvian says that Trier was sacked four

times in his life, it is far from clear that 407 was one of the occasions, and when telling of the Vandals in the provinces of Germania Prima and Belgica he says the whole area was in flames (*regio arsit*) but mentions no city.<sup>47</sup> He also says, 'With the barbarians situated almost within sight of everyone, there was no fear and no protection of the *civitates*', which makes one wonder how serious the danger was. Perhaps the most telling fact is the silence of Olympiodorus, by far the most trustworthy source for the early fifth century, who speaks of neglect of the Rhine defences, while describing the usurpation of Constantine III, but says not a word about destruction of cities.<sup>48</sup> During the invasion of Attila in AD 451, Prosper of Aquitaine alleges that 'Many Gallic cities suffered his savage attacks', but Fredegarius says he spared them – *parcens civitatebus Germaniae et Galiae (sic)*.<sup>49</sup> Are we witnessing a historiographic change of mood in the later fifth century, as I suggested earlier?

So, how are we to assess the damage to Gaul from this ambiguous evidence? We know the character of the Gallic cities changed in the third and fourth centuries. In physical aspect, the building of the *castrum*, as a fortified city centre, was the most important difference, although this does not imply abandonment of the *suburbium* nor necessarily a contracted population. The term *civitas* is ambiguous in the Later Empire, sometimes including the whole of the *suburbium*, sometimes only the fortified *castrum*.<sup>50</sup> Zosimus' famous attack on Constantine for ruining the security of Diocletian's frontiers by withdrawing the army to the cities, although incorrect, nevertheless reflects the new function of some cities as centres of food storage for the mobile units of *comitatenses*. This was done, so the sources said, that they might be more conveniently supplied (*ut commodius vescerentur*) and because of growing insecurity from secret, bandit raids (*per furta et latrocinia*).<sup>51</sup>

According to the literary evidence, therefore, while some cities, like Besançon and Avenches, were a pale reflection of their former glory, others, such as Cologne, Tongre and Amiens, appear to have flourished.<sup>52</sup> And even Besançon was better than most, according to Ammianus, despite Julian's gloomy report.<sup>53</sup> Just as in Italy, though that country was undamaged by successive invasions in the third and fourth century, cities regrouped. Smaller ones declined or were displaced and larger ones flourished.<sup>54</sup> Prosperity was often the result of being a military or administrative supply centres, as Ausonius tells us happened on the Moselle.<sup>55</sup> The importance of the Church as a builder is another factor, although is not easy to assess before the later fifth century. The absence of known bishops in Belgica Secunda (apart from the Nervii) suggests it was not important in that region. But even the cathedral of Auxerre, which lay outside the ramparts in the fourth century, moved inside during the fifth century when land outside became limited.<sup>56</sup>

References to recovery and rebuilding of cities is plentiful in the literary sources, but often in the context of panegyric and propaganda, which are the

mirror image of the destruction. Trier naturally benefited as a new imperial capital and deserved Ausonius' praise, although again we should note how he underlines its role in military supplies.<sup>57</sup> Even if there was a real decline in urban life, which had already begun in the late second and early third centuries, and about which the sources are ambiguous, the effect would have been cultural and social not economic or demographic. For that information we have to look to the countryside.

Our perception of the state of rural Gaul in the Later Empire has radically changed in recent years through systematic field surveys (for example, in the Aisne Valley and around Amiens), villa excavations (thanks to 'le Tunnel' and the TGV!) and the publication of excellent syntheses. They now prove that the countryside was far more prosperous well into the fifth century than was once believed.<sup>58</sup> My aim here, however, is to review only the literary sources. Several years ago I wrote about *agri deserti* and labour supply to show that the majority of ancient authors did not subscribe to a cataclysmic view of rural life in the later Empire, although most of the texts I used did not relate to Northern Gaul.<sup>59</sup> Since I wrote, the archaeological evidence has reinforced my opinion.

We must assume *a priori* that invasions of any sort took a heavier toll from the rural than the town population, in so far as the countryside was less protected. But equally the countryside would recover more quickly, when labour was available, particularly if many (perhaps most) of the invaders were searching for land. Although we may suspect the over-enthusiasm of the panegyricists about total recovery under the Tetrarchy and no shortage of farmers (*nullus ager fallit agricolam*), the city of Autun could obviously see the benefits of so-called laetic and postliminial labour, that is, immigrants and returning prisoners, on the land of their neighbours, the Remi, Nervii, Tricassini, Ambiani, Belovaci and Lingoni. So regardless of whether they were really short of labour, they canvassed the emperor for similar benefits.<sup>60</sup> The figures given in our sources for such settlements are in tens of thousands which, even at a conservative guess of 20,000 settlers in total, would have represented an approximate increase of 2 per cent of the population of Belgica.<sup>61</sup> However we view the numbers, they reflect a perception of rural recovery under Constantine, which is confirmed by more sober sources.<sup>62</sup>

The usurpation of Magnentius and Silvanus, combined with the Alamanni attacks in the 350s that were accompanied by infiltration of the Franks from the North, are the occasion for the most explicit information we possess about disruption of the countryside. According to the Emperor Julian, the Germans occupied a strip of 300 stades (60 km) on the left bank of the Rhine and devastated an area three times as broad, which would have extended as far as Dijon, Langres, Verdun, Namur, so that not even cattle could be pastured there. Ammianus says nothing of such distances but confirms the insecurity of Gaul over a wide area, which there is no reason to doubt.<sup>63</sup> Ammianus, however is scandalously biased when talking about the

'long neglect' of the defence of Gaul in AD 354, since he himself records a campaign by Constantius II which drove the Alamanni back to the Rhine a few months earlier, followed later by Silvanus' successful campaigns.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile plundering Franks had moved into the Meuse valley and were occupying the region of Toxandria.<sup>65</sup>

The point to note, however, is that the land itself was not, as Julian implies (though does not actually say), lying desolate. Indeed Libanius is indignant that, 'The victors farmed our lands with their own hands and with the captives'.<sup>66</sup> That means to say that many farmers remained on their land. Alamanni, Ammianus says, sowed and reaped their own wheat on the left bank where they had taken land.<sup>67</sup> The Franks in Toxandria were settlers, whom Julian permitted to remain as *dediticii*, tax-paying cultivators. They were not military federates.<sup>68</sup> Once again prisoners returned and large numbers of German colonists are said to have been settled, whether by the invitation of Magnentius and Constantius II or by permission of Julian. Julian himself speaks of 10,000 prisoners, while Libanius says, 'They restored the towns [does he mean *vici*?] and restored the inhabitants'.<sup>69</sup>

The damage done to the countryside and the rural population after 407 is only described, as we saw, in very general terms of plunder and devastation. What is striking about the late fourth and early fifth centuries is the large number of literary references to federate settlers, that is, enclaves of foreign troops with their families. The references are mostly by conservative writers expressing fears about the changing political relationships. Sulpicius Severus, for example, says, 'Roman soil has been occupied by foreign or rebellious people'.<sup>70</sup> Since we know of no *hospitalitas* accords with Franks or any other federates in northern Gaul, it is assumed that they were mostly settled on imperial estates, which subsequently passed to the royal fisc of the Franks.<sup>71</sup>

That has raised the possibility, about which we have no real information, that there was large-scale depopulation north of the Loire either through death or desertion.<sup>72</sup> The sources, however, refer almost entirely to displacement of rich landowners, administrators (especially after the removal of the Praetorian Prefect from Trier) or churchmen.<sup>73</sup> Some rich were ordered by the Romans themselves to give their lands to federates, as in AD 442 when they had to make room for the Alans in the Orléanais, or in 440 for a similar allocations of *rura deserta* around Valence.<sup>74</sup> The poor could not move so easily, nor, according to Salvian (who himself fled from Trier), did they always wish to.<sup>75</sup> In some cases they were said to have entered into close relationships with the new settlers, like the Armorici, in the later fifth century, 'uniting with the Germans (Franks, perhaps) ... intermarrying and joining their bands (*betairizein*)'.<sup>76</sup> We must not forget that, even if federate settlements were disastrous for the Roman treasury, the land was still cultivated. 'The barbarians having foresworn their swords, have turned to the

plough and nourish the surviving Romans as allies and friends'; those are the words of the Romano-Spanish priest, Orosius.<sup>77</sup>

Nor did all the rich leave the North, although they are difficult to document in this period. The family of Remigius, Bishop of Reims, owned four estates, plus vineyards and other property, with 52 male and 29 female workers of whom 12 were *coloni* and 16 slaves.<sup>78</sup> Some estates and villas, like those of Syagrius at Soissons, Count Arbogast at Trier or Merobaudes at Troyes, can be assumed. The description of the fortified residence of Nicetius, Bishop of Trier, resembles that of the Pontii Leontini on the Garonne and is one of a number of references to forts and camps as residences of bishops, a practice that continued into Merovingian times.<sup>79</sup>

But it must be left to archaeology to confirm or deny whether nucleation grew in the fifth century.<sup>80</sup> What we can say is that recent archaeology does not support a scenario of catastrophe during the Great Invasions.<sup>81</sup> In *Germania Secunda*, for example, a report talks of a 'high degree of continuity' of Roman villa regimes, and deplores the tendency to exaggerate the effect of invasions.<sup>82</sup> A spectacular treasure like that at Saint-Ouen-du-Breuil, near Rouen, shows that in the mid-fourth century there were still wealthy landowners about.<sup>83</sup> As in the Narbonnaise, radical changes in North Gaul were already taking place before the third century. But what happened between AD 350 and 500 is no longer regarded as a crisis of continuity or depopulation.<sup>84</sup>

To sum up, the whole nature of 'The Barbarian Invasions' has undergone serious revision in recent years, partly, but not only, as a result of archaeological progress. The emphasis is now upon symbiosis and osmosis, continuity not disruption, accommodation not conflict. What I hope I have shown here is that, even by using the literary sources alone, the sense of crisis has been exaggerated to account for change. But the sources have to be interpreted. Although the third and fifth century invasions were periods of acute political instability, I have the impression that the mid-fourth century attacks caused the greatest social and economic damage. But the fact that the Empire was subsequently restored by Julian and Valentinian, without the annihilation of the invading colonists, ensured assimilation and continuity of Roman administration. Although the greatest population influx seems to have been in the fifth century, the majority entered the Empire as *federates* at the invitation of the Romans. We must beware of equating cultural change with military crisis.

## Notes

- 1 Goffart 1980: 17–25; Goffart 1989. The only recorded example is that of the Huns who drove the Goths out of the Wallachian plain.
- 2 Caes. *B Gall.* 1. 1, 1. 44; Drinkwater 1989; Van Dam 1992; Roymans 1993.
- 3 HA *Tyr. Trig.* 5. 1, 5. 4, *Aurel.* 7. 1–2, *Tac.* 3. 4, *Prob.* 13. 5, 13. 7; cf. *Tyr. Trig.* 3. 6, *Firm.* 9. 5, etc.



- 4 HA *Prob.* 13 and 15.
- 5 Jul. *Conv.* 314b.
- 6 Jullian 1993: I. 862.
- 7 Only about half the hoards in the Nord-Pas de Calais have a *terminus post quem* of Gallienus/Postumus; Desmulliez and Milis 1988: 104. A non-violent example of hoarding and salutary advice is given by Delmaire 1992: 152, who concludes, 'Chercher à tout prix une cause politico-militaire aux enfouissement nous paraît utopique'. Literary examples of destruction of buildings (theatres, pagan monuments) by the Church, by internal disturbances or by accident can be found in Février 1980: 410, 420, 461. The usurpation of Carausius may have been an important reason for hoarding; Grigcourt 1954. Many buildings were pulled down by the inhabitants to construct city walls; few walls can be dated accurately, Johnson 1983: 250, 253–60.
- 8 *falluntur malorum recentium stipore confixi*, Amm.Marc. 31. 5. 11.
- 9 E.g. *Pan Lat.* 10(4). 18.
- 10 Jerome, *Ep.* 123. 16. Many other examples given in Mathisen 1993: 26–8, 32–44.
- 11 Barnish 1992.
- 12 *Chron. Gall* 452, a.442 (127), 'The Alans, to whom lands of further Gaul had been handed by Aëtius the patrician to be divided with the inhabitants (*incoli*), defeated those who resisted with arms and took possession of the lands by force when the owners (*domini*) had been expelled.'
- 13 Panegyricists – Wightman 1985: 212; fifth century *literati* – Wood 1992; Prosper – Muhlberger 1990: 30.
- 14 Paschoud 1989 argues that Zosimus systematically used Eunapius in the later parts of Book IV to Book V. 24, and that Book V. 25 to the end derives heavily from Olympiodorus.
- 15 E.g. Sid.Apoll. *Ep.* 8. 6. 3, *Orient. Comm.* 2. 257–60.
- 16 Paulin. *Ep.* 8. 21.
- 17 Elton 1992: 167–8.
- 18 Favez 1957.
- 19 The *patriae fumantis imago* appears in both *Carm. Prov. Dei* 17 and *Orient.Comm.* 2. 184.
- 20 Ruric.*Ep.* 2. 64; these and other examples with refs. in Mathisen 1993: 119–23.
- 21 Jerome, *Ep.* 123.
- 22 Jerome, *Comm.in Soph.* 1. 676; *Ep.* 66. 14.
- 23 Jerome, *Ep.* 66.14.
- 24 I share the scepticism of Vercauteren 1934 against the credibility of Courtois 1955: 42–3.
- 25 Paul. Nola, *Ep.* 18.
- 26 Lib. *Ep.* 25; Sozom. *HE* 5.1.
- 27 Lib. *Or.* 18.107; Jul. *ad Ath.* 286a.
- 28 Magnentius – Lib.*Or.* 18. 31–2; Strasbourg – Amm.Marc.16. 12. 63; Lib. *Or.* 18. 60.
- 29 Cities – HA *Prob.* 13. 5–6, 15.3; Strasbourg – Lib. *Or.* 18. 54, Amm.Marc. 16. 12. 26; Germans – HA *Prob.* 15. 3.
- 30 Vandals in AD 429 – Vict.Vit. 1. 2; in 480 – Procop. *BVand.* 1. 15. 18; in the sixth century – Procop. *Anecd.* 18. 6.
- 31 AD 370 – Jerome, *Chron.* 2389; Valentinian – Jord. *Get.* 309.
- 32 Jones 1964: 194–6; the phalanx, as in Vegetius 2. 2, is suggested by Goffart 1980: 233.
- 33 Amm.Marc. 31.4. 6–7, 31. 12. 3.
- 34 Delbrück 1990: 285–99.

- 35 Jerome, *Ep.* 123. 16, Greg.Tur. *HF.* 2. 9, citing Renatus Profuturus Fredigarius.
- 36 Salvian, *de gub.Dei* 7. 28–9, 50.
- 37 According to the sources themselves, the number for the Vandals was deliberately put out to deceive the Romans; Goffart 1980: 234. Nixon 1992 calculates from the *annona* rations of 600,000 modii given to the Visigoths (Olymp. fr.30 Blockley). But we do not know whether this was for three months at 2.5 modii per person (= 80,000 men women and children) or for a year per family at a normal Roman rate of 5 modii per month (= 10,000 adult males).
- 38 Goffart 1989; although he is wrong to think that this language was a Carolingian invention; see, e.g., in the fourth century, Amm.Marc. 26. 4.5, Anon. *de rebus bellicis*, 6. 1; Whittaker 1994: 194–5; and in the fifth century, Anon. *carm.de provid.div.* 8 (PL 51.617); Courtois 1955: 50.
- 39 E.g. Amm. Marc. 31. 7. 2.
- 40 Langres – Eutrop. 9. 23, Euseb. *Chron.* 2317; 1,000 Franks – Lib.Or 18. 70; Charietto – Zos. 3. 7; Saxons – Amm.Marc. 18. 5. 1–6. Many other similar references in Whittaker 1994: ch. 6.
- 41 Discussed alongside the archaeology by Belot and Canut 1993.
- 42 Invasion – HA *Prob* 18. 5; occupation – Victor, *Caes.* 33. 3. The shadowy pretenders, Proculus and Bonosus, are supposed to have seized Cologne in a military coup and proclaimed an imperium over Britain, Spain and all the provinces of Gallia ‘bracata’, but the information about Britain is certainly untrue, Zon. 12. 29.
- 43 Fiches 1996; see my review in *AJA* 103 (1998): 579–80.
- 44 Lib. Or 12. 48; Jul. *ad Ath.* 279a; Amm.Marc. 16. 2. 12.
- 45 Amm. Marc. 15. 8. 19, 16. 3. 1–2. The archaeology is discussed by Carrolle-Spillecke 1997.
- 46 *Chron. Gall.* 452, a.451. 55; Jerome, *Ep.* 123. 16.
- 47 Salvian, *de gub. Dei*, 6. 75, 7. 50, 6. 80. Wightman 1970; 250; Wightman 1985: 239.
- 48 Olymp. frags.13, 17. 2, 15. 12 (Blockley), Zos. 6. 3.
- 49 Prosper, *Chron.* a.451; Fredeg. *Chron.* 2. 53.
- 50 Roblin 1951; Roblin 1965.
- 51 Zos. 2. 34. 1–2; Amm. Marc. 16. 4. 1; cf. 31. 8. 1, 31. 16. 8. Whittaker 1994: 207–9.
- 52 Besançon – Julian, *Ep.* 8; Avenches – Amm.Marc.15.11.12.
- 53 *potior oppidis multis*, Amm. Marc. 15. 11. 6–12.
- 54 See Wightman 1985: 204–5. Tournai perhaps replaced Cassel as capital of the Morini, Cambrai perhaps replaced Bavay as capital of the Nervii; Verdun and Chalons-s-Marne were created out of *pagi*. North-West Belgica appears to have been concentrated into six or seven centres of administration, but urbanism was always weak in this region; see Bayard et al. 1986: 28. For Italy, see Ruggini 1961: 33–5, 52–65, etc.
- 55 *securis non castra sed horrea Belgis*, Auson. *Mos.* 456–7.
- 56 Février 1980: 411.
- 57 Auson. *ord.urb.nobil.* 6.
- 58 The Aisne Valley survey, Hazelgrove and Skull 1992; the ACO Amiens survey has not been published. Two of several examples of recent villa excavations in the Pas de Calais, at Graincourt-les-Haurincourt and at Fréthun, show that both continued into the fifth century, *Rev Nord(Arch)* 72 (1991). Note especially the comprehensive work of Ossel 1992 and the reports of the Colloque at Bliesbruck, edited by J.-P. Petit and M. Mangin, *Les agglomération secondaires de la Gaule Belgique, les Germanies et l’Occident romain*, Paris, 1994. This extensive collection speaks, for example, of ‘le mythe de la disparition des sites après 275’;



- and 'une "renaissance constantinienne" ' in the Franche-Comté and the Bourgogne; 'des occupations prolongées dans le Ve s.' in Lorraine, and so on. See most recently Ouzalías *et al.* 2001 for an up-to-date assessment of rural Gaul.
- 59 Republished in Whittaker 1993: chs 3 and 4.
- 60 *PanLat.* 11(3). 15; cf. 8(5). 3 and 21; 9(4). 18; 5(8). 6; 8(5). 21. I have discussed these matters further in Ch. 10.
- 61 References to *laeti* collected by de Ste Croix 1981: 508–18; the population of Belgica is estimated in Wightman 1985: 32–3.
- 62 For example, *fructuum proventu*, *Epit. de Caes.* 41. 24.
- 63 *Jul. Ep. ad Ath.* 279 a-b; *Amm. Marc.* 14. 10. 1, 15. 5. 2, 16. 12. 5.
- 64 It is obvious that Silvanus had been sent to Cologne soon after this to coordinate an attack from the West with one force coming from Linzgau on the Danube, led by the Emperor (*Amm.* 15. 4); for Ammianus' bias against Constantius II, see Frézouls 1983.
- 65 *Amm. Marc.* 17. 2. 2, 17. 8. 3; *Lib. Or.* 18. 70.
- 66 *Lib. Or.* 18.34; cf. *Or.* 12.44.
- 67 *Amm. Marc.* 16. 11. 8 and 10–12, 16. 12. 9.
- 68 Despite the clear text of Ammianus, using the word *deditio* (17. 8. 1–4), the myth of *foederati* in Toxandria is constantly repeated; e.g. Wightman 1985: 208–9, Desmulliez and Milis 1988: 136. Note the absence of weapon burials in the region, Halsall 1992: 197, but I am sceptical about Halsall's thesis that there is no ethnic character in the weapon burials.
- 69 Julian, *Ep. ad Ath.* 280c, *Lib. Or.* 18.75-7
- 70 Sulp. sev., *Chron.* 2.3
- 71 Goffart 1980: 175.
- 72 Drinkwater 1992, Wightman 1985: 262.
- 73 E.g. the letter of Polichronius, Bishop of Verdun in the later fifth century, 'We have been compelled by grave necessity to leave our homeland' (*PLS* 3. 831–2). Mathisen 1992 and 1993: 59–65.
- 74 *Chron. Gall.* 451, a.442 (Alans), a.440 (Valence).
- 75 Salvian, *de gub. Dei* 5.8.
- 76 Procop. *BGoth.* 1.12.14.
- 77 Oros. *adv. pag.* 7. 41.
- 78 *VRemig.* in *MGH SS rer. Merov.* 3. 336–47.
- 79 Nicetius of Trier – *turribus incinxit ter denis*; Ven. Fortun. *Carm.* 3. 12. 19–24; Mathisen 1993: 99–100 for other references; Merovingian – Böhner 1977.
- 80 Percival 1992 argues that villas with fifth century buildings were used for other purposes, sometimes as churches. Ossel 1992: 105, etc. is sceptical about Wightman's theory of increased nucleation and rich domains. But see Drinkwater 1989 and Bayard *et al.* 1986: 32 for archaeology in the Soissonais.
- 81 For a collection of recent studies, see Ouzouliás *et al.* 2001 and my comments in Ch. 10.
- 82 K.H. Lenz in Ouzouliás *et al.* 2001: 113–46.
- 83 C. Balmelle and P. Van Ossel in Ouzouliás *et al.* 2001: 533–52.
- 84 C. Wickham gives an excellent survey of the late rural scene in Ouzouliás *et al.* 2001: 555–67.

## MENTAL MAPS AND FRONTIERS

### SEEING LIKE A ROMAN

Late on the evening of 12 January 49 BC, Julius Caesar, accompanied by a few friends, jumped into a carriage in Ravenna, after borrowing some mules from a local baker, in order to travel to Rimini. It was to be a momentous journey, since by crossing the River Rubicon, where his army was awaiting his arrival, he would automatically trigger off the civil war that changed the course of history. The road he took was probably the *via Popilia* which joined the *via Aemilia* at Cesina, one of the great highways of Republican Italy. Yet somehow he lost the way and, after wandering about all night, at dawn a guide showed him the way back to the highway on foot by narrow paths.

In the dark, I suppose, anyone can get lost. But why should Caesar have needed a guide to get back on the road once it became light? The countryside north of the Rubicon is not difficult, and Caesar's party must have travelled the road often. The road, yes. But once off the main road, they needed to know the country, and for that they needed a map. The most important march in history nearly did not happen for want of a map, and Julius Caesar nearly missed his own moment in it.

I use this example to re-examine some questions about itineraries and maps in the Roman world. If even a meticulous military commander like Caesar possessed, at most, only an itinerary of his route, and if this fact passed without comment in the second century AD when Suetonius told the story,<sup>1</sup> it poses several questions. What are we to conclude about Roman achievements in geography and cartography? How did they perceive the world and its ordering of space? And what, if anything, might this tell us about Roman concepts of frontiers and empire?

Briefly, for the sake of completeness, I begin with some banalities about the main streams of Roman spatial representations. Surveys of lands in their cosmic context (*geographia/ges periodos*) were well known to the Greeks, which the Romans regularly cited but hardly developed. By contrast were detailed descriptions of regions and places (*chorographia*), to which Romans and Romanized writers contributed with an enthusiasm engendered by an expanding empire.<sup>2</sup> To these two cultural rivers must be added the lesser stream of land survey (*agrimensio*). The skill of 'gnomonics', as Pliny calls it,

also owed a debt to Greece, but developed as a peculiarly intense Roman technology to serve Roman law, administration and imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately it is never clear, when either the Greek termination - *graphia* or the Latin equivalents *descripta* or *depicta* were used, whether they meant 'written' as opposed to 'pictorial' representations, nor how much written commentary accompanied pictorial maps, nor whether the distinction between geography and chorography was always strictly maintained. Vitruvius, for example, while almost certainly looking at a 'geographic' pictorial representation of the world, referred to physical features, such as rivers, 'which are drawn and described (*picta itemque scripta*) by chorographers'.<sup>4</sup> It is equally impossible to be sure, when the Elder Pliny referred to *situs depicti* in Armenia or to the *forma* of Ethiopia contained in a military report, whether he meant pictorial maps or written descriptions.<sup>5</sup> But even if the language to describe them was ambiguous, the broad distinction between the two main categories was clear enough to Ptolemy in the second century AD. The one, he said, required a mathematician, the other an artist.<sup>6</sup>

From all these sources, however, the only *certain* map, in any sense that we would recognize it, to survive almost complete from antiquity is the celebrated Peutinger Table, although only preserved in a medieval copy. The map is too well known and studied to need much description,<sup>7</sup> so I simply stress that, although it is a map which covers the whole world, it does not derive from the classical world map tradition of *geographia*. In spirit it is an itinerary map in the chorographic tradition, which in its present form is a parchment role nearly 7m long by 34 cm high, made up (originally, though one is lost) of 12 segments that cover 112,000 km of Roman roads, divided into 6,000 measured distances along which 555 vignettes depict towns, *mansiones* (inns), *mutationes* (post stations) and tourist sights.<sup>8</sup> The question is, why was this, the only more or less complete map to reach us, an itinerary map? Was it by chance and atypical?<sup>9</sup> Apparently not. Recently, there has come to light a papyrus of the first century AD, a copy of a Hellenistic document, containing fragments of the *Geographoumena* of Artemidorus of Ephesus, which is illustrated by a remarkable map of a part of Spain, showing rivers, roads, square points marked along the road and vignettes. There is no doubt that it is an *itinerarium pictum* that must have been an ancestor of the Peutinger Table.<sup>10</sup> It confirms my belief that itineraries dominated and infiltrated all the other categories of ancient representations and perceptions of space. This is not a novel idea. But, since it has been challenged recently, it needs restating more forcefully and elaborating.<sup>11</sup>

Take the first category of world 'geographic' maps. The Greek schematic concepts of the inhabited *oikoumene* divided into three continents, and the universal cosmos arranged into *climata* zones of latitude, were sometimes represented pictorially. But they were probably so only on miniatures, too small to show many physical or topographic features.<sup>12</sup> These sorts of global maps and 'scientific' studies, originally made famous in Alexandria by

Eratosthenes and others, were often cited by Romans, from early authors such as Sallust, Vergil and Lucan to Macrobius and Orosius in the Later Empire. That in turn almost certainly influenced Isidore of Seville in the seventh century and the medieval fashion for miniature T-O maps and zonal *mappaemundi*. Although there is no evidence that any of the known illustrations derived from Roman originals, such maps are often found in medieval editions of classical authors, and they could well have had classical prototypes.<sup>13</sup>

But while neither Strabo nor the Elder Pliny showed much interest in cosmic theories, despite paying them lip service,<sup>14</sup> it is plausible that the penchant in writers, such as Caesar, Strabo or Tacitus, for comparing countries to geometric or natural shapes of triangles, cones, oak leaves, animal skins, and so on, owed something to their pictorial representation on such cosmic maps.<sup>15</sup> The distortions of the size, shape and centrality of Europe, when compared to Asia or Africa in the continental divisions of cosmic maps, both fed and fed upon the Euro-centric and Romano-centric prejudices reflected in Roman mental mapping and Roman rhetoric.<sup>16</sup> It must have been this kind of map which Varro saw in the temple of Tellus, since Eratosthenes figures in the story. It was perhaps the same map later seen by Vitruvius, which led them both to exclaim on the good fortune of Italy's geographic location in the centre of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Such early cosmic projections coincided with Roman preoccupations with imperial rule since, as Polybius saw, they were a means of contextualizing unknown places in the mind's eye.<sup>18</sup> A global setting was one reason why Strabo thought *geographia* was 'relevant to the practice of provincial governors' since it showed 'the whole *oikoumene* under one rule'.<sup>19</sup> The symbolic significance of this sort of representation, that sometimes probably focused on just the relevant bits, was not lost on the father of the Gracchi, since this is probably the way he glorified his Sardinian campaign with a picture. And such maps served as emblems on the shields of mythical heroes. The inamorata of Propertius was not the last to feel closer to her lover by looking at a cosmic map.<sup>20</sup> Under the Empire, global views of the earth were ideal teaching aids for good citizens. But carrying a private copy of one (*depictum orbem terrae in membrana*) was dangerous under a paranoid emperor, since it could be thought to display imperial ambitions.<sup>21</sup> What we can be sure about, however, is that this kind of map never served, nor was intended to serve, as a guide for travellers, or for generals and imperial war councils.

Yet even the art of geographic representation was to some extent influenced by perceptions of chorographic space, particularly that associated with itineraries. When a soldier at Dura Europos needed a device on his shield he crudely symbolized a snippet from an itinerary along the Black Sea coast.<sup>22</sup> Polybius made a confused attempt to give a geometric orientation of Italy by using the road from Marseille to the Alps as his base line.<sup>23</sup> The later Cosmography of Ravenna described the Forth–Clyde neck in Britain by 'the

cities in Britain itself joined to each other by a straight line'. Indeed, although it called itself a *Cosmography*, it had taken on many of the characteristics of the chorographic tradition.<sup>24</sup> If it is true that the map of Agrippa and Augustus, which I am just about to discuss, was the direct ancestor of medieval *mappaemundi*, like the one now preserved at Hereford, it is clear from them that the importance of locality was defined by places and roads, however small the global map.<sup>25</sup>

If we now turn to chorography, we find that geographic representation had little in common with what little we know about the great world map of Agrippa, which was set up by Augustus in the portico off the *Via del Corso* in Rome;<sup>26</sup> nor with any other monumental maps in the Later Empire, such as the teaching map at Autun in the fourth century AD or the map of Theodosius II in the fifth century.<sup>27</sup> In reality, we know little about what these maps actually looked like, and we have to rely upon only brief references to their characteristics. If they were all intended as imperial propaganda, as seems likely, they cannot have been very detailed. Nevertheless, if Agrippa's map was connected to the project initiated by Caesar and completed by Augustus, whereby distinguished geographers were sent out to bring back their findings from various parts of the world, then according to the *Cosmographia* of Julius Honorius these scholars apparently occupied themselves with collecting not cosmic projections but local, topographic details.<sup>28</sup>

From what we know about such maps, many of their features confirm that they were derived not from cosmological maps but from itineraries, of which I pick out three. First, they were essentially routes linking spot points. Agrippa's map marked key towns, such as Pasinou Charax on the Persian Gulf, Lixus in Africa, Arsinoe on the Red Sea or Chalcedon and Byzantium in Asia. At the same time they provided dimensions which mostly appear to be the distances along roads, including those Agrippa himself had helped to construct.<sup>29</sup> The later Autun map, we are told, was to teach the young 'the distances between every place (*spatia intervalla*) with its name'.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, as we know from the Elder Pliny's account of Agrippa's map, many details were transmitted not from the map itself but from the written *commentarii* that accompanied it. These were plausibly the origin of the topographic lists that have come down to us from the Later Empire, in the works called the *Divisio Orbis Terrarum* and the *Demensuratio Provinciarum*.<sup>31</sup> However, Pliny's insistence on the visual purpose of Agrippa's map as 'the world for the city to see' (*orbis terrarum urbi spectandus*) makes it difficult to believe that there was only an inscription and never a map to go with the commentary, as has been suggested.<sup>32</sup> Certainly putting a text and a map together seems to have been the practice later. The two cartographers of Theodosius recorded that, 'One wrote while the other painted'.<sup>33</sup> Medieval

cartographers likewise regularly imposed a written text, often a chorographic list, onto the *mappaemundi*.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, there is the method of demonstrating Roman dominance, and the relation between centre and periphery, as is implied by the maps' propaganda intent. This overlaps with what I said earlier about global maps. The Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table, both perhaps compiled in the fourth century from earlier itineraries and/or route maps, demonstrated power through the roads, the one focusing on Milan, the other on Rome. It is the roads on the sixth century mosaic map at Madaba which proclaims Jerusalem's importance in Palestine, as also in later *mappaemundi*. A place was comprehended by its routes.<sup>35</sup>

But the best evidence of the way that a Roman's sense of space and visual perspectives were shaped by the horizontal, linear movement of itineraries over land and sea is contained in Roman writers of history and geography. Polybius may be a less than perfect example, since he was torn between his Greek instinct for geographic abstractions and his Roman readers' interest in itineraries, although even this latter-day Odysseus (as he called himself) is famed for his descriptions of southern Gaul or central Greece through itineraries.<sup>36</sup> In Livy, however, we see how closely he made use of Polybius' chorographic descriptions of *topos* and travel, since they chimed with Roman horizontal perspectives. The best example is the famous scene when Hannibal looked out over the north Italian plain after crossing the Alps.<sup>37</sup> This is one of several similar landscapes described by Livy, who did not otherwise often venture into spatial descriptions; for example, the Romans' first view over the route into central Etruria from Mons Ciminus; or Philip's view from Mons Haemus tracing his route to Italy. In a rare attempt to add dimensions to description, Livy measured the length and breadth of the conquest of Lucius Scipio's campaign against Antiochus in days' marches.<sup>38</sup>

Julius Caesar famously never once mentions a map in all his commentaries. At the very least that informs us about what his audience wanted (or did not). It is not impossible that he had a geographic miniature before him when he tried to give a global, bird's eye view of 'all Gaul' or when he gave Britain a triangular projection. Perhaps the same map was available to Strabo, although Strabo pointedly does not refer to any map when he cites the geography of Caesar's *Commentaries*.<sup>39</sup> But the distortions and lack of features in such descriptions, such as that of the peninsulas of Brittany and Cherbourg, show that the map was probably small and crude.<sup>40</sup> Much more prominent in the narrative is how Caesar described Gaul as though one was 'looking' (*spectat* is his word) from Provence, or the way he recounts his advance by itineraries, without orientation but with distances measured by marches. Again, like Livy, Caesar describes sites, such as Gergovia or Alesia, as though they were landscapes viewed horizontally by a general or an observer on the ground: 'Before the town a plain stretches out ...', he says.

At Gergovia the description is made more vivid and immediate by the conceit of pretending there were points from where one could not see.<sup>41</sup>

We know that Strabo, although a Greek-speaking Roman provincial, was close to Augustan thinking and representations of empire, so much so that some have mistakenly thought his geography was written to be a manual of Roman administration.<sup>42</sup> So he is interesting as an example of Roman sensibilities towards space. One only has to think of his chorographic perception of a country through descriptions of discreet *topoi*, rather than by recording the spaces between them, which tend to be filled with tribal names. His outlook is firmly from the central position of Rome; but he conveys the explicit sense of journeying in his use of *periploi*, such as those of Ephorus, when he is organizing topographic material. There are many examples one could cite; such as 'the voyage from Miletus to Heraclea, including the bays of the gulfs ...' with an alternative land route; or the Black Sea coast itinerary from the mouth of the Danube to Byzantium.<sup>43</sup>

But the Elder Pliny is far and away the most informative Roman writer when it comes to contemporary, spatial concepts, both in the evidence that he preserves and in his own way of seeing. He tells us, for example, that when Augustus commissioned the world geographer, Dionysius of Charax, to provide a 'full account' (*ad commentanda omnia*) before Gaius Caesar's eastern expedition, the result was a route description, an excerpt of which is the 'Parthian Stations'.<sup>44</sup> Like the other writers he has his global images and spatial preferences; Europe is larger than Asia and more desirable; the Spanish province of Citerior is shaped like a wedge, and so on.<sup>45</sup> But by contrast with the meagre sections when he discusses cosmic mapping, his chorographic commentary occupies four full books (III–VI), much of it stemming from itineraries, like those on Agrippa's map, or from *periploi*, to which he would have had easy access as a naval officer.<sup>46</sup>

Again and again Pliny himself travels mentally with the ships or route marchers. In southern Gaul he follows the Via Domitia; Italy is traced by 'the line of the coast'; Isidorus' dimensions for the Peloponnese, he says, are wrong because they do not follow the indented coast line; he overestimates the distance from Dyraccium to Byzantium by a third because he follows the Via Egnatia; the route from Byzantium to the delta of the Danube is also measured by hugging the coast.<sup>47</sup> The limits of the Roman Empire are probed and expanded by journeys, some regarded as *inexplicabilis*, to the Troglodytes, to the Garamantes, to Ethiopia, in search of the source of the Nile or an eastern Eldorado.<sup>48</sup> Most spectacularly the two dimensions of the entire world are measured by the sum of the routes, *mensura currit duplici via*, which ends up by him doubling longitude over latitude.<sup>49</sup> Pliny's eye for description is that of the traveller who pauses to view the landscape stretching horizontally in front of him. The mountains of Thessaly, he says, 'curve like a theatre and in the *cavea* in the foreground are seventy-five



cities'; the gentle slopes of the Vale of Tempe 'rise beyond human sight on either side'.<sup>50</sup>

There is no need to spend much time over the *agrimensores*. The surprise is that, notwithstanding the importance of land surveys in the law and life of Rome, when it came to wider spatial perceptions Romans did not think like land surveyors. As we have seen already, there was a certain built-in interest in geometric forms and projections at the level of cosmic mapping. But when it came to topography, it is very doubtful whether all those land cadasters that were recorded on *varias formas* of wood, bronze or parchment and kept as copies in a central records office in Rome were ever consolidated into anything like master Ordinance Survey maps, not even in the case of Italy. A recent commentary on the *agrimensores*, for example, suggests that the *forma* for the settlements at Lucus Feroniae in Latium would have been difficult to locate on a map of Italy.<sup>51</sup> The document called *expositio et ratio omnium formarum*, which was possibly written by Domitian's military surveyor, Balbus, had nothing to do with a general survey map, despite its title, and there is nothing in it to suggest that Balbus did any surveying for that purpose.<sup>52</sup>

It is not even clear from the writings we possess whether the surveying skills of the *mensores* were ever utilized to map out roads and itineraries, although I think it probable. All that Balbus' text mentions is that he built two straight embankments for a road and measured the width of rivers or the height of hill forts to be stormed. But there are cases of the orientation of roads and the measurement of distances being made by dead reckoning which must have originated in the work of provincial surveyors. In Roman Britain, for example, Marinus of Tyre (Ptolemy's source) got hold of the correct dead reckoning distance between London and Chichester, even though the southern section of the actual road, Stane Street, had diverted from the true bearing.<sup>53</sup> How much that sort of 'gnomonic' thinking rubbed off onto Roman perceptions can perhaps be seen in the way Caesar described the battle of Alesia, in relation to a horizontal *kardo* and a perpendicular *decumanus*, as though the site had been centuriated.<sup>54</sup> Yet it is ironic, in the light of the example with which I began, that Caesar was still unable to figure out his route between Ravenna and the Rubicon once off piste, even though this region of the Romagna has yielded some of the earliest evidence of centuriation.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, it is easy to detect in the *agrimensores* affinities with the Roman's perception of space through itineraries. First, there is the obvious fact that the term *limites*, meaning road-balks between centuriated land, came to refer to the roads of the imperial frontiers. Then there is the similarity of topographic landscape and chorographic, horizontal perspective that are shown in the miniature vignettes of towns which illustrate the medieval edition of the *corpus agrimensorum*, and which reappear in the medieval manuscripts of the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the Later Empire. They



are almost certainly in some cases copies of Roman originals.<sup>56</sup> They also have close affinities with the vignettes of the Peutinger Table and, before that, with the crude vignettes appearing on the fragment of an itinerary painted on a soldier's shield in the third century which was discovered at Dura Europos.<sup>57</sup> The first century AD papyrus text of Artemidorus containing a map of the Spanish sector has similar vignettes to illustrate the route.

It would be strange in discussing Roman maps and mentality not to say something, however brief, about Ptolemy, since he represented the climax of Hellenistic studies in celestial projections and mathematical co-ordinates, which profoundly impressed the Middle Ages after the Byzantine rediscovery of his texts. From the introduction to his *Geography*, quoted earlier, it is clear that Ptolemy was obsessed with the divisions between geography and chorography and how to reconcile them in a world map without the usual distortions: 'We propose to describe (*katagraphein*) our habitable earth, in order that the description may correspond as far as possible with the earth itself.'<sup>58</sup> But whether or not Ptolemy actually produced a map or only a commentary and co-ordinates from which others could do so,<sup>59</sup> it is difficult to show that he had any direct influence on Roman civil or military thinking, or that he seriously influenced many Romans' image of the world. Their imagination thrived in human space not cosmic abstractions, and Ptolemy remained 'a luxury for the few'.<sup>60</sup>

Yet even in Ptolemy's geography one can detect the powerful effect of 'information gained through travel' (*historia periodike*). His predecessor, Marinus, he says, made extensive use of itineraries and *periploi*, like those of Septimius Flaccus or Julius Maternus in Africa, and he himself corrected Marinus' poor calculations from such records.<sup>61</sup> Müller, in his edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, argued that, since long distances in the Antonine Itinerary and Ptolemy were often the same, we can assume a common, itinerary source.<sup>62</sup> A particularly interesting example comes from Britain, which seems to confirm the theory that a linear vision of space on itineraries deformed the sense of triangulation.<sup>63</sup> Although Ptolemy's distances from London to Catterick and London to Binchester are roughly correct, the longitude of Binchester is so far wrong in a westerly direction that the two northern towns are placed about four times further apart than they should be.<sup>64</sup> That makes me wonder whether the famous tilting flat of the north of Britain, that we see in medieval maps following Ptolemy's calculations, was really caused by an error of textual transmission rather than Ptolemy's own misconception derived from itinerary maps.

The fact is that, despite the technical skills of the land surveyors in constructing roads and bridges, despite the existence of travelling sundials, and despite the familiarity of sailors with wind roses and steering across the open sea by use of the stars and an azimuth, none of this experience transmitted itself from practice to cartographic theory or multi-dimensional perception.<sup>65</sup> Notwithstanding exaggerated claims that ancient, written sea

itineraries (*periploi*) were ancestors of medieval portolans, we possess not a single reference to an ancient sea chart, and one only has to look at the portolan of Pietro Visconti in 1311 to see that we are now in a different world of ships with fixed rudders and sea compasses.<sup>66</sup>

If Roman perception of what we might call the 'real' world, as opposed to the cosmic world, was dominated by itineraries, it is not hard to see why. Itineraries, like the roads they documented, were the instruments of military conquest and provincial administration. Like the 'pacers' (*bematistai*) in the army of Alexander the Great, military *mensores* and chorographers are recorded in the Roman army, and our sources are full of descriptions of their routes.<sup>67</sup> Topography was limited mainly to towns, *castra*, *castelli*, water points and food stores, the sort of *loci* that still remain listed in the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table.<sup>68</sup> But that was all. They did not result in a general survey map. Vegetius in the fourth century, who said that a good commander should carry *itinera*, both written (*adnotata*) and drawn (*picta*), refers only to set routes and short cuts, not to general cartographic features. Even the number of routes was limited. Ambrose tells us how rigidly an itinerary was imposed upon the soldier: 'He goes out in the order which is prescribed ... he completes his journey by the direct route ... if he marches by another itinerary, he does not get his *annona* (pay).'<sup>69</sup>

The administrative function was similar. Although it is not now believed, as once, that the written Antonine Itinerary and the illustrated Peutinger Table are records of the actual travels of emperors or routes of the imperial post (*cursus publicus*) and military supplies (*annona militaris*), elements of all these official functions are present in the documents.<sup>70</sup> For example, a *mansio Augusti in praetorio* is marked on the route between Ljubljana in the Julian Alps and the Danube; the term *mutationes* implies official changing of horses;<sup>71</sup> while legal and literary sources record the rigid itineraries both used and abused by the state for transport of tax supplies.<sup>72</sup> But although we possess records of individual imperial itineraries,<sup>73</sup> and plenty of evidence of private journeys by land and sea,<sup>74</sup> none of the extant itineraries and sea routes nor any literary source suggests that there was ever such a thing as an official, master map. We cannot prove even the existence of a state archive of official itineraries, although I find the idea plausible on the analogy of the archive that was kept for the *formae* of land cadasters.<sup>75</sup>

In fact, it is doubtful whether the Antonine Itinerary or the Peutinger Table were even useable in their present form.<sup>76</sup> Both are late syntheses of numerous shorter, local itineraries, sometimes crudely fitted together with minor roads. They do not cover every part of the Empire systematically, although in some sectors, such as North Africa, they seem to draw upon a common source.<sup>77</sup> The local character of the underlying itineraries is shown when both documents record some distances in Gaul in leagues not miles, although the Antonine Itinerary sometimes confuses the two, perhaps because the stones changed in the early third century.<sup>78</sup>

As with the official and military itineraries, so in private records, it is the short, local and usually written itineraries of the earlier Empire that have to be stressed, since this is what the evidence points to. The routes as we have them recorded are clearly not maps for travellers, but more like souvenirs of private voyages or monuments of local, civic pride. The four silver goblets found at Bagni di Vicarello (Lake Bracciano), dating from the Augustan period, have engraved upon them 106 stations between Gades and Rome travelling through North Italy, along the Via Aemelia through Piacenza, Parma and Reggio. Although each one is slightly different, they were all dedicated at a sanctuary of Apollo, which implies a purpose other than cartography.<sup>79</sup> Vessels found in Britain, France and Spain decorated with the names of the forts of Hadrian's Wall must surely be personal souvenirs of soldiers in memory of the coldest days of their service, not guides for future conscripts.<sup>80</sup> I suspect that a private memento is also the explanation of the painted itinerary on the shield from Dura Europos mentioned earlier.<sup>81</sup> More official looking are a series of pillars inscribed with itineraries that have been found at various towns in the Empire – Tongres in Belgium, Autun and Nîmes in France, Mainz in Germany, and elsewhere. But even though they record routes leading out of the town, possibly as far as Rome, and might conceivably have served as signposts, they look more like advertisements of the city's importance, like those signposts in airports saying 1,000 km to New York, 2,000 km to Delhi.<sup>82</sup>

A change, however, took place in the Later Empire from the recording of single, shorter itineraries to composite itineraries and route maps. One reason for this change in cultural perspective was undoubtedly the vast increase in the numbers of travellers and the well-known passion for travel which swept through late Roman society. Pilgrimage was not something new or unique to the Later Empire. A study of Pausanias, the Greek 'religious tourist' in the second century AD underlines pagan pilgrimage in his day as 'a journey into one's identity in its topographic, cultural and spiritual resonances'.<sup>83</sup> As we know from the non-stop attraction today of festivals, ashrams and gurus in India, there is no greater stimulus than a combination of tourism and piety to take pilgrims on long distance journeys. But in the Later Empire the urge became a passion.

The *Itinerarium Burdigalense* (or Bordeaux Itinerary) of AD 333 records the stages of an astonishing land journey, over 5,000 km from Bordeaux to Milan, Constantinople and Jerusalem, returning by sea and land via Brindisi, Rome and Milan, which lasted seven months. The itinerary is very much in the style of the Antonine Itinerary, a simple record of *mansiones* and *mutationes*, with only very brief tourist notes, mostly at holy sites – places such as Tarsus 'where the apostle Paul lived' or Libissa 'the place where Hannibal was buried'. They are not unlike the entries on the Peutinger Table.<sup>84</sup> The *Itinerarium Egeriae* in AD 381–384 is somewhat different, since it is not strictly an itinerary but the diary of Egeria, a noble lady who was

probably a member of the imperial household of Theodosius I. She travelled from Spain to Constantinople, from where she toured the holy sites of the Middle East, Egypt and Palestine. Her tour lasted three years and included voyages requiring heroic stamina, such as climbing Mount Sinai in the heat at God's command, *iubente deo*.<sup>85</sup> Both itineraries, however, codify the fashion for journeys as pious feats of asceticism and pilgrimage. The fashion was set by Helena, wife of Constantine, who travelled to Jerusalem in search of the true cross.

Although all this has been well studied, we need to note that between the Bordeaux Itinerary and the Itinerary of Egeria, that is, in the course of the fourth century, the craze for religious tourism developed into a boom just at the same time that changes occurred in Roman mental mapping. The boom was encouraged by the pilgrimages of a succession of wealthy court ladies, most more pious than ascetic, who had an eye for publicity,<sup>86</sup> and by the increasing numbers of holy men and women whose fame attracted visitors.<sup>87</sup> Basil of Caesarea founded new bishoprics at the *mansiones* along the pilgrim itineraries between Ancyra and Tarsus, as well as encouraging the construction of hostels called 'basileias' and demanding tax exemptions for pilgrims.<sup>88</sup>

We can only guess at the size of the increased traffic. The impression we get is that it was considerable. Unlike the travels of the ascetic Egeria, the visit by the Lady Poemenia to the holy hermit John in Egypt, was accompanied by an army of bishops, priests and servants, and such was local hostility to so many foreigners that at Nikiupolis a brawl resulted in several dead and a bishop being dumped in the river.<sup>89</sup> Poemenia was only one of many of the great and the good who made the 'Grand Tour' of the religious sites. The rich were assisted by local authorities and bishops who hoped for liberal patronage in return. Paula, for instance, who was Jerome's patron, was offered the use of the private *mansio* of the governor of Palestine and the Younger Melania obtained a state warrant for the public *cursus* through her court connections.<sup>90</sup>

No small part of the religious traffic was caused by church administration and the ever increasing numbers of councils and bishops. Sometimes a delegation might include as many as 400 bishops plus a staff of priests and deacons. Summoned by imperial edict, they had the right to use the *cursus publicus* and are described by Ammianus as 'Crowds of bishops scurrying backwards and forwards on public post-horses'.<sup>91</sup> Such ecclesiastical transactions do not include unofficial travellers nor the couriers bearing the huge number of letters exchanged between men like Augustine, Jerome and Basil. Nor does it include all the many secular and religious personnel who illegally obtained state warrants for food and animals, and whose abuses fill the law codes. It comes as no surprise that the Council of Sardica complained that the *cursus publicus* was breaking down.<sup>92</sup> A law of AD 378 limited the number of horses that could be requisitioned at halts along the *cursus* to five

per day (not mentioning oxen and pack animals) which, given that there are over 400 *mutationes* marked on the Peutinger Table, suggests that travellers could have been numbered in tens of thousands.<sup>93</sup>

The poor did not have the advantages of the rich. But the foundation of churches and monasteries on the routes, including the provision of charitable *xenodocheia* or hospices, helped them to avoid some of the horrible *mansiones* that we know about, and they overlaid the itineraries with 'a Christian pattern of travel and hospitality'.<sup>94</sup> So much did this encourage travel that the Council of Nîmes in 396 protested that 'Many on the pretence of pilgrimage are running riot with the contributions of the Church', and the Council of Chalchedon subjected the poor to examination before granting them 'letters of peace'.<sup>95</sup> Egeria described the crowds at Jerusalem as 'mobs' (*turbae*); Gregory of Nazianzen declared himself unwilling to become a bishop of a small town on the pilgrim route because, he said, 'All is dust and noise and carriages; ... all foreigners and travellers'; and Jerome complained of intolerable conditions from 'packed mobs'.<sup>96</sup> By the time the Anonymous Itinerary of Piacenza was composed in the sixth century there were two *xenodocheia* in Jerusalem for 1,200 men and women, plus more than 3,000 beds for the sick and *mensas innumerabiles*.<sup>97</sup>

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity, therefore, also radically transformed the world-view of Romans. Travel made the world a smaller place. There was a new emphasis on the heroic journey, both physical and spiritual, which were fused into one by the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In the classical world long journeys were limited to marginal people, traders, wandering philosophers and outlaws, the antithesis of good citizens. Christianity reinvented the classical *homo viator*, such as Odysseus, who travelled for virtue. But aimless wandering without an itinerary became a metaphor for sin.<sup>98</sup> Augustine presents an image of the *perigrinatio animae* when he has a vision of the land of peace, seen from a high mountain, but he cannot reach it, unless he keeps to the route guarded by the heavenly commander against fugitives and deserters.<sup>99</sup> The horizontal perspective of the traveller is the same as before, but the boundaries had crumbled. International horizons were expanding under the impact of pilgrims like Egeria or monks from India, Persia, Ethiopia and the barbarian fringes, who 'flock in from the four corners of the earth'.<sup>100</sup>

It is fashionable to ask how ancient and medieval map-makers perceived geographic space through their maps,<sup>101</sup> but less common to examine how their maps or itineraries shaped their perceptions. Both are equally important for understanding how Romans thought. The simplistic assumption that ancient and medieval cartographers were like us but more stupid misunderstands the cultural content of all maps.<sup>102</sup> Modern studies of mental maps find plotting of 'relative locations' and 'spatial preferences'

more informative about movement and social behaviour than conventional maps.<sup>103</sup> It was the mind's eye which ancient chorographers stressed, since written texts, 'la carte écrite', created no lesser visible, spatial images than maps.<sup>104</sup> If anything, the written text was better as a visual aid. Diodorus' survey of Asia would enable readers to follow the history of Alexander's successors 'with the whole topography and spaces set out *in front of their eyes*'.<sup>105</sup>

Within the framework of the mental map the perception was shaped above all by the itinerary, the sense of linear movement between *loci* with visual pauses from fixed viewpoints. Pliny mentally envisaged the geography of the tribes along the Black Sea as an itinerary, even when passing from East to West by routes no Roman had actually travelled. 'Let our imagination cross (*transcendat animus*)', he says, 'the Ripaeian mountains and proceed along the right bank of the ocean.'<sup>106</sup> And that never seems to change. Orosius in the fifth century still visualizes the Christian world in terms of a journey with the pen (*stilo pervagabor*).<sup>107</sup> Written itineraries could be more easily memorized than maps, because they were sequential. That was why Cicero and Quintilian reversed the process and suggested orators should imagine itineraries to organize the memory, which the latter characterizes as 'a large number of *loci* ... with short spaces between them'.<sup>108</sup>

The horizontal perspective of the traveller is caught by the perspective of Roman paintings or reliefs. On the Palaestrina map mosaic of the Nile, for all its sixteenth-century restorations, the panoramic view is preserved with a series of narrative vignettes rising from the foreground to the mountains of Ethiopia in the background.<sup>109</sup> The same, single line of vision typifies the pictures of villas in a formal garden landscape, a fashion which Pliny says (wrongly, as it happens) was the invention of the Augustan period. What is interesting about these paintings, which have been called 'cartographic spatial designs', is Pliny's characterization of them as 'people going to the villas' or 'with an access road'; space, that is, in movement along roads.<sup>110</sup> The formal, visual, landscape is echoed in his description of travel to Mt Nymphaeus in Phtheotis, 'viewed for its garden design of nature' (*topiario naturae opere spectabilis*).<sup>111</sup> For such scenes of 'motion pictures' the base relief was an ideal vehicle. So, it is not surprising to find a modern commentator comparing the scenes on Trajan's column with cinema techniques of travelling and panoramic shots.<sup>112</sup> More to the point here, however, is the horizontal perspective of the *itineraria picta*, already noted in the vignettes of the Peutinger Table, which Vegetius says must be viewed by both the mind (*consilio mentis*) and the eye (*aspectu oculorum*).<sup>113</sup>

It would be wrong to claim that the horizontal view was the only way that Romans perceived space. There was also cosmic mental mapping. Eustathius, the Byzantine commentator of Dionyus Periegetes, imagines him like Daedalus flying over the world and looking down from above. The conceit of looking down from on high, like Icarus or Zeus, was common



among geographers, Lucian tells us.<sup>114</sup> But these were geographic views of the world, valuable for conveying global descriptions and philosophic concepts of divine, rational order, 'as though seeing it with one's own eyes', says Cicero.<sup>115</sup> Pliny found it a helpful way to convey a sense of the extensive oceans encircling the world, 'as it were displayed to the eyes'. And an anonymous Greek geographer went so far as to say, 'Readers can contemplate the whole world *with the eyes of their mind*, without need of a map'.<sup>116</sup>

But vertical perspective was of limited use in describing the real world of travellers or administrators, except in the often misleading attempt to describe the shape of a country. Dionysius was following the principles of cosmology derived from Ptolemy to give a global view of the world, but his work was also a *periegesis*, a guided voyage around it. It may be that his popularity in the schoolroom helps to explain the convergence of geography and chorography in the Later Empire – 'so that what you perceive by your learning ... you can see with your eyes', says Cassiodorus in recommending Dionysius to monks in the sixth century.<sup>117</sup>

By way of summing up, I see four ways in which itineraries and world maps, reflected, but also fashioned, the mental maps of antiquity. First, space itself was defined by itineraries, since it was through itineraries that Romans actually experienced space; that is, by lines and not by shapes. This does not mean that Romans had no 'map consciousness', only a 'utilitarian consciousness'.<sup>118</sup> As in their paintings, they had a different visual comprehension of space from ours. Their mapping sense was accurate for what was needed, even if other aspects were distorted.<sup>119</sup> In graphic form the Peutinger Table looks distorted because the information is hopelessly crowded into the space of a long parchment roll. But the movement was more important than the form. In that respect, therefore, and assuming most strip maps shared these characteristics, ancient maps reflected their function. But the function in its turn created the mental map. Ireland was believed to be North of Britain because it came after Britain on an itinerary.<sup>120</sup>

Polybius, Strabo, Caesar and others made use of geometric images drawn from cosmographs when wanting to give global descriptions of a country or an empire, and Polybius may even have attempted to apply the cosmologists' principle of triangulation. But, if so, it has to be said he attempted it without much success, as though he was using distance to imagine a geometric shape, rather than the shape to calculate a distance.<sup>121</sup> There is not enough here, however, to persuade me that, when it came down to mental mapping on the ground, as it were, Romans ever viewed their localities and environment other than as 'hodological space', the term adopted by Janni.<sup>122</sup>

This means, as Janni explains, that the relationship of locations was unidimensional, the route from A to B or A to C but not the area triangulated

by the three points. Even if there were several itineraries in a region, sometimes side roads, too, running between major points, the points themselves were not imagined in a multi-dimensional or geographic relationship. Relics of that can be found even in Ptolemy's co-ordinates, which were after all an attempt (even if a rare and esoteric one) to break out of the hodological straitjacket.<sup>123</sup> Itineraries or maps could never have been used as guides across country, any more than one can use an Underground map of London to walk around the city. That is why Caesar was lost when he left the route before the Rubicon. And that is why Roman maps are never mentioned in planning military strategy, being useful, according to Vegetius, only for the 'distance between places' and the 'quality of the road'.<sup>124</sup>

Secondly, the essence of itineraries was space between topographic points, towns, vici, *mansiones*, and so on, which followed in linear succession. The mind focused not upon the continuity of the terrain but on the contiguity of the stops. The principle was the same as the rhetoric of *topographia*: 'For the imagination can comprehend any region and in it create or construct ... the site of a place.'<sup>125</sup> It reflected the Roman political view of a world made up of a network of *civitates* and urban space, between which lay nothing except curiosities for the traveller, an historic battlefield or a bridge over a river.

This was the legacy Romans left to the Middle Ages. The 'Isidore Map' of the eighth century in the Vatican shows almost no detail except a large number of the letter 'c' for *civitas*.<sup>126</sup> To turn off the route into space spelt danger (or to the Christian sin), the domain of the anti-citizen, the bandit. The horror of empty space was the worst of war against Celts and Germans, according to Strabo, since they fought 'in pathless, deserted forests, making the uninformed Romans think that what was near was far away and keeping the roads hidden'.<sup>127</sup> On the Peutinger Table blank spaces are filled with rubrics, such as 'Here scorpions are born'.<sup>128</sup>

Thirdly, if all maps are controlled fiction which mediate specific views of the world, it is nevertheless impossible to tell which comes first in geographic perceptions and distortions, the imagination or the map. Italy, for example, was regularly given an almost due East–West orientation, even in Ptolemy. Pliny puts Genova, Rome and Campania on the same latitude. Vergil describes Carthage as opposite Rome. And this is how it appears on the Peutinger Table, parallel to the North African coast, and so close that Carthage looks nearer to Rome than it does to Naples. But was this because Africa, being the granary of Rome and a land of Roman estates, created a mental map of easy accessibility and, therefore, a spatial preference? Or was it because a *periplus* or an itinerary map stretched Europe out in such an orientation that it created the illusion that Africa was that close? We can detect the influence of a *periplus* when Procopius says that Sardinia lay between Rome and Carthage.<sup>129</sup>

It has been suggested that Trajan's expedition into Dacia may have been conducted in the belief that it was a northern salient at all, but lay flattened



out in an East–West direction, as it appeared to Ptolemy.<sup>130</sup> Did Trajan have a map, or did Ptolemy’s map reflect Roman perceptions? The Romans bequeathed this perception to the Middle Ages, since the *imago mundi* of Honorius of Autun in the twelfth century and the mappamundi of Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century continued to show the same orientation and relationship.

The illusion of the global centrality of Rome was created by the geographic theory of the continents and by chorographic itineraries, regardless of whether they were illustrated in map form or not, a typical example of what has been called the ‘omphalos syndrome’ employed by every imperial power. Europeans hardly noticed that the sixteenth-century Mercator projections located two-thirds of the world’s surface in high latitudes.<sup>131</sup> But in Rome the effect was achieved by the network of roads in particular. The names of places they united, what has been called in modern colonial history ‘dispossession through naming’, illustrated the relations between centre and periphery, and that in turn enhanced the rhetoric of control.<sup>132</sup> The routes of the Antonine Itinerary represent the chains that linked the frontiers to the centre.

At the same time, however, such maps were cognitive interpretations, legitimations perhaps, following from practical perception. The discussion between Varro and his friends beside the map in the Temple of Tellus about the natural advantages of Rome’s central position is interesting because it begins from the personal observations of those who had travelled, *vos qui multas perambulastis terras*. From this standpoint it is easier to argue that Augustus believed he could conquer the East as quickly as he had the West, not because he was misled by distances on Agrippa’s Map (which may be true), but because he, in common with all Romans, believed that Rome lay equidistant between the two poles.<sup>133</sup> The illusion created the mental map before the actual map fostered the illusion.

My last conclusion is simply to reiterate what I said about the new perspectives created in the religious itineraries of the Later Empire, from which the Middle Ages again, and rather more obviously, received a legacy from Rome. No known, composite, written itinerary or painted map dates from earlier than the mid-fourth century and none ever functioned as a handbook for travellers. Earlier itineraries were short records of one simple or single journey. The itinerary had therefore passed from the personal to the general, from the local to the universal, the beginning of a more complex sense of topographic relationships. The new mobility of the fourth and fifth century was filling in the gaps of space and time.

Both the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table show the influence of cosmographic geography on chorographic itineraries. The consolidated Antonine Itinerary is more interested in long distances than immediate travel; it is ‘neither utilitarian, nor administrative but cultural’, a recent study concludes.<sup>134</sup> The Peutinger Table of itineraries also reflects the

cosmic orthodoxy of the division of continents and the linking of the Caspian with the outer ocean.<sup>135</sup> The cosmographic lists, the *Demensuratio Provinciarum* and the *Divisio Orbis Terrarum*, though believed to have an ancestry from Agrippa's Map, were also late products. The Ravenna Cosmographer of the late sixth or seventh century, despite his 'careless topography', was attempting the same task as the Antonine Itinerary in producing not an itinerary itself but a crude geography through itineraries.<sup>136</sup> Maps were becoming used not as guides but as historical records, not for actual travellers but for spiritual and mental *perigrinatio in stabilitate*.

There is a seamless continuity from the Antonine Itinerary and the Bordeaux Itinerary of the fourth century to the Anonymous of Piacenza in the sixth, the Ravenna Cosmographer in the seventh and Guido of Pisa in the twelfth. What happened in the Roman world we can perhaps begin to understand from what happened in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although the analogy cannot be pressed in detail. In France perceptions of space changed, through the needs of centralized administration and through an increase in mobility, from the contiguity of 'places' to the continuity of territorial and political space. This is illustrated graphically by the remarkable maps of Nicolas Sanson in 1632, actually superimposing the itineraries of the *Guide de Chemins de France* upon a 'geographic' map of France.<sup>137</sup>

I asked at the beginning of this survey whether Roman perceptions of space might tell us anything about how they regarded frontiers. What is noticeable about the various Roman cartographic or chorographic sources I have quoted is the apparent absence of frontiers as limits to empire. The fragment of the Dura Map from a soldier's shield happens to include the route crossing the Danube between Istropolis and Tyra, that is, moving out of the Roman Empire into the territory of the Costoboci, without showing any landmark to signify a frontier. That may have been a reflection of the remarkable signs of Roman control beyond the frontier through bases in the Crimea.<sup>138</sup> Pliny is the same. His description of the route from the Danube to the Crimaeian Bosphorus gives no hint of passing over a frontier. He does, it is true, elsewhere note boundaries of provinces, such as Numidia or Africa, but he gives us no sense that the journeys to the Troglodytes or the Garamantes were moving through some formal frontier.<sup>139</sup> Strabo talks of tribes beyond the river lines of the advancing Roman armies. But I cannot find a trace of the idea of a limit in what he says, while, by contrast, he almost encourages the vision of an empire beyond the passage of Roman arms.<sup>140</sup>

If we look from the first century to a period when Roman military forts on the outskirts of the Empire took on a more permanent character, the

image does not change. There are no boundary lines marked on Ptolemy's map, nor do frontiers appear in the vulgarized text of Dionysius Periegetes, derived from Ptolemy, which was on the reading list for monks in the sixth century recommended by Cassiodorus. Nor is there any mention of limits or frontiers (as opposed to provincial boundaries) in the cosmographic lists, the *Divisio orbi terrarum* and the *Demensuratio provinciarum*.<sup>141</sup> The Antonine Itinerary, which is essentially a catalogue of the communications within the administered provinces and not of the unadministered territories beyond, does happen to mention Hadrian's Wall but as a point along roads which begin from posts twenty miles beyond it to the North.<sup>142</sup> On the Peutinger Table there are two points marked in the Syrian - Mesopotamian desert as *finis provinciarum*, similar to some inscribed boundary stones, but the general opinion is that these, too, record administrative boundaries, since they correspond to no known military positions.<sup>143</sup>

What interests me most, however, is the absence of any sense of passing through a barrier when moving beyond the territories under direct Roman administration. The only limit is the mental image of where the road ended, since the road brought order to the unknown. That was the point in Strabo's example of the Romans who were lost in Germany when they did not know where the road was. Beyond the end of the route all was 'deserted and nameless', says Arrian.<sup>144</sup>

But the roads were constantly extended by probing outwards, as in Nero's praetorian expedition to Ethiopia or Aelius Gallus' venture into Arabia. Gaius Caesar's invasion of Parthia was planned on the base of the road to Kandahar described by Dionysius of Charax, one of the rare cases we know of chorographic intelligence acquired before an expedition. The probe at right angles to the military front is exactly the sense of *limites* used by Frontinus to describe Domitian's advance to 'uncover the hiding places' of the Germans in AD 83, or by Velleius Paterculus to record Tiberius' offensive in Germany. He penetrated further into the interior and opened up roads (*penetrat interius, aperit limites*), says Frontinus.<sup>145</sup> In surveying terms it was like laying down a new *cardo* to the *decumanus* of the frontier road. That sense of a probing antenna was taken up by the term *praetensio* and *praetentura* in the later Empire, as is confirmed by an inscription along the road projecting out from the Jordanian front into the Wadi Sirhan.<sup>146</sup> The lateral boundaries of public imagination were the roads and rivers, like Britain's Stane Gate, Arabia's *via Traiana* or the great river highways of the Rhine and the Danube. They were the 'narratives' of travel. But they were not the frontiers.

There is no need to repeat what has been said about the military functions of the *mensores* in the surveying of the roads which were recorded on the itineraries. All I want to stress is that there is not the slightest evidence that they created composite military survey maps for the planning of strategic frontiers.<sup>147</sup> The *forma* of Ethiopia produced by the praetorians for Nero could have been no more than a crude sketch listing place names and

distances, since they had no time for anything more.<sup>148</sup> It was probably typical of such military records. The only military duties Balbus records are immediate, practical tasks, such as laying out *rigores ordinati* for a road. Otherwise, most evidence points to administrative activities like military allotments, sorting out land disputes, cadastrating land for tax purposes, or to civil engineering jobs like aqueducts.<sup>149</sup> There is nothing, in fact, to suggest the surveyors produced documents of strategic usefulness.

The most eloquent testimony of this is the silence of Frontinus. He was an aristocratic *agrimensor* ‘manager’ (that is, a writer but not a practitioner), who was also author of the *Strategemata*. In all the military ‘stratagems’ he never once mentions a map of any sort, not even where you might expect it – when he discusses how to choose a site for battle, for example, or how to select a rendezvous in retreat.<sup>150</sup> Nor is there any reference in Onosander’s *Strategikos*, a Greek work dedicated to Q. Veranius, governor of Britain in AD 59, which became hugely influential in Byzantium. A general, he says, must know the stars (for time, however, not for orientation), he must have good guides, he must discuss matters with his staff. But not a word about a map.<sup>151</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, the recent, careful study of Roman strategic planning by Austin and Rankov concludes that, although emperors and generals must have mentally envisaged roads and coastlines for moving troops *within* the Empire, this was, they say, ‘Much less so for the assessment of the limits of territory to be annexed or the predetermination of new frontier lines’.<sup>152</sup> For information before tactical and strategic planning they relied on scouts. I assume that when Velleius Paterculus, a serving officer, spoke of Tiberius’ *mira felicitas* in AD 4 by getting the fleet and the army to meet on the Elbe, he meant it was an exceptional event, although this was not the first visit to the Elbe by a Roman army or fleet. Stranger still, following the expedition, Velleius gives the distance between the Rhine and the Elbe as four hundred miles, when it should be about two hundred and fifty.<sup>153</sup> Even after three centuries of military contact, neither Septimius Severus in the third century, nor Julian in the fourth had much idea of the geography of Mesopotamia.<sup>154</sup>

So, if there was consolidation of general mapping intelligence in the Later Empire, as I have argued, it is nevertheless remarkably difficult to find evidence of it at an official or military operational level. Both the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table are thought to be unofficial initiatives, and there is no shred of evidence to prove any sort of government mapping office or officer at any period.<sup>155</sup> If there is little to show that mental mapping played any part in the planning of individual campaigns, the same is true *a fortiore* of the Grand Strategy of frontiers – that is, assuming we can even begin to talk of such a concept.<sup>156</sup> The perception of empire at that scale was mystical and ideological, as reflected in and created by the cosmologies of the day.

In sum, maps have the power to create 'imagined communities'.<sup>157</sup> Benedict Anderson's book with that title describes how the imposition of the Mercator Map on Siam by a colonial power in 1851 dramatically changed the social and political face of the country. Before that date the comparisons with Rome are quite striking. Two types of maps, says Anderson, fashioned the imagination: the first vertical, cosmic maps of the Buddhists used for spiritual journeys to heaven or hell; the second 'diagrammatic guides' for use in military campaigns and shipping, whose main feature was written-in notes. The perspective of the terrestrial map was entirely horizontal and never located in a larger geographic context. Space was viewed in terms of sacred capitals looking from the centre towards visible, outlying centres of population. As for frontiers, Anderson's study makes a point of underlining that, although rulers in Siam did sometimes set up some discontinuous boundary stones and markers, they were not regarded as limits. 'They were understood horizontally, at eye-level, as extension points of royal power.' Only after the imposition of a European map did the Thai think of boundaries as segments of a map-line. Before then boundaries did not define territorial power.

The Romans, I believe, had much the same way of seeing things.

### Notes

- 1 Suet. *Caes.* 31.
- 2 Levi and Levi 1964: 34; Nicolet 1988: 12–14.
- 3 Pliny, *NH* 2. 187.
- 4 Vitruv. 8. 2. 6.
- 5 Cf. Plaut. *Poen.* 1114 – *formam verbis depinxti*, or Cic. *de rep.* 2. 29 – *in sermone depinxerit*. Although *forma* in Plautus' example means a woman's looks, the word can mean a 'shape', or even a diagram; Campbell 2000: 34.
- 6 Ptol. *Geog.* 1. 1.
- 7 Above all, Levi and Levi 1964; Boscio 1983; and the codex illustrations in Weber 1976.
- 8 The manuscript is discussed by Miller 1916: XIII–XVII.
- 9 As Dilke 1987: 120.
- 10 This is the conclusion of Gallazzi and Kramer 1998, who have published a preliminary report of the papyrus with photographs; they consider that this section of Spain is part of a world map – 'Wir haben es mit einer wissenschaftlichen Landkarte zu tun, die einen Ausschnitt aus dem geographischen Weltbild ihrerer Zeit wiedergibt' (p. 200).
- 11 A good survey of the whole mapping debate is in Brodersen 1995: ch. 1. The proposition I support is most importantly presented by Janni 1984, to whom it will be obvious this chapter owes a great deal. The importance of the itinerary tradition is well stressed by Mattern 1999: 26–41. But challenged by Clarke 1999: 102–3.
- 12 The two best-known examples featuring Aristagoras in Sparta (Hdt. 5. 49) and Strepsiades in Athens (Aristoph. *Clouds*, 200 ff.) are both cited in the context of philosophic, cosmographic originals.
- 13 Woodward 1985: 511; Edson 1997: 11, 26–30, 40.
- 14 Clarke 1999: 207–8; Pliny devotes only a few sections of Book II and Book VI to cosmography.

- 15 Caes. *B Gall.* 5. 13, Strabo 4. 199, Mela 3. 6. 50, Tac. *Agric.* 10. The prize for a variety of such shapely comparisons goes to Dionysius Periegetes, widely read in schools; Jacob 1981: 39–40.
- 16 Not even Ptolemy was immune, and he was enthusiastically vulgarized by Dionysius Periegetes; Jacob 1981: 37. Clarke 1999: 296, discusses the rhetorical tradition of praising cities through their geographic centrality.
- 17 Varro, *RR* 1. 2. 1–4, Vitruv. *de arch.* 8. 2. 6; the same map – Janvier 1994: 59. The same cosmographic context surrounds the ‘painted worlds’ on the *tabula* seen by Propertius from which, he says, he learnt about climates, 4. 3. 39–40.
- 18 Polyb. 3. 36–8; Clarke 1999: 190.
- 19 Strabo 1. 1. 16 – *tas praxeis hegemonikas* can, of course, refer to generals, also.
- 20 Gracchus – Livy 41. 28 (176 BC); shields – Ovid, *Met.* 5. 185 (map of the Nile); 13. 110 (the whole universe); lover – Prop. 4. 3. 35–40.
- 21 Suet. *Dom.* 10; Jacob 1981: 56, discusses the *Periegesis* of Dionysius as a teaching aid.
- 22 The notion that the Dura map was an actual itinerary is self-evidently implausible (Dilke 1985: 121–2); but Sherk 1974: 560 seems to assume it was functional; cf. below, note 57.
- 23 Poly. 2. 14. 4–12 – cf. F. Walbank, *A historical commentary on Polybius*, vol. I, Oxford, repr. 1970, *ad loc.* – ‘a very forced and schematic description’.
- 24 Dilleman 1975.
- 25 Crone 1978; D. Woodward in Harley and Woodward 1987: 292; Brodersen 1995: 273; Edson 1997: 142.
- 26 Pliny, *NH* 3. 17; Nicolet 1988: 108; Zanker 1988: 141.
- 27 Agrippa’s Map – Pliny, *NH* 3. 17; the Autun map – *Pan. Lat.* 9(4). 21; Theodosius’ map – Dicuil, *de mens.* 5. 4.
- 28 Text in *Geog. Lat. Min.*, pp. 21–3 (Riese); discussion in Brodersen, 1995: 262–7.
- 29 Pliny’s references are collected by Dilke 1985: 44–52; Brodersen 1995 notes that the *loci* are coastal sites.
- 30 Nicolet 1988: 112; Janni 1984: 62. The Autun map may be linked to the marble pillar or pilaster, now disappeared, reported to have had on one side a list of Italian cities along the *Via Aemilia*. But another fragment of a written itinerary from Autun suggests more local information (*CIL* XIII. 2681); see Miller 1916: LXXIV.
- 31 Texts in *Geog. Lat. Min.* (Riese); discussed by Nicolet 1988: 104–7. This may explain the reference to the otherwise unknown *chorographia* of Augustus in the *DOT*.
- 32 Argued by Brodersen 1995: 275–8, citing other passages where Pliny uses *spectare* metaphorically; but metaphor does not rule out a literal sense, and at the most creates ambiguity.
- 33 *dum scribit, pingit et alter* – Dicuil, *de mens.* 5. 4. The so-called *Divisio Orbis Terrarum Theodosiana* referred to in a manuscript of Leiden, similar to that of Ripoll, must be linked to this event, as well as having links with Agrippa’s map through the *DOT* and *DP*; Dalché 1992.
- 34 D. Woodward in Harley and Woodward 1987: 326; Edson 1997: 135.
- 35 Antonine Itinerary – Arnaud 1992, Madaba – Dilke 1985, Janni 1984: 125.
- 36 The tensions are excellently discussed by Clarke 1999. Cf. Polyb. 3. 39. 8 and 34. 12. 12; the latter criticized by Strabo (8. 8. 5) for ‘following the chance route of a general’.
- 37 Polyb. 3. 54; Livy 31. 35.
- 38 Livy 9. 36; 40. 21–2; 38. 59; Girod 1974: 481–5.
- 39 Caes. *B Gall.* 1. 1; 5. 13, Strabo 4. 1. 1. Goudineau 1990: 321 reconstructs a map following Strabo’s description but stresses that Caesar’s Roman audience

- had no interest in precise topography. Dilke 1985: 102 discusses a not very convincing map supposedly engraved on a stone at Mauchamp (Aisne); cf. Brodersen 1995: 143–4.
- 40 See Rambaud 1974: 114–16, for distortions (the Ardennes 500 miles long instead of 175, etc.).
- 41 Rambaud 1974: 121–3, but I doubt that Caesar must have had ‘une carte sommaire’ (p. 119) for setting his winter quarters, since local guides were always available (e.g. Caes. *B. Gall.* 2. 7). Compare Lucret. *de re .nat.* 2. 5–6, for viewing battles – *suave etiam belli certamina magna tuerilper campos instructa*.
- 42 Based on Strabo 1. 1. 16–17 (see above, note 19). Clarke 1999: 202 dismisses the idea; I am much indebted to her study of Strabo.
- 43 Rome – Clarke 1999: 216–17; Ephorus – Strabo 8. 1. 3; Miletus etc. – Strabo 14. 1. 9; the Black Sea – Strabo 7. 6. 1.
- 44 Pliny, *NH* 6. 141
- 45 Pliny, *NH* 3. 5, 3. 29
- 46 See the high opinion of Pliny’s information about the route to India held by Tchernia and De Romanis 1997, in contrast to that of Syme 1988b: 229 – ‘a sorry and messy compilation’.
- 47 Pliny, *NH* 3. 31–5; 3. 43; 4. 9; 4. 46; 4. 78.
- 48 Pliny, *NH*, 5. 34; 5. 38; 6. 181; 5. 51; 6. 160.
- 49 Pliny, *NH* 2. 242–6.
- 50 Pliny, *NH* 4. 30–1.
- 51 Central office – Siculus Flaccus, *de condic. agr.* 120. 22–32 (Campbell); cf. the discussions in Campbell 2000: 343, 397.
- 52 Campbell 2000: 204–15 and xxxix–xl.
- 53 Rivet 1974: 68, gives another example; cf. Troussel 1978, esp. 151–3, studying the frontier road in southern Tunisia that used a cadaster orientation on Jebel Bou el Haneche some 200 km to the north-west.
- 54 Rambaud 1974: 127 goes so far as to believe the site may have been surveyed; cf. p. 113.
- 55 Chouquer 1981, especially the plan on p. 854.
- 56 Campbell 2000: xiv–xvi; Dilke 1971: 110–12, 126–32; Dilke 1987: 244; Alexander 1976: 17 (with other similarities in the figure of Rome personified); Levi and Trell 1964.
- 57 It is not important for the argument here that the Dura fragment is thought by some not to be a genuine itinerary; cf. Brodersen 1995: 145–8, for references.
- 58 Ptol. *Geog.* 1. 2 – where he refers to several revisions of the *pinax* of his predecessor Marinus.
- 59 The bibliography of the debate is listed in Dilke 1987: 207, note 29. Most commentators subscribe to the view that it is inconceivable Ptolemy did not produce his own maps; summarized in the introduction to Stevenson 1991.
- 60 Janni 1984: 73 (quoting Beazley); Edson 1997: 165; Crone 1978: 5; Jacob 1992: 85 and 473.
- 61 Ptol. *Geog.* 1. 2; 1. 4; 1. 7–8; 1. 12; 1. 17.
- 62 Müller 1883–1901: I. 141.
- 63 See Janni 1984, discussed below.
- 64 Rivet 1974: 74.
- 65 Survey of roads, etc. – Sherk 1974: 45; travelling sundials – Casson 1974: 176; open sea travel – Tchernia 1997b: 257–8.
- 66 Woodward 1985: 512; Janni 1984: 58–9; Edson 1997: 13.
- 67 Alexander – Pliny, *NH* 6. 61; inscriptions – *AE* 1947, 61, *CIL* VIII. 12914, *IGRR* 1. 1365; Roman sources collected by Sherk 1974.



- 68 E.g. the *castra* on the route Aquincum-Crumero, *It.Ant.* 266; the *ala* stations on *It.Ant.* 254–6; discussed by Arnaud 1993: 36–7; water points – Pliny *NH* 6. 51–2; vignettes for baths and inns on the PT discussed by Levi and Trell 1964.
- 69 Ambr. *Exp.Ps.CXVIII* 5. 2; cf. HA *Alex.* 47.
- 70 *It. Ant.* – Arnaud 1992, *contra* Reed 1978; Peutinger Table – Dilke 1985: 115 is sceptical, *contra* Levi and Levi 1964: 97.
- 71 *It.Ant.* 260; Arnaud 1993: 33 thinks this is the relic of an earlier itinerary
- 72 Tac. *Agr.* 19; *CTb* XI. 1. 9; cf. Reed 1978: 243 for the probable location of *borrea* at Veldidina near Innsbruck as an explanation of its importance on the *It.Ant.*
- 73 The journey of Hadrian (probably) in Cilicia was recorded on an inscription in Rome, *CIL* VI. 5076; Syme 1988a: 160; Alexander Severus published his route in advance by edict, HA *Alex.* 45.
- 74 Notably the various *periploi* of which the best known is the *Periplous Maris Erythraei*, obviously written for traders.
- 75 See below. Miller 1916: LXVII finds no evidence of official work in the *itinerarium maritimum* section of the *It.Ant.* Austin and Rankov 1995: 117 note that Arrian's *Periplus of the Euxine Sea* was not an official dispatch, but it does refer (62. 10) to a supplementary report (probably in Latin) sent to Hadrian.
- 76 Janni 1984: 32; *contra* Casson 1974: 187, who compares the PT to a Michelin routier.
- 77 Arnaud 1993: 35; Dilke 1985: 125–8.
- 78 Reed 1978: 234–5.
- 79 Miller 1916: LXXI suggests they possibly belonged to a travelling businessman or his slaves; Dilke, 1985: 123.
- 80 Bibliography in Dilke 1985: 124.
- 81 Cf. note 22.
- 82 Miller 1916: LXXII–LXXV, and Levi and Levi 1964: 28 provide the essential bibliography.
- 83 Elsner 1995: 128–35.
- 84 *It.Burd.* 572 and 581.
- 85 *It.Eger.* 3. 2
- 86 For instance by Palladius, *Historia Lausiaci* and the *vita Melaniae*.
- 87 Cf. *It.Eger.* 17. 1 – in Mesopotamia *ad visendos sanctos monachos*.
- 88 Basil, *Epp.* .94; 142–3; Gregory Naz. *Or.* 43. 63 (= *PG* 36. 577); Hunt 1982: 66.
- 89 Palladius, *H. Laus.* 35.
- 90 *V. Mel.(Lat)* 52; Jerome, *Ep.* 54. 13; Casson 1974: 319; Hunt 1982: 183–6 and 229.
- 91 Council of Arles (314) – *data evectione publica*, *CSEL* 26. 205; Amm. Marc. 21. 16. 18; Casson 1974: 301–2.
- 92 Letters – Gorce 1925; abuses are listed in the title of *C. Tb* VIII. 5, *de cursu publico, angariis et parangariis*; Council of Sardica – *CSEL* 65. 64.
- 93 *C. Tb* VIII. 5. 35.
- 94 Hunt 1982: 62; Gorce 1925: 146 ff.
- 95 Council of Nîmes, canon 5 (*S. Cbr.* 241. 128); Council of Chalcedon, canon 11.
- 96 *turbae*— *It.Eg.* 49. 1; cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 107. 2; Greg. Naz. *de vita sua* 443–5 (= *PG* 37.1060); Jerome, *Ep.* 58. 4.
- 97 *Anon. Plac. It.* 23.
- 98 Bowman 1983, but he wrongly ascribes this change to the Middle Ages.
- 99 Augustine, *Conf.* 7.1; Kuntz 1983.
- 100 Jerome, *Ep.* 107. 2; cf. Turner and Turner 1978, 6–9; Hunt 1982: 245.



- 101 For example, the recent publication of Edson 1997.  
 102 Edson 1997: vii; Woodward 1985.  
 103 Gould and White 1974: 15–19.  
 104 Jacob 1992: 134 and 249; cf. Janni 1984: 74–8 – ‘uno spazio visuto’.  
 105 Diod. 18. 5. 1.  
 106 Pliny, *NH* 6. 33; P. liked the flight of fancy, since in 4. 94 he says, ‘Crossing the Ripaeian mountains, we must coast along the shore of the northern ocean to the left until we come to Gades’.  
 107 Oros. *Hist. adv. pag.* 1. 2. 51.  
 108 Quint. 11. 2. 21–2; Leach 1988: 75–8; cf. Jacob 1992: 57 – ‘un dispositif mnémotechnique complexe jouant l’interaction de la vision de l’espace et du langage’.  
 109 Leach 1988: 91–3.  
 110 Pliny, *NH* 35. 116–17; Leach 1988: 100.  
 111 Pliny, *NH* 4. 29.  
 112 Malissard 1974.  
 113 Veget. 3. 6; Levi and Levi 1981: 42.  
 114 Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 26; cf. *Icaromen.* 11; Jacob 1981: 27–8.  
 115 Cic. *de nat. deor.* 2. 38. 100.  
 116 Pliny, *NH* 2. 170; *Geog. Gr. Min.* (Riese) II. 494.5.  
 117 Cassiod. *de instit. div. litt.* XXV, *cosmographia a monachis legenda*; Jacob 1981: 57–61.  
 118 *Contra* R.J.A. Talbert, *JRS*, 77 (1987), pp. 210–12. For Roman utilitarianism, see the introductory remarks of Chevallier 1974.  
 119 Cf. Haynes 1980: 35.  
 120 Ireland – ‘più in là lungo un percorso; Janni 1984: 102.  
 121 Clarke 1999: 102–4 argues that Polybius ‘totally confounds’ the notion that space was conceived only in linear terms. But in Polyb. 3.49 the comparison of the triangle Isère–Rhône–northern mountains (perhaps the Chartreuse Massif) with the Nile Delta is ‘absurd’ (Walbank) and serves no geographical purpose. The triangulation of Italy in Polyb. 2.14 was incomprehensible to both Strabo (5. 1. 6) and modern commentators; see note 23.  
 122 Janni 1984: 13.  
 123 See above, p. 70.  
 124 Veget. 3. 6; Austin and Rankov 1995: 117–18.  
 125 Auct. ad Herenn. 3. 19. 32 – *cogitatio enim quamvis regionem potest amplecti et in eam situm loci cuiusdam ... fabricari et architectari.*  
 126 Edson 1997: 63.  
 127 Strabo 1. 1. 17.  
 128 Levi and Levi 1964: 20–2 cite Plutarch on geographers who know nothing and say, ‘Everything beyond is sandy desert with no water or full of wild animals or unexplored marsh’.  
 129 Verg. *Aen.* 1. 13–14; Procop. *BVand.* 4. 13. 42; Janni 1984: 74–8; Dilke 1985: 116–17.  
 130 Mattern 1999: 60–1  
 131 Maps and power, discussed by Harley 1988.  
 132 Gregory 1994: 171.  
 133 References to the earlier debate about Agrippa’s Map are in Whittaker 1994: 14; cf. Isaac 1990: 403 for serious underestimations of distances in the East.  
 134 Arnaud 1993: 46–9 convincingly dates the *It. Ant.* to post-338.  
 135 Levi and Levi 1981: 139.  
 136 Dillemann 1975; Rivet and Smith 1979: 85–215.

- 137 Pelletier and Ozane 1995: 61; this is the theme of Nordman 1998: esp. 511–27.
- 138 See the evidence given by O. Savelya in Freeman *et al.* 2002: 339–48.
- 139 Pliny, *NH* 4. 78; 5. 22 – *Numidiae finis* 5.29 – Africa, etc.
- 140 Clarke 1999: 206 is non-committal about frontiers; but see Strabo 6. 4. 2 – Danube; Strabo 7. 1. 3–4 – Rhine and Elbe; Strabo 17. 3. 25 – provinces and land beyond waiting to be subdued; cf. Whittaker 1994: 26.
- 141 Whittaker 1994: 14–16.
- 142 *It. Ant.* 71.464 (Cunz) – *a limite, id est a vallo*; cf. Bunbury 1883: 95, although he says the routes were ‘strictly within the limits of the Roman Empire’.
- 143 Whittaker 1994: 68 and note 14 (pp. 286–7). I have discussed other such boundary markers in Ch. 1.
- 144 Strabo 1. 1. 17; Arrian, *Peripl.* 20. 2–3, cited by Austin and Rankov 1995: 112–13.
- 145 Frontin. *Strat.* 1. 3. 10; cf 1. 5. 10 (of Pericles) – *limitem agere coepit, tamquam per eum erupturus*. Vell. Pat. 2. 120. See A. Passerini in De Ruggiero, *Diz epigrafico di antichità romane* (Rome, 1895–), s.v. ‘limes’.
- 146 Discussed with references in Whittaker 1994: 200–1.
- 147 Campbell 2000: xl.
- 148 Pliny, *NH* 6. 184, 12. 18–19; Austin and Rankov 1995: 115.
- 149 Campbell 2000: li–lii, who cites the famous inscription concerning the aqueduct at Saldae, in Algeria.
- 150 Frontin. *Strat.* 2. 2; 2. 13; for F’s status, see Campbell 2000: xviii; Cuomo 2000.
- 151 Onos. *Strat.* 10. 15; 39. 2–3.
- 152 Austin and Rankov 1995: 117.
- 153 Vell. Pat. 2.106; I am baffled by the assertion of Syme 1988b: 242 that VP’s figure is evidence of accurate intelligence.
- 154 Isaac 1990: 402–7, with references to other examples.
- 155 Unofficial – Arnaud 1993: 34, *contra* Reed 1978. Austin and Rankov 1995: 140 suggest the possibility of maps archives at the central *scrinia* of the *ab epistulis*, but Talbert 1990/91 is rightly sceptical. Mommsen long ago pointed out that the *comes formarum* in the Late Empire was in charge of aqueducts, not maps.
- 156 Discussed in Ch. 2.
- 157 Anderson 1991: 170–83.

## 5 SUPPLYING THE ARMY

### THE EVIDENCE FROM THE FRONTIER FORT OF VINDOLANDA

It is a banality that the Romans were well aware of the importance of military supplies in maintaining an effective army'. A soldier is not to be feared', says the writer of the *Historia Augusta's Life of Severus Alexander* (52) 'if he is well clothed and armed and shod, and has a full stomach and something in his money belt'. And, of course, modern historians and archaeologists have long discussed the implications of this concern. 'The most important characteristic of Roman imperialism', says one, 'is the means by which it controlled and manipulated basic resources in carrying out a policy of territorial expansion.'<sup>1</sup> This means that the Romans never left the supply of the army, which was an essential element of imperialism, to chance, for fear that the whole imperial system collapsed.

In the last decade there has been a flood of publications of Roman documents which have underlined this importance, either directly or indirectly in various parts of the Empire,<sup>2</sup> and these documents supplement the collections of ostraca, inscriptions and papyri that we already possessed.<sup>3</sup> But the most dramatic of the new publications are those of the tablets from Vindolanda on the North British frontier.

The aim of this chapter is to examine some of these texts, starting from the tablets of Vindolanda, with the object of asking what more we can learn from them about the system of supply to the Roman army. But first a word of warning. Among the Vindolanda archives so far published there are only about twenty tablets directly concerned with supplies, while by 1993 the inventory of numbered tablets was already over 1,500 – a number that is forecast to rise.<sup>4</sup> Similarly at Mons Claudianus in Egypt only 416 ostraca have been published out of a total of nine thousand which have been found. And who knows what more the sands of Africa will reveal? Inevitably, therefore, any conclusions here must be regarded as provisional.

The extraordinary thing, in view of the importance of military supplies, is how little we really know about the way they were collected and organized. I want to look closely at four particular and overlapping questions, the same questions that I formulated in my book, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, which naturally concentrate on the army of the frontiers.<sup>5</sup> They are:

(a) Was the system in the hands of the army or was it given out by contract to civilians? Was it organized by the state or given to private entrepreneurs and traders? These are problems of importance in understanding the broader character of Roman trade.<sup>6</sup>

(b) What proportion of the supplies came from a long distance, what from the local, frontier region? In other words, whom did the army as consumers benefit economically, big businesses or local suppliers?

(c) Closely related is whether the transactions were carried out in cash or in kind. Were the goods requisitioned as tax or were they purchased? This question has been much discussed in the context of the overall Roman economy, the extent of its monetization and the volume of exchange, which inevitably affected the impact that the army had on local communities.<sup>7</sup>

(d) Finally comes the question of the 'barbarians', a misleading word to describe those living beyond the frontiers. How much did they contribute to military supplies and how much came through symbiotic exchange? I have argued that it was cross-frontier transactions which transformed the frontiers and developed the social and political power of the communities on the margins of the Roman Empire. Can Vindolanda improve on that statement?

Before concluding these preliminary remarks it is worth underlining some points regarding the context of the tablets from Vindolanda and their history, which may not be familiar to everyone. Although the first fort at Vindolanda was perhaps built about AD 80/90 (Period I) and reconstructed or enlarged a few years later (Period II), the period about which we know most from the tablets is in the reign of Trajan, *c.* AD 98–105 (Period III), when the fort, which formed part of the frontier of the Stanegate road, was occupied by an auxiliary cohort of Batavian cavalry plus some detachments. This was, therefore, before the construction of Hadrian's wall, traditionally dated *c.* AD 122, although some of the tablets dating from AD 105–*c.*122 (Period IV) look as if they contain references to preliminary work on the Wall after a Tungrian cohort had replaced the Batavians.<sup>8</sup> All these wooden forts were quite different from the later, stone fort visible today.

The work of reconstructing the original wooden fort entailed filling in the old, low lying *fossa* in order to build on top of it. That caused the old ditch to collect water, despite repeated efforts to fill and seal the area, and it was here that the archaeologists found a large number of leather goods (two hundred shoes, for example, including those of women and children) along with bones and cloth. The first building erected on top of the old ditch filling was the *praetorium* house of the commander (in Period II), which was subsequently (in Period IV) reconstructed as living quarters and finally became a military workshop. But rising damp from the water collecting in the old ditch was a continual problem, which the soldiers tried to remedy by

sealing it off with layers of clay and bracken. It was the remarkable anaerobic conditions created by the filling which has preserved the wooden structures of the earlier building beneath it, together with the hundreds of tablets which form the bulk of the Vindolanda archive.

The Vindolanda 'tablets' are in fact thin slivers or 'leaves' of wood which served as paper for writing in ink; although there are also some fewer documents engraved on wax stylus tablets which are as yet unpublished. The important point about all the tablets, however, is that they were nothing like the official, army archives that have been found in other parts of the empire. The letters and records were written on cheap material, obviously designed to be disposed of.<sup>9</sup> Some, indeed, had been thrown away and partly burnt outside the wooden *praetorium* building, probably when the Batavian cohort was transferred at the end of Period III, c. AD 105, and was replaced by the Tungrian cohort. They dealt with the ephemera of camp life and more especially with details of the life of the Batavian commander, Flavius Cerialis and his officers, who were the earlier occupants of the *praetorium*. The largest dossier, indeed, belonged to Cerialis and his wife, containing copies of their personal and official correspondence, as well as kitchen accounts and lists of clothing.

One of the problems, therefore, in drawing general, military conclusions from the tablets is that many concern only officers. But there are also some tablets concerning the provisions and equipment of the camp as a whole, particularly in the post-Batavian period. Some are letters from officers and ordinary soldiers which contain indirect information about supplies.

Let me, therefore, turn to the first question of whether the provisioning of the army was in the hands of soldiers or civilians, and what we can learn from the tablets about traders.

The alternatives, soldier or civilian, have been badly posed. Instead of 'or' we should say 'and'. It has been calculated (based on *Tab. Vindol.* I. 1, II. 155) that the *fabrica* of the camp contained approximately 340 persons.<sup>10</sup> In parenthesis, we should note that in the *fabrica* of the camp at Catterick (*Cataractonium*) archaeologists have found the remains of a tannery which dates from between the invasions of Agricola and circa AD 120, exactly our period. So it is no surprise to find references to hides (*coria*) and Catterick on the same tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 343).<sup>11</sup> In these sorts of military *fabricae* we know very well from documents that military specialists, who were *immunes*, worked alongside civilian *pagani* and slaves. As an example, we have a papyrus, now in Berlin, containing a list of *immunes* of the *fabrica* among whom there were eight *pagani* and an unspecified number of *galliarii* (slaves, according to the editors).<sup>12</sup> The same is true of Mons Claudianus in Egypt, which, though not a military site, was guarded by soldiers, where the *ergatai paganoi* appear listed on an ostrakon together with *ergatai familias*, who are obviously slaves, in the proportion of one *paganus* to four slaves.<sup>13</sup>

So the first conclusion, which is not new but often strangely omitted from calculations about the size of the Roman army, is that we ought to include civilian artisans, who probably had to be supplied by the army. This is in addition to numerous references to slaves, both public and private, the latter particularly, though not only, belonging to officers, who also had to be fed and clothed either by the army or by their master. From the Republic onwards we know of a great many such servants from our sources; for example, the *calones* who helped Caesar in the supply services, or those whom Josephus called 'servants attached to each legion' in Judaea or 'slaves of the camp' in Hadrian's day.<sup>14</sup> At Vindolanda there is no doubt about the presence of slaves. One tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 302), for example, records a slave of the *praetorium*, who looks as if he was buying provisions for the officers; another (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 225) refers to military clothing ordered through the army for a centurion's *pueri*. At Vindonissa up to 2,000 slaves are assumed to have been in the camp.<sup>15</sup>

Judging by the ostraca at Mons Claudianus, the people who worked there were not necessarily fed by the army, since we have records of payment in money to them. But Mons Claudianus was not a military site and had only a small garrison to supervise a large, civilian work force. So the comparisons may not be valid. The Vindolanda tablets, however, come from a fort established soon after the conquest of North Britain, so we might expect the civilians and slaves who appear there to be an integral part of the army of occupation, and consequently to have received military supplies. In fact, on one tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 180) the name 'Primus of Lucius' (that is, his slave) appears in the same receipt of rations of wheat as that of the soldiers. By way of comparison, a papyrus from the camp at Dura Europos on the Euphrates reads, 'I request that you oblige the man in charge, the freedman of our Augusti, to give to the horsemen and the muleteers of the vexillum Appadanensis some barley from the fiscal estates ...'<sup>16</sup> This was a letter sent by the *procurator/praepositus* of the frontier to the tribune at Dura asking him to supply an outpost where the muleteers were probably either civilians giving *corvée* service (as often happened) or slaves. Either way they were given provisions along with the army. There is other good documentary evidence, too, that civilians and slaves were given military *cibaria*.<sup>17</sup>

One might have expected that in the early days of an invasion there would be fewer civilians, whose number would increase as stability was achieved. And that is what many Romano-British archaeologists have proposed.<sup>18</sup> But it is not at all certain that this was true. For example, at Holt (not far from the legionary camp of Chester) intense production of all types of pottery began very early during the first century and continued into the beginning of the second century on military territory where it seems some houses belonged to civilians.<sup>19</sup> Similarly at Sheepen (near Colchester) a civilian centre for the production of leather goods appeared immediately after the invasion of Britain of AD 43, which stopped about AD 60.<sup>20</sup> In the

*Digest* there is a quotation under the heading of *disciplina Augusta*, which shows that the first emperor was reluctant to employ too many soldiers as artisans, implying that civilians were employed instead. By contrast, during the third century the list of *immunes* soldiers employed as artisans, was a long one, including chariot makers, lead smiths, iron smiths, lime makers, charcoal makers, and others.<sup>21</sup>

There is no reason, of course, why civilians employed in a camp should be natives of the region. But the advantages of having workers who knew the local conditions are obvious, provided security was not compromised. The tablets of Vindolanda, written very soon after the campaigns of Agricola and before the northern part of the province had been stabilized, do not contain references to anyone who can be identified for certain as a free, civilian worker. But equally there are a number of men engaged in transactions outside the camp who could well have been civilians. The most likely example (*Tab. Vindol. II. 344*) is of a man who calls himself *hominem tra(n)smarinum* and complains that he had been beaten, probably by a soldier, which sounds like military abuse of non-citizen civilians.<sup>22</sup> Since the tablet was found under the floorboard of a later military barrack, it suggests that he had worked inside the camp as a foreign civilian, a Gaul perhaps, serving under military orders.

Another tablet (*Tab. Vindol. II. 213*) probably refers to an interpreter, acting as a contact between two parties, although we do not know exactly who they were. There would be nothing surprising about employing a civilian, who was also perhaps a trader, in such a role, although soldiers and veterans, too, sometimes doubled as traders. In an inscription from Boldog near Carnuntum, beyond the Danube in Slovakia, which dates probably from the first century AD we find an *inter(p)rex*, Q. Atilius Primus, who was, or had been, a military centurion, although the fact that he also lists himself as a *negotiator* could mean that, as a veteran, he had taken up another profession in civilian life. But in another inscription from the same region we find an *interprex S(armatorum) e(x) o(ffici)o co(n)sularis* – which probably means that he was a *beneficiarius consularis* and, therefore, still a soldier.<sup>23</sup>

Since we have arrived at trade and traders, this raises the question of how military supplies were procured, whether by the state or through private contractors or both. This is not the place for a full discussion on the roles of the state versus private contractors and traders, although a recent study of Republican references to contractors casts doubts on their importance for essential military supplies. Rather they were negotiated between state officials and local communities, the latter being responsible for delivery to military depots.<sup>24</sup> This accords with the statements of Strabo and Tacitus that in the Empire officials supervised the supply and delivery of provisions.<sup>25</sup> Other studies have detected a role for the Roman navy in transporting food and material goods to military bases in Britain.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the epigraphic evidence, above all in Gaul and Germany, of civilian



*negotiatores* and shippers transporting essential supplies (wheat, wine, etc.) along major military supply routes strongly suggests they played some, even if unquantifiable, part in the system, not to mention the added complication that sailors of the fleet or soldiers sometimes doubled as traders.<sup>27</sup>

As we know from the military document we call *Hunt's Pridianum*, there was always the possibility of individual military units procuring goods directly from producers in quite distant provinces. Some support for this comes from the *tituli picti* or graffiti recording names of individual legions or officers on amphorae of wine, garum and oil reaching frontier provinces, including those found in camps on Hadrian's Wall.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, although large numbers of barrel staves and bungs of imported barrels have been found at Vindolanda, the graffiti are reported to be not very helpful about origins or modes of transport. Oil amphorae at Vindolanda which came from Spain are similarly uninformative about state involvement, although the name of one trader appears on the *titulus pictus*. The stamps also follow the pattern of imports into Britain as a whole, suggesting civilian traders, although Funari has suggested a political bias in the distribution.<sup>29</sup>

Another possible sign of traders is the Black Burnished ware produced in South-West England, which has been found in quantities on the military sites of the North and is regarded as a tracer for military supplies to the British frontier. That has been stressed again in a recent study, which sees in it a direct association with construction material being imported for Hadrian's Wall and with inscriptions recording the *classis Britannicus* that have been found in the camps. Indeed the writers propose this as part of 'a supply network which originated in the Hadrianic system', which included provision of perishables from the continent and South Britain.<sup>30</sup>

If we turn to the Vindolanda tablets for hints of such a public-private partnership, there is a reference (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 91/1022*) to *Caesariani*, that is, imperial officials, in a tablet linked to grain that was apparently collected by British tribesmen. It perhaps compares with the ostraca at Bu Ngem recording an imperial *procurator* arranging delivery of oil, and 'letters of consignment' certifying the grain dispatched by a soldier to the camp, which was carried by camel drivers of the Garamantes.<sup>31</sup> At Vindolanda there is a very fragmentary letter (*Tab. Vindol. II. 185*) referring to business costs, perhaps a claim for *viaticum* travel expenses, and connected with what seems to be travel to various military camps for food, fodder and equipment. We also have a tablet (*Tab. Vindol. II. 255*) referring to an officer returning to Vindolanda from Gaul which is concerned with clothing supply, a distinct echo of the soldiers of the Moesian unit, recorded in *Hunt's Pridianum*, who travelled *in Gallia vestitum*.<sup>32</sup> So far, therefore, one gets the impression that the role of the state was predominant.

As to private traders, the evidence is as ambiguous as, indeed, was the practice. The same letter (*Tab. Vindol. II. 344*) as that in which the *homo transmarinus* complained about being beaten mentions *mercem* (trade), which



was, therefore, perhaps in the hands of a foreign civilian. But, if so, the context of the find shows that he was a civilian closely connected to the army. This letter was part of the same dossier as two other tablets, both of them among the most important information we have from Vindolanda about supply transactions. All of them date from the later Period IV of the wooden camp, that is, after the replacement of the Batavians by the Tungrian cohort, when the army was well established on the Stanegate and perhaps preparing to build Hadrian's Wall.<sup>33</sup>

One of these two other tablets (*Tab. Vindol. II. 181*) is an account of monies received and unrepaid loans, listing a variety of persons, including 'Alio the *veterinarius* and Vitalis the *balniator* (in charge of the baths)', whose status as civilians or soldiers is unclear, alongside cavalry members of an attached cohort and a standard bearer. The second tablet (*Tab. Vindol. II. 180*) is headed *ratio frumenti*, being a stock account of wheat issues, which begins, 'An account of the wheat measured from that which I myself placed in the barrel [...] to myself for bread [...] to Macrinus seven *modii*', and so on. At first sight it appears to be an issue of regular rations to soldiers and camp personnel, since the recorded total is substantial, 2,000 bushels (*modii*) issued over ten days of September, which would have been enough to feed 200 people. The wheat was also issued on the orders of military officers, Spectatus and Firmus, and it was given to soldiers, some of them not part of the Tungrian cohort (for example, *beneficiario* or *militibus legionaribus (sic)*). Among the recipients some might have been civilians or *immunes* soldiers working on the *territorium* of the camp; men such as the *bubulcaris in silvan* in charge of the cattle, or those in charge of pigs and cattle (*ad porc*os and *ad iuven*cos), or the person 'in charge of the shrine' (*ad fanum*).

Reinforcing the impression that this was some sort of official ration, no sums of money are listed against the issues, although some wheat was released on loan (*comodati*). A soldier's regular supplies, as we know, were deducted at source from his pay, and would not therefore normally carry a price on an issue manifest, although there are exceptions to this rule on Egyptian supply issues (discussed below). On the other hand, there are some puzzling entries which make it look more like a private account, since two items refer to *patri*, presumably the father of the account holder. Should we conclude, therefore, that we have here a sub-account for those not on the normal strength of the unit in the camp, whether civilians or soldiers, which was run by an entrepreneur at the wishes of the army commander?

The differences between this account and an official ration issue become clear, if we compare it with the contemporary manifest of wheat and barley issued by the *summus curator* to the cavalry unit at Carlise, a standard three-day ration.<sup>34</sup> We also have for comparison the second century AD ostraca from Pselkis in Egypt, which are receipts for official rations, that have to be countersigned by individual soldiers.<sup>35</sup> In these ostraca the soldiers acknowledge receipt of grain (*siton*, *pyron*) but also of lentils, salt, vinegar and wine

(some with the value in money attached) which, interestingly, were all included in the official rations (*achri tou opsoniou*). Although the food was actually distributed by the *cibariator*, who may have been either civil or military, the receipt went to the *optio*, who is called 'the receiver of grain' and was certainly a soldier.<sup>36</sup> At Mons Claudianus (*O. Claud.* 155–6) the *cibariates* (as they are styled on the document), who travelled from the food depot, were probably soldiers.

The ambiguity between civilian and soldier, private and military, continues in the longest and most complete letter we possess (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 343). Two people, Octavius et Candidus, were involved in transactions to obtain supplies for the army, and needed large sums of money to purchase sizeable quantities of different kinds of goods (for example, 5,000 *modii* of spelt wheat (*spicae*); and hides from Cataractonium, with a mention of 170 treated hides). It all looks like official military business. But the letter seems to be dealing with private transactions at the same time, since there is discussion of repayment of some small debts (one for 8<sup>1/2</sup> denarii). So whether Octavius and Candidus were soldiers or civilians making purchases for the army, they were clearly closely connected to the army, since there is a reference to a mutual friend, Fronto, as *contubernalis*, a military term usually meaning 'tent mate'.<sup>37</sup> Two other friends, Spectatus and Firmus, are referred to, who could have been the centurions who appear in the stock account (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 180) referred to earlier.

The reference in the Octavius–Candidus tablet to a wagon and to the beast of burden gives the impression that the correspondents were transporting the provisions themselves. That would fit in with a further tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 309) concerning the spare parts in wood required for carts. It is entirely possible that these transporters were civilians under contract, although there is no proof of that.<sup>38</sup> There is quite a number of fragmentary references to unloading of wagons, but the most suggestive is one which refers to 'British wagons' in connection with supplies.<sup>39</sup> Like the ostraca from Bu Nem in Libya referring to *camelli* (camel riders) belonging to native tribesmen bringing in supplies, they appear to show that there were native civilians either serving *corvée* duty or fulfilling military contracts or both.<sup>40</sup> At Vindolanda the carriers were paid, although in kind (*merce*). A particularly revealing fact at Bu Nem is that the grain was listed in a local African measure, while the Vindolanda tablets frequently refers to native grain (*bracis*).

All this shows, at the very least, that civilians and soldiers worked closely together, often within the same operation. This has long been clear from the famous wax tablet of Tolsum in Holland. It concerns the purchase of cattle (*emptio bovis*), where a certain Gargilius Secundus, apparently a civilian purchaser for the army, made a contract for cattle, but it was witnessed by two centurions and by a veteran.<sup>41</sup> The employment of civilians for military procurement goes back to the Republican period when, for example, Julius

Caesar used a civilian trader in Gaul *negotiandi causa*, to take charge of the food supply. But that does not necessarily imply that such men played a major role in the system.<sup>42</sup>

In Egyptian documents some *conductores* (contractors) seem to have been part of the actual military unit, and this may be the explanation at Vindolanda. For example, in one a *conductor* called Porcius appears on a list of soldiers *opera vacantes* (that is, they were *immunes*).<sup>43</sup> And on a military pay list there is an auxiliary, called Pantarchus, born *castris* (that is, son of a soldier), who drew money from his account to buy the contract for something unknown.<sup>44</sup> In another we come across *conductores fenarii*, the holders of a contract to provide fodder, who were given a receipt by the procurator.<sup>45</sup> But the curious thing is that the procurator, who was usually a civil official, is in this papyrus called the *conturmalis* (comrade) of 30 horsemen of the *ala veterana Gallica* at Oxyrhynchus. So, if even *conductores* could be soldiers, the distinction between soldier and civilian was hopelessly obscure.

One possible explanation for some of the references is that at one stage military contracts for food were sold by the *primus pilus*, the senior centurion of the legion, who could thus earn substantial sums of money (*commoda*). Support comes from a fragmentary papyrus from Dura-Europos which mentions military supply (*seitiou*) in association with a centurion and the *primus pilus*.<sup>46</sup> In the Later Empire this function of the *primus pilus* came to be called *primipili pastus*. But by then the once profitable perquisite had become an obligation, a *munus*, to transport the *annona* to the *dux* on the frontier. It was extremely unpopular, since no doubt it had ceased to make money. Linked to this form of supply, in the High Empire there is an inscription from Carnuntum on the Danube, which refers to a certain *conductor prati*(i), who was at the same time a *miles* of XIV legion Martia Victrix, and it is dated in the *lustrum* of the *primus pilus* who, we may assume, let out the contracts. The reference to the *conductor prati* or 'tenant on the pasture land', relates to another much debated aspect of supply, which comes up later in connection with Vindolanda, concerning the *territorium* of a military camp, the *prata legionis*, as a source of food production.<sup>47</sup> Here it is enough to note once again the ambiguity between soldier and civilian in the status of such farmers.

In several of the Vindolanda tablets we have lists of items of food and other goods against cash sums (e.g. *Tab. Vindol. I. 5*), which surely means that they were sold. But sold by whom? The presence of civilian traders in the *vicus* would hardly be surprising, and there is no need here to repeat all the evidence. In general, the civilian *vici* and the *canabae* were an integral part of Roman military sites, and it is likely that military surveyors (*mensores*) took account of space for them right from the moment when they laid out the camps.<sup>48</sup> On Hadrian's Wall, for example, the Vallum behind the camp is thought to have been deliberately filled in to make room for such settlements at Carrawburgh and Birdoswald. While Arrian, the

Hadrianic governor and writer of military treatises, informs us, 'Because it was desirable ... to protect the dwellings outside the fort, which were occupied by veterans and others who were traders, I decided to dig a trench ...'<sup>49</sup> In Britain the diversity of the pottery on military sites is often taken as evidence of shops in the *vicus* and travelling salesmen rather than military contractors, although it is perfectly plausible that private, commercial goods travelled with state contractors.<sup>50</sup>

No doubt it was the money in the pockets of the soldiers which attracted the traders, but the *vici* also served an essential function for the army by providing supplementary goods and communications with the local population (especially with the women), as well as providing homes and employment for veterans. Among the Vindolanda tablets there are a few references to the veterans, one (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 93/1462*) in connection with hunting nets, which no doubt explains a source of the game and venison sold to the officers; another (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 93/1474*) links a veteran to the supply of poultry for officers and other special occasions.

I assume that the many references to Celtic beer were for drink brewed outside the camp in the *vicus*. But, as shown in the letter (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 93/1398*) from a decurion to Cerialis, the commander, his complaint of beer shortages for his unit on detachment shows it was regarded as an essential item of military provision. The brewers, however, seem to be included among the personnel of the camp in the sales account (*Tab. Vindol. II. 182*) and the very fact that all these accounts were found among the camp documents would at the very least indicate the close rapport between civilian and soldier, if not that a soldier actually ran the accounts.

In Britain, by contrast with Gaul, we have almost no direct record of *mercatores* nor about their presence in the *vici*. Long-distance traders who travelled to Britain have left a certain amount of evidence of their activity on either side of the Channel.<sup>51</sup> But within the military zone of North Britain I can find only two possible references: one an *ex voto* inscription on Hadrian's Wall at Bowness on Solway, dedicated by a certain [Ant]onianus who begs the gods for 'an increase in his trade' before he sets off, perhaps beyond the frontier;<sup>52</sup> the other, which is less probable, is an inscription recording Barathes of Palmyra who was called a *vexilarius (sic)* and died at the age of 68, too old to be a soldier and 'standard bearer', so, perhaps, a 'standard maker'.<sup>53</sup>

The Vindolanda tablets, therefore, are a valuable further source of information about just how many financial and trade transactions took place within the camp and its vicinity. Some of those commodities, which are discussed later, were obviously supplied locally and were most probably sold in the *vicus* market.

Many of the tablets at Vindolanda indicate what the soldiers ate, apart from the official rations; fewer show what equipment they used. We should remember, however, that the majority of the tablets were found in the area

of the commander's house and the officers' quarters; so the food referred to was probably that supplied to the officers. One tablet (*Tab. Vindol. II. 299*) speaks of a gift of fifty oysters with a reference to a decurion; they must surely have come from a civilian source.<sup>54</sup> Another (*Tab. Vindol. I. 4*) gives a day by day account of distribution of food and sums of money, some (perhaps all) for religious festivals, since *ad sacrum* is listed three times. Since there is no wheat on the list and since there is more quality wine recorded than the standard-issue, sour wine (*acetum*), plus frequent issues of Celtic beer (*cervesa*), it is difficult to believe that these were normal rations rather than supplementary food provided for special purposes. But just who was keeping the account of these items, which were not apparently sold, is again unclear. The context looks like a military imprest account. Such a large amount of beer is unsurprising in a camp occupied by northern units of Batavians or Tungrians. But one wonders whether the festivals were also attended by local, native civilians or even by British auxiliaries, since local recruiting into foreign units was certainly not unknown.

By contrast, the account of food sold for cash (*Tab. Vindol. I. 5*) contains a list of different foods which are much more exotic; spice (*condimentum*), four kinds of meat (*caprea porcellum perna cervina*), two types of wheat (*frumentum et braxis*), which look much more like supplies purchased for the officers, or for their servants in the case of native *braxis*. Food for officers is probably the subject, too, of a tablet (*Tab. Vindol. II. 302*) which contains the word *emantur* (purchase), and seems to be a shopping list given to the slave of the Tungrian prefect, Verecundus; items such 100 apples, 100–200 eggs, and so on. Reference was made earlier to a tablet (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 93/1474*) containing a domestic stores record of a remarkable number of chickens, geese and other food consumed over several months, probably at official dinners given by the commander, Cerialis.<sup>55</sup>

I have touched several times on the second question, the origins of the supplies and its importance in determining which sector of the economy the army stimulated, whether that associated with long-distance traders or local markets. As we have seen in the Vindolanda catalogues, some of the perishable provisions, like eggs and apples, must have come from the neighbourhood, while other, Mediterranean produce must have come from far away – olive oil, olives, exotic wine, pepper, and things not produced locally. Verecundus' slave, for example (*Tab. Vindol. II. 302*), was told to get the apples only if they were good, which implies a local supplier, although olives were also included in his list, which suggests that he visited shops in the *vicus* which sold imported goods.

One tablet (*Tab. Vindol. I. 4*) alludes to the arrival (*allatus*) of a particular wine, which may have been Massic ([*Ma*]ssec[.]), a wine that Pliny tells us was of high quality. In the Swiss camp at Vindonissa amphorae have been found which came from as far away as Surrentum and Messina, and there is

no reason why military camps in Britain should have been any different.<sup>56</sup> That is confirmed by the remains of foreign-wine barrels in the wooden fort of Vindolanda, which also, incidentally, confirms that barrels for long-haul exports were more common before the third century AD than is sometimes believed. The finds of Spanish oil amphorae are perhaps a reflection of the fact that they were also the commonest source of oil imports at York.<sup>57</sup> Like the pepper found in the Augustan camp at Oberaden in Germany within a few years of its foundation, the imported goods indicate that long-distance goods arrived almost at the same time as the army.<sup>58</sup> The pepper referred to at Vindolanda (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 184) presumably came with traders, since it was sold.

It is nevertheless difficult to discover much certain information in the tablets about the origin of the provisions. Oysters, for instance, were common on every coast of Britain in Roman times, but at Vindonissa the oysters came from Portugal. The large quantities and variety of meat mentioned earlier (*Tab. Vindol.* I. 5) do not resolve the debate about whether Roman soldiers ate meat regularly, since it could have been for officers only.<sup>59</sup> Most, particularly the game, was probably supplied locally, although the ostraca at Mons Claudianus in Egypt show that meat could be imported in amphorae (*kerameia tōn kreadiōn*, etc.), and salted or smoked meat was often eaten (including by the future Emperor Trajan) on the lower Rhine frontier, where smoke chambers have sometimes been discovered in the camps.<sup>60</sup> The high proportion of cattle bones at Vindolanda and Corbridge indicate high levels of beef consumption, some of it from Celtic short horns, which would probably have been local.<sup>61</sup>

We can be reasonably sure that the barley was of British origin, since its cultivation was important in Britain before the arrival of the Romans, and it is significant that we have so many references to it in the tablets of Vindolanda. The same is true of the *bracis* mentioned in several letters, which was a local Celtic grain, probably used for beer making. It is often said that these two cereals were not eaten by the men, but in the Octavius - Candidus letter (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 343) the *bracis* was threshed, which sounds as if it was prepared for human consumption; and barley was, after all, eaten by natives of northern Europe from whom recruits were drawn. In another letter (*Tab. Vindol.* inv. 91/1108) it seems the *bracis* was delivered by British transporters in large quantities.<sup>62</sup> And in a third (*Tab. Vindol.* inv. 91/1022) there is mention of imperial servants (*Caesariani*) involved in transactions, perhaps in grain procurement, conducted by three men, Cocceius Maritimus (who was presumably an officer), someone called Major, who wrote the letter and had access to a store of *bracis* (if the reading is correct), and Major's father, who must have been a veteran or a civilian.<sup>63</sup> There is a fragmentary pair of lists (*Tab. Vindol.* inv. 93/1495) showing individual allocations of winter wheat (*siligo*), which seems to have been collected from nearby by soldiers, possibly from the grain stores at Corbridge (*Coria*) in the Tyne



Valley, where there is a reference elsewhere to contacts.<sup>64</sup> But how the central granary was stocked we do not know.

Spelt wheat (*spica*) was consumed everywhere in British Late Iron Age communities, so the several references to it in the tablets, including the considerable quantity of 5,000 *modii* in the Octavius–Candidus letter (above), could theoretically have been grown locally. However, the amount of grain required by the army was enormous. At Carlisle the cavalry unit of 500 men were issued with 32,500 *modii* of wheat per year,<sup>65</sup> and at Vindolanda the cohort was sometimes supplemented by detachments of cavalry or legionaries plus civilians. For supplies of regulation wheat, therefore, it seems likely that it would have been necessary to import from a distance, at least in the early days of the fort. The importation of Black Burnished ware from South-West Britain to the Solway, which began about AD 120, almost certainly indicates that other, more essential military supplies were arriving by ship, which fits in with the suggestion that Briga, which appears in the tablets to be near Vindolanda, may have been a port, perhaps Kirkbride, used for that purpose.<sup>66</sup> Carlisle, too, was accessible by ships.

We have a very imperfect understanding of wheat crops in Britain, but the limited evidence from charred seed assemblages suggests that bread (or naked) wheat was uncommon until later periods, unlike the situation on the Rhine where the opposite was true. Wheat imported onto northern military sites, therefore, would have come from southern Britain. That seems confirmed by the pattern of seed assemblages on the native site of Thornborough, just south of Hadrian's Wall, and by the evidence from York, where the need for imports continued for some 30 to 40 years after the first occupation.<sup>67</sup> Subsequently, however, it is a question of how much local agriculture was able to respond to Roman needs.

The references to transport in the Vindolanda tablets unfortunately do not help to clarify the origins of the supplies. Catterick, from where the leather hides and wagons came in the Octavius–Candidus letter, is not far from Vindolanda. Corbridge, which had substantial grain stores, was only seventeen miles away, and Carlisle, which is referred to, is also close.<sup>68</sup> One fragmentary tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* inv. 93/1503B) mentions goods ordered from London and another (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 255) clothing coming, perhaps, from Gaul.<sup>69</sup> As we saw (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 344), there is a reference to *hominem transmarinum*, which may imply someone bringing supplies from Gaul, although not necessarily so. But we can see the involvement of officialdom in the transport. At Bu Nem military supplies came by camel from the oases on the orders of a soldier of the unit, and oil was sent by the *procurator* of the *ratio privata* probably from Lepcis Magna.<sup>70</sup>

Most of the relevant Vindolanda documents concerning transport of food and equipment appear to refer only to movement from a nearby depot to the camp, although the activities of imperial agents (*Caesariani*) in the letter



noted earlier concerning supplies rather suggests a search further afield, perhaps from imperial estates in the South. A papyrus from Dura Europos speaks of grain which comes from the *praedia fiscalia*, that is, from imperial estates, which may have been on the Euphrates or further away.<sup>71</sup> That would parallel a long-standing suggestion that imperial estates in southern Britain, also, produced food for the northern army.<sup>72</sup>

One source of local supplies, which is commonly proposed for the production of food and pasturing of animals, is the land adjacent to the fort, the military *territorium* or *prata*, referred to earlier.<sup>73</sup> The most striking examples come from the legionary camps at Windisch (Vindonissa) in Switzerland and Xanten (Vetera) on the Lower Rhine. For the latter it has been argued that the *territorium* extended 11 km by 3 km, enough to produce 1,500 tons of wheat and hence to feed 6,000 legionaries. But the premises of the argument are doubtful, since they assumed that wherever bricks marked with the legion's stamp were found they must mark the *territorium*.<sup>74</sup> In Britain this assumption would produce a legionary territory attached to Chester of 5,500 sq. km, which is clearly not sensible.<sup>75</sup> Tacitus also tells us in a well-known passage that the land on the German frontier which had been set aside for the use of the soldiers was unoccupied, *agros vacuos et militum usui sepositos*, and that it was only pasture land, which the German tribes complained even the army did not use.<sup>76</sup>

Recent studies are more sceptical about the extent of camp land, some stressing that one cannot automatically assume that all camps possessed such a *territorium*. There was probably none, for instance, around Bu Nem in Africa and in Bulgaria archaeologists doubt whether there was any agricultural activity in the military *territoria*.<sup>77</sup> Nor has much direct evidence turned up in Britain, although a damaged inscription mentions the *territorium* of a cavalry unit at Chester-le-Street.<sup>78</sup> But at Vindolanda the references (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 180) to people with duties *ad porcos*, *ad iuencos* or employed as *bulcaris*, whether civilians under contract or soldiers charged with care of the animals, suggest that the animals were kept nearby, and hence most plausibly on military land, which would match inscriptions referring to military *pecuarii* elsewhere in the Empire.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, in the tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 178) headed as 'an account of income of the camp' (*reditus castelli*), although we are not informed of the reason for the cash payments, some income might have been generated by rent of land, even if some also came from sale of food, as the editors of the tablets suggest.<sup>80</sup>

Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that the *vicani* and the *canabenses* could have rented land around the forts, some support for which was thought to come from the fact that agricultural tools have been found in some camps. But the evidence is ambiguous, since almost all the tools were also suitable for cutting trenches, and in Britain only two ploughs have been found. So while we cannot rule out the possibility of some food being grown either by military employees or by civilians and veterans under the direction of the

army on its own land, the majority of the forts and *vici* in the North of Britain were located in Highland zones, where self-sufficiency from this source alone would have been impossible.<sup>81</sup>

If the *territoria* are not enough to explain supplies, can we propose the local population as a source? In other words, were the Romans able to stimulate the natives to increase their production sufficiently to feed the army? In Britain archaeologists have regularly debated the changes in agricultural regimes and techniques of production caused by the arrival of Romans. But conclusions based on pollen studies and the archaeology of pre-Roman and post-Roman levels on native sites in North Britain are notoriously difficult to assess chronologically.<sup>82</sup> It is fair to say, however, that recent studies of seed assemblages and pollen evidence are agreed that the pre-Roman Iron Age was already extending forest clearance and crop production, mainly of barley and spelt, although this is more evident in the North-East than in the North-West. Vindolanda itself, like several other military forts, was already largely treeless, and crops were being grown there when the army arrived.<sup>83</sup>

The impact of the Roman military occupation of the frontier is, therefore, less clear-cut than one might expect. There was a 'dramatic increase' in land clearance around Hadrian's Wall, according to the opinion of a recent study, but cereal pollens do not show up so clearly, even if arable and pasture land seem to have expanded. There can be little doubt, therefore, that some food for the army was produced locally, a fact which becomes clearest from pollen studies dating from after the end of Roman rule, when there was a regeneration of forests and agricultural systems came to an end.<sup>84</sup> Whether this local production was enough to satisfy the demands of the army is, of course, another matter, and attempts to prove that it was by using the figures of productivity in the Iron Age experiment at Butser Hill are far from convincing. Even if one trusts the validity of the figures, they take no account of the Roman mentality which said, 'Fodder, grain and other army provisions, customarily requisitioned from provincials, should be exacted in good time and the quantities [should be] always more than sufficient'.<sup>85</sup>

One facet of local supply has been the question of exploitation and the destructive effect of Roman taxes and requisitions upon the native communities. Around York, the legionary base, which lay in a fertile plain well to the south of the frontier, there was, as elsewhere in the north, already quite extensive cultivation of barley and wheat by the local population when the Romans arrived.<sup>86</sup> After a generation Roman goods started to appear on native sites, which indicates that the natives had probably begun, in exchange for Roman goods or money, to provide wheat and other food for the Romans. Some of that would probably have gone to the frontier. The reasonable conclusion is that in the immediate post-conquest period the army would have been obliged to import considerable quantities of food, as one might expect. But thereafter an attempt was made to stimulate local production by trade and by taxes.

In some areas, however, such as the highlands of Britain and the heavy clay soil region of the Lower Rhine, it is doubtful whether it would ever have been possible to produce enough food for the army. Any attempt to extract too much would have wrecked the fragile economy, even if the population south of the Tyne had already turned to more extensive, arable farming before the Romans arrived.<sup>87</sup> Confirmation of this comes from the well-known fact of the almost total absence of villas and cities in the northern military zone and the sparseness of Roman coins and artefacts on native sites. Only five possible villas, for example, have been identified in the eastern county of Durham, all of which appear doubtful.<sup>88</sup> It looks, therefore, as though the Romans were creaming off the surplus produce and stultifying the growth of the local aristocracy, for which the relatively flourishing brochs in Lowland Scotland provide an interesting counterfactual example.<sup>89</sup>

However, alternative explanations for this dearth have been offered, either that the differences in social structure did not predispose some British communities to seek prestigious Roman objects, or simply that the economy was naturally weak, where there is little evidence of material culture either before or after the Romans. Alternatively, it has been suggested, much of North Britain was public, often military, land where, just as in Norfolk and Suffolk, private villas and towns could not flourish.<sup>90</sup> These are not exclusive arguments but on the whole they point towards the improbability that the frontier zone was self-sustaining.

The fact is that the military granary of South Shields on the Tyne estuary in the third century AD shows clear evidence of imported grain (bread wheat, for example) from either Gaul or South Britain. There is evidence, too, of a Rhine–North British axis for trade in the same period. Both indicate that a gap existed between local supply and demand in the Later Empire.<sup>91</sup> There is not enough evidence to support the comparison that is often made with the Lower Rhine frontier; that is, of a post-conquest period in the second century when a period of self-sufficiency intervened before soil exhaustion set in.<sup>92</sup>

If we accept the general proposition that Roman frontiers always advanced into marginal zones, where they could sustain themselves but go no further, then strictly speaking local production alone was never likely to be enough to meet the total needs of military consumption, and imports would always have been needed as insurance. But to argue that in Britain as in Lower Germany the frontiers were advanced beyond the army's capacity to feed itself, and that they were therefore politically determined, misunderstands the nature of marginal zones.<sup>93</sup> In Britain's case the needs of the North seem to have been met by stimulating production in the South. Continental pottery imported into Britain declined, for example, which may be taken as a tracer of a lesser need for imports as the prosperity of the southern villas increased. By the fourth century it is well documented that Britain even exported surplus wheat to the Rhine army.<sup>94</sup>

But we have strayed far from Vindolanda, which has revealed no dramatic key to unlock the argument. Exploitation, however, brings me to the third question about military provisions: whether they were negotiated through money transactions or whether they were requisitioned and taxed in kind?

One cannot tell from *Hunt's Pridianum* how the soldiers actually procured their supplies, whether through the market or by compulsory requisition. Nor do we know whether requisition was compensated in cash or whether they took the supplies as tax in kind. Egyptian documents give an ambiguous message on the subject. Some supplies were apparently obtained by compulsion but still paid for 'at the normal price' (say the papyri), and not necessarily below market price.<sup>95</sup> Others were illegally obtained without payment, even though successive imperial decrees tried in vain to control the practice. But some documents also show that transactions were regularly and legally conducted without payment. Bronze labels attached to the necks of pack animals belonging to imperial estates were marked 'not liable for tax or requisition'.<sup>96</sup> Although this refers not to food but transport, it seems clear that the abuse which the emperor tried to stop was not that of requisitioning transport or food for the journey (*viaticum*) free of charge, but that these demands were being made 'without a permit'. That implies legal requisition and we have a number of *diplomata* granting such authorization.<sup>97</sup>

When Tacitus described the way that the Romans administered Britain, he was writing about a period which coincided pretty well with that when the Vindolanda tablets were being written. There was, he says, 'a tax demand of corn and tribute' (*frumenti et tributorum exactio*), which means strictly that the administration levied two kinds of tax, one in kind and the other in cash. He does not say, as is sometimes asserted, on the basis of the very imperfect analogy of the highly productive province of Sicily in Cicero's day, that food and services were requisitioned in return for payment, even if that also happened sometimes. In the non-monetized economy of northern Britain it was surely tax in kind that was demanded in the first instance, at least. Given the contemptuous attitude to the British that filters through the Vindolanda tablets, we can suppose that the local population suffered many further abuses of which Tacitus spoke.<sup>98</sup>

As we have seen, the tablets of Vindolanda record many transactions involving money, proving just how extensively the society of the camp and the *vicus* was monetized. A recently published tablet (*Tab. Vindol.* inv. 93/1398) provides a detailed inventory of valuables that were situated, perhaps, in the *praetorium*, since some were clearly not regulation supplies (bolts of cloth, for example, in four colours). But each has a price attached, and this has allowed the editors to compile an impressive list of forty-five items whose price is known from the tablets.<sup>99</sup> The most revealing commercial tablet is the much-quoted Octavius–Candidus letter (*Tab. Vindol.* II. 343), where the traders, whether as soldiers or civilians, were handling large

sums of money – 500 denarii, at least, is mentioned on one occasion (*minime quingentos*), plus 300 denarii as a deposit for huge quantities of spelt wheat (*spica*).

At the same time the same traders were dealing in petty sums, such as 8<sup>1/2</sup> denarii or 5 denarii for leather objects, which must have concerned internal camp transactions. In the camp stores account (*Tab. Vindol. I. 4*), money, perhaps for a religious festival, was handed out with food. In another document (*Tab. Vindol. I. 5*), purchases of meat were made in denarii, and in the revenue account of the camp (*Tab. Vindol. II. 178*), the income *reditus* is listed in cash sums. Two accounts (*Tab. Vindol. II. 181, 182*) list sums of money against items such as wood, tunics, bacon and even a bugle. The first provides a list of goods sold to different people with their debts, some of them soldiers, including a camp doctor and the man in charge of the baths. The second seems to be a receipt account and deals with a man, perhaps a civilian, from Trier (*Treverus*), two centurions and a brewer.

We might, therefore, conclude that all military transactions were in cash, including for some of the basic rations of wheat and barley. But a third account (*Tab. Vindol. II. 180*), from the same dossier as the first, concerning the distribution of wheat to soldiers within the camp, makes no reference to money at all. The same is true of the wheat and barley distributions at Carlisle, and of most of the official receipts found at Pselkis. The *frumenti exactio* would have been carried out by military officers, as is recorded on a papyrus from Dura Europos and in the *Digest*, not by private traders.<sup>100</sup> Thereafter, it would have been transferred to the soldiers directly without any exchange of money and debited to the account of each soldier, as recorded in the famous Geneva papyrus from Egypt.<sup>101</sup> So, while we cannot doubt the importance of money within the camp, salary deductions against rations removed a fair amount of liquidity from the market, perhaps at least 50 per cent of a soldier's pay it has been calculated from the Carlisle tablet. We must not, therefore, exaggerate the amount of cash in circulation, particularly if the papyrus record of even higher deductions for clothing and shoes is evidence of general military practice.<sup>102</sup>

From the fresh food and luxuries for officers the financial beneficiaries were presumably the *vicani* of the military cantonment who possessed allotments, and the money they earned would have remained within the military territory. We have quite a lot of information about markets in or around the camps; for example, an inscription from Lambaesis in Africa lists soldiers who were allocated to service in the market to control the weights (*ad pondera*); the 'bâtiment aux niches' at Bu Nem outside the camp, has been interpreted as a market; and probable market-places have been found just outside the gates of camps in Germany (such as at Zugmantel).<sup>103</sup> In several camps in Britain, archaeologists have discovered square courtyards, full of amphorae, which were very probably markets, of the sort which the *Historia Augusta* speaks, when it says that Hadrian removed from inside the camps the *triclinia* and the *porticus* (that is, the bars and the shops).<sup>104</sup>

Evidence of money going beyond military land to native farms is hard to discover in the tablets, although some of the eggs, chickens and apples could have been bought from native farmers who had been allowed to set up market stalls in the *vicus*. But the bulk purchases of grain in the Octavius-Candidus letter were too large for petty market traders and must have been conducted with long-distance traders or even with the imperial agents (*Caesariani*) who appear to be concerned with the transport of grain (*Tab. Vindol. inv.91/1022*).

But if no Roman coins, artefacts or other signs of wealth were appearing on native farming settlements, and if there were virtually no villas in North Britain that could have produced large surpluses, the conclusion seems inescapable. It was the rich farmers, probably of southern Britain, and the middle-men *negotiatores Britannici*, the importers who appear in later periods at places such as York, who benefited from the larger financial transactions. Meanwhile the northern farmers were contributing tax or services in kind. Or in some cases they may have moved onto military territory as tenants. This last phenomenon could explain why some native sites came to an end in the earlier half of the second century AD, and why so many native objects appear on military sites, despite the absence of Roman artefacts on native sites.<sup>105</sup>

There is no sure evidence in the tablets of requisitions or tax collection by military detachments. One letter (*Tab. Vindol. II. 213*) refers to what was perhaps an official procurement by an officer (someone like the *optio* who appears as the supply officer on the Egyptian ostraca), who was dealing with 'trading barley' (*bordeum commercium*) which presumably came from native farmers, since it required the use of an *interpretex*.<sup>106</sup> A quite large quantity, 308 *modii*, of the native *bracis* grain appears in another fragmentary letter (*Tab. Vindol. inv. 92/1108*), which contains references to transport costs of 109<sup>1/2</sup> denarii, but adds, 'Which transport you will pay in kind' (*quam vecturam eis solves merce*); then the letter refers to British carts (*carris Brittonum*) and to a fragmentary but British-looking name.<sup>107</sup> Evidently native transport was being used, possibly doing corvée duty for requisitioned food in a non-monetized transaction. The hides mentioned in the Octavius-Candidus letter might have been requisitioned as tax, too, as we know from Tacitus had been levied from the Frisii.<sup>108</sup> But the Vindolanda tablets seem to indicate that the tannery for the production of leather goods was in the hands of private entrepreneurs.

I conclude that the Vindolanda tablets were not much concerned with normal, basic supplies of food and equipment for the army, despite the large quantities that are recorded. The accounts which we have on the tablets must be accounts belonging to entrepreneurs, whether military or civil, who were providing supplementary provisions to soldiers and civilians in the camp and the *vicus*.



The last question I posed at the beginning of this chapter concerned how much of the military provisions came from beyond the frontiers. The ostraca at Bu Nem inform us about *Garamantes ferentes bordeum*, native Libyans who were probably bringing grain to the camp market from their territory beyond the frontier; the grain was for sale, in the opinion of the editor.<sup>109</sup> Although we have plenty of allusions in ancient writers to barbarians who attended markets on or beyond the frontiers, which the Romans used as an instrument of control, the real problem is to estimate their importance as a source of supply.

To summarize briefly what is known about such markets, which I have discussed, also, in Chapter 1. The tablet from Tolsum recording a receipt for sale of cattle came from a site well to the north of the Lower Rhine frontier in an important cattle-breeding zone, which was well known to the Romans from at least the time when we are told a tribute of cattle hides was imposed on the Frisians.<sup>110</sup> The involvement of the military in what appears to be a civil transaction shows clearly that this was one means by which the Romans obtained the essential supplies they needed for the army. That meant that the Romans needed control of such sources. On the Danube, Cassius Dio tells us that a centurion was sent each month to watch over barbarian markets of the Quadi and the Marcomanni, and we may assume that this was at the time when the tribes also provided the Romans with 'agreed quantities of grain', *siton takton*.<sup>111</sup> On the Lower Rhine it seems likely that the German tribes exchanged cattle for wheat, some of which was supplied to the army by traders. We can prove through archaeology that the wheat came to the army from the south, probably from the chalk lands of Picardy.<sup>112</sup>

When it comes to the Vindolanda tablets, however, they are a disappointing source of information about what was happening on or beyond the military line of the Stanegate, and there is little of certainty to be learned about supplies. In the conditions of hostility which must have existed in the early days of the invasion when the tablets were written, before the consolidation of the northern frontier by the building of Hadrian's Wall, we should not expect much trade or exchange. There are some limited references to hostilities. One is the much quoted allusion (*Tab. Vindol. II.163*) to the contemptible British cavalry, the *Brittunculi*, and more recently an inscription has been discovered at Vindolanda under the floor of the later stone camp of a commanding officer 'killed in the war', probably of Hadrianic date.<sup>113</sup>

However, we do have a reference (*Tab. Vindol. II. 213*) to an interpreter, and the supplies of barley or *bracis* could have come in part from beyond the frontier. We also have a reference (*Tab. Vindol. II. 180*) to a *beneficiarius* at Vindolanda. The *beneficarii* were posted regularly at crossroads but also at important crossing-points on the frontiers, as we know was the case at Cannstatt and Stockstadt on the River Main in Germany, in order to control the traffic across the river frontier.<sup>114</sup> But this is clutching at straws.



The best case for exchange across the frontiers is inferential and it must have developed only slowly. After the building of Hadrian's Wall and the abandonment of Scotland, for example, the advanced posts at Risingham and High Rochester beyond the wall held Greek *liberti* with names like Hermagoras, Theodotus, Dionysius and Fortunatus, who could well have been traders. The needs of the Roman army in Britain have been well documented; in particular the enormous number of animals for normal use, of the order of 10,000 horses, 4,000 mules, 2,500 animals for sacrifice, and the hides of about 120,000 cows for tents, leather goods, and so on.<sup>115</sup> It is reasonable to assume that some of this large need would have come from beyond the frontier, where cattle raising was an important part of the economy.

The effect of the Roman occupation on British crop regimes is also becoming better understood. Unlike the zone to the north of the Antonine Wall, where agriculture declined, the opposite happened north of Hadrian's Wall.<sup>116</sup> While sites on Hadrian's Wall itself have produced little evidence of cereal pollens in the Roman period, Steng Moss, some 25 km north of the Wall, expanded its arable and pasture.<sup>117</sup> It now seems established from seed assemblages of pre-Roman sites in the later frontier zone of England that large-scale arable farms and small-scale subsistence settlements were not separated by the river line of the Tyne.<sup>118</sup> While the seed assemblages and field systems witness in general a more prosperous farming regime south of the Tyne compared to the less centralised, small-scale, subsistence settlements north of the river, these were not precise boundaries of demarcation but overlapping systems. A recent study of a site at Elginhaugh (near Edinburgh) concludes that cattle herding continued after the withdrawal to Hadrian's Wall but under some sort of Roman direction.<sup>119</sup> The evidence proves that the British frontier was located in an essentially marginal zone. I infer, therefore, that the Roman frontier would have passed through a zone that had some economic and social similarities both north and south of the line, and that must have encouraged interchange.

In Scotland, unlike northern Britain, quite a wide range of Roman goods have been found and a fair number of coins, although the goods tend to be concentrated in native centres.<sup>120</sup> This concentration has led archaeologists to the conclusion that 'General exchange was monopolized by groups of native élite', and that probably 'The Roman army played an important role in the system of exchange'.<sup>121</sup> The same conclusion has now been reached from a study of the evidence in zones such as Thuringia in free Germany.<sup>122</sup> *Hunt's Pridianum* has shown us how far the Roman army sent its units beyond the formal frontier of the Danube in search of supplies. The trader who left his memorial at Bowness-on-Solway, may have been going to beyond Hadrian's Wall to the North-West.<sup>123</sup>

So how far do the Vindolanda tablets provide answers to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter? And do they agree with evidence from

other frontiers of the Empire? The overall impression one gets is that there is little new in the tablets to be learned about the broader picture of life on the frontiers and that the value lies in the detail.

When we try to discover whether the system was in the hands of the army or given out by contract to civilians, the evidence is hopelessly ambiguous. That should not be a surprise, since it accords with evidence from other frontiers which show that a false distinction has been made between military and civilian in the procurement of local supplies. Although Vindolanda has little to say about long-distance trade, there is just a hint to confirm the evidence from other frontiers that, while private entrepreneurs were prominent, the traditional involvement of the army and military and imperial administration was still highly visible in the early second century when the tablets were written. The impressive list of references to military quartermasters on campaign, assembled by Domaszkeski, must prove that the army never really relinquished its direct responsibility for basic provisions.<sup>124</sup>

As to origins and the proportion of supplies that came from a long distance or from the local, frontier region, the tablets indicate a fair amount of activity in collecting supplies of native grains and winter wheat. Some of this seems to have been carried out by military detachments and some by individual traders in local operations. But they do not reveal whether the supplies were levied from native farmers direct, although that seems probable for native grain, or collected from large military stores like Corbridge. The latter certainly figures in the tablets and we must assume that the large requirement for standard wheat rations, illustrated by the Carlisle tablet, was met from central depots. As a consequence, if we ask whether the army contributed more to big business than to local economies, in Britain there seems no doubt that most supplies came from long distances, although not necessarily from overseas. The economic benefits, therefore, went to larger traders. The surprising number and variety of exotic and luxury goods mentioned in the tablets gives indirect confirmation of the vigour of long-distance trade.

Were the transactions carried out in cash or in kind? And were the requisitioned goods collected as tax or were they purchased? The tablets contain a surprisingly high record of cash transactions within the camp and its vicinity, but they were probably confined to the *vicus*. In the few references to the local population, the business appears to have been conducted outside the cash economy. The most explicit reference seems to show that suppliers were paid in kind for transport services, which may have been requisitioned. Although the tablets reflect the early days of the British frontier, the silence of the tablets may simply reflect the fact that the natives were otherwise isolated and impoverished by exploitation.

There is little news from Vindolanda to show how much of the military needs came from beyond the frontiers either by tribute or by symbiotic

exchange. We have to remember that the dates of most of the tablets fall within a period which was barely more than a generation after its foundation. But elsewhere, as in Scotland, there is reasonably good cause to think that in the end the supplies purchased or traded by the Roman army made an economic impact upon the communities beyond the frontiers, thereby developing their social and political power. This was why the more successful the Roman frontiers were in supplying their forts from beyond the frontiers, the more unstable the frontiers ultimately became.

## Notes

- 1 Fulford 1992.
- 2 For example: from Africa, R. Marichal, *Les ostraca de Bu Nem*, Tripoli, 1992; from Egypt, J. Bingen *et al.*, *Mons Claudianus. Ostraca graeca et latina*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1992–1997, marginally about the Egyptian army; in which there is an announcement of a publication about supply in the near future by H. Cuvigny; M.A. Speidel published documents from the German frontier, *Die römischen Schreibräufeln von Vindonissa*, Brugg, 1996. From Britain, two volumes of tablets found at Vindolanda in North Britain have been published with commentary by A. Bowman and J. Thomas 1983 and 1994, as well as an excellent book of explanation by Alan Bowman, *Life and letters on the Roman frontier*, London, 1994. A third volume is announced for which previews have appeared in articles noted below. In 1999 the ink tablets found at Carlisle, which are contemporary with and second only in number to those from Vindolanda, were published in Tomlin 1999. Useful bibliographies are in Birley 1997 and Tomlin 1999. Since the writing of this chapter, two studies of the Vindolanda tablets in relation to supplies have appeared in the recently published *Limes XVIII* proceedings, by A.R. Birley and by J. Pearce; see Freeman *et al.* 2002: 925–30 and 931–44.
- 3 In books such as R. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, Princeton, 1971, or in the numerous volumes of *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* (edited by A. Bruckner *et al.*).
- 4 Birley *et al.* 1993: 10 forecast even as many as 100,000. A.R. Birley in Freeman *et al.* 2002 gives the state of play and notes that 250 fragments remain to be published from the 1991–4 excavations alone.
- 5 Whittaker 1994.
- 6 An up-to-date account of these questions is presented in the first part of Funari 2002.
- 7 Hopkins 1980 and 1995/96; Jongman 2000; Drinkwater 2001.
- 8 Birley 1997: 277.
- 9 This point is underlined by the contemporary ink tablets from Carlisle, many of which were already crumbling when thrown away as rubbish; Tomlin 1999: 34.
- 10 Other references to workers are given in Birley 1997: 277, who thinks some may be associated with the construction of Hadrian's Wall. All references to *Tab. Vindol.* can be found in Bowman and Thomas 1983 and 1994. Others, cited as inv. 91, etc., refer to more recent texts which have been published in various articles.
- 11 Frere 1967: 227; Jones 1990: 103.
- 12 *CbLA* X. 409.
- 13 *O.Claud.* 115; Bingen *et al.* 1992: I. 102–4.

- 14 Caes. *B. Gall.* 6. 36–7, Jos. *B. Jud.* 3. 115 f., HA *Hadr.* 13. 7 (*servitia castris*); Speidel 1989 notes the use of servants in fighting, and the effect the numbers had on rations; cf. Sommer 1984: 6–7.
- 15 Birley 1997: 278 thinks the ‘boys’ may be ‘lads’ of a military detachment, since the six or seven cloaks, etc. sent for the *pueri* seem a high number for one officer. But see MacMullen 1963: 106n for references at Vindonissa and to Lib. *Or.* 47. 28, who cites an officer with eleven slaves.
- 16 P.Dura 64 = Fink 91, reading from column 1, line 6 – *peto compellas ordinatum augg n'n' equitibus siuf(e) mulionib(us) q)u(i) in vexill' appadanens(i) deg bord(e)um ex praedis fiscalib(us) dare secum(dum) ...*.
- 17 TLL ‘cibarius’ and Gilliam 1986: 115–17.
- 18 For example, Jones 1990. Note the comments by Davies 2002 about immediate post-occupation periods.
- 19 Grimes 1930; Mason 1988: 174–80, discusses Holt and other sites (like Heronbridge) which seem to fall between military and civilian settlements.
- 20 Crumy 1988: 44, stresses the effort made by the Roman garrison to coexist with the natives.
- 21 *Dig.* 49. 16. 12. 1 [Macer]; but *Dig.* 50. 66. 7(6) [Tarruntenus Paternus].
- 22 *Tab. Vindol.* II. 344; Birley 1997: 277 believes the complaint was made to the Emperor Hadrian when he was in Britain (perhaps staying at Vindolanda) planning the wall.
- 23 Kolník 1978 gives the first text and provides a list of interpreters, and at p. 66 makes the suggestion that the man was perhaps engaged in the amber trade, given the location of the camp; the second inscription is *CIL* III. 14349(5).
- 24 Imperial supplies – Labisch 1975; Republican supplies – Erdkamp 1998: 112–21.
- 25 Strabo 3. 3. 4, Tac. *Agr.* 19.
- 26 Cf. Veget. 3. 3; navy – Allen and Fulford 1999.
- 27 For example, *Bericht Röm-Ger.Komm.* 17 (1927), no. 41 – a sailor of the *classis Germanicus* as *negotiator cervesarius*; *Pan. Lat.* 4(8). 12 – Carausius enrolled traders into the *classis Britannicus*. Cf. Nicolet 1976: 166 – ‘on aurait tort d’opposer trop fortement deux types d’activité, commerçante et militaire’. The trader references are collected by Middleton 1981: ch. 3, but problems in assessing their importance are stressed by Goudineau 2000: 476–7.
- 28 *Hunt’s Pridianum* – Fink 63; amphorae in Pannonia, at Vindonissa and in Britain – Berecny 1996; Dressel 20 oil containers at Catterick – *RIB* 2494.81; a wooden bung at Carlisle – *RIB* 2442.11.
- 29 Barrels – Birley *et al.* 1993: 75; amphorae – Funari 1991; Funari 2002. Some of the debate about military oil supplies is recorded in Ch. 1.
- 30 Allen and Fulford 1999, with references.
- 31 *O. Bu Ngem* 75 refers to a procurator; *O. Bu Nem* 76–80 are called ‘lettres de voiture’ by Marichal 1992: 100.
- 32 The comparison is made by Birley 1997: 278; *Hunt’s Pridianum* = Fink 63.
- 33 It is written by the same hand that wrote *Tab. Vindol.* II. 180 and *T. Vindol.* II. 181, and on the back of the former.
- 34 *Tab. Luguval.* 1A; Tomlin 1999 compares the list to the pay sheet from Masada, *P. Masada* 722, and the Egyptian issues in *P. Amherst* II. 107.
- 35 Collected in Fink 78. Just to cite two examples among many similar ones: (a) Ostrakon 1131: ‘Julius ... the *log(...)* to Asclepiades, the *optio* (under-officer in charge of the account). I have received an advance of one *artaba* of *siton* (i.e. *frumentum*) for the month of Choiak. I Alexander, his comrade, have signed. Year 20, Hathyr 24.’ Below is written: ‘I, Dionysianus, the centurion, have signed.’ (b) Ostrakon 1129: ‘Comarus, son of Comarus, a soldier in the century of

- Heraclianus, to Asclepiades, the *optio*. I have received from you a coptic *keramon* of wine towards my ration. I, Maximus ... his comrade in the century of Glykon, have signed on his behalf because he is illiterate. Year 15, Mesore 2.'
- 36 The *cibariator* appears in Fink 78, no. 22; the 'receiver of grain' is recorded in Fink 78, no. 6.
- 37 Birley 1991b: 92 takes the view they were soldiers, engaged in trade, as so often happened.
- 38 Suggested by Bowman and Thomas 1994, *ad. loc.*
- 39 *Tab. Vindol.* inv. 92/1108 is fragmentary but contains the phrase *de carris Brittonum*, followed perhaps by a local British name, which the editors read as *Rac ... romaucus*.
- 40 *O. Bu Nem* 78 and 79 with commentary by Marichal 1992: 100.
- 41 *FIRA* III. 137.
- 42 *Caes. B. Gall.* 7. 3. 1 – C. Curtius Cita, *qui rei frumentariae iussu Caesaris praeerat*. But note the reservations of Erdkamp 1998: 121.
- 43 *P. Gen. Lat.* 1 = Fink 58.
- 44 Fink 70, frag. a. ii. 18 – [*q*]uaestururam pro contuptione.
- 45 Fink 80.
- 46 *P. Dura* 43.
- 47 *CIL* III. 14356.3a; Mócsy 1966: 324. Ørsted 1985: 342–3 does not believe the leased land served as any serious source of supply.
- 48 MacMullen 1963: 119–25; Sommer 1984: 15–16, and Sommer 1991. Dio 56. 20. 2–5 does not make a distinction between servants and women among the military baggage train and suggests that in peace time they were an essential element of the army; cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.15. Discussed in Ch. 6.
- 49 Arrian, *Peripl.* 9. 3.
- 50 Peacock 1982: 149–50; Whittaker 1994: 111–12.
- 51 Hassall 1978 collects the evidence.
- 52 *RIB* 2059.
- 53 *RIB* 1065; Birley 1961: 81–2, compares him to the *negotiator gladiarius* at Mainz, *ILS* 2472.
- 54 Oysters were common fare in the camps, Bowman 1994: 76–7.
- 55 Bowman and Thomas 1996: 307–23.
- 56 Davies 1989: 196. Note the comments on long-distance supplies by Davies 2002.
- 57 Goudineau 2000: 477 has doubts about barrel dates. Tchernia 1986: 285 and 291 notes barrels depicted on Trajan's column and common earlier in Gaul for short haul. Peacock and Williams 1986: 27–8 discuss wine barrels and Spanish Dr 20 amphorae. Funari 2002 expands our knowledge of oil imports into Britain.
- 58 De Romanis 1997a: 141, for references. The camp at Oberaden beyond the Rhine was only occupied for a few years; Wells 1972: 211–20.
- 59 The debate is recorded in Erdkamp 1998: 32–3. At Bearsden the latrines showed no evidence of meat eaters (Breeze 1996: 77–8); but at Valkenburg Groenman-van Waateringe 1997 calculates individual consumption at about 1 lb per day.
- 60 *O. Claud.* 139, 145. Trajan – HA *Hadr.* 10. Fish, too, was sometimes imported in amphorae, as at Masada, or kept fresh in a *vivarium* in the camp, as an inscription records, *ILS* 3265; Davies 1989: 195.
- 61 Anderson 1992: 79.
- 62 For this and the next letter, see Birley and Birley 1994; Bowman and Thomas 1996 modify some of the readings.
- 63 Bowman and Thomas 1996: 326–8 emend the text of Birley and Birley 1994, and suggest that the word *fussa* about whose delivery the letter is concerned was

- a mill spindle. But note the discussion in Pflaum 1960, no. 274 concerning a *procurator ad fusa fru]menti*, where *fusa* possibly means emergency grain supply.
- 64 Birley 1997: 276.
- 65 Davies 1989: 52; Marichal 1992: 104 reckons that one cohort of 500 men needed 600 tons per year. Carlisle – *Tab.Luguval.* 1A; Tomlin 1999: 45.
- 66 Birley 1991a: 101; Anderson 1992: 67.
- 67 van der Veen 1994: 154–5; later imports of bread wheat from the Rhine to South Shields are discussed by Anderson 1992: 59–66; York – Jones 1990: 101–2.
- 68 Carlisle – Bowman and Thomas 1983: 72.
- 69 Birley 1997: 278.
- 70 *O.BuNjem* 75 and 76–81, with commentary by Marichal 1992: 60–1, 103–4, 111–12.
- 71 *P. Dura* 64.
- 72 The problem of how to identify British imperial estates in East Anglia or elsewhere is discussed by Millett 1990: 120. Cf. *Dig.* 50. 6. 6. 11, *ILS* 8870. III. 30, for references to imperial estates, although we cannot be sure if this was a regular source of supply.
- 73 See above and Petrikovits 1979.
- 74 Scepticism from MacMullen 1963: 7.
- 75 Mason 1988.
- 76 *Tac. Ann.* 13. 54–5.
- 77 See the references in Marichal 1992: 105 and Poulter 1987: 393.
- 78 *RIB* 1049; Anderson 1992: 77.
- 79 *CIL* III.10428, 11215, VIII. 2553, XIII. 7695.
- 80 Bowman and Thomas 1994, *ad. loc.*, suggest food.
- 81 Sommer 1984: 36–8.
- 82 Breeze 1989: 229; Anderson 1992: 101 – local production ‘may have’ increased.
- 83 van der Veen 1994: 153–4; Dark 1999: 264; Vindolanda – Anderson 1992: 91.
- 84 Dark and Dark 1997: 33–5, 143–4.
- 85 Attempted by Anderson 1992: 102; but see the review by P. Bidwell, *Britannia* 26 (1995), pp. 395–6. I am uncertain why Andersen calculates the Roman tax at 20 per cent rather than the more usual 10 per cent (Britain was not Sicily), thus halving his calculation for land requirement. But even at the higher tax rate the quantities he calculates for local production barely meet the supposed demand. And how much allowance must be made for loss by insect infestation, sometimes reckoned at 10 per cent? (See Buckland 1975.)
- 86 Jones 1990.
- 87 van der Veen 1992: 155–6.
- 88 Clack 1982.
- 89 Breeze 1990: 93; Millett 1990: 98–100.
- 90 Structure – Anderson 1992: 78; economy – Allason-Jones 1991, citing North-East England; military land – Allen and Fulford 1999: 179.
- 91 van der Veen 1991; Hassall 1978.
- 92 Groenman-van Waateringe 1989; but see Breeze 1990: 92.
- 93 van der Veen 1994: 155–6, provides the perfect description of transitional economic zones, despite believing in more political reasons for placing the frontier.
- 94 Fulford 1984; Whittaker 1994: 103, Millett 1990: 163.
- 95 For example, *P.Amberst* 107.
- 96 Davies 1989: 156; Rostovtzeff 1957: 721–3 discusses uses and abuses of requisition.
- 97 *P.BMus.* 1171; Davies 1989: 51.
- 98 *Tac. Agr.* 19; contempt – Birley 1991a: 18.
- 99 Bowman and Thomas 1996: 300–6.

- 100 *P. Dura* 64; *Dig.* 49. 16. 12. 2.  
 101 *P. Gen.Lat* 1  
 102 Carlisle – Tomlin 1999: 46; papyrus – Fink 68 recording deductions *in vestimentis* and for *caligas fascias*.  
 103 Lambaesis – *CIL* VIII 18219 and MacMullen 1963: 59 and 92; Bu Nem – Marichal 1992: 111–12; Germany – Sommer 1991.  
 104 Greene 1984: 411–12; *HA Hadr.* 10. 4.  
 105 Breeze 1990: 9 discusses farmers moving; van der Veen 1994: 155 notes the end of prosperous native farms at Thorpe Thewles and Rock Castle; Allason-Jones 1991: 4 records native objects on Roman sites.  
 106 *Tab.Vindol.* II. 213; the recipient, Cassius Saecularis, was closely connected with the legionary aquilifer of the II Augustan legion, *Tab.Vindol.* II. 214.  
 107 *Tab.Vindol.* inv. 92/1108; Birley and Birley 1994: 431–44.  
 108 *Tac. Ann.* 4. 72.  
 109 *O.BuNjem* 72 and the commentary by Marichal 1992.  
 110 *FIRA* III. 137, *Tac. Ann.* 4. 72. The control over the Frisii is discussed further in Ch. 1.  
 111 Dio 72. 2. 4.  
 112 Whittaker 1994: 113; Willems 1986: 244–6. For cattle transactions, see note 115 below.  
 113 The inscription is illustrated on Vindolanda’s web site, [www.vindolanda.com](http://www.vindolanda.com), ‘Excavations 1997’.  
 114 Birley 1961: 83.  
 115 Breeze 1984: 271–2. There is an important, unresolved debate about cattle imports from beyond the frontiers, to which I have given references in Ch. 1.  
 116 Dark 1999.  
 117 Dark and Dark 1997: 35.  
 118 van der Veen 1994: 155–6.  
 119 Hanson 1997a.  
 120 Keppie 1989: 68; a more recent assessment of the economic effect of the Romans in Scotland is made by Breeze 1996: 112–17.  
 121 Macinnes 1989: 112–14.  
 122 Stupperich 1995: 97; Wolters 1995: 103–4; Stoll 2001: 339  
 123 *RIB* 2509; Hassall 1978: 42.  
 124 Domaszewski 1927.



## 6 SEX ON THE FRONTIERS

Probably the most famous example of sexual imagery of the frontiers is the picture entitled 'America' by Jan van der Straet (see figure 1). Theodore Galle's engraving of the sixteenth-century drawing portrays Amerigo Vespucci discovering the continent.<sup>1</sup> America is depicted as a naked woman half-rising from a hammock on the sea shore of a savage, wild land, and making a gesture of wonder or alarm towards Vespucci, who stands before her fully clothed and armed with, what are described as, 'empowering' instruments of violence (a sword), of technology (an astrolabe) and of conquest (a banner bearing the Southern Cross). Below are inscribed the words, *Americen Americus retexit, & semel vocavit inde semper excitam* ('Americus rediscovers America: and once he called her she was thenceforth always aroused'). The allegorical feminization of the land is heightened by the obviously erotic metaphor of intended rape and conquest by a masterful, intruding man. But the dangers of the frontier are also gendered by the scene in the background, where barbarian women are feasting on a dismembered human (male, we must presume) leg and thigh.<sup>2</sup> The conquest is signified by the matching names of Americus/America that seal the possession.

Van der Straet's drawing finds astonishing resonance in two reliefs that come from the Romano-Greek Sebasteion at Aphrodisias (in present-day Turkey). The first allegorically portrays Claudius vanquishing Britain (see figure 2) and the second Nero conquering Armenia (see figure 3).<sup>3</sup> The first shows the emperor in heroic nudity apart from a helmet, cloak and baldric with empty scabbard, standing over and holding down, with his knee on her thigh, the female figure of Britannia. With his right arm he raises a sword and with his left he pulls Britannia's head back by the hair, while the woman struggles with her right arm raised, one breast exposed, and with her left arm she holds her tunic from slipping off. The second displays Nero, also nude with cloak, baldric and empty scabbard, standing with his legs apart behind the female figure of Armenia, who is slumped on the ground between his legs. As her cloak falls away, she is revealed fully naked and her arms are spread-eagled by the man. There is little doubt that both highly erotic scenes were intended to present a metaphor of conquest by rape.<sup>4</sup>

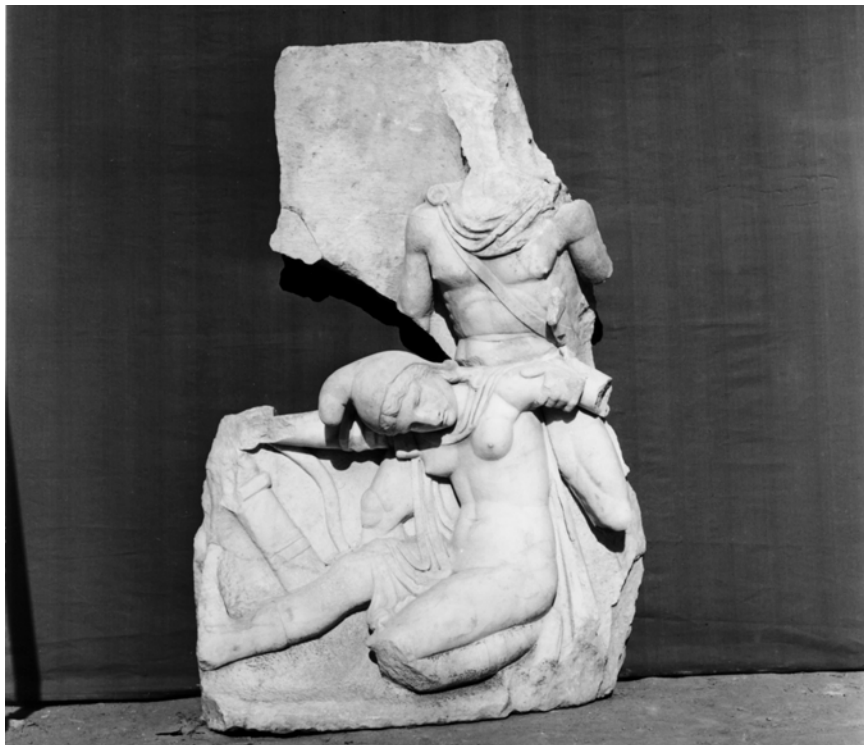


Figure 1: 'America' by Jan van der Straet (Johannes Stradanus); engraved by Theodore Galle. Number one in the series Nova Reperta, Antwerp 1638; from the collection 'New Discoveries' of Stradanus, reproduced by permission of the Burndy Library, Dibner Institute for the History of Science and Technology, Cambridge, Mass., USA.



*Figure 2* Claudius and Britannia. Imperial relief from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. Photo supplied by the New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias.

The sword (or spear or dagger) is one of the commonest tropes for the penis in both ancient and modern literature and iconography. A dirty joke was told about Mithridates who, when being frisked by a Roman guard, told him, ‘To watch out that he didn’t find a different *telum* (weapon) from the one he was looking for’. In the fifteenth or sixteenth century the image of a marauding *Landsknecht* has a sword hanging down between his legs. Not for nothing, according to a study of mass rape in Bosnia, was a weapon called ‘the soldier’s bride’.<sup>5</sup> The symbolism of the hair also spans the ages and cultures, and scenes of rape are often identified by pulling women by the hair or touching it.<sup>6</sup> Both the Aphrodisias sculptures abandon the conventional idealization of provinces at peace for the realism of war on the frontiers.



*Figure 3* Nero and Armenia. Imperial relief from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. Photo supplied by the New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias.

As for names, we hardly need reminding that Claudius gave the title of *Britannicus* to his son, just as he himself received the title of *Germanicus* when his uncle, the Elder Drusus, triumphed in Germany. This reverses the Amerigo–America couplet, and Roman triumphal titles were so routine that they were perhaps without great significance. Nevertheless a fragment of Cassius Dio’s history says of the Emperor Gaius (Caligula) that ‘He was often called *Germanicus* and *Britannicus* because of his adulteries, as though he had mastered the whole of Celtica [viz. Germania] and Britannia’.<sup>7</sup> A stone relief found at Kula in Lydia shows a warrior on horseback with a lance riding at a woman whose breasts look bare (although the stone is badly worn) and her hands are bound behind her back. The inscription below names the rider as Caesar Germanicus and the woman as Germania.<sup>8</sup> The sexualization of conquest is explicit.

Sexual imagery and its association with frontiers and imperial conquest is part of a wider discussion. It is largely due to feminist history and the inspiration of Foucault that we are now more aware of the coding of Nature as



feminine in Western intellectual tradition, from which we cannot exclude the Greeks and the Romans.<sup>9</sup> As one writer recently puts it, 'Imperialism ... seemed to be a highly gendered phenomenon'.<sup>10</sup> Sexual metaphors abound. Imperial expansion and the crossing of frontiers are symbolized as 'penetration' of 'virgin' lands by 'manly' heroes. Gender language becomes the trope for power relations.<sup>11</sup> While the land is feminized, frontier societies are imagined as the arena for masculine values and interests. Sexuality, however, is not exterior to the historical events but part of the discourse of power, 'a result and an instrument of power's design', in Foucault's words.<sup>12</sup> The early documents of the exploration and colonization of America constantly refer to the land in terms of innocent beauty, virginity and rape. 'Like a faire virgin, longing to be sped/And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed', wrote Thomas Morton in 1632. Not just a virgin, however, but also a mother and a widow left 'weeping for her children', in the words of John Hammond in 1656.<sup>13</sup>

Roman history and historians are full of parallels of such sexually loaded imagery. Well known, and far from being vulgar jokes, are the metaphors of the plough (*vomer*) for the penis, sowing in fertile fields, or boundary stones (*termini*) and ditches (*fossae*) for the male and female genitalia.<sup>14</sup> A phallus was regularly paraded in the symbolic beating of the boundaries, averting evil but asserting dominion.<sup>15</sup> The ingredients of feminized land, male phallic power, military conquest and boundaries are all present. The image of the weeping mother was a regular icon of Roman conquest on coins and triumphal monuments. On the *Gemma Augustea* cameo, now in Vienna, and on the *Grand Camée de France* in Paris the imperial families of Augustus and Tiberius reign serenely above a scene of dejected barbarian prisoners and sorrowing women, one with a babe in her arms.<sup>16</sup> A seated, mourning woman was first used on coins as a symbol of conquest by Vespasian after his campaign in Judaea, and it continued so until the Later Empire, as, for example, can be seen on Constantine's portrait of weeping Francia.<sup>17</sup>

Sexual geography, the gendering of space, and particularly of space beyond the frontiers, is common in medieval and modern imagination. McClintock cites a dramatic example from Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, of a supposedly sixteenth-century Portuguese map of the African mines, which resembles the body of a woman laid out on her back, hills as breasts and genitals the mines by which intruders penetrated.<sup>18</sup> The fiction is not so far-fetched. Fact can be even more explicit. On a fourteenth-century map Opicinus de Canestrus of Avignon mapped the Mediterranean as the 'Sea of Sin', upended and orientated West–East, to depict Europe and Africa face to face as human figures. Europe, the male, has a protruding penis in the shape of Italy as he bends towards Africa, the woman, who is whispering in his ear (Spain). Just in case we miss the message, she says, 'Come copulate with me' – and Europe is wearing a sword and scabbard.<sup>19</sup>

Romans had no difficulty imagining the body in space. Vitruvius, the architect, drew parallels between the proportions of a man flat on his back

and those of a temple.<sup>20</sup> In this case it was a classical temple where men dominated. But the conceptualization of lands as feminine and passive was automatic to the Roman mind.<sup>21</sup> They readily accepted the polarities of what Foucault called 'the dead, the fixed, the inert' on the one hand and the masculine energy of historical action and progress on the other.<sup>22</sup> The frontiers were in theory no place for women, unless it be in the barbarian beyond. The Elder Drusus, the night before he crossed the Elbe into unknown territory in 9 BC, dreamt he saw a superhuman woman (obviously Germania), who forewarned him of his death.<sup>23</sup>

Concentration on women beyond the frontiers as the embodiment of barbarity and sexual licence has often been a prominent theme in writers and artists. Vespucci's own writing in the sixteenth century containing fantasies about the libidinous behaviour of Native American women (who, for example, supposedly enlarged the penises of their husbands) and van der Straet's picture of their cannibalism are matched by Greco-Roman tales of the barbarity and sexual promiscuity of African and Indian women.<sup>24</sup> A series of warrior queens and women leaders stalk the history of Roman conquest, threatening the foundations of empire: Cleopatra in Egypt, unnatural wife of Antony, with the 'barbarous wealth' of the East; Boudicca in Britain avenging 'her scourged body and the outraged chastity of her daughters'; Cartimandua, cunning manipulator who outmanoeuvred her husband to rule the fierce Brigantes; Veleda in Gaul, object of 'excess of superstition' and prophetess of the extermination of Rome's armies; Zenobia of Palmyra, who claimed descent from Cleopatra and ruled 'longer than can be endured from one of the female sex'.<sup>25</sup> Their portraits perpetuated the stereotyped image of barbarian disorder and danger, often tinged with overt sexual references.<sup>26</sup>

The sexual theme of gendered geography in the examples I have given includes rape as a prominent, even an essential, ingredient of artistic representation. Just as in Western colonial history military conquest of territory was mirrored by conquest of women, Roman frontier history also contains what Porter called 'a vast cultural reservoir of phallogentric aggression',<sup>27</sup> either actual rape of a symbolic figure, as in the case of Boudicca's daughters, or the symbolic representation of rape to celebrated conquest. On the *Gemma Augustea*, mentioned earlier, at the scene of Augustus' military triumph the weeping woman on the left is paralleled by another woman on the right being brutally pulled along by her hair.<sup>28</sup> There can be no doubt about the meaning. In Ovid's description when the centaurs break into the wedding of Peirithoüs and Hippodame a woman 'is seized by the hair (*raptatur comis*) and forcibly dragged away'.<sup>29</sup>

Such scenes appear repeatedly on subsequent imperial monuments, such as on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius in Rome, and for the first time on coins under Constantine.<sup>30</sup> Most explicit is the scene (XCVII) on Marcus Aurelius' column showing a woman being pulled by her hair, her

clothes falling from her shoulder, as she begs for mercy from the soldier. Another (see figure 4), very obviously in the context of violence, shows a woman grasped by the hair, again bare breasted as she tries to cope with her child. Even the language of sacking cities was adapted to describe the violence of rape and the rapist – *expugnator pudicitiae*, *expugnata filiae pudicitia* and the like.<sup>31</sup>

The victory columns of Trajan and Marcus bring me to an important distinction in the gendering of conquest. Van Gennepe, in discussing incorporation rites that sometimes included sexual acts with strangers, noted that coitus does not in these cases signify fertility, but union. Studies of rape in Ecuador stress that we must separate rape for genocide (such as that in Bosnia) from rape for booty.<sup>32</sup> These distinctions should be kept in mind when we examine the scenes of conquest on the Roman columns. Many have been struck by the difference between the levels of violence depicted there. The scenes on Trajan's column are relatively calm, those on Marcus Aurelius' column look like a 'final annihilation'.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 4: Scene XX from The Column of Marcus Aurelius, Piazza della Colonna, Rome. Photo by courtesy of the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge.



The differences are particularly pointed in the scenes of women. The Trajanic destruction of villages shows relatively undramatic action, but on the Antonine column one scene (XX) shows a soldier catching a woman by the hair, who has one breast bare as she holds on to her child. Another (XCVII), described earlier, is even more violent. I am tempted to see in these contrasts the differences between fertility and union or between rape for booty and rape for ethnic cleansing. Whatever the reality of the erotic aggression of all rape, the official version was at pains to make a distinction. Although this may seem far-fetched, they correspond in fact to different historical realities.<sup>34</sup>

Dacia, the arena of Trajan's wars on the column, became a Roman province, whereas southern Slovakia, where Marcus Aurelius fought his victorious campaign, remained outside the administered empire. Even if Marcus had once intended creating two new provinces, the plan had been abandoned by the time the column was erected. While on Trajan's column it looks as if the artist toned down the violence in Dacia in the light of future reconciliation. This is not as fantastic as it sounds. The figure of Dacia on Trajan's coins goes through a transformation from a captive woman on her knees, representing *gens devicta*, to later images of her seated peacefully among the legionary symbols of a frontier zone, stereotypically posed as *provincia pia fidelis*.<sup>35</sup>

Some sort of similar transformation takes place in the iconography of Germany. On the coins of Domitian after his campaigns there in the first century AD, *Germania capta* is shown seated, chin in hands, long hair and upper body naked. Under Trajan, although still half-naked, she is no longer in mourning. But under Hadrian the woman is fully dressed, though with one breast exposed, showing, according to Toynbee, 'Germania taking her full share of imperial responsibilities'. However, the figure identified as *Germania* from the Hadrianeum in the Campus Martius (now in the Villa Doria Pamphilji) is still cast as a wild-looking prisoner.<sup>36</sup> That may indicate that sentiment about Germany was ambiguous, as Tacitus knew when he wrote his monograph, *Germania*, under Trajan. It was a name given to a vast hinterland beyond the frontiers of the northern provinces as well as the title applied to two provinces. The frontiers between the two were just in the process of being consolidated at this time under Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, with artificial, military walls, extending into Schwabia and Bavaria.

There is, however, an oddity in what seems to be the general rule about the portrayal of provinces that has implications for how the Romans conceptualized their frontiers and, indeed, their Empire as a whole. Among the feminine personifications set up in Hadrian's temple, the Hadrianeum, in the Campus Martius, there are two that seem out of place among the administered territories of the Empire; those of Scythia and Parthia. The Hadrianeum followed very much the traditional display of *simulacra gentium*

that we now know so well from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. There, too, among the fifty or so estimated *gentes* or 'peoples' (of which only thirteen can be positively identified) there are included some that seem out of place, such as the Daci, the Bospori, the Arabi and the Iudaei, who were not among the administered provinces at the time. The solution put forward is that they represented 'the effective reach of imperial power' and were intended to 'suggest peaceful incorporation'.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the Hadrianeum not all the *gentes* are clearly identifiable, but it is usual to follow the names that were listed by Toynbee from the Hadrianic and later Antonine 'province' series of coins.<sup>38</sup>

The thing to stress, however, is that the images were not, in fact, all provinces in the sense of administered territories. Many were generic peoples. They were the part of the Empire, says a recent study, that was in process of being integrated and ideologically assimilated.<sup>39</sup> Setting up *simulacra* was a practice begun by Pompey in a portico at Rome, imitated by Augustus also in a portico at Rome and then copied all over the Roman world (probably at sites such as the Stoa in Corinth) by other emperors to represent the nations dependent on Rome. It was a form of 'triumphal art' to show the extent of the Roman *imperium*, including the outlandish periphery of an empire without end.<sup>40</sup>

A likely explanation of the inclusion of Parthia and Scythia in the coin series was, according to Toynbee, because they were 'symbolic of the great tracts of the world outside the Empire'. But she also points out that both figures, although in national dress, were shown holding out a large crown in the right hand, in the same pose as many of the provinces, such as Asia and Cappadocia, representing the payment of *aurum coronarium*, a sort of tribute and mark of deference.<sup>41</sup> The Romans, we should conclude from this, did not limit their vision of empire to the formal, visible frontiers of the administered provinces.

If that is true, we ought to look and see if there are any other *simulacra gentium*, which are not representations of half-naked, dejected barbarians but women who are clothed, confident and 'ideologically assimilated'. As far as I know only one exists, and that is the icon of India.

The earliest, positively identifiable, female personification of India is on a silver bowl from Lampsacus, now in the National Museum at Istanbul (see figure 5). She is clearly 'India' because of the accompanying animals (a hanuman monkey, a parrot, a guinea fowl), and she is seated on a chair of ivory tusks, the conventional symbol of India. The bowl is thought by some to date from the first or early second century. It is a pity, of course, that no figure has survived from the age of Augustus. But with only a quarter of the *simulacra* identifiable in the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, it is perfectly possible that India was a part of the repertoire. On the celebrated Augustan cup from the Boscoreale hoard (now in the Louvre), depicting seven conquered female *gentes* behind Mars, the middle figure (now cut out by a souvenir collector)

may represent the East with a crescent on her head; and that could provide a link with India through Egypt. But it is all very unsatisfactory as evidence. From the Later Empire, however, in the mosaic scene of the Great Hunt at the Piazza Armerina in Sicily, there is a seated, female figure in the South Apse described by one critic as a 'dark skinned lady' (see figure 6). She is plausibly 'India', even if there is dispute about whether some of the accompanying animals, a tigress, an elephant and a phoenix, are associated with India, since they may simply illustrate the animals coming to Rome through Alexandria.



Figure 5: 'India' portrayed on a silver dish found at Lampsacus. Now in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul. Photo by Hirmer-Verlag, Munich.

But did the Romans actually believe India was, like Parthia, within the orbit of imperial power? In Chapter 7 I have collected the literary evidence to support the view that the Emperor Augustus did, indeed, consider that his victory over Egypt was also a victory over India, and that India had become a sort of province. Particularly revealing is the scene imagined by Vergil in the *Aeneid* of the triumph of Apollo (Augustus' patron saint, as it were) over the 'People of the Dawn' who had been mustered by Cleopatra, Egypt's female incarnation of barbarian orientalism.<sup>42</sup> The 'People of the Dawn' are certainly Indians, who were, therefore, defeated fighting for Cleopatra. It so happens that the later commentary by Servius on Vergil's *Aeneid*, at the conclusion of this very passage on the triumphs of Augustus, refers to the portico of Augustus at Rome which was called 'ad Nationes'.



Figure 6: 'India' from the Great Hunt Mosaic at the Piazza Armerina, Sicily. Reproduced by permission of S.F. Flaccovio Editore, Palermo.

On this monument, says Servius, 'He had placed the *simulacra gentium*.' The portico is reasonably thought to have preceded the iconographic programme later used in the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, a programme corresponding, also, to the peoples subservient to Rome that Augustus listed in the posthumous account of his achievements, the *Res Gestae*.<sup>43</sup> This record famously included the delegations coming from Indian kings which, to many Romans at least, signified submission.<sup>44</sup> We know, too, that images of the conquered *gentes* were paraded at Augustus' funeral, on the instructions left by the deceased emperor, again almost certainly a repeat of the list in the *Res Gestae* that was put up at the entrance to the emperor's tomb.<sup>45</sup>

The defeat of Egypt is closely connected to the Villa Farnesina across the Tiber in Rome, which is considered to have been originally the residence of Cleopatra after her defeat by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. It was then redecorated about 19 BC to celebrate the marriage of Agrippa, victor over Cleopatra at Actium, to the flighty princess, Julia. The paintings were loaded with political messages, and in a room of the central *aedicula* no one could mistake the symbolism of Apollo and Dionysus conquering the East, the latter with branches sprouting from his body on which figures described as ‘Orientals’ are standing. They very probably included Indians, since Dionysus’ conquest of India was a popular myth.<sup>46</sup> That can be seen on the Dionysus mosaic of the fourth century from the Villa della Ruffinella, where Indians are being whipped into submission.<sup>47</sup>

More pointedly evoking conquest, although without a female figure, is the ivory diptych held in the Barbarini Library showing an emperor, thought perhaps to be Constantius, with the inevitable ivory tusks of Indian tribute in the lower register.<sup>48</sup> Even in the Later Empire there is good reason to think India was still thought of as a Roman domain. In a curious document written by someone called Palladius, probably in the fourth century, the author says of the Indians, ‘They honour and fear the Roman *arche* [empire]’. If, as I believe, the Roman Empire was defined by roads not frontiers, we might note, too, that the Peutinger Table ends in South India near the port of Muziris, where a temple of Augustus is prominently marked (see figure 7).<sup>49</sup> It raises the intriguing question: did this Indian Sebasteion follow the same triumphal, artistic programme as that at Aphrodisias?

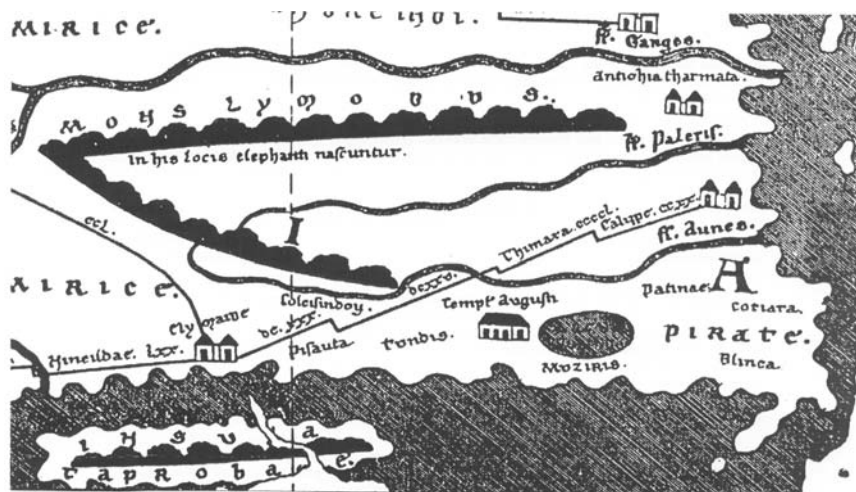


Figure 7: The roads of South India, showing the Temple of Augustus at Muziris. Extract from Section 12 of the Peutinger Table.



It is time to return to frontiers by examining the sexual associations with religious ceremonies of borders. In many societies rituals and rites of passage connected with frontiers heighten sexual consciousness. In her classic book, *Purity and danger*, Mary Douglas pointed out that 'Boundary protection focuses particularly on sexuality', since it is through females that the purity of the caste can be polluted. If, as she also argues, 'Women are the gates of entry to the caste', rituals were devised in order to resolve anxiety, but equally to maintain the culture.<sup>50</sup> The boundary was a magico-religious line between the sacred and the profane, between the outside and the inside, and it was often signalled by sexual landmarks, such as the phallus, Hermes or Priapus. Such symbols possessed power to mediate the act of crossing the threshold, but also to penetrate or pierce the feminized, often dangerous unknown.<sup>51</sup> The old Slav custom during plagues of naked women ploughing deep furrows around a village illustrates the sexual sensitivity of the boundary and the role of women as conservators of internal safety.<sup>52</sup>

Among Roman cults there was similar sexual consciousness associated with boundaries. The god Liber was honoured by a phallic image that was carried in procession as a protection against witchcraft and the evil eye (*fascinatio*), particularly at crossroads and outside the town.<sup>53</sup> Fascinus, the divine spirit of the phallus, was the protector both of the boundary, and of the general who fought beyond it. The phallus symbol (*turpicula res*) that was worn by triumphing generals was carried as an amulet (*bullae*) by boys to avert *fascinatio* until they had passed through the rites of passage into manhood. The *triumphator*, after his conquests, also carried the sacred phallus under his chariot. And we are told that the sacred phallus was tended by the Vestal Virgins at Rome, whose festival, the Vestalia, was also part of the military calendar of rituals of the frontiers.<sup>54</sup>

The sacredness of the walls of the city, epitomized in the story of Remus, who was killed for the sacrilege of leaping over the unfinished walls of Romulus, was equally significant for the wall or the entrenchment of the military camp, where death was the penalty for anyone who tried to climb over them and avoid the gates.<sup>55</sup> Doubtless that was true also of the artificial barriers around the Empire, although the sources do not say so specifically. The ritual act of drawing the lines around the city with a plough drawn by a cow and a bull was understood in sexual terms of male power and female fertility.<sup>56</sup> The symbolism of sex and frontiers was also a two-way traffic. Augustine used the frontier as a metaphor for 'a zone of interchange and communication', when he was grappling with the frontier of the body in terms of sexuality and celibacy. Other Christian fathers constantly made use of the language of frontiers and fortifications to discuss the issue of virginity.<sup>57</sup>

If liminal space was an area of uncertainty to be mediated by ritual, it was also an area of opportunity, where violence could be fruitful. In the end, the rape of the Sabine women may have been legitimated by the heroic outcome,

but the sexual violence included in crossing the boundary was commemorated forever, says Plutarch, by the ritual of carrying brides over the threshold, 'Because the Sabine women were carried in by force and did not go in of their own accord'. By naming thirty sectors of the city after the Sabine brides, who were celebrated in the festival of the *Matronalia*, Romans ritualized the act of violence that made outsiders insiders and rendered the territorial boundary between Rome and 'non-Rome' legally indistinct.<sup>58</sup> That is important for understanding Roman attitudes to frontiers. The crossings into the territories of 'non-Rome' were a rite of passage that required a ritual sacrifice to legitimize Roman power beyond the frontier. On Trajan's column the scene of the *suovetaurilia* sacrifice took place within the camp walls before the next foray into unknown Dacia. On the column of Marcus Aurelius sacrifice and lustration seem to be required at every river crossing.<sup>59</sup> Once again territorial aggression, violence and sex are inextricably intertwined in the metaphors.

Military service itself has often been regarded as a rite of passage, a 'graduation to manhood', male bonding with a band of brothers in a society of masculine, military values.<sup>60</sup> The early rite of passage in Rome, when a boy put off his *toga praetexta* for the *toga virilis* (the toga of manhood), took place in the Forum of Augustus, which was the locus par excellence for displays of past military conquests and heroes of war. But masculine, military values are often tinged with an element of homosexuality. A good example is in the imagery of the cult of Mithras that enjoyed widespread popularity among soldiers of the frontiers. Described as 'a perfectly liminal space for perfectly absurd journeys', the rituals were defined by boundaries that deliberately inverted traditional rites of passage, well suited to the topsy-turvy world where women were excluded.<sup>61</sup> The autoerotic or homosexual context is sometime explicit. One text tells us, '[Mithras] detested the race of women; and so he masturbated upon a rock'. The images of females were systematically degraded as night witches or as hyenas, the latter significant as an animal that could change its sex. One of the grades of initiates was that of the Male Bride. The overtones need no comment.<sup>62</sup>

If we now turn from symbolic representations to the realities of sex on the frontiers, the studies of the recent wars in Bosnia and Kosovo have for the first time in history seriously documented the horrors of rape and sexual violence as deliberate weapons of war.<sup>63</sup> The inevitable question that arises is to what extent the Roman army, too, used rape as an instrument of systematic terror. In the histories of most periods rape has been almost invisible, since it was accepted without comment as an inevitable fact of war.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand it would be the worst kind of historicism to project the high incidence of rape that happens in countries such as the USA, or the atrocities of the recent Balkan wars, onto all societies, present or past.<sup>65</sup> Rape by the Vietcong army, for example, was almost unknown, whether due to the influ-



ence of Buddhist culture or because the army included many women fighters.<sup>66</sup> The incidence of rape, therefore, may correlate with the broader cultural influences at work in society or with the structure of the military community.

Among such cultural influences, Porter searches for the essential feature of recent Western history which might account for its distinctive sexual attitudes. The answer he finds is conquest and imperialism which, he argues, 'mirrored' their encounters with women.<sup>67</sup> It also shaped the character of the margins of the society on the frontiers. The British Empire presented endless opportunities for such aggression, especially at its frontiers. On the margins of society there was a greater opportunity to take advantage of what Grotius called 'the law of war, that everything which belongs to the enemy should be at the disposal of the victor'.<sup>68</sup> At the end of the Afghan War in 1841, it was said that British soldiers 'fell upon the women of Kabul' with such lust that it caused lasting resentment. Stone goes so far as to suggest that the sublimation of sex at home may account for the military aggression of modern Western man.<sup>69</sup> But analysts of mass rape in Bosnia have suggested that the incidence of rape is higher in societies where male power is unstable and when the boundaries between the sexes is blurred.<sup>70</sup>

Can any of this be applied to imperial Rome? The danger in cultural comparisons is that they become too facile. But sometimes they offer a way into understanding events. To start with, it is safe to believe that rape in war was under-reported, largely because it was taken for granted as the consequence of defeat, but partly because we rarely hear the voices of the defeated. A rare example is one of the most quoted passages of Latin literature, when Calgacus, the British leader cried, 'Robbery, butchery, rapine (*rapere*) they falsely call empire ... Our wives and sisters, even if they escape the lust of the enemy, are defiled by them pretending to be guests and friends'.<sup>71</sup> Usually, however, references to wartime rape are scarce in the Empire when set against those of the Republic.<sup>72</sup> That may be quite simply because few writers of the Empire were as caustic as Tacitus. Or it may be because the Roman legal definition of rape (that is, *stuprum*) was 'status dependent' and could not be charged for violation of slaves or peregrines, and clearly not for rape of foreign captives who automatically became slaves.<sup>73</sup>

It is also obvious that Roman imperialism was a brutal affair and, like later Western imperialism, probably produced a similar reservoir of phallic aggression on the frontiers, where 'women became conquests' and 'conquests became female'.<sup>74</sup> Above all in frontier society, the culture was determined ideologically by a veto on marriage for soldiers and by a repressive military discipline. Consorting with women led to the neglect of military duty. That was the point of the cautionary tale about Cerealis on the Rhine front. The camp guards claimed they could not raise the alarm against a Batavian attack because they feared to disturb the general who was bedded down with a Gallic woman.<sup>75</sup>

In terms of the status of male power and the relations between the sexes in Roman society, it is not as easy to draw comparisons. It is true that, as frontier culture presaged opportunities for manliness (*virtus*), the social order at home had been disrupted since the late Republic by the revolution that led to the Augustan autocracy. Marriage had grown less stable, chastity less prized and women, especially those linked to the imperial households, had become more powerful. Even poets were more passionate, perhaps, it has been suggested, because of men's 'loss of social standing' and because 'virility became domesticated', separated from real warfare.<sup>76</sup> Ovid, for example, linked the centre and periphery, women's liberty, rape and frontier masculinity in an interesting, if extreme, articulation of the new culture of Rome:

Maybe, in the days when Tatius ruled, the unkempt Sabine women refused to be taken by more than one man. Now Mars tries men's souls in far off wars, and Venus rules in her city of Aeneas. The lovely ladies are at play; the only chaste ones are those no one has courted.<sup>77</sup>

The repetition by Roman writers of rape stories to mark moments of historical change, and the constant theme of rape in the schools of rhetoric during the Empire shows that no amount of bland, political justification of the fate of the Sabine women could conceal the fact that 'Roman men talked rape constantly'.<sup>78</sup>

The difficulty with an attempt to trace a shift or blurring of relations between the sexes in Roman society is that almost all our information inevitably concerns the metropolis, at the very time that Rome and Italy became increasingly detached from the soldiers on the frontiers, who by the early second century were largely recruited from the provinces. Even though Roman provincials adopted Roman cultural values, it would be a bold person who would claim that conservative, provincial societies acquired the same sexual consciousness in every respect as that of the demilitarized capital. But there is one decisive, cultural factor that makes it unlikely that rape in Roman society, whether in the metropolis or in the provinces, can be meaningfully compared with modern societies. That is domestic slavery.

Sexual opportunities for both homosexuals and heterosexuals was readily available within the law for those who owned slaves. And for the poor who could not afford a slave, cheap sex was offered by slave prostitutes. Roman law created only limited restrictions against the exploitation of slaves for prostitution, and even less protection against masters.<sup>79</sup> Martial says that if he could not find a consenting, freeborn woman, there was always the slave maid (*ancilla*), and he has left several poems about boy lovers which show that homosexual relations were perfectly acceptable socially, provided the freeborn man was not the passive partner.<sup>80</sup> In civil society, at least, there-

fore, if there were aggressive instincts in the conquest culture it was more likely to be mirrored in the treatment of domestic slaves than in aggression towards free women.

So, to return to the question I began by asking: what about the frontier society itself? Can we detect any suggestion of rape being used as a weapon of war on a par with the appalling Balkan experience? In Kosovo, mass rapes have been described as 'not rare or isolated acts ... but rather used deliberately as an instrument to terrorize the civilian population, extort money from families and push people to flee their homes'. In both Kosovo and Bosnia most acts were in public, they were systematic and they were intended to dehumanize women, so that they would be less marriageable or bear ethnically mixed bastards. The rape cannot be explained by uncontrolled libido or senseless brutality; rather a 'ritual procedure' to prove the masculinity of the aggressor and the weakness of the woman's husband. Often the women were killed after rape. And sometimes the men in the prison camps were forced into homosexual acts with each other.<sup>81</sup>

Naturally we have nothing of this detail in Roman writing. On the frontiers, certainly, there were acts of brutality against the enemy, and under the Republic the Romans were notorious for their intent to strike terror in the enemy by their savagery.<sup>82</sup> But it is hard to find parallels in the warfare of the Empire. I said earlier that the scenes of the Marcommanian Wars of the late second century on the column of Marcus Aurelius, including those of sexual assault on civilians, seem to show more violence than others. Perhaps this was because the invasion by the Danube tribes in AD 170 had posed such a serious threat to Italy that a war of terror and ethnic cleansing was required. We are told that Marcus 'wished to annihilate the Quadi completely', and that Roman soldiers even fought with their teeth in close combat.<sup>83</sup> But there is not enough in the literary or iconographic evidence to suggest the systematic, sexual violation of the civilian population on the scale of Bosnia or Kosovo. Perhaps we simply do not have enough information to make a comparison.

But there is a reason to believe that the wars beyond the frontiers were not fought in this mode. It is significant that the most explicit descriptions of mass rape that we possess come not from foreign campaigns but from civil wars. In the Perusine War of 40 BC, when the Italian city of Perugia was sacked, the scene is described by Cicero: 'Fields were laid waste, villas sacked, married women, maidens and freeborn boys were violently dragged off and handed over to the soldiers'.<sup>84</sup>

In the Year of the Four Emperors, AD 69–70, the Italian city of Cremona was also devastated. Tacitus gives a graphic account:

Neither rank nor years protected anyone from rape (*stuprum*) mingled with slaughter, and slaughter with rape. Old men and women at the end of their lives were dragged off as booty and to

mock them. Whenever a blossoming maiden or a good-looking youth fell into their hands, they were torn to pieces by the violence of their rapists (*rapientium*).<sup>85</sup>

Both scenes contain clear echoes of the reports of mass rape and humiliation in the Balkan wars, which were, of course, also civil wars. But civil wars are exceptions and rouse exceptionally bestial violence. They were wars, in the Roman case, at least, where the sufferings of the victims, also exceptionally, were graphically described, no doubt because the victims were citizens. The Gallic panegyricists praised Constantine that during the wars of succession married women of beauty were ‘not an incitement to licentiousness’, and they lauded the fact that, when the army entered Milan in AD 312, ‘What serenity there was for mothers and maidens (because) they feared no licence’.<sup>86</sup> The implications are that rape was expected. For this was civil war.

It is tempting to believe that the *disciplina* which figured high in the ideological lexicon of the new Augustan army, and included a ban on military marriages, was a deliberate attempt to channel a soldier’s testosterone into rape of the womenfolk of the enemy. If so, the belief that women were ‘inimical to military discipline’ (as Herodian says) ought logically to have excluded all females from the vicinity of the camp, if the ban was to be sexually effective.<sup>87</sup> As we shall see, even Augustus did not do that. There is little reason, therefore, to think that rape was considered a strategic weapon of war, even if everyone, like Calgacus, knew that war provided opportunities for rape.

Women in the camps brings me to the last building block in this study of sex on the frontiers. How did soldiers in the frontier armies manage their sexual urges? And with what consequences? There have been a large number of studies of marriage of Roman soldiers – or rather of non-marriage, since life in the camps was until the third century a matter of ‘copulation and concubinage’, like that of subsequent European colonialism.<sup>88</sup> I have no wish, therefore, to repeat everything that has been said, but only to highlight certain features that lead me to believe that women on the frontiers contributed as much as any other factor to the blurring of the concept of frontiers as the barrier between Rome and the people beyond. Indeed, to some extent the sexual history of soldiers replicated the history of frontiers themselves.

Crudely put, the formation of the frontiers passed through three phases: invasion, occupation and consolidation. This is, of course, only a schematic way of examining the process, which in reality cannot be rigidly or even chronologically separated out. The violence and aggression of invasion and expansion in the first century often continued after the army had established its initial positions as an occupying force, and extended even into the second

and third centuries after the frontiers had been consolidated by permanent camps and cantonments behind walls.

There is little to add about invasion and conquest, since most of what has been said so far related to aggression against an outside enemy. Slaughter of the fighting men and enslavement of women and children was standard treatment for those who refused to submit. That is what Corbulo did in AD 58 against the Armenian town of Volandum.<sup>89</sup> Rapine and slaughter were what they called peace, which the icons of victory sanitized, but did not conceal. Ideology maintained that on campaign was no place for women or wives, since they subverted loyalty and masculinity. Tacitus gives us the full blast of the rhetoric in his accounts of various wives at the front where they should not have been found. Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, in the camp at Cologne, was politically too ambitious by half: 'There was nothing left for generals when a woman got in among the maniples, attended the standards and attempted bribery.' The wife of Calvisius Sabinus in Germany was worse: 'She entered the camp at night dressed as a soldier, and with similar licence tested out the sentries and dared to fornicate right in the headquarters building.'<sup>90</sup> The countless horrors of women were rehearsed in the senate: extravagant in peacetime, timid in war and too feeble on the march; once admitted to army life they were ferocious plotters, ordering the officers about and attracting 'every rascal in the province'.<sup>91</sup> One might suppose from such a declamatory catalogue that the law forbidding women from accompanying their husbands on foreign service would have been rigorously enforced. But the very examples show that it was regularly flouted.

What comes as a greater surprise is the number of women who were available for the lower ranks. They fell within the generic names of *lixae* and *calones*, which included all kinds of camp followers and servants – traders, cooks, grooms, actors and the like, but among them women. The best-known example of them accompanying soldiers on campaign comes from Appian's Republican history of the battle of Numantia in 134 BC, when Scipio expelled all camp followers from the camp, including the women *hetarai*, a word signifying sexual companions.<sup>92</sup> But under the Empire Augustus did not suppress their presence on campaign. Although the number of women can only be guessed at, it was the shrieks of 'not a few women and children' among 'many other servants' that betrayed the Roman army as it was trying to escape in the dark, before the disastrous massacre of Varus' army in the Teutoburg forest in AD 9.<sup>93</sup> The *lixae* and *calones* accompanying the ill-disciplined army of Vitellius in the civil wars of AD 69–70 astonishingly outnumbered the 40–60,000 soldiers, according to Tacitus. In the same war Fabius Valens was impeded in his march by 'a long and luxurious train of prostitutes and eunuchs'.<sup>94</sup> No doubt the examples were exaggerated for effect but the stories were told for those who knew the basic reality.

Armies of occupation in the second phase of frontier formation brought with them semi-permanent or permanent camps, in the East often in the vicinity of cities, even though campaigns were still waged that entailed frequent postings of individuals or whole legions. One of the problems of postings, once a unit had put down its roots, was the female attachments and the children that resulted. That was enough, we are told, to cause the soldiers stationed in Syria to mutiny, when the rumour went round that they were to be sent to Germany: 'The provincials liked living with (*contubernatio*) soldiers they knew, and many soldiers were tied to them by family ties and relationships.' The same problem arose in the Later Empire, when Gallic units were threatened with transfer to the East.<sup>95</sup>

The second example should make us wary of accepting the common stereotype of the Eastern armies as being exceptionally ill-disciplined and corrupted by soft, urban conditions. Egyptian documents show that the soldiers there, too, were involved in a 'web of connections' with the local community.<sup>96</sup> However, although there must have been many broken hearts when the unit moved, inscriptions show a surprising number of women who appear to have followed their men from one part of the Empire to the next: an African woman with a Pannonian centurion in Britain, a Syrian 'wife' living with an auxiliary in Mauretania Tingitana, a British partner attached to a centurion in Upper Germany, a German sister travelling with her brother to Hadrian's Wall in Britain, or a Batavian soldier with a Batavian wife and daughters on the Danube.<sup>97</sup>

Occupation, however, began the process of institutionalization of daily life on the frontiers, sex for the troops included. Some of their desires would have been satisfied by the prostitutes they brought with them. But evidence of military brothels is hard to come by. At the camp in Dura Europos on the Euphrates one of the houses has been identified as a possible example because on the walls it displays pictures of a group of visiting performing artists, including women, who appear to have been billeted there by a military *optio* (or under-officer), to whom there is a reference in one graffito. Normally there would not be any way of identifying a brothel archaeologically, unless a stone bed or an explicit graffito had survived, as in Pompeii. In any case, we must assume that most prostitutes plied their trade in bars and taverns, like the one found at Carnuntum near the legionary camp on the Danube, which could not strictly be described as brothels.

Although the presence of the *optio* at Dura suggests the women were official camp prostitutes, I am doubtful whether the army really did make provision for such encouragement.<sup>98</sup> More probably they turned a blind eye. 'Whoring, drinking and bathing' became the rhetoric for lax control of the soldiers, which is the point of the reference to the purge of the fancy eating houses in the camp by Hadrian, who was a stickler for discipline.<sup>99</sup> This last reference gives the impression that prostitutes sometimes set up shop inside the camp. But the term 'camp' may be used loosely, since a reference in the

glossaries says that the *purpurilla* was 'A place in the camp outside the *vallum* where prostitutes exhibit themselves ... since prostitutes used to use purple clothing'.<sup>100</sup>

But in the early days of occupation there was a good deal of abuse of the native population, whose rights of redress as peregrines were minimal in law and virtually non-existent in practice. We must assume that only the more spectacular incidents attracted attention; cases like the rape of Boudicca's daughters in AD 60 that provoked a war; or the buggery of Batavian youths, who were 'treated as slaves' when called to the camp on the pretext of conscription, which also stoked a revolution in AD 70. The wives and daughters of respectable provincials were not safe.<sup>101</sup> Jewish Talmudic sources, one of the rare cases when provincials speak for themselves, assume that women were more likely to be violated by Roman soldiers than by bandits.<sup>102</sup> And we have the notorious episode in AD 378 when beautiful Gothic women and grown lads were 'hunted down for disgraceful purposes' by army officers after they had been promised safe conduct across the frontiers.<sup>103</sup>

Such examples show that homosexual assault was one recourse for sex-starved soldiers. The myth of Mithras, mentioned earlier, suggests that masturbation was another. The extent of homoerotic relations with local boys or subordinates by prominent Victorian colonials and military heroes is now becoming fully realized, although for long concealed by official prudery.<sup>104</sup> No doubt there was a similar reticence in the Roman sources, although homosexuality was certainly practised. In the army it was socially unacceptable for a Roman citizen to be a passive partner, and militarily bad for discipline between soldiers of unequal ranks.<sup>105</sup> The point is vividly illustrated by a *declamatio* written in the late first or early second century AD, although it refers to an anecdote in Marius' army of 104 BC. The story relates that an ordinary soldier was raped or seduced by a military tribune, whom he then killed. But the soldier was acquitted on the plea that the rape would have been an outrage against his manhood and his citizenship. It would have reduced him to the status of a slave, whereas only a proper man could serve as a soldier.

Again the eastern army became the butt of ancient writers, but there are other examples to discount it as the exception. There is no need to believe that Maximus was able to outlast 30 soldiers and 30 women in bed to recognize a moderate sort of reality behind a typical scandal story.<sup>106</sup> But the mention of slaves, as a comparison for the treatment of the Batavians or of the *miles Marianus*, is instructive. As before, it seems probable that violation of provincials and relations between citizens were less common as long as slaves or male prostitutes (usually also slaves) were among the *lixae*. Tacitus for the first century and Salvian for the Later Empire say as much.<sup>107</sup> There was apparently no social stigma on the active partner nor legal impediment if the passive partner was a slave (or captive).<sup>108</sup> But the several references to



male rape in military life, given the natural reticence of our upper-class sources, means it was constantly in the background.

The availability of local women in the camps for stable liaisons is difficult to quantify in any period. Even if the Syrian and Egyptian evidence indicates that it began to happen quite soon after the occupation, there were obviously regional variations according to the closeness of contacts between soldiers and civilians, whether the camps were based on towns or isolated, and so on.<sup>109</sup> The large train of camp followers, the *lixae* and *calones*, who needed housing once the unit settled in a camp, must have sometimes included women from the vicinity. One example of a camp follower appears on an inscription at Asciburgium (Asberg) on the Upper Rhine, who was a dancer or entertainer, Polla Matidia, commemorated in death by a veteran of the camp. Her nickname, 'Olumphia' (presumably Olympia), shows she was not local.<sup>110</sup> Evidence of women in the *vicus* at Vindolanda in the earliest phase is scarce among the 500–800 inhabitants. But what the Vindolanda tablets have shown us is that from the very earliest occupation of North Britain the wives of various local commanding officers were living with their husbands and children in the camp *praetorium*.<sup>111</sup> Despite the rhetoric, the sexual urge on the frontiers had won.

With consolidation of the frontiers in the second century and the growth of permanent camps, molestation of provincial women was less likely, since it destabilized the communities. Many provincials were gaining citizenship and hence, in theory at least, they were protected against rape (*stuprum*) in Roman law. Juvenal, of course, was right that Roman soldiers were often aggressive and difficult to bring to book, and we have far too many examples of abuse of provincials to regard his words as exceptional.<sup>112</sup> However, the growth in size and amenities of the civil settlements, the *canabae* and *vici*, near the camps meant more sexual partners and prostitutes were available on site. We are only just beginning to appreciate just how many women there were to be found in the military zones of the camps.<sup>113</sup>

The most spectacular evidence is that from shoes discarded on refuse dumps at camps such as Vindolanda, Saalburg (near Mainz) and Zwammerdam (nr Nijmegen), many of them clearly belonging to women and children. Unlike similar finds on sites in the first century, where the shoes are predominantly male, in the second century the proportions reflect a more balanced population. At Vindolanda the women's and children's shoes were unexpectedly found inside the barrack block occupied by a Tungrian cohort and concentrated in just a few rooms. The evidence compares with that at Bonner Berg in Germany, where there was a military workshop. Does this mean, an archaeologist asks, that families were actually living with their menfolk as *contubernales*, or was this evidence of women slaves, or even of young boy prostitutes?<sup>114</sup>

Most studies of women on the frontiers concern what are termed soldiers' 'wives', and I have nothing to add. Although marriage was not legalized

until the third century AD, inscriptions indicate a general trend already in the second century towards stable partnerships, with as many as 50 per cent of soldiers being commemorated on epitaphs by either women or children.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps there were more, since the poorer ranks were less likely to leave stone inscriptions.<sup>116</sup> At a rough calculation, however, about half the soldiers found comforts within the partnerships noted by the inscriptions. But that leaves half who looked elsewhere. Presumably these latter were the poorer, ordinary soldiers, who would have found it difficult to support a regular companion, and had to make do with a prostitute.

But where did the women, these quasi-wives, come from? There is no clear answer, since most of the evidence has to be deduced from their names on the inscriptions. Some look as if they began life as dancing girls or prostitutes, like Olympia we saw earlier, even though she had the Roman-looking *duo nomina* of Polla Matidia. Other women's names, such as Veneris, Veneria, Delicta or Aphrodisia, are more suggestive of their origins, although we cannot be sure.<sup>117</sup> Given that military society was fairly enclosed, we would not expect to find a high proportion of 'wives' from the local population. But there are some names which have a native ring, such as Tancorix (in Britain) or Mababne (in Africa), whom one would expect to have been accommodated in the *vici* or *canabae* that grew up around the camps.<sup>118</sup> Their numbers are no more than about 10 per cent of the inscriptions that record partners.

There is growing support for the idea that many 'wives' would have been found from among the 'daughters of the regiment', that is, from children born to retired soldiers, although there is dispute about whether children born to a soldier on active service were retrospectively legitimated (and hence gained citizenship) when the father retired. Some, in any case, would have held citizenship if their mothers were already citizens. And the wives of auxiliaries were not granted citizenship, nor after AD 140 were their children.<sup>119</sup> The debate, however, does not affect the number of girls available, only their status. But there must be a question of whether there were ever enough daughters of veterans to become a self-replacing caste to meet demands.<sup>120</sup> If not, there was only one major source of supply left, and that is, again slaves – or rather manumitted slaves who became freedwomen.

Many or most of the freedwomen almost certainly began cohabitation with soldiers as their slaves and were freed during the service of their partners or after their retirement (sometimes by testamentary deposition after the man's death).<sup>121</sup> There is a significant number of such 'wives' who can be identified on the inscriptions, which either call them *libertae* or give them the gentile *nomen* of their former master, often adding a second Latinized *cognomen*. But onomastics is not an exact science and the names are not always a guide to origin or status. Many of those 'wives' who are listed as *incerti* could also have been *libertae* with Latin rights, or children of *libertae*, if born to a veteran.<sup>122</sup>

As slaves, the women could have come from anywhere within or beyond the frontiers, the commonest source being home-bred *vernae*. But the slaves who are the most under-represented in our source material are those imported across the frontiers.<sup>123</sup> It is now more generally accepted that there was no serious decline in the use of slaves during the history of the Empire, although the regional variations in agrarian slavery were always considerable, and it was only domestic slavery that was widespread. The evidence shows that even the very poor could often afford to buy a slave, sometimes more than one.<sup>124</sup> The most obvious and the cheapest place to find slaves was on the frontiers, particularly after the spoils of war came home. Trajan's wars in Dacia, we are told, netted half a million, and we have the scandalous case of starving Goths in the fourth century AD who sold themselves to army officers in return for food. Soldiers themselves and court officials benefited from the trade.<sup>125</sup> The slave traders, the *mangones*, who were said to have stripped the frontiers of enemies, probably operated out of the frontier *vici* and *canabae*.<sup>126</sup>

This is no more than a hypothesis, of course. But, if true, it was one more way in which the frontiers acted as the bridge between the Roman Empire and the supposed barbarian world. Many of those 'barbarians', I believe, became assimilated 'wives' of Roman soldiers and mothers of future citizens and soldiers.

### Notes

- 1 Studied in detail by Montrose 1993; cf. also McClintock 1995: 25–8; Gregory 1994: 129.
- 2 Montrose 1993: 180–1 thinks this may be an allusion to an actual incident during Vespucci's third voyage, which he recounts in a letter of 1504.
- 3 Described and illustrated by Smith 1987: 115–20 and plates XIV, XVI. I look forward to the publication by C. Vout, which discusses these amongst other sexual images.
- 4 Smith 1987: 116–17 thinks Claudius is depicted as about to kill Britannia, although he comments that it is odd to show the killing of a future province. The scene of Armenia, he says, is not at the 'moment of killing'. Both look to me like scenes first of the threat and then of the moment of rape.
- 5 The story is in Justin 38. 1. 9; Adams 1982: 17–23. Wolfthal 1999: 80–1 speaks of 'a long established tradition'. For Bosnia, see Seifert 1994: 60.
- 6 Wolfthal 1999: 68–71, although rarely commented on in classical art, as I discuss later.
- 7 Dio [Joann..Antioch.] 59. 25. 5a. The note by M. Cary in the Loeb edition says the words carry a double meaning and compares them to the ribald, triumphal joke that Caesar conquered Gaul, but was himself mastered (sexually) by Nicomedes; Suet. *Jul.* 45. 4. *Celtica* is regularly used by Greek authors for Germania.
- 8 Bienkowski 1900: 40.
- 9 Gregory 1994: 129; Stoler 1995.
- 10 J.M. Mackenzie, introduction to Midgley 1998: vii.
- 11 Scott 1996: 167.
- 12 Foucault 1990: 152.

- 13 These and other examples from Kolodny 1975: 12–15.
- 14 E.g. Lucr. 4. 1272–3, Plaut. *Asin.* 874, Pomponius, fr. 124–5 (Frasinetti). These and others in Adams 1982: 23; Dougherty 1998: 70–1.
- 15 Williams 1999: 92; discussed below.
- 16 Kunsthist. Museum, Vienna, inv. no. ix. A 79; Paris Bibl. Nat. C 2000324; discussed by Kampen 1991: 235–6; Fantham et al. 1994: 313 – ‘symbols of legitimacy’.
- 17 Levi 1982.
- 18 McClintock 1995: 1–5.
- 19 Mathisen and Sivan 1996: 4, illustrated on the dust cover; but I am puzzled why they think Italy depicts a leg.
- 20 Vitruvius 3. 1. 3; the example is given by Kellum 1996, but I baulk at the idea that the ground plan of the Forum of Augustus looked like a gigantic phallus. One symbolism too far?
- 21 McClintock 1995: 22 cites Ptolemy, ‘The constellation of Scorpio, which pertains to the *pudenda*, dominates the continent’, but I am unable to trace the quotation.
- 22 Foucault 1980: 150; Massey 1994: esp. 109–10, 179–80.
- 23 Suet. *Claud.* 1. 2, Dio 55. 1. 3.
- 24 Montrose 1993: 181; McClintock 1995: 23; I provide examples of Indian women in Ch. 7.
- 25 Verg. *Aen.* 8. 685, Tac. *Ann.* 14. 35, 12. 40, *Hist.* 4. 61, HA *Trig.Tyr.* 30.
- 26 Cf. Porter 1986: 233 for similar comments in more modern, colonial history concerning witches and the like.
- 27 Porter 1986: 232–5.
- 28 Savaedra 1999 notes references to rape by soldiers in the early Spanish wars but cites Suet. *Aug.* 21 for Augustus’ new policy of taking women hostages.
- 29 Ovid, *Met.* 12. 225; cf. Wolfthal 1999: 68–71, cited earlier (note 6) with examples; W. also notes cutting off the hair as a symbol of subjection, with which can be compared Ovid, *Amor.* 1. 14. 45, Mart. 14. 26, 5. 68. 1, where the hair of captive German women is sent to Rome.
- 30 Levi 1982: 25; Demougeot 1984: 136–7, compares the *Gemma Augustea* to scene XVII of Trajan’s column, but she does not suggest rape. Zanker 2000: 165–6 notes the tradition and makes the identification with rape (though he adds ‘vermutlich’).
- 31 Ovid, *Amor.* 1. 9. 15, Cic. *Verr.* 1. 9, Seneca, *Contr.* 2. 3. 1; Paul 1982; Adams 1982: 195–6.
- 32 van Gennep 1960: 33–4; R. Copelon in Stiglmayer 1994: 213.
- 33 Levi 1982: 3; Demougeot 1984: 132 thinks the sculptors of the column of Marcus Aurelius were ‘less idealistic’. Scheid and Huet 2000: 12 describe the scenes on the Aurelian column as ‘less systematic than selective and emotional’, not so much war as punishment; cf. R. Robert in Scheid and Huet 2000: 183 for the different levels of violence.
- 34 Zanker 2000: 171–3 argues that the lower level of violence to the women prisoners portrayed on Trajan’s column conveyed a political message that Dacia was to become a province.
- 35 Presicce 1999: 93–4. I cannot agree with J. Elsner in Scheid and Huet 2000: 264 that the Aurelian column proclaimed Commodus’ ‘defensive attempts’ against the barbarians; more plausibly a claim of victory, to forestall criticism of his inaction.
- 36 Toynbee 1934: 89–93; Sapelli 1999: 44.
- 37 Smith 1988: 29 and 71.
- 38 Toynbee 1934; Sapelli 1999: 16.

- 39 Sapelli 1999: 16 – ‘la parte integrante, idealmente assimilati’.
- 40 Ostrowski 1990: 69; Smith 1988: 71 and 77, although he makes a distinction between Augustus’ vision of infinite empire and Hadrian’s internal *cura imperii*.
- 41 Toynbee 1934: 146.
- 42 Verg. *Aen.* 685–706.
- 43 Servius, *ad Aen.* 8.721; cf. Pliny *NH* 36. 39; Smith 1988; K. Brodersen in Schubert and Brodersen 1995: 129–33.
- 44 *Res Gestae* 31. Note how Augustus goes on in the same passage to say, ‘These delegations had not been seen before with any Roman *commander*’, deliberately employing the military term *dux*. Discussed further in Ch. 7
- 45 Dio 75. 4.5. There was a similar display of statues with *tituli* in the Augustan forum, where one imaginative scholar believes the design contained deep sexual messages; see note 20.
- 46 Kuttner 1995: 83; illustrated in Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, 1982, vol II, 1, *Le decorazioni della villa romana della Farnesiana* (eds I. Bragatini, M. de Vos), p. 298; inv. 1174, pl. 168. Dionysus in India was claimed to have been commemorated as a predecessor by Alexander the Great; Strabo 3. 5. 5. For the Villa Farnesina’s political allegories, see Maria Rita Sanzi di Mino in Museo Nazionale Romano, *Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* (ed. A. La Regina), Rome, 1998, p. 215.
- 47 Illustrated in Museo Nazionale Romano, *Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* (ed. A. La Regina) 1998, Rome, p. 203
- 48 Graeven 1900: 210–12; cf. Ch. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, Paris, 1873–1919, vol. II, p. 271, fig. 2459. Settis 1975: 953 notes in association with this ivory the reference by the Gallic panegyricist of Constantius Chlorus, *Aethiops et Indus intremuit*, *Pan.Lat.* 8(4). 5. 2.
- 49 Discussed with further details and references in Gurukkal and Whittaker 2001: 338.
- 50 Douglas 1966: 122–6.
- 51 van Gennep 1960: 15–16; McClintock 1995: 24 lists a number of gendered boundary phenomena, such as sirens, mermaids, the female figure-head on ships, and so on.
- 52 Hand 1983.
- 53 August. *Civ.Dei.* 7.2.1; cf. 4. 11. 6, 6. 9.
- 54 Macrob. *Sat.* 1.6. 9; Varro, *Ling.Lat.* 7. 97 (Müller); Pliny, *NH* 28. 39, cf. 19. 50; Beard *et al.* 1998: 53; cf. Helgeland 1978: 1493, who describes the Dura calendar as a ‘liturgical link connecting Rome and the camp’, although not in the context of the sacred phallus.
- 55 *Dig.* 49. 16. 3. 17–18.
- 56 John Lyd. *de mens.* 4. 50; discussed in Whittaker 1994: 24.
- 57 For example, August. *Ep.* 109. 2 – ‘A kind of frontier by which the love of God and the love of neighbour are linked together.’ This and other examples in Clarke 1996.
- 58 Plut. *Rom.* 15. 5, Livy 1. 13. 6, Ovid, *Fast.* 3. 229; Bryson 1986: 158–9. See Beard 1999 on the need to demythologize the rape of the Sabines and to see it for what it was, an act of sexual aggression that Livy and the Romans tried to sanitize as being politically justified.
- 59 For example, on Marcus Aurelius’ column scene VI; Whittaker 1994: 21–3 gives other examples, including crossing the Antonine Wall in Scotland. The significance of the *lustrationes* on the Aurelian column is unclear; discussed by J. Scheid in Scheid and Huet 2000: 236–7.
- 60 Seifert 1994: 59–61 notes that rape in Bosnia was intended to send a message to men that they could not protect their wives; cf. M. Lake in Midgley 1998: 123.

- 61 I follow closely Gordon 1996.
- 62 Ps.Plut. *de fluviis* 23. 4; this and other texts in Beard *et al.* 1998: II. 305.
- 63 Stiglmayer 1994; Kosovo 2000.
- 64 R. Copelon in Stiglmayer 1994: 197. Rape in peacetime, too, has been consistently under-reported and, until Brownmiller 1975, consistently underestimated.
- 65 Porter 1986: 216; Seifert 1994: 57. Rape is the commonest felony today in the USA.
- 66 Brownmiller 1975: 94–5.
- 67 Porter 1986: 232–5.
- 68 Grotius, *de iure belli ac pacis* (ed. Molhuysen), p. 522; cited by Wolfal 1999: 96.
- 69 Hyam 1990: 2–10, to whom I owe the reference to L. Stone, *Family, sex and marriage in England, 1500–1800*, London, 1977, p. 54.
- 70 Seifert 1994: 57 cites H. Sander and B. Jöhr, *Befreier und Befreit: Krieg, Verwaltung, Kinder*, Munich, 1992.
- 71 Tac. *Agr.* 30–1: *rapere* is ambiguous but the context makes the sense clear.
- 72 Phang 2001: 251–61 and Williams 1999: 104–7 collect the references. Phang suggests that many of the Republican descriptions were rhetorical *topoi*, which does not, of course, mean they were untrue.
- 73 Phang 2001: 253.
- 74 Porter 1988: 232.
- 75 Tac. *Hist.* 1. 48, 5. 22; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15. 10. 6, Caes. *BCiv.* 3. 110; further examples in Phang 2001: 365–87.
- 76 Fantham *et al.* 1994: 289–99; Alston 1998: 213–16. Dougherty 1998: 274 believes the literary themes of rape that celebrated the Augustan rebirth of Rome were transformed ‘into an act of culture’, which may also have encouraged rape as a weapon of war.
- 77 Ovid, *Amor.* 1. 7. 39–43.
- 78 Beard 1999.
- 79 *Dig.* 37. 14. 7 – Vespasian’s decree against prostitution of slave women, if it was not in the conditions of their sale; *Dig.* 1. 6. 2 (Ulpian) – protection of slaves against masters, if there was savage compulsion to commit lewd acts. Dio Chys. *Or.* 15. 5 and Salvian, *de gub. Dei* 7. 4, assume regular access by masters.
- 80 Williams 1999: 33; Phang 2001: 267, 278–9.
- 81 The quotation is from Kosovo 2000: 2. Otherwise see, Kosovo 2000: 9–11, 24–6; Stiglmayer 1994: ix–x; Seifert 1994: 54–9.
- 82 Polyb. 10. 15. 4–6; Harris 1979: 51–2.
- 83 Dio 71. 12–13.
- 84 Cic. *Phil.* 3. 31.
- 85 Tac. *Hist.* 3. 33. 1; for other scenes, Tac. *Hist.* 2. 56, 2. 73.
- 86 *Pan.Lat.* 4(10). 34. 1; 12(9). 7. 5.
- 87 Herod. 3. 8. 4. Libanius, *Or.* 2. 39–40 in the fourth century thought soldiers became inefficient through lack of food, since their wives (permitted since the third century) spent all their earnings.
- 88 Hyam 1990: 2. Phang 2001 is the most recent and the fullest survey of marriage and women on the frontiers; Campbell 1984, focuses more on marriage, among other aspects of the Roman army. Further works are cited in the notes below.
- 89 Tac. *Ann.* 13. 39; cf. K.R. Bradley in Finley 1987: 51.
- 90 Tac. *Ann.* 1. 69, *Hist.* 2. 84.
- 91 Tac. *Ann.* 3. 33; cf. Dio 59. 18. 4, Plut. *Galb.* 12. 1–2. Phang 2001: 365–72 discusses the rhetorical *topos*.
- 92 App. *Iber.* 85; Petrikovits 1979.
- 93 Dio 56. 20. 2–5, 56. 22. 2; Maxfield 1995: 5–6.

- 94 Tac. *Hist.* 2. 87, 3. 33, 3. 40; cf. Quint. 8.6.42, who compares an overloaded rhetorical style to an army with as many *lixae* as soldiers.
- 95 Tac. *Hist.* 2. 80; Amm.Marc. 20. 4. 4.
- 96 Alston 1999; Maxfield 1995: 22–30. For an analysis of the stereotype, see Wheeler 1996.
- 97 References are provided by Haynes 1999: 167; Allason-Jones 1999: 44 and 48; Maxfield 1995: 1.
- 98 MacMullen 1963: 83–4; Davies 1989: 67. Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 51–3 discusses the problems of identifying brothels in Pompeii. Potter 1999: 12–13, talks of ‘a class of camp prostitutes’.
- 99 HA *Alex.* 53, *Hadr.* 10.
- 100 *Corp.Gloss.Lat.* 5. 524. 30 (*Excerpta ex Cod.Vat.* 1469, dating from the tenth century); Adams 1982: 32 emends *purpurilla* to *turturilla* (*turtur* meaning a phallus), but I have rejected this on the grounds of the derivation from *pupurea veste* worn by the prostitutes, according to the glossator.
- 101 Tac. *Ann.* 14. 31 and 35; *Hist.* 4. 14; cf. the charge by Calgacus, note 71. The abuse of native populations in general is studied by Campbell 1984: 243–63.
- 102 Isaac 1998: 86–8.
- 103 Zos. 4. 20. 6; although Amm.Marc. 31. 4. 9–11 says nothing of rape, only slavery.
- 104 Hyam 1990: 5, 29–30 says they were sometimes asexual associations.
- 105 Most examples of homosexual relations in the army come from the Republic, although many of the authors wrote under the Empire. But Suet. *Dom.* 10. 5 tells of two officers who pleaded that they were *impudici* (passive partners).
- 106 Eastern army – Lact. *de mort.persec.* 8. 5; Tac. *Hist.* 3. 40, perhaps Fronto, *ad Ver.* 2. 1. 19 (*lascivia*). Maximus – HA *Max.* 4. 7, with whom compare Magnentius – Vict. *de Caes.* 41. 24. Other examples in Phang 2001: 276–92.
- 107 Tac. *Hist.* 3.40, Salv. *de gub.Dei* 7.88.
- 108 Phang 2001: 278–9.
- 109 There is no agreement about the closeness of contact with civilian communities among scholars in the different papers collected in Goldsworthy and Haynes 1999; Phang 2001: 90–1 summarizes the debate.
- 110 *CIL* XIII 12075 – dated to the first century AD by Petrikovits 1979: 1029–31; cf. Maxfield 1995: 11.
- 111 Birley 1997: 71–3; Bowman 1994: 76, etc.
- 112 Juv. 16. 9–12, 21–2; Campbell 1984: 244.
- 113 Allason-Jones 1999: 41; Hassall 1999: 35–7.
- 114 van Driel Murray 1995; Bowman 1994: 75 notes the term *contubernalis* on *Tab.Vindol.* II. 181. Allason-Jones 1999: 45–6 says that in Block 13 at Housesteads the centurion’s quarter was full of women’s artefacts.
- 115 Phang 2001: 229; I make no distinction between auxiliaries and legionaries except where the differences are important.
- 116 Roxan 1991: 463. Cherry 1998: 113, 122–3 calculates at Lambaesis that the poor were seven times less likely to leave a record and that the marriage records of soldiers and veterans are about a third as common as those of civilians. Maxfield 1995: 17 and Roxan 1991: 465 calculate that about 50 per cent of auxiliary diplomas name wives.
- 117 Phang 2001: 245.
- 118 Allason-Jones 1999: 50, citing *RIB* 908, 967; Cherry 1998: 120, citing *CIL* VIII. 3081. Apart from these native forms there are a fair number of Latinized but local names, such as Donata in Africa. Phang 2001: 331 gives the percentages.
- 119 Wells 1997; Phang 2001: 306–7; Cherry 1988: 102, citing earlier discussions.



- 120 Discussion of veteran numbers in Cherry 1998: 97, giving earlier estimates. We cannot begin to calculate how many children were born to serving soldiers. But using Cherry's figures of about 80,000 veterans (legionaries and auxiliaries) at any given time, half of whom married and had families, it would have needed 40,000 daughters to supply the following generation. The Roman army of 200–300,000 men, half of whom were looking for partners, would not have found enough among the daughters of the regiment.
- 121 Varron 1994 gives many examples of *libertae* as partners. The *ancilla* could be manumitted, if the intention was to marry her; Gaius 1. 19.
- 122 Phang 2001: 190–5, 306–13 discusses the problem of onomastics and the status of children of freedwomen born before manumission.
- 123 Harris 1999: 62.
- 124 Whittaker 1993: V. 96–97.
- 125 Trajan – John Lyd. *de magist.* 2. 28; Goths – Amm.Marc.31. 4–5; soldiers – Them. *Or.* 10. 138b; court – Symm. *Ep.* 2. 78.
- 126 Amm.Marc. 22. 7. 8; Whittaker 1993: V. 96–8. Admittedly many of these examples come from the post-Severan period when marriage was legal, but I assume the tendency for soldiers to acquire slaves did not cease, some of whom would have become wives.

# 7 'TO REACH OUT TO INDIA AND PURSUE THE DAWN' THE ROMAN VIEW OF INDIA

On the medieval *mappamundi*, or map of the world (drawn c. 1300), which hangs today in Hereford Cathedral in England, you can see on the bottom left-hand corner a portrait of the Emperor Augustus, first Emperor of Rome, commissioning three geographers to survey the whole world. The picture derives its subject from various geographic world lists, or cosmographies, some of them anonymous, which were circulating in the later Roman Empire, and it refers to an event some four hundred years earlier, when Julius Caesar, after the defeat of all his enemies, commissioned four Greek geographers to go to the four corners of the earth and collect information to draw a map of the whole world.

The work was finished some time between 30–24 BC,<sup>1</sup> by which time Julius Caesar was dead and his adopted son, the Emperor Augustus, had taken up the project. Augustus had just made himself ruler of the Roman world, following his great naval victory at Actium in 31 BC off the west coast of Greece. The battle was in reality the last in a bloody civil war between Augustus and his arch Roman rival, Antony, who had enlisted the help of Egypt. But the victory was subsequently publicized not as a civil war but as the triumph of Roman Italy, led by a constitutional ruler, over an oriental, barbarian queen, Cleopatra. That was how the Augustan poet, Vergil, described the scene (supposedly engraved on the shield of Aeneas, founder of Rome):

There stood Antony with barbaric wealth and strange weapons,  
victor over the people of the Dawn and the Erythrean shore,  
bringing with him Egypt, the strength of the East and furthest  
Bactria – while following him (for shame!) his Egyptian wife ...  
And when Apollo, god of Actium, saw all this from above and was  
bending his bow, all Egypt turned tail in terror, as did the Indians  
and all Arabia and the Sabaeans.<sup>2</sup>

The poet's message was clear: Augustus had conquered the East. The 'people of the Dawn' were Indians; the Erythrian Sea was the Indian Ocean.

Bactria was a part of North-West India and Indians had now been defeated by Rome.

It was soon after this climactic battle that the map of Caesar was completed. We do not know what form it first took, and it was probably ultimately absorbed into the famous map designed by Augustus' lieutenant, Agrippa. But we know from the cosmographies of the Later Empire what features it contained, since they are set out in catalogue lists, under headings such as Mountains, Seas and Rivers. One of the lists is that of Roman *provinciae* extending to the four quarters of the world where Oceanus, the great river, encircled the earth. Many of these *provinciae*, are what one would expect, like Gaul or Africa, which were organized 'provinces' – what we would now call colonies – of the Roman Empire. But under the heading in the section headed *Oceanus Orientalis* it is a surprise to find India, together with what the list calls '*gentes* [that is, peoples or tribes] stretching to Oceanus on its outer edge'. This must mean that India was considered a 'province', literally a 'field of action', which the Romans claimed to control.<sup>3</sup>

Maps are political constructs, encapsulating visions of imperial power, of which globes and orbs are symbols. Alexander the Great understood the importance of taking map-makers in his train when conquering the world. Augustus' map, the information for which was organized by his lieutenant, Agrippa, was set up in a public portico in the centre of Rome near the Pantheon. The Elder Pliny, who was a near contemporary, called this map, 'An image of the orb of the world for the city to see',<sup>4</sup> in other words, a proclamation of Empire. The coins of Augustus show him seated on a globe, and the poet Vergil speaks of Augustus taking his *imperium* (which in Latin means both 'empire' and 'rule') past the Indians to where the giant Atlas 'turns the pole on his shoulders'.<sup>5</sup>

There is nothing unusual about such imagery, now or later. The same imperial glory was expressed when Cardinal d' Estrées gave Louis XIV a gift of globes of the earth and the sky, accompanied by the inscription, 'Where a thousand great deeds have been executed by him and by his orders, to the astonishment of so many nations'.<sup>6</sup> Mercator's *Atlas*, published in an English translation in the seventeenth century, was intended to 'Englishize' the world for her imperial design.<sup>7</sup> In British India images abounded of Victoria, Empress of India, seated with an orb in her hand, while more recently Mussolini illustrated his new Roman Empire with a set of maps set up in the middle of ancient, imperial Rome.

Augustan rule and empire, therefore, was world-wide, 'an *imperium* without end', to use a much quoted phrase of Vergil.<sup>8</sup> The same idea of world rule is voiced by another contemporary poet, Ovid, when he says, 'For the city its space is the same as the world'.<sup>9</sup> And this became a dominant theme of the age, which specifically included rule over Indians, as reflected in the title of this paper: 'They are preparing with their hands to reach out to India and pursue the Dawn'.<sup>10</sup> The theme was repeated by writers, such

as the Elder Pliny, in the next generation, also in the context of the route to India.<sup>11</sup>

To dismiss all this as mere literary rhetoric is, of course, possible, but that would be to misunderstand the contemporary cosmological view. The Romans believed that, whether or not a territory of the outer *gentes* (peoples) was formally organized within the boundaries of administration, Roman sovereignty still extended to them, and that Rome had a suzerain's right to expect obedience or to intervene, if this right was challenged.<sup>12</sup> The embassies 'frequently sent' from Indian kings was a thing 'never seen before', Augustus wrote in the account of his own achievements.<sup>13</sup> This implied submission in Roman eyes: 'Now the Scythians [i.e. those living in North-West India] and proud Indians seek his ruling', says Horace, also an Augustan poet.<sup>14</sup>

Whether the submission was also accompanied by grants of specific port rights for Romans is much disputed by modern historians. Our sources do, in fact, refer to some kind of privileges conceded to Roman ships by certain Indian kings – the Pandion king in Tamil Nadu, for example, and the king who controlled Barygaza (Broach) in Gujurat.<sup>15</sup> There is, of course, no reason to think that every different ruler in the Indian continent, which was not a single nation, would have behaved identically. But the notion of kings concerned with port rights is perfectly plausible. One Roman source noted that some Indian kings had direct control of traders entering his ports, while Indian sources show that there was close royal patronage of trade guilds and their associated Buddhist monasteries, which acted as staging posts for voyagers.<sup>16</sup> Inscriptions of the period also record most-favoured-nation status being granted by their rulers to certain traders in some South Arabian ports.<sup>17</sup> So the idea was certainly current.

All this, however, is to some extent detail compared with the central principle that the Romans viewed Indians as subjects. In many ways the Parthians, east of the Euphrates, provide a comparative model. Although never part of the administered Empire, the Parthians, were deemed to have submitted to Augustus when they made a diplomatic return of captured standards, and in Roman iconography they are depicted kneeling, often in a religious setting.<sup>18</sup> There is a not too dissimilar reference to India when Vergil imagined the carving on a temple door showing, 'The battle of the Gangarides [the people of Ganga] and the weapons of conquering Quirinus [i.e. Augustus]'.<sup>19</sup> It is even possible India's submission was publicly displayed in the 'portico of the tribes' in the middle of Rome. This can be no more than a conjecture, since the building no longer exists. But we know that Augustus commemorated his conquests in temples in different parts of the Empire by placing within the buildings female figures representing the *provinciae* and *gentes*, in which, as we have seen, India was included. This was done in order to glorify his military achievements.<sup>20</sup>

This sense of the rights of Roman overlordship of India persisted after

Augustus. Seneca, imperial adviser to the Emperor Nero, wrote a geography of India (now lost), which has been seen as an encouragement for an Indian expedition in the mid-first century AD, and the Emperor Domitian possibly intended the same in the later first century AD.<sup>21</sup> The Emperor Trajan in the early second century was visited by Indian delegations and wistfully pondered over an Indian expedition in his old age<sup>22</sup> – a desire that persisted into the Later Empire, when emperors continued to regard India as a Roman fiefdom.<sup>23</sup>

Just how much Augustus actually knew about India, or how he thought about India, we can only guess, based upon the extensive contemporary literature of his rule; from poets such as Vergil, Horace and Ovid, quoted earlier, or from prose writers such as Diodorus the Sicilian. Above all we can judge by Strabo, a Greek speaking Roman from Asia, who was undoubtedly the finest geographer of the age, and whose views many believe reflected those of Augustus. He was writing just as trade between Rome and India had opened up after the annexation of Egypt. These authors were not, of course, official spin-doctors employed by an imperial propaganda department. But they do represent a 'network of discourses', as they have been termed, within the new regime and attitudes of Westerners at the time in contact with the other world of India.<sup>24</sup> It is this view that must be examined.

A good many studies within the last decade have discussed the concept of alterity or 'Otherness', stimulated by the binary polarities perceived by structural anthropologists as an explanation of myth. The concept was adopted into historiography by books such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1985) and François Hartog's *Mirror of Herodotus* (1988) as a tool to dissect the ideological fantasies held by one group of people about another. The conclusion of these studies is that binary oppositions, such as raw/cooked, barbarian/civilized, and so on, usually serve the purpose of self-identity. They hold up a 'mirror' to one's own society, which shows how people 'represent themselves and others to themselves', thereby creating 'communities of interpretation', which are non-existent by themselves.<sup>25</sup> Most of such studies have concerned Western views of the Eastern outsider, although Indian scholars have now begun to reverse the perspective.<sup>26</sup> The perceptions of India, therefore, held by the Greeks and later by the Romans, as they became Hellenized, are not straightforward cocktails of fact and fancy, but images with a subtext or subtexts at several different levels.

Some of the Roman accounts of India are, indeed, a pure reverse mirror of a different world. Pliny, for instance, says the Singhalese were called *antichthonos* – 'other-landers' in Greek – and Strabo continually stresses that the customs of India 'are very unusual compared to our own'. Strabo's Greek word for 'unusual' is *a-etheia* meaning 'opposite of customary'.<sup>27</sup> We see the classic polarities of 'Otherness' when Indians are described as barbarians who eat raw flesh, including that of humans,<sup>28</sup> or as those who could not speak

the language of Westerners. Speaking Greek had always been the prime way that Greeks differentiated themselves from barbarian 'others', particularly from those who distorted the sacred names. This was much as in India, where *mlecbha* outsiders were distinguished from brahmana *aryas* by their alien pronunciation and exclusion from sacred, Sanskrit rituals.<sup>29</sup> In a music-hall mime, popular in Roman Alexandria during the second century AD (to which I shall refer later), great amusement was had from Indian women babbling an unintelligible language; and in another popular tale the Indian king, although able to speak Greek, would not, because, he said, 'I am a barbarian by decree of fate.'<sup>30</sup>

This theme of opposites was all pervasive. India was a land where 'animals that are tame in *other* countries are wild', and where some of their marriage and burial customs are bizarre and unusual, 'a thing quite different from what is customary among Greeks'.<sup>31</sup> There the world was upside-down and unnatural. When others had snow, said the Roman writer, Curtius Rufus, India was hot, and vice-versa. Then he added the significant words, 'The reason why nature has inverted her order like this is not apparent'. It was not nature, of course, who had inverted her order but the Romans. They had invented India to become, what Said calls, an 'ante-type of Europe'.<sup>32</sup>

Such polarity, however, was not only self-identification of insiders against barbarians outside, but also an instrument to underline the primitiveness of India, which thus became a utopia of Rome's own past frozen in the present, the relics of the Golden Age, where men lived to phenomenal ages – of 130, 200 or even 400 years old.<sup>33</sup> The Jewish-Roman historian, Josephus, in the first century AD, associated India with the Garden of Eden from where a river 'runs towards India and falls into the sea, called by the Greeks the Ganges'. And the second century orator, Dio Chrysostom, described India as the land most favoured by fortune, where rivers ran with milk and honey and olive oil, where every day was a feast day.<sup>34</sup> This image of fantastic fertility, where trees grew so tall they threw a shadow five furlongs, higher than any archer could shoot,<sup>35</sup> where tigers were twice the size of lions and the jungles teemed with exotic beasts and enormous snakes<sup>36</sup> and where even the monkeys helped to collect the pepper,<sup>37</sup> was not just a fairyland of myth and monsters. No doubt popular imagination was fuelled by 'magic carpet' tales and legends of the gods Dionysus and Herakles, who lived in or went to India.<sup>38</sup> But these were also self-identifying images that served a different purpose.

The intention and perspective behind such texts about India was precisely the same as that displayed towards other lands on the Roman periphery. The historian Tacitus, for instance, wrote a monograph in the early second century AD called the *Germania* in which Germany was presented as a single land, although the German tribes were no more an ethno-geographic entity than India was. They were an imaginary Roman construct, imposed by 'the rhetoric of identity and the rhetoric of alterity' on a bewildering variety of

groups beyond what we normally call the Roman frontiers. But, like Indians, they were people whom Rome considered within her sphere of power.<sup>39</sup> Like India, Germany became a land of fabulous monsters and forests, paradoxically and simultaneously peopled by gross caricatures and models of noble savagery. Germans, just as Indians, were supposedly free men who possessed no slaves, who used no silver or gold, and so on.<sup>40</sup>

Alterity, in short, was applied as a critique of a lost purity and openness in Western society. It serviced, for example, the well-known classical discourse on nurture versus nature, the oppositions of law against custom (*nomos/physics*) familiar in Greek philosophic debate. The nobility, bravery and simple life of the Brahmin philosophers, who did not cling to life, deeply impressed almost every Westerner, since, as one writer says, 'We from the first have been taught the opposite'.<sup>41</sup> Mandaris, the Brahmin leader in one encounter with a Westerner, supposedly intervened directly in the *nomos/physics* philosophic debate by declaring that the Greeks were wrong to prefer convention to nature.<sup>42</sup>

One interesting angle to the Brahmin encounters is its adoption by early Christians, which illustrates perfectly the theme of India as the mirror of Western Roman society. Among the papers of the greatest of all Roman bishops of the fourth century, Ambrose of Milan, was found a work called 'Concerning the people of India and the Brahmins', attributed to an unknown Christian bishop of Helenopolis in Asia Minor. It seems to be an amalgam of various texts circulating in the Roman Greek East, based upon the famous meeting between Alexander the Great and the Brahmin philosopher, Dandamis, as told by Hellenistic writers. The details of its transmission, however, are less important than the fact that the work found in the library of Ambrose was a late Roman, Latin translation, into which had been woven a violent and obviously anachronistic attack, supposedly by the Brahmin *guru*, upon the follies of Rome – the filth and luxury of the city, the wild beast and gladiatorial shows, the feasting, drunkenness and sexual deviation. But, says Dandamis in conclusion, 'The Brahmins appear to be free from all these evils we have named'.<sup>43</sup>

It comes as no surprise, in the light of what has been said about the function of alterity, to find that Ambrose was the champion of a new, ascetic movement in the Church. Another contemporary Latin translation of the same work was made by Jerome, also a Christian ascetic but this time the scourge of corrupt monks. In his translation the message of Dandamis, the Brahman, is made to condemn the monastic style of life of the Brahmins and the luxuries of paganism. The Brahmin episode and their monotheism was equally used by the Arians to support their theological attack on the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>44</sup> What we witness in the Later Roman Empire, therefore, is the re-silvering of the Indian mirror by each spectator for his own objective.



Indians, living in a state of nature, had no thieves, no lawsuits, no borrowing or lending, and they always respected the truth.<sup>45</sup> It did not matter that many of the antitheses were untrue and, what is more, known to be untrue. India, after all did have slaves (Sanskrit *dasa*) and debt-slaves, while money and gold transactions were certainly practised from an early period.<sup>46</sup> What counted, however, was the ideological rhetoric, for which India served as a 'laboratory of mankind', to use the phrase of a nineteenth-century anthropologist referring to India. But, just as in the nineteenth century, anthropology was the handmaid of imperialism, used to impose order upon a land that lay on the edge of Western imperial aspirations.<sup>47</sup> And it is this third, political aspect of alterity that returns to the subject with which this chapter began.

We must, says Said in response to critics of the theory of alterity, go 'beyond the polarities and binary oppositions' of 'Othering', to a more political subtext of Orientalism in modern historiography. The subtext, of course, was drawn originally from Greek and Roman sources.<sup>48</sup> The nature versus law debate of Greek philosophy, referred to earlier as a means of reinforcing utopian arguments, was also read as an opposition between a legally organized and controlled West against a libidinous and corrupt East; a civilized land against not just a barbarian, but a barbarous, people. India, as the mythical birthplace of Dionysus/Bacchus, the leader of the wild pyrrhic dance and inventor of wine, became the land of drinking to excess and outlandish dance.<sup>49</sup> In the Alexandrian mime, noted earlier, one character says, 'Wine is not for sale in this country (India) ... so they drink it neat' – a sign to Romans of drunkards; and the Indian king leads a dance to the moon, described as, 'intemperate in rhythm ... a frenzied seric step'.<sup>50</sup> 'Indian revels and drinking bouts' were a byword in Republican Rome, we are told.<sup>51</sup> Such stereotypes have been used in history by every colonizing master against 'the natives'.

With dancing and drinking went gold, jewels and corruption of morals. The fabulous gold of India is one of the earliest *topoi* (or literary set-pieces) about India. It included the extraordinarily persistent myth of a gold-digging ant which, even if sometimes regarded with scepticism, was nevertheless repeated in almost every ancient description of India from the fifth century BC to the later Roman Empire. Interestingly the ant, sometimes the size of a fox and with a hide like a panther, reappears in medieval stories of Prester John; and we are told Suleiman the Magnificent received the gift of an Indian ant the size of a dog.<sup>52</sup> But such tales of luxurious dress, enormous jewels and corruption mirror more than anything else the preoccupations of the external reporters. 'The sea', says the Roman writer, Curtius Rufus, writing about India in the second century AD, 'casts upon the shore precious stones and pearls and nothing has contributed more to the opulence of the natives'. But, he adds – and this is where the author reveals himself – 'they spread the common evil to foreign nations'. The moral obses-

sion with the corrupting influence of Indian imports was a critique not of Indian but of Roman society, a theme that is prominent in Roman satirists.<sup>53</sup> The Indian despot who dared not sleep in the same bed all night for fear of plots, looks remarkably like the portrait of a Greek tyrant or a Roman emperor.<sup>54</sup>

Ancient Orientalism, therefore, like its modern counterpart, was a tool of racial domination, often combined with gender domination and sexual degradation, as also in more modern epochs.<sup>55</sup> Robert Calasso's intriguing book, *The marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, begins with the rape of Europa, an Asian maiden (despite her name), by the Greek god, Zeus, in the form of a bull, incarnation of Western masculinity. 'If it is history we want', says Calasso, 'then it is a history of conflict'.<sup>56</sup> I have already suggested that an allegorical, female figure of India may have stood in the portico at Rome as one of the *simulacra gentium*, subject women dominated by the male.<sup>57</sup> The account of the Emperor's victory at Actium, with which I began, was told not as defeat of a Roman rival but conquest over an erotic, Asian harlot, a theme reinforced by contemporary Roman oracles and a long tradition of mistrust.<sup>58</sup> Many of the Indian stories current in Rome focused on lax, barbarian sexual practices in India: copulation took place like animals in the open air; marriage contests were held for women; all Indian wives were would-be prostitutes, and so on.<sup>59</sup> Roman satire associated scents and ointments with Indian prostitutes on the streets of Rome. And in the Alexandrian mime the women archers attending the barbarian king were called by the Greek clown 'daughters of pigs' to raise a laugh.<sup>60</sup>

Gender domination was only one aspect of Western imperial rights. The people of Rome knew, ever since Aristotle, that those who lived in Asia, although intelligent and skilful, were 'in continuous subjection and slavery'.<sup>61</sup> Indian slaves, eunuchs and prostitutes were evidently a familiar sight in Rome, even if not every slave with the name 'Indus' or 'Indicus' really came from India.<sup>62</sup> The theme has subsequently been repeated by Montesquieu's belief in Asia's 'spirit of servitude' and Marx's 'Asiatic exceptionalism' as explanations of its stagnation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, just as the notion of the unique superiority of the Western economy, fed by Adam Smith, Hegel and Weber, was also inherited from Greco-Roman binary comparisons.<sup>63</sup> Even Lord James Bryce's distinguished work on law in 1914 concluded that Indians were beyond cultural assimilation with the West because they were 'intellectually backward'.<sup>64</sup>

It is worth, however, stressing the reasons behind the crises of identity which stimulated the need to distinguish self from the barbarian in history. They were always closely attached to military conflict and domination. Such polarities were unknown in Greece before the tensions of the Persian Wars of the fifth century BC, after which came a rapid Greek expansion into the Persian Empire.<sup>65</sup> The bulk of 'Othering' literature about Indians in Rome took their origin from Greek writers who accompanied Alexander's military

expansion and followed his imperial ambitions, ambitions which were inherited by the successor Hellenistic Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties. It was this latter period which produced the anthropologies of India by Megasthenes, Deinarchos and others. It cannot be coincidence that these Hellenistic writers were then culled and collected in the new imperial age of Augustus by writers such as Juba, Strabo and the poets, just when the Emperor was reinventing the concept of *Romanitas* and claiming to follow in Alexander's footsteps.

In the century after Augustus the Emperor Trajan took Alexander as his role model in the context of his Indian ambitions and diplomacy, and there were even contemporary rumours that an army of 70,000 could take control of the land.<sup>66</sup> It is perhaps not too fanciful, therefore, to associate this new phase of imperialism with the work of a number of writers who were contemporaries of Trajan: Ptolemy, who richly enlarged the cosmic and geographic information about India;<sup>67</sup> Aelian who assembled a dictionary of curious Indian animals; or Arrian who wrote an anthropology of India derived from that of Megasthenes. New histories and lives of Alexander were produced by Arrian, Curtius Rufus and Plutarch. But if we ask, what lay behind this new burst of interest in the East, we remember that Trajan had inherited an Empire racked by factions at home and uncertainties on the frontiers. The invention of the barbarian has always been a means of resolving internal tensions. Barbarians are, as Cavafy says in his poem 'Waiting for the barbarian', 'Some sort of solution'.<sup>68</sup>

The Orient of antiquity, therefore, existed much as it has been described in later periods, as Europe's 'silent partner', over which the West's right to rule was defined, to use Said's phrase, by 'paradigmatic fossilization' and by a belief in superior Western rationality.<sup>69</sup> Once we recognize this fact, we should be suspicious about many Greco-Roman assertions about their own primacy.

Perhaps the best-known example of such primacy is Europe's so-called discovery of the monsoon, much as Western explorers later claimed to have discovered the Nile or the Victoria Falls. In the Indian case the different accounts about who precisely made the discovery, whether it was Eudoxus at the court of Ptolemy Euergetes, c. 116 BC, relying on information from a half-dead Indian castaway, or an unknown ship's captain called Hippalus, the stories have rightly been regarded with scepticism, even for reasons of internal inconsistencies. Hippalus was almost certainly invented from the Greek sailors' name of Hipalus, given to the South-West Monsoon, and Strabo himself believed Eudoxus' voyage was nonsense.<sup>70</sup> But our conclusions here lead us to add that the stories depended heavily on the stereotypes of the silent 'Other' of India, its primitive fossilization and inferior rationality.

Despite this, the view persists that it was Westerners who first understood how to use the winds for commerce.<sup>71</sup> We never hear of Indian

shipping and sailors coming to the West, so it was argued, since they would not, or could not, use the monsoon winds. Their ships were too small or too fragile or incorrectly rigged, and their trade too underdeveloped.<sup>72</sup> It is hard to know whether this is true or not; but it is a dangerous argument from silence that looks increasingly fragile. In fact, sailors of North-West India had long been familiar with the Greco-Indian tradition of shipbuilding, since Alexander had built a fleet at the mouth of the Indus and Megasthenes reported on the shipbuilders of Chandragupta's navy, who hired ships to traders.<sup>73</sup> The existence of large ocean-going ships is apparently supported by Vedic texts and Buddhist *jatakas*.<sup>74</sup> A Roman source early in the Roman period says that merchants of Barygaza (Broach) in Gujerat were sending large ships to Arabia carrying heavy teak beams and metals, while large ocean-going ships, called Kolandiphonta, were sailing the South Asian seas.<sup>75</sup> Modern research concludes from the literary and iconographic evidence that large Indian two- and three-masted sailing ships of perhaps 40–50 metres length plied the seas; some are illustrated on Andhran coins of the second century.<sup>76</sup> This may account for the astonishingly large amount of Indian teak found in excavations at Berenike, the Roman port on the Red Sea, where so much Indian rouletted table ware and coarse cooking ware has also been found, dating from the mid-first century AD, that the archaeologists conclude there was probably a South Indian community living there.<sup>77</sup>

There is also the archaeological and literary evidence, however scant, of an Indian presence on the island of Socotra – the ancient Dioscurides – which lies conveniently on the 12th parallel latitude for ships steering by the stars across the open sea, the monsoon route between Cape Gardafui in Africa and the Malabar coast.<sup>78</sup> Use of the gentler, prevailing North-East winds in winter to cross from India to the West was no problem, even for small ships which, if they had been too fragile to manage the return strong Sou'westers of summer, could have returned along the Arabian coastal route.

In sum, if there is a lack of evidence of Indian ships in the West, it was not because they did not know how to reach the West, since Indian ships clearly did sometimes use the coastal route.<sup>79</sup> Possibly there were religious taboos on overseas travel in the *dharmasastras*. More probably there were political impediments on the Yemen coast and fierce restrictions on entering Ptolemaic Egypt, as our ancient sources do, in fact, say.<sup>80</sup> But I doubt if we have sufficiently considered the possibility that the lack of epigraphic evidence of Indian sailors in Ptolemaic Egypt is concealed by the fact that Indo-Greeks of North-West India spoke Greek and were, therefore, indistinguishable from Egyptian Greeks. Even in the Roman period the evidence of Indians in the West is minute, but much of it refers to Indians speaking Greek.<sup>81</sup>

As for commercial activity, no one, surely, can believe in the lack of sophistication of Indian trade, when confronted with the evidence which has been assembled by recent research; evidence of Indian terms for commercial

transactions in the *sūtras* of Panini, probably dating from the third century BC, the role of the Buddhist and Jain institutions in trading guilds, and the existence of commercially orientated economies long before the arrival of the Romans, who profited from them.<sup>82</sup> All this contrasts starkly, however, with the statement by Pausanias, the Greek traveller and guide of the second century AD, who claimed to have heard from sailors going to India that they engaged in primitive barter which, if true, probably reflected a Roman, not an Indian desire to avoid transactions in coin.<sup>83</sup> Barter, in any case, is no index of the levels or character of trade transactions.

Just one footnote before we leave the silent 'Other' of India. We should not ignore the Indian view of the outsider *Yavanas* in the equation, which has been ably analysed by Indian scholars. Indians were just as exclusive, and they distorted reality because of their own internal tensions just as much as did the Greek and Roman mirror.<sup>84</sup> One spin-off from such exclusivity was the way that Indian sources fed Greco-Roman prejudices about their exotic and barbaric 'Otherness'. Bizarre tales of one-eyed Indian men or people with ears so big they touched the ground, were, says Megasthenes, 'described to him by the [Brahmin] philosophers'.<sup>85</sup> They may have just been having a good laugh at his expense, but one suspects an element of resentment at outsider curiosity. Pliny cynically suggested that reports about the origin of cinnamon and casia from birds' nests or from marshes guarded by bats and snakes were 'Tales invented by natives to raise the price of the goods'.<sup>86</sup> So much for supposed Indian lack of business acumen!

In view of the distorting effect of alterity, it is not surprising how persistent, how deeply frozen the information was that the Roman world read about India. This, despite the trade boom of the first century AD and continuous contacts thereafter. In all the four hundred years of Roman-Indian relations it is as though the clock had stopped in the third century BC, where the hands had been set by Hellenistic historians and geographers, the followers of Alexander the Great, Megasthenes the Seleucid ambassador who is said to have gone to the court of Chandragupta and the geographer of Alexandria, Eratosthenes. So, for example, Arrian, a Roman commander in the second century AD, who wrote two works on India, says 'Beyond the River Hyphasis (Beas) I cannot speak for certain, *since Alexander did not go beyond it*', or 'I shall now give the dimensions of India, following Eratosthenes ... as the most trustworthy authority'.<sup>87</sup> Eratosthenes lived 400 years before Arrian, and countless traders had gone beyond the River Beas.

It is not as though further information was not available. Strabo, the Augustan geographer, had read later writers about South India, including Poseidonius (c. 100 BC), who had given the correct orientation of India which every sailor could verify. Yet Strabo rejects them in favour of Megasthenes and Eratosthenes.<sup>88</sup> The same applies to later writers, such as the second century AD writer Dionysius, called *Periegetes* ('the guide book

writer') whose popularity led to a translation into verse by a Roman senator, Avienus in the fourth century, and who was still read in the sixth century.<sup>89</sup> Yet the information he peddles is still the same tired, old 'Wonders of India' from Hellenistic times.<sup>90</sup> This embalming of all things Indian is even more striking when put alongside the frequent references to first-hand information available to authors like Strabo and Arrian from sailors and traders, who talk about 'the busy merchant' who 'hastens to the far-away Indias by sea'.<sup>91</sup>

An important exception to this tradition was the Elder Pliny, a Roman admiral (which may be important) who died in AD 70. Among the various and varied information he collected in his massive *Natural History* there are over two hundred references to India. But even Pliny's work is a curious hotch-potch of frozen Hellenistic *miracula* and monsters mixed up with absolutely up-to-date information about winds and sailing routes or the value of coral in India, more like a journalist than a scientist, says one modern commentator.<sup>92</sup> Just to give one example, almost every Hellenistic writer says that the two constellations around the North Pole, Ursa Major and Minor (the Roman *Septentriones*) were invisible from India, either one or both, for all or part of the year, and from various latitudes. The information is repeated by Pliny four times in various contexts, talking about both Sri Lanka and Northern India.<sup>93</sup> In antiquity, however, the celestial North Pole lay midway between its present position and the star Alpha Draconis. The effect of this was that the Pole Star itself (of Ursa Minor), which today lies only 40' above the northern horizon at Sri Lanka and is difficult to see, was easily visible in antiquity at 15' above the horizon. All the other principal stars of the two constellations, moreover, which circled around the Pole Star, while less visible at certain periods would have been more visible at others, especially in the higher Indian latitudes, where they never fell below the horizon. So Pliny was perhaps half-right to say, as he does, that the constellation stars could not be seen from Sri Lanka, yet quite wrong about the invisibility of Ursa Minor in more northerly latitudes. The main point, however, is this. Pliny could easily have verified his information from sailors, who must have used stars to sail the latitude of 120' in the open sea from the Horn of Africa to Nelkynda on the Malabar Coast.<sup>94</sup> But he did not.

So Pliny stands between the high culture of the poets or Hellenistic-dominated litterateurs and the technical or scientific writings deriving from practical experience of sailors and traders. Of the latter we have two important examples. The first is the anonymous *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, almost certainly written just before Pliny in the mid-first century AD;<sup>95</sup> the second is the work of the mathematician, astronomer and cosmic geographer, Ptolemy, who lived probably in Alexandria in the mid-second century AD.<sup>96</sup> It is not necessary here to discuss these two authors who themselves lived in different worlds, one of traders and the other of armchair scholars, except to say they show how much Roman travellers knew about the Indian



coast and even about some inland political conditions, very little of which reached the literary salons. The question, however, we have to answer is why? Why this determination to keep India in the deep-freeze?

Before answering we must remind ourselves that beneath the surface of high classical, conservative literature in any culture there always lies almost concealed a layer of culture of the streets, the bars and the theatre, what nowadays we would call 'pop' culture, which plays an important part in the lives of the poor, and never more than in the busy cosmopolitan environment of capital cities and sea ports. Not surprisingly, what the ordinary Roman knew most about when India was mentioned were the fortune-tellers, slaves and prostitutes using fancy, exotic scents, whom they met on the street;<sup>97</sup> or the freaks and pictures of strange animals that were shown in public shows;<sup>98</sup> or the exotic plants, such as cinnamon, or the spices, such as pepper, which were displayed in public ceremonies or occupied the huge market warehouses.<sup>99</sup>

But popular culture has a habit of becoming the high culture of the succeeding age. The Roman East in the second and third centuries was just such an age of transition, especially in the huge ports of Antioch, Carthage and Alexandria. Alexandria, we know, was the chief depot for the India trade via the Red Sea ports and the Nile. It was there that ointments and drugs were manufactured from India ingredients, where the bonded warehouses held goods in transit for the West, and where sailors and merchants and Indian travellers congregated in the streets and theatres.<sup>100</sup>

By chance one of the mimes performed in the theatre at Alexandria has survived on papyrus, to which several references have been made. It is the romantic story of Charition, who was caught by pirates and fell into the hands of Indian barbarians, until rescued by her brother. The Indian king speaks Greek but his followers speak a comic 'double Dutch' – words that sounded like an Indian language but were distorted to be funny. That meant there must have been people in the audience who could recognize the distortions and hence were familiar with the Indian language.<sup>101</sup> Another piece of 'pop' literature of the Roman East in the late second or early third centuries is the romantic novel by Xenophon of Ephesus, again a story of pirates who capture two lovers and sell them as slaves in Alexandria, where the girl, Anthea, is bought by a wealthy Indian prince, who has arrived, we are told, 'For sight-seeing in the city and transacting business'. On his return trip to India following the route up the Nile to Koptos, 'With many camels and asses and pack-horses, as well as lots of gold and silver', he is killed by robbers who operate on 'the route which was much used by merchants who travelled regularly to Ethiopia and India'.<sup>102</sup>

These are only romantic stories, of course, but there is no mistaking the genuine mercantile information they contain, which formed the popular view of India – pirates, rich India rajahs and gold – the information you could find in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, written by the anonymous pilot in



the first century. It was similar, too, to the kind of remarks made in the popular dialogues of Lucian in the late second century, who also lived in Alexandria as a petty government official. In Lucian we meet again the old stereotypes – the luxuries of India, the exotic animals and the Brahmin philosophers; and there are some interesting, mocking remarks about phoney historians who promise ‘to write about future happenings in India and a *Periplus of the Outer Sea*’.<sup>103</sup> Filtering into these imaginary dialogues are genuine details about travellers and traders – a letter from Muziris (Cranganore, Malabar Coast) or from the Oxydraci (Punjab), catching the boat for India at Clysma (near Suez), and so on.<sup>104</sup>

Lucian in this respect is not unlike another Eastern Greco-Roman writer, Philostratus, who wrote an almost certainly fictitious tale about a popular miracle worker, Apollonius of Tyana, making a journey overland to India to consult the Brahmin philosophers. Most of it is the usual Hellenistic rubbish of popular imagination, but mixed up with it are references to ships bringing back tigers and to pirates (twice), who were clearly an obsession for Western sailors; and there is a particularly informative remark about a pilot of an Egyptian ship who was one of four shareholders of the cargo.<sup>105</sup>

Last, but by no means the least in this line-up of popular culture, comes Christianity, which was very much a symptom of the age of transition in the late second and third centuries, in Egypt and in Alexandria, in particular, where men were trying to formulate a philosophic basis for a religion that had begun as a popular cult of revelations and miracles. The subject of Christianity in India has been much studied, so it is only necessary to underline a point that has often been noticed. Christian texts reflect very different social sources from those of Greco-Roman classical literature; information, in fact, which derived from sailors and traders.<sup>106</sup> One of the major figures in this early movement was Clement, another inhabitant of Alexandria, who lived in the mid-second century. Scholars are divided as to how much his Christianity was influenced by Buddhists, especially by their concept of the stewardship of wealth.<sup>107</sup> But although he included some standard stories about India that went back to Megasthenes, he also made the first clear reference to Buddhism, which we know was closely associated with *Yavana* traders.<sup>108</sup> Eusebius, who is a fairly reliable Christian church historian, says that Clement’s teacher, Pantaenus, had travelled to India, where he found the Christian gospel was already known, presumably brought by traders, as so often happened.<sup>109</sup>

If we had to sum up popular Western perceptions of India, therefore, we could say that, while there was some overlap with classical heritage from Hellenistic culture, albeit a culture vulgarized by street gossip and public spectacles, there was another distinct channel of information that came from below through travellers’ tales. How do we explain, I asked earlier, this dichotomy between the upper-class and lower-class cultures in their receptivity to intelligence that was manifestly available about India? One reason,

as I have tried to show, was that the élite classes preferred the mirror of barbarian Orientalism to be unclouded by the truth, in order to justify their own imperial ambitions and to reflect an image of their own superiority.

But a second reason was respectability and snobbery. Remember Lucian's comment that you could not trust those who wrote a *Periplus*, since it was all lies. Traders were cheats and villains. The attitude of Strabo was typical. 'Only a few traders', he says, 'have sailed as far as the Ganges and they are *idiotai*, no use for the *historia* of places'. Both Greek words are ambiguous since *idiotai* meant ignorant as well as private; *historia* meant enquiry as well as history. The sense, however, is clear, that a trader cannot be relied upon for respectable geography.<sup>110</sup> Marinus of Tyre, the source of Ptolemy's information, is explicit as to why they must not be trusted, 'Because they are too engrossed in their own business to care about finding the truth, and from sheer boasting they exaggerate the truth'.<sup>111</sup> That probably explains why Ptolemy's geography is mainly confined to an uncomplicated list of port names and does not contain much information about the interior. For, says, Dio Chrysostom, 'Only a few go there [to India] in pursuit of trade and they mix only with people of the coast, who are Indian people of low repute.'<sup>112</sup>

Such social stigmas, that traders were petty, untrustworthy, ignorant men, and that not many went to India, anyway, should serve as a guide to the economy of Roman trade with India. In the next chapter I try to explain why I believe there may be dangers in exaggerating its size and importance.<sup>113</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Dilke 1985: 40.
- 2 Verg. *Aen.* 8. 705 ff.
- 3 Whittaker 1994: 14–16.
- 4 Pliny, *NH* 3. 17 – *orbis terrarum urbi spectandus*.
- 5 Verg. *Aen.* 6. 794 ff.
- 6 Cited by Nicolet 1988: 16.
- 7 J. Rabasa, 'Allegories of the Atlas' in F. Barker, ed., *Europe and its Other*, 2 vols, Colchester, 1985, II, pp. 1–16.
- 8 Verg. *Aen.* 1. 279.
- 9 Ovid, *Fast.* 2. 684
- 10 Verg. *Aen.* 7. 794; cf. *Georg.* 2. 170–2 – 'Caesar, who is already victorious on the furthest shores of Asia, now drives the warlike Indians from Roman citadels.'
- 11 Pliny, *NH* 7. 99; cf. 6. 52. Augustus was greater than Pompey, who had explored the land route to India, according to the contemporary writer Varro.
- 12 Whittaker 1994: 34–7.
- 13 Augus. *Res Gestae* 31.
- 14 Hor. *Carm.Saec.* 55–6; cf. *Od.* 4. 15. 22. It may well be that the Ethiopian expeditions in 24 and 22 BC were also considered to have been defeats of the Indians, with whom they were often confused; see V. La Bua in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (ed. F. della Corte, Rome, 1985), II. s.v. 'India/Indi'.
- 15 See Strabo 15. 1. 4, 15. 1. 73, Diod. Sic. 2. 42. The case for special treaty ports as being the meaning of the Greek term *emporion enthesmon* (found in *Periplus*

- Maris Erythraei* [henceforth *PME*] 52) was argued by Charlesworth 1951 and supported by Schmitthener 1979: 104–5, but disputed by Casson 1989: 215.
- 16 *PME* 39 – at Barbarikon goods are taken to the king; *PME* 44 – at Barygaza the king's fishermen escort ships in; *PME* 52 – the Deccan ports no longer afforded legal protection as once had been granted. For Buddhists, see Thapar 1992: 10–11.
  - 17 Sidebotham 1986: 219 cites the Mercantile Code of Timna (Qataban) of the late second or early first century BC granting the Gebbanites special trading status; Pliny, *NH* 12. 93 notes the monopoly operated by the Gebbanite king over cinnamon.
  - 18 Zanker 1988: 187–92.
  - 19 Verg. *Georg.* 3. 26–7.
  - 20 I have developed this theme further in the next chapter; cf. Nicolet 1988: 43–7.
  - 21 Schmitthener 1979: 102 for references.
  - 22 Dio 68.15, 68. 29. 1.
  - 23 HA *Trig.Tyr.* 22. 8; *Firm.* 3. 3–6; *Aur.* 33. 4; *Tac.* 15. 2 (referring to Sri Lanka). The numerous references in the biographies of emperors contained in the *Historia Augusta* may not be historically valid for the third century but they betray a climate of opinion in the fourth century, when they were written.
  - 24 The phrase 'network of discourses' come from Wyke 1992: 100, writing in this context.
  - 25 Cartledge 1993: 4; Said 1985: 16.
  - 26 E.g. Thapar 1988; Thapar 2002: 7–9; Parasher 1992: 109–29.
  - 27 Pliny, *NH* 6. 89; Strabo 15. 1. 66.
  - 28 Herodot. 3. 99; Strabo 15. 1. 57, *Tibul.* 4. 1. 144–5, etc.
  - 29 Thapar 1988: cf. Parasher 1992: 118, citing a *Visnu Purana* text, which includes *Yavana* soldiers among the *mlecchhas*.
  - 30 *POxy.* III. 413; Philost. *VApol.* 1. 27.
  - 31 Strabo 15. 1. 56, and 62; Diod. Sic. 19. 20.
  - 32 Curt. Ruf. 8. 9; Said 1985: 17.
  - 33 Strabo 15. 1. 34, Pliny, *NH*. 7. 28, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35. 18–24.
  - 34 Jos. *AJ* 1. 38, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35. 18–24.
  - 35 Strabo 15. 1. 34, Verg. *Georg.* 2. 120–39.
  - 36 Strabo 15. 1. 37, Pliny, *NH* 7. 72–3, 107.
  - 37 Strabo 15. 1. 56; cf. Philost. *VApol.* 3. 4, for monkeys rolling stones onto pursuers.
  - 38 Philost. *VApol.* 2. 33, Arrian, *Ind.* 8. 5–9, dismissed by Strabo 15. 1. 9; Lucian, *The ship or the wishes*: 44, wants a magic ring to fly to India to see the wonders of the griffin and the phoenix.
  - 39 F. Dupont in Rousselle 1995: 217.
  - 40 Strabo 15. 1. 34, 54, 66, Diod. Sic. 2. 39, Arrian, *Ind.* 10. 1
  - 41 Jos. *BJ* 7. 351–7; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 69, Arrian, *Anab.* 7. 3, Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 25.
  - 42 Strabo 15. 1. 65.
  - 43 For the earlier works behind the text of Palladius, from a Cynic tradition, see Martin 1959. The text of Ambrose is translated by S.V. Yankowski (1962) *The Brahman Episode*, Ansbach.
  - 44 Photiades 1959.
  - 45 Strabo 15. 1. 53, Ael. *Hist.Var.* 4. 1.
  - 46 Daffinà 1996: 257.
  - 47 Pinney 1991: 252–63.
  - 48 Said 1985: 22; Richon 1985: 1–13.
  - 49 Diod. Sic. 2. 38, 3. 63, Athen. *Deipn.* 13. 631.

- 50 *POxy.* III. 413. 58–9, 97–8.
- 51 Athen. *Deipn.* 10. 438, cf. 10. 437, Curt.Ruf. 8. 9.
- 52 E.g. Herodot. (fifth century BC) 3. 98, 3. 102, 3. 105, 3. 108; Strabo (first century AD) 15. 1. 37. Arrian (second century AD), *Ind.* 15. 5, Dio Chrys. (second century AD), *Or.* 35. 24, Lucian (second century AD), *Saturn.* 24. For the medieval refs, see W.W. How and J. Wells (1928), 2nd impress., *A commentary on Herodotus*, Oxford, *ad loc.*
- 53 *Juv.* 6. 466, 11. 125, Petron. *Saturn.* 119.
- 54 Strabo 15. 1. 55.
- 55 McClintock 1995.
- 56 R. Calasso (1994), *The marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, London, p. 7.
- 57 The sexual symbolism of conquest is discussed in Ch. 6.
- 58 Wyke 1992.
- 59 Herod. 3. 101, Strabo 15. 1. 54 and 56, Arrian, *Ind.* 15. 4
- 60 *Juv.* 6. 337 and 466; *POxy.* III. 413.
- 61 Arist. *Pol.* 7. 6. 1327b; cf. 3. 9. 1285a.
- 62 Hor. *Sat.* 2. 8. 14, *Tibul.* 2. 3. 49–58, Philostr. *VSoph.* 1. 8, *Digest* 39. 4. 16. 6–7. Schmitthener 1979: 94 and 96; Sidebotham 1986: 23, give further refs. One theme of stereotype familiar to anyone who has lived in colonial countries is that the natives do not feel pain as we do; for which, cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 68.2.
- 63 Goody 1966: 3–8.
- 64 Bryce 1914: 5.
- 65 Cartledge 1993: 13.
- 66 Dio 68. 15 and 29; cf. Zon. 11. 21, Eutrop. 8. 3. Plut. *Pomp.* 70, although relating the army to the Republican general, Pompey, was writing in the first half of the second century AD.
- 67 Warmington 1974: 107 believed that the increased number of ports recorded by Ptolemy in the second century was explained by Trajan's diplomatic agreements.
- 68 Cited by Cartledge 1993: 36.
- 69 Said 1985: 16–17; Goody 1966: 13–15.
- 70 Strabo 2. 3. 5. On Hipalus/Hippalus, see S. Mazzarino in De Romanis and Tchernia 1997: 72–9; although Casson 1989: 224 disagrees.
- 71 Tchernia 1997b: 250–76 ingeniously attributes the crossing not to a particular discoverer so much as to the proof given by the Greek geographer, Poseidonius, c. 100 BC, that India lay in a North–South orientation, thus giving sailors confidence that they could sail the 12° parallel from Africa.
- 72 Raschke 1978: 656.
- 73 Strabo 15. 1. 46, Diod. Sic. 2. 41, Arrian, *Ind.* 12. 1. I have not entered into the question of whether Megasthenes really visited Chandragupta's court, since it is enough to show that some Romano-Greek sources believed he did.
- 74 Mishra 1954.
- 75 *PME* 36, 60 – with note by Casson 1989: *ad loc.*
- 76 Schlinghoff 1982: 57, with illustrations.
- 77 Sidebotham and Wendrich 2000; see especially the reports by R.S. Tomber and V. Begley on pottery, and the discussion of teak on p. 341. Summary in Sidebotham 2002.
- 78 *PME* 30–1; Casson 1989: *ad loc.*, gives modern refs; cf. also, Dihle 1964: 16, Daffinà 1996: 268, Tchernia 1997b.
- 79 Sozomen, *HE* 2. 24. 1; Dihle 1964: 16.
- 80 Strabo 2. 3. 5; *PME* 26; Casson 1989: 12.
- 81 See Salomon 1991: 731–7 for the sparse evidence of Indian language graffiti in ports. By comparison note the Greek speaking Indians in *POxy.* III. 413, or

- Indians attending the Alexandrian (Greek) theatre in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32. 40, etc.
- 82 Thapar 1992 and 1997; Daffinà, 1996: 252–3, De Romanis 1997a.
- 83 Pausan. 3. 12. 4; Harl 1996: 302.
- 84 Thapar 1988; Parasher 1992: 118 stresses the point that the term *Yavana* as *mlecchcha* does not appear before first century BC Purana texts, after these people had become resident intruders in Aryavarta ('essential constituents of Indian society'), thus provoking a formalization of arya norms.
- 85 Strabo 15. 1. 57; McCrindle 1960: 76.
- 86 Pliny, *NH* 12. 85–6.
- 87 Arrian, *Ind.* 4. 1, 3. 1.
- 88 Strabo 15.1.5, 1. 72; Poseidonius' information is recorded by Pliny, *NH* 6. 57; cf. Tchernia 1997b; Dihle 1964: 18.
- 89 Another translation was made by Priscian and a map added by Cassiodorus in the sixth century; Dilke 1985: 144.
- 90 Compare Ps-Plutarch, *Geog. Graeci Min.*(Reise) II: 637–65, or Athenaeus, still going back to Megasthenes for information on pearl fishing or curry and rice; *Deip.* 3. 93, 4. 153, 10. 437.
- 91 *Hor.Ep.* 1. 1. 45; cf. Arrian, *Ind.* 8. 9–11 – those who 'in our own day ... bring exports from India'; Strabo 16. 1. 3 says, 'Those who sail there at the present time' are untrustworthy (cf. 15. 1. 2, 15. 1. 4), although at 2. 1. 115 he says sailors are better than instruments for geographic detail.
- 92 Tchernia 1997b; for coral, see De Romanis 1997b; Pliny as a journalist – Dilke 1985: 71.
- 93 Pliny, *NH* 6. 69, 6. 83, 6. 87, 6. 98; this was still repeated in the second and third centuries AD by Philostratus, *VApol.* 3. 53, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 53. 7.
- 94 For the route, see Ptol. *Geog.* 1. pr. 7. 6 (from Didorus of Samos). At *Geog.* 1. pr. 7. 4 Ptolemy repeats Marinus of Tyre with correct information that Ursa Minor was visible '500 stades distance from Ocelis' (which lies at 11° 24'). Müller 1883–1901: I. 17 says visibility was impossible south of 12° 24' but makes no allowance for the movement of the Polar North over the centuries. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. M. Hoskin for this astronomical information.
- 95 Robin 1997; Fussman 1997. The *PME* cannot have been unique, even if all other known *periploi* were more concerned with voyages than trade; Dilke 1985: 138–43.
- 96 Ptolemy makes clear his debt to Marinus of Tyre, a near contemporary, although he also refers to first-hand information from sailors; *Geog.* 1. pr. 7. 6, 17. 3, 17. 5. My impression is that P. learnt very little about inland India except what could be picked up in port gossip; e.g. Mathura, 'city of the gods' (viz. Krishna), Punnada (nr. Mysore), 'where beryl is found'; the first Western writer to mention the Vindhya Mountains. For Ptolemy's limitations, see McCrindle 1927: 76–7; Warmington 1974: 108–17 is more optimistic.
- 97 *Juv.* 6. 337, 466, 585.
- 98 Freak shows – Dio 54. 9, Strabo 15. 1. 73; animals – Pliny, *NH* 8. 65–6, Suet. *Aug.* 43, Petron. *Satyr.* 119, Dio 76. 1. 4; pictures – Herod. 1. 5. 5.
- 99 Public display in a temple, Pliny, *NH* 12. 94; the huge *borrea piperetaria* (pepper and spice warehouse) stood on the site of the present basilica of Maxentius in the centre of Rome.
- 100 Drugs etc. – Raschke 1978: 633, 643; Indians in the theatre – Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32. 40.
- 101 *POxy.* III. 413. There are those who think they can identify an ancient form of Cananese in the words; but there is a close parallel here with Plautus' play about a Carthaginian merchant, who speaks a funny, distorted form of Punic.

- 102 All quotations are from the translation by M. Hadas, *Three Greek Romances*, New York, 1953.
- 103 Luxuries etc. – Lucian, *The ship* 23 and 44, *Peregrinus* 25, *Runaways* 6, *Toxaris* 34, *Saturnalia* 24; history – Lucian, *How to write history* 31.
- 104 Lucian, *How to write history* 31, *Alexander* 44.
- 105 Philostr. *VApol.* 2. 14, 2. 29, 3. 23–4, cf. 3. 35.
- 106 Dihle 1964: 17.
- 107 W. Frend, *A History of Christianity*, Cambridge, 1984, p. 372; more sceptically, Dihle 1964: 20–2 and Raschke 1978: 674, with references.
- 108 Megasthenes on Brahmins – Clement, *Strom.* 4. 17. 4; Buddhists – Clement, *Strom.* 1. 17. 3b; *Yavanas* – Thapar 1992: 21–2; Thapar 1997: 22, 34–35; Thapar 2002: 159–60, 241–4
- 109 Euseb. *HE* 5. 10. 3.
- 110 Strabo 15. 1. 4; cf. Dion. *Perig.* 709–10.
- 111 Ptol. *Geog.* 1. pr. 11. 7.
- 112 Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35. 18–24.
- 113 See Ch. 8.

## 8 INDIAN TRADE WITHIN THE ROMAN IMPERIAL NETWORK

Economists make a distinction between ‘positive economies’, which describe the factual features of an economic system, and ‘normative economies’, which make ethical and value judgements in prescribing how things could or should be done.<sup>1</sup> Economic choices and decisions lie between the two. On the one side lurks Adam Smith’s ‘invisible hand’, the selfish interests which in theory lead to the good of all through perfect market competition; and on the other the imperfect competition of the real world created by the external forces of politics and society.<sup>2</sup>

In the last chapter I tried to show that India, although formally outside the Roman administrative provinces, nevertheless lay close to the heart of Roman imperial interest. What I want to do in this chapter is to look at the commercial aspects of that interest. I shall present first the bare outlines of Roman trade with India, including the physical and commercial factors; and then briefly broaden the discussion by considering how the Romans made economic decisions about Indian trade between ‘positive’ and ‘normative’ aspects.

The broad facts are pretty well known, even if there is some debate over the details. During the period of the Republic it is evident that some Indian slaves and Indian trade goods were reaching Rome through Alexandrian or Greek contacts. Most of the commerce probably passed through Alexandria after direct, serious contact with India had been established during the reign of Ptolemy VIII at the end of the second century BC. Strabo represents this with a story about the discovery of the monsoon and the expedition of Eudoxus<sup>3</sup> which, even if untrue, indicates the growing traffic that, according to Strabo, numbered twenty ships a year under the Lagid kings.<sup>4</sup> Indian and African spices would have been a royal monopoly and sold on at a fixed price, but no doubt Roman merchants were making efforts to find cheaper markets. A loan contract of the later second century BC refers to a ‘spice bearing land’, thought to be Somalia, of which the broker, called Gnaeus, could have been a Roman.<sup>5</sup> Plautus mentions a *trapezita* (banker) and a *naulerus* (shipper) who had returned from India,<sup>6</sup> and the reorganization of the eastern provinces in the first



century BC after the death of King Mithridates must have opened up the land route to India. That is illustrated, perhaps, by Roman knowledge of the *Mithridatium*, which was an antidote made up of thirty-six spices, including long pepper that the king used to take.<sup>7</sup>

Real 'take-off' of Indian trade began with the victory of Augustus over Cleopatra, which accompanied the political sea change in the Roman view of India. As I showed in the last chapter, the Bactrians and the 'people of the Dawn', both of them Indians, were numbered among the Egyptian Queen's allies.<sup>8</sup> The *mappamundi* of Caesar and Augustus, completed between about 30 and 24 BC, counted India as a *provincia*, and Indian ambassadors came 'often' to Rome between 26 and 20 BC asking for treaties.<sup>9</sup> Among these ambassadors were kings from the Tamil South.<sup>10</sup> Those political events were matched by a commercial awakening. Strabo says that he had been told personally, while travelling in southern Egypt in 26 BC, that by that date a hundred and twenty ships sailed down the coast en route for India each year.<sup>11</sup> Even if he exaggerated, we have some confirmation of the activity in the Augustan period from the recent excavations at Berenike on the Red Sea coast and from the rock shelters on the camel route between Berenike and Koptos on the Nile.<sup>12</sup> One of the names written in a rock shelter, which dates from the Augustan period, is that of Lysas, a slave of P. Annius Plocamus, probably a member of the well-known trading family of Annii at Puteoli.

The growth of Indian trade in the Julio-Claudian period probably lies behind the references to luxury in the reign of Tiberius. The senate was told in AD21 that spending on luxuries, especially on jewellery for women, was diverting wealth 'to foreign lands and to enemy peoples'.<sup>13</sup> The crisis of credit in AD33, too, may be connected with this boom when, according to Tacitus, every senator was breaking the law by putting out excessive money in loans. Perhaps the credit was needed to meet the rush into oriental trade.<sup>14</sup> The trade is clearly associated with the large number of silver denarii of Augustus and Tiberius, some 6,000 of them found in hoards in India, although it is unwise to make too much of them, since coins are in general a poor guide to levels of trade.<sup>15</sup> In South India the excavations at the port of Arikamedu have turned up Roman *terra sigillata*, most of which dates from the reign of Tiberius.<sup>16</sup> The finds from Berenike and from Leukos Limen (also on the Red Sea) place the most intense activity of the ports in the reign of Tiberius. For example, the recent discovery of a sherd of an amphora is typed as Dressel 2-4, the wine and oil containers that mostly date from the mid-first century AD. The sherd bears a graffito with the name of a Chera king, KORRA, written in Tamil-Brahmi, and comes from the same spot as a graffito drawing of a Roman ship.<sup>17</sup> The considerable number of ostraka found in the northern quarter of the port, including permits for cargoes going to India and other eastern ports, begin at an early date.

Soon after this the Elder Pliny tells the story, set in Claudius' reign, about a freedman of Annius Plocamus, who was a state contractor as *redemptor vectigalium Maris Rubris* ('Collector of taxes for the Red Sea District'). The freedman was accidentally blown off course and arrived in Sri Lanka. His contact led to a diplomatic mission from the Srilankan king and provided the Romans with information about Chinese trade.<sup>18</sup> It is this visit that has been linked to texts from Sri Lanka concerning Roman coral imported there in the first century AD, which couples with Pliny's note about the high-volume export of red coral from Roman Gaul.<sup>19</sup> The importance of Indian trade is proved conclusively, however, by the literary texts of the period: the *Periplus Maris Erythraeae* (the 'Red Sea Pilot') dates from about AD 50, which detailed the commercial routes to Arabia, Africa and India for sailors and traders; soon after came the work of the Elder Pliny, who wrote twenty years later his *Natural History* that contains 222 references to India, including further information about the sea routes; and finally there was a lost work of Seneca, entitled *de situ Indiae*.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike some numismatists, I have difficulty in believing that there was any serious decline in trade with India after the rule of Tiberius in the later first century AD, notwithstanding the fewer Roman coins and the propaganda of austerity put out by the Flavian emperor, Vespasian.<sup>21</sup> It was, after all, during the reign of Vespasian that the Elder Pliny twice made his famous statement about the haemorrhage of Roman coins. Fifty million sesterces, he says, the equivalent of 11,000 lb of gold, went annually to India; a hundred million was spent in India and China together, although Pliny, himself, unlike some of his modern commentators, does not appear unduly perturbed by the effect on the balance of trade.<sup>22</sup> At the same time it is Pliny who has provided us with a price list of spices and aromatics that are almost certainly those charged in the market at Rome (informing us, for example, that the price of Indian commodities rose a hundred fold from producer to buyer).<sup>23</sup> Nor should we forget that it was Domitian who constructed the *borrea piperataria* on the Velia hill in Rome in AD 92, the later site of the Basilica of Maxentius, in order to provide warehouses for the supply of all the exotic, imported spices needed by Romans.

Nor is there good reason to believe that in the second century AD there was a sharp decline in trade with India, a conclusion, as before, based solely on coin finds in India.<sup>24</sup> Most of the other, more reliable evidence goes against it. In the reign of Trajan, for example, we are told of 'many embassies' again coming from India to Rome.<sup>25</sup> And we have inscriptions of a Roman fleet stationed in the Red Sea under the orders of a prefect.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the first century or at the beginning of the second Berenike and other Red Sea-India ports underwent building repairs. One of the warehouses of Berenike that was operating from the first to the fifth centuries is reported to have contained 'masses of pepper corns' everywhere, while a fifth century 'trash dump' shows considerable evidence of Indian and Sri Lankan

contacts.<sup>27</sup> Numerous ostraka have survived recording contracts with camel drivers who were carriers between Koptos and the Red Sea ports, one of which, the so-called *Tariff of Koptos*, dates from about AD 90.<sup>28</sup> Roman authors of the second century, such as Aelius Aristides, Lucian, pseudo-Xenophon of Ephesus, Ptolemy, make frequent, often casual references to India or to Indian travellers, which makes me suppose that there was an intense traffic between India and the Roman world.<sup>29</sup> Aelius Aristides, for example, says that the cargoes coming in from India and Arabia were so numerous that 'you might believe that the trees in these countries had been stripped clean'.<sup>30</sup>

Above all, there is the celebrated papyrus from the Vienna collection (*P.Vindobona* G 40 822), which dates from the middle of the second century and records a contract for the transport of goods from Koptos to Alexandria, some or all of which must have come from India. In the contract there is a reference to a loan agreement connected with Muziris, one of the major entrepôts for pepper export on the southern Indian Malabar Coast, although in the document itself there are only references to nard, ivory and cloth.<sup>31</sup> It is not necessary to enter into the details or controversies surrounding the contract to be certain that it was an extremely valuable and profitable cargo that is our best proof of a high level of trade between India and the Roman West.

The main difficulty we have in crediting such trading activity is the shortage of archaeological evidence from the Indian end, apart, that is, from the ambiguous testimony of Roman coins. There is, however, more than is sometimes thought. Several sites on the South Indian Malabar and Coromandel coasts have yielded up sherds of Roman amphorae and pottery, although a good deal of uncertainty surrounds the identification.<sup>32</sup> More recently the graffito of a deep-sea ship has been discovered at Alagankulam, the point opposite Sri Lanka, although unfortunately it is hard to identify precisely and it has no stratigraphic context.<sup>33</sup> Tamil literature, too, is not silent about foreign trading ships, but again there is a problem in dating the references between the first century BC and third century AD.<sup>34</sup>

So much, then, for the outline of the Roman contacts with India. Let me now turn to the 'positive' economy, that is the physical and commercial factors that lay behind the economic decisions that the Romans took in respect of Indian trade.

To begin with the physical aspects, obviously the Romans benefited from the experience of the Ptolemies, which must have included knowledge of how to make use of the monsoon winds. There seems no doubt that the story of the 'discovery' of the monsoon conceals the fact that the economic conditions had become favourable for traders.<sup>35</sup> One of those conditions was the important observation by the Greek geographer, Poseidonius, that India had a North-South orientation. This knowledge would have encouraged

merchant-sailors to attempt the voyage by following the twelfth parallel latitude by the stars from Cape Gardafui on the Horn of Africa, in the reasonable expectation of making a landing in India – as, in fact, happened when they reached the Malabar Coast.

Precisely when this happened is difficult to say. Poseidonius wrote about 100 BC, but the Elder Pliny says that the information about the route had only recently been propagated (*patescente*), maybe meaning that it had been kept secret by the Lagid kings to preserve their monopoly. The important economic point is that, according to Pliny, the direct crossing now made Indian commerce a profitable proposition, *lucroque India admota est*.<sup>36</sup> The publication of the *Periplus Maris Erythraeae* and Pliny's own information confirms that. It may be that the monsoon conditions and the open sea route also required larger, stronger ships; that is to say, a more expensive outlay. I hesitate slightly in accepting this, since Palladius, a Greek of the fourth century AD, received information that Indian traders (whom one sometimes forgets in the discussion) often crossed from Axum in Somalia to India in *ploiaria*, the word for little boats.<sup>37</sup>

I assume, however, that none of this technical information was new to the Augustan age. What changed with the Emperor Augustus and stimulated traders was the role of the state. Commercial politics is an anachronism in the Roman Empire and it is most unlikely that Augustus himself aimed to continue the Lagid monopoly of trade.<sup>38</sup> Only their fiscal policies interested him. State intervention was limited to traditional activities, security for traders, port facilities and diplomatic relations to achieve this. Pliny, for example, records cohorts of archers on ships for protection against pirates who were almost certainly state troops, given Roman sensibility about allowing anyone to carry arms privately in the Empire.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the trade route from Berenike to Koptos was lined with military outposts against desert robbers, and since Trajan's rule we know there was a fleet in the Erythrean Sea for the protection of the ports, to whose prefect the *naukleroi* and *emporoi* (the ship owners and traders) made a dedication.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike under the Republic, Roman emperors considered India as part of their sphere of interest, if not actually part of the Empire.<sup>41</sup> Given that Augustus and, later, Trajan received several Indian diplomatic missions, one would suppose that the result of such contacts would have been automatic privileges for Roman traders in some Indian ports. That may explain the title *emporion enthesmon* ('designated trading port') that appears in the *Periplus* and the later term *emporion* that Ptolemy reserves for certain select ports in his geographic description of India. In my view the conditions in these Indian ports correspond to those at Naucratis, as described by Herodotus, or to the medieval 'Capitulations' and 'Ports of Trade' that were known also in India in the sixteenth century. In such ports the merchants negotiated directly with the local rulers, although the facilities would have been assisted by state prestige.<sup>42</sup> In short, even if the Romans never conducted a

policy that consciously aimed at increasing the volume of trade, it did not exclude 'an awareness of the benefits of commerce', *omnibus fructuosum*.<sup>43</sup>

But there is another side to the growth of trade in the first century AD. While concentrating on the Roman economy we tend to overlook what Braudel called 'conjunctures', the coincidence of events in Indian politics, and we are only just beginning to realize the sophistication of Indian commercial transactions that existed long before the Romans arrived on the scene.<sup>44</sup> Buddhist and Jain monks had been moving south after the break-up of Asoka's empire in the late second and early first centuries BC, carrying with them Mauryan culture that included the use of coin (probably) and transcontinental trade networks. Remains of Buddhist and Jain rock shelters have been found on the commercial routes that cross the continent from the Malabar to the Coromandel coast, along which pepper and beryl travelled and where a number of Roman coin hoards have been found.<sup>45</sup>

Although the exact dates and relationship of events are not yet fully understood, at approximately the same time new powers in central Asia, which we associate with the Kusana kingdoms, were destabilizing the northern routes from China to India that led on to Syria and the West. This insecurity was forcing the Chinese and North Indians to find alternatives routes by sea, from ports like Barygaza (under the Saka kings in Gujrat) or from those on the Gangetic and Coromandel coast. In effect the Chinese and the Kusana kingdoms of North India were looking for outlets and creating a buyers market. All this was before Augustus exchanged gifts with the Tamil king, Pandya (among others), and before Roman great ships began to arrive in search of pepper and pearls.<sup>46</sup>

When the Roman did arrive, we know something of the favourable conditions they discovered at the Indian end of the trade. The Tamil poets refer to quarters reserved for *Yavanas* (foreigners) at Kaveri(pum)pattinam at the mouth of the Kaveri River on the Coromandel Coast. And in the excavations at Arikamedu a wall was found separating the northern quarter from the rest of the port that looks very much as if the port was similar to descriptions of the foreign quarters authorized by the rajas in the 'Ports of Trade' in the sixteenth century.<sup>47</sup> In the cave at Nasik (south of Bombay) inscriptions dating from about AD 120 suggest the use of gold coin and silver struck on an Attic tariff, which seems to indicate a well-developed financial system.<sup>48</sup> What appears certain, however, is that the burst of Roman commerce in the Julio-Claudian period coincided with the formations of new political powers in Tamilnadu and Kerala that assisted in the boom.<sup>49</sup> As Pliny notes, all the names of unknown places in India 'seem to show the condition of the places is changing'.<sup>50</sup> Indians, as much as Romans, stimulated the supply and demand.

Apart from the physical and political circumstances, there is no question that Indian trade required huge investments and expensive loans. The return on outlay was inevitably slow. The round trip from Alexandria required

seven or eight months to catch the monsoon winds, on top of which it would have been two or three months more for goods to arrive at Ostia. In the (fragmentary) valuations contained in the Muziris papyrus (*P.Vindobona* G 80422), some 131 talents for the three and half tons of merchandise is recorded, showing that enormous sums of money were involved.<sup>51</sup> It is hardly surprising under these circumstances that the *Periplus* says, 'Ships in these ports [of India] sail full (*mesta*) because of the bulk and quantity of pepper and *malabathron*'.<sup>52</sup> A full cargo of 500 tons of pepper, for which Pliny provides a price per pound on the Roman market, would have needed millions of sesterces in advance.<sup>53</sup>

So we can understand why the short crossing by the twelfth parallel was needed to assure the trader of a reasonable profit.<sup>54</sup> Despite the large profits to be made on the market, there were also the high risks on the Indian Ocean, the weather, the pirates, and so on, which must certainly have raised the rate of interest on loans. The loans in any case would not have been given at less than the standard one per cent per month (ten per cent for the ten months of the voyage) and probably higher. To make a fortune was not easy.

Investments and interest levels of this size inevitably eliminated the petty traders, even when there were, as sometimes, multiple shareholders or *synnaukleroi*. Another Vienna papyrus (*P.Vindobona* G 19792) gives us an idea of what a small enterprise was like, in which four investors put up eight talents each to charter a small ship. A.H.M. Jones, using texts from the later Empire, estimated that the average small loan at that time was between five and fifty pounds of gold (that is, about 20,000 HS to 200,000 HS in old money).<sup>55</sup> At that rate our hypothetical cargo of pepper would have required a large number of petty *synnaukleroi*, not to mention the riches required to underwrite the fabulous cargo of the Muziris papyrus (*P.Vindobona* G 80422). As a footnote, it is interesting to see that in this latter papyrus the authorities apparently gave a special rate of import tax to the big shippers, the *emporoi*.

Despite a number of hypotheses, it is still impossible to identify any of the élite, Roman 'merchant-princes' directly involved in trade. Perhaps M. Julius Alexander, who is thought to have been the brother of the Egyptian Prefect.<sup>56</sup> We have already seen that there seem to have been some big trading families behind the names of freedmen and slaves who appear on the India route, names such as Annius Plocamus and Peticus.<sup>57</sup> Although the Peticii are known as exporters of wine and wheat in the late first century BC and the early first century AD, we tend to forget they were probably also importers of goods of exchange that may have been more valuable. Other names of slaves and imperial freedmen who were active in Red Sea ports are known; Anicetus and Ti. Claudius Epaphroditus, both perhaps from the period of Nero, although it is difficult to prove they were engaged in exporting produce of the imperial estates.<sup>58</sup> We might note, too, that



Josephus tells of a maritime loan given to the Jewish prince, Herod Agrippa, in AD 36 by a freedman of the Empress Agrippina, although not necessarily for trade.<sup>59</sup> Such loans bring us to the rich investors behind the merchants.

There is no need for me to repeat the conclusions that have been reached about rich landowners who concluded financial loans through intermediate agents, the so-called *Janus medius*, and the way in which they became progressive fused in the second century AD with commercial traders.<sup>60</sup> As far as Indian trade is concerned, it is difficult to identify any names either before or after the second century. In the later Empire (the sixth century AD) a leading citizen of Alexandria lost all his fortune in a shipwreck, perhaps on the India run, but he was rescued by the Patriarch Apollinarius through a church loan of 50 pounds of gold.<sup>61</sup> Rufinus, who wrote in the late Empire, also, tells us of a merchant with three ships carrying cargoes that probably came from the East, valued at 27 pounds of gold.<sup>62</sup>

In general, the Code of Justinian gives the impression that there were still the traditional, social restrictions on direct trading. It talks of excluding 'those noble by birth or conspicuous with honours or riches in property ... in order to make it easier between plebians and traders (*negotiatores*)'.<sup>63</sup> That seems to mean that the state wanted to eliminate competition between the very rich and the rest. But if Indian commerce required the huge and multiple investments just described, the Roman aristocracy must have been deeply involved, since no one else possessed such funds.<sup>64</sup>

We know something about how the trade was kick-started in the Augustan age. The rich *manubiae* (spoils) from Egypt that paid for imperial building programmes put large sums of money into circulation. To that was added the gifts made by the Emperor to his favourites and the booty that came from the Spanish and Illyrian wars. All created an excess of liquidity in the market, perhaps as much as an extra billion denarii, according to one estimate.<sup>65</sup> If, as Orosius says, prices doubled, so, too, rates of interest must have fallen, encouraged no doubt by the effect of Augustus offering interest-free credit from the property of those who had been condemned, the *bona damnatorum*.<sup>66</sup> As a result, by AD 33, Tacitus says, every single senator had broken the law by lending more money than was permitted in relation to their property values. Some of these loans must have gone into trading enterprises.<sup>67</sup>

In short, there is a strong *prima facie* case for saying that the trade with India was necessary to mop up the excess liquidity in the economy, and it was this that fuelled the Augustan boom. When, however, the demand for credit increased in Tiberius' reign (not, of course, to finance Indian trade alone), the consequent rise in interest rates would have stimulated the merchants to search for a shorter and less expensive route towards the Malabar coast of India. At the same time occurred the 'conjuncture' with Indian and Chinese goods that were looking for buyers. Let us not forget that at Berenike there is considerable early evidence from Indian course ware



pottery of a South Asian community living in the Egyptian port.<sup>68</sup> While thinking of the context of economic decisions, we should note the remark of the Sri Lankan ambassadors who came to Rome in the reign of Claudius. Although, they said, there was a high level of luxury in Sri Lanka, among the Romans there was *opulentiae maiorem usum*, a greater demand for opulence. And that doubtless stimulated investments in maritime loans.<sup>69</sup>

But there is a danger of exaggerating the size of Indian trade and, therefore, of the numbers of those involved. I have already referred to Strabo's observation that 120 ships a year sailed along the Red Sea coast. But we cannot trust the figure. If the total valuation of the cargo calculated for the Muziris papyrus (that is, 19,000 talents or 27,000 lb gold) is anywhere near typical, the capital investment required for so many ships each year, even allowing for a huge added sale value, would have been quite simply impossible, since it would have absorbed many times over the million denarii extra currency that Augustus put into circulation. Even if we take as average the lower valuation of the cargo of our hypothetical ship loaded with pepper, the investment needed for that one ship (without taking account of the customs and freight charges) would have reached about half the total figure that Pliny said was haemorrhaging out to India (50 million sesterces). Given that pepper was one of the least expensive Indian imports,<sup>70</sup> the same argument applies *a fortiori* to other imports such as jewels and aromatics.

From the point of view of Roman demand, if we limit the argument to pepper, a single ship's cargo of 500 tons would have been enough to supply every inhabitant of Rome with one pound a year, and 20 shiploads would have been enough to provide the same amount to every person in the Empire (of about sixty million). This is unlikely, even though pepper had many uses in cuisine and medicines. To give a comparison from Venice in the fifteenth century, when one ship bringing pepper was lost, it created severe shortages and disruption of prices.<sup>71</sup> There cannot have been too many ships carrying pepper from India to Rome. I conclude, therefore, that the money markets would have been able to support a large number of such ships only with great difficulty, even if many carried goods of lower value, such as cloth. The market for Indian produce was more limited than is sometimes supposed and relatively fewer investors were involved.

The last commercial factor is the market in Rome. It is a question of the stability of the luxury market, where risks could have caused fluctuations and unpredictability of prices, as we have just seen in the later case of Venice. Cargoes of high value and low volume that targeted only the relatively few rich must have always been in danger of saturating the market and, thus, causing a collapse of prices. It seems certain that the market for pepper, aromatics and gems did grow with the increasing numbers of references in our sources, which probably produced at first a fluctuation of prices. In 13 BC Horace suggests that pepper was rare (and therefore expensive) since, he says, it was specially wrapped in small packets. But by the time of

Apicius, who wrote about the mid-first century AD, cooking recipes make use of pepper regularly and in quantity. Archaeology has turned up black pepper in an early Augustan military camp in Germany (at Oberaden) and there is a reference to pepper on the writing tablets of Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall, as well as the discovery of pepper pots in Gaul (for example, in the Treasure of Chaource).<sup>72</sup> Pliny, however, admits that his price list of Indian goods 'change almost every year, according to the shipping'; and he cites a celebrated case of price manipulation by the *manceps* (agent) Demetrius, who in the time of Nero was prosecuted by the whole Sepalasia quarter of Capua, which was a centre of perfume and drug manufacture.<sup>73</sup>

But after the initial boom in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, I am sceptical about any radical, structural change in the markets, as some have supposed from the evidence of Roman coins in India. More probably the markets achieved a certain equilibrium by the second century AD, since Pliny, in the same passage as above, could at least speak of the *auctoritas* of prices, the 'normal' or 'standard value'. If I am correct about control of prices by local princes in Indian ports of trade, that would indicate the supply side also stabilized. As far as we can tell from the geography of Ptolemy in the second century, very little information about production in the Indian interior reached Rome.<sup>74</sup>

So much, then, for the positive and normative aspect of the Indian and Roman economies. Let me now finish with some general remarks about how economic decisions were made.

Finley pointed out that, while every action in antiquity had an economic component, to say so is meaningless unless we specify the economic aims.<sup>75</sup> But we are impeded by the fact that we cannot trust explicit statements of intent, which are in any case rare, nor can we draw conclusions from formal legal statements, which often conceal or imply evasion. We must of necessity, therefore, rely upon evidence of regular behaviour.<sup>76</sup> In antiquity the level of market forces was necessarily extremely restricted, given that most producers had very little spending power, since in times of shortage they had no surpluses and only small profits in times of plenty.<sup>77</sup> The luxury market, which was less labour dependent, tended to be relatively more stable, although, of course, much smaller.

But economic choice is ultimately a matter of culture, whether decisions are explicitly rational (through the use of actuarial tables, balance sheets and the like) or unconsciously made by the operation of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of supply and demand. Often they fall between the two. One of the criticisms of Finley is that he did not identify the intermediary point in the ancient economy between modern rationality and social and non-economic elements that influenced choices.<sup>78</sup> To take an example, we know that the Emperor Justinian tried to set the annual rate of interest on maritime loans at 12 per cent (that is, 1 per cent per month) against the habitual practice of

25 per cent or more. The law was obviously dictated by social considerations but the behaviour was economic. Almost immediately he was compelled to return to voluntary stipulations, that is, to recognize the force of the invisible hand. Actuarial tables of risk may not have existed but, in the words of the law, 'Experience proves that what was thought to be efficacious was useless'.<sup>79</sup>

Such practical experience was not too different from that described by Weber within which the medieval 'commenda' trader operated. He was neither the owner of the goods nor an agent working on commission but a sort of partner who was paid out of the profits. He had to make calculations of the profit, therefore, but calculations based on guesswork and conventional wisdom. That is to say, there was a kind of capital accounting by balancing assets against profits (what Weber called proto-capitalism), because it was based on market opportunity, but it was not an enterprise of continuous trading with fixed capital like that practised by the later East India Company.<sup>80</sup> The Roman economy was situated at a point balanced between a market that was autonomous with its own logic of decisions and a market constrained by social control and rank.

In order to arrive at perfect, general equilibrium of supply and demand, the market must have perfect information. The less information, the greater the risk and the less rational or more speculative the choices. In antiquity we can easily find examples from all periods of market information reaching producers. Perhaps the best known is the initiative of Cleonomes of Naukratis, Alexander's satrap in Egypt, who placed agents in ports to warn him of corn prices.<sup>81</sup> The younger Pliny informed his friend Marcellus that there was a seller's market for land in Italy.<sup>82</sup> And Proculus of Naukratis, we are told, used to send information from Athens back to his native district, or nome, as to when they should supply aromatics, ivory and papyrus to Athenian traders.<sup>83</sup> But I doubt whether any of these examples can be regarded as a systematic or regular, long-distance mechanism for making market choices. Despite references in the legal texts to those who collected debts in Carthage and Berytus on behalf of Romans, these men were not the same as agents to provide market information.<sup>84</sup> The *Periplus* tells us, and hence presumably told every merchant captain, about the markets in Indian ports. But this would not have created market opportunities, if prices were controlled by local rulers or information about demand was only sporadic. The island of Socotra on the sailing route, where there was an open market because it was always short of staples, was only visited by traders 'who stopped there by chance'.<sup>85</sup> Even in the second century AD Pausanias knew so little about the Indian market that he believed coins were not used; and suspicion about information from sailors to India was a persistent theme.<sup>86</sup>

In general, we may conclude, market information was so dispersed in time and place that jurists struggled to define value against market fluctuations. For value, says Paul, 'is not formed in a single moment nor through a

rare shortage' and, he adds, 'We know that prices of things vary from one city and region to another ... as also does money'.<sup>87</sup> Pliny, likewise, tried to separate market prices from true value (what he called *auctoritas*). Both he and Paul reflect prevailing unwillingness to recognize the invisible hand, much less to act upon it commercially.<sup>88</sup> All the information provided by works, such as the *Periplus*, the *Geography* of Ptolemy or the later *Expositio totius mundi*, were valuable only for macro-economics, the understanding of broader economic opportunities, but not for the micro-economic decisions involved with a fluctuating markets. These works could tell you where to go for pearls or frankincense but not whether it was worth going or whether the price was right at any given moment to make the voyage profitable.

The trading attitude in antiquity was, as later in the Middle Ages, 'provisionist'.<sup>89</sup> 'Whenever they hear that corn is most plentiful,' says Xenophon about the trading *emporoi*, 'they sail there.' The merchants did not refer to the seller's market, any more that did the *emporos* recorded by Synesius who visited Cyrenaica once a year, or the *mercator* in Plautus' play. They bought and sold wherever they could.<sup>90</sup> It is the unpredictability of prices and expenses, the instability of the markets, even the luxury market, that is the message of the ancient texts. Pliny says that bribes and expenses in the Yemen could add 688 denarii to a camel load of frankincense.<sup>91</sup> Philostratus talks of merchants going round from port to port paying 'unholy rates' of interest (*anosio tokoi*), implying their variability, and scuttling their ships if the profits disappeared.<sup>92</sup>

Although precise calculation of risk in such conditions was impossible, decisions were not entirely irrational, as we have seen. After having lost five ships, worth thirty million sesterces, Trimalchio nevertheless invested another two million that brought him a return of ten million sesterces.<sup>93</sup> It was a rational risk, based upon some sort of experience. Pragmatism usually dictated the choices. If the rate of interest fell too low, no money was available for loans; if it rose too high (*anosios* is the word used by Philostratus), or if the profits from market prices dropped too far, traders sank their ships (in order to collect the insurance), or they formed cartels, or they adulterated their produce (as they did with pepper, which was sometimes mixed with juniper berries). The market could be manipulated *multis modis*.<sup>94</sup>

There are many examples of market rationality and responses, whether institutional or pragmatic. For institutional responses we have the whole legal system of *pecunia traiecticia*, or shipping loans, that evolved to spread risk of losses to the rich, proprietorial class while helping the small traders who did not have the capital to buy the cargo or pay the insurance of a ship.<sup>95</sup> The law of shipwreck (*de iactu*) had a similar effect by averaging out losses between merchants. Both in effect created the prototype of limited liability and commercial instruments for individual members of a *societas*, without ever arriving at the capitalist solution of giving corporations a legal personality.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, Roman law never in theory recognized contracts

negotiated by third party agents, but in practice it developed a system of dependants (slaves, freedmen) as agents with liability limited to their own *peculium*. This permitted the élites to bypass the social disrepute of entering trade.<sup>97</sup> We should note, too, the rationality behind the *actio exercitoria* that made the principal lender responsible for contracts negotiated by shippers. 'The usefulness', says Ulpian, 'is obvious ... because often there is no chance to enquire about the ship's captain'.<sup>98</sup>

Purely pragmatic responses to market choice are easy to find. Apart from the examples of fraud or substitution noted earlier, cheaper Indian *caeruleus* undercut Puteoli blue;<sup>99</sup> traders who went to India found, as we have seen, routes which increased their profits (*compendia*) and they made economies of scale – 'the greater the ship, the greater the confidence'.<sup>100</sup> No doubt the concept of productive investment existed. Vespasian apparently earned the reputation for 'buying up commodities so that he could sell them again at a profit'.<sup>101</sup> Plentiful coin for the lenders of the age of Augustus and Tiberius must have brought down the rate of interest of maritime loans until shortage of circulating currency forced it up again. But I have the impression in all this that the structural instability of the market explains why there were regular attempts by the state to maintain fair prices (*aequa pretia*) that were not against customary expectations, *contra veterem consuetudinem*.<sup>102</sup> Yet at the same time there was a remarkably lax attitude to cartels, unless in cases of essential food supply. For example, we know of guilds (*collegia*) of salt and gypsum in the Egyptian town of Tebtunis that had the right to arrest anyone who broke the cartel prices.<sup>103</sup>

If we turn, finally, to the political basis of market behaviour, we see that Roman law went some way towards ironing out inconsistencies in the market place. But the effect of state intervention was, and almost always is, to destroy the invisible hand of perfect competition. It does so by promoting microeconomic equity and stability, or by influencing macroeconomic conditions of political and social behaviour. That is, it produces a 'normative' economy.<sup>104</sup> I have already considered some of the economic consequences of state treaties and negotiated 'Ports of Trade' in India.

If we want an ancient example from a port near to India in time and place, a Mercantile Code dating from the first century BC was found in the South Arabian town of Timna which provided specially favour status for merchants from the Gebbanites. The Gebbanites, as we know from Pliny, controlled the high price of cinnamon. Evidently, therefore, the market was far from perfect.<sup>105</sup> In India itself we know that various goods were controlled by local kings, so again they were not open markets.<sup>106</sup> We should not expect a sophisticated political economy. Roman emperors understood the consequences of a good supply of money, but not the relationship between supply and circulation.<sup>107</sup> And I doubt if the high level of silver denarii found in India can be explained by a special imperial decision to encourage trade.<sup>108</sup>

Just as in studying the Middle Ages, we have to distinguish between 'exploitation of trade' (through taxes, tolls or the like) and 'exploitation by trade'; in other words, there is a difference between 'political mercantilism' and 'economic mercantilism'.<sup>109</sup> The former distorts and stultifies market capitalism, even though a degree of market rationalism may be present, since the market is always distorted, if more weight is given to status than contract.<sup>110</sup> Existing maritime contracts show how much élite lenders dictated the routes, goods and periods of trading, and Roman law ensured that the rich dominated.<sup>111</sup> Local, rural markets themselves required state permission and were often granted only to wealthy landowners to regulate, as the well-known example at Vicetia in North Italy illustrates.<sup>112</sup>

Given such distortions, whether by corrupt or benevolent rulers and élites, economic choices were bound to be conservative, and the level of productive capital formation low. That applies particularly in respect of Indian trade. Thomas Aquinas gives a good summary of this economic conservatism, although speaking of a later age: *dignior enim est civitas si abundantiam rerum habet ex territorio proprio quam si per mercatores abundet*. Better and safer your own products than the risks of war and travels abroad.

## Notes

- 1 Samuelson and Norhaus 1995: 6.
- 2 Samuelson and Norhaus 1995: 27.
- 3 Strabo 2. 3. 4. For the myth of the discovery of the monsoon and the improved knowledge of the geographic position of India given by Poseidonius, see Tchernia 1997b.
- 4 Strabo 2. 5. 2; 17. 1. 13; the 20 ships that sailed out of the Red Sea could also have been going to East Africa.
- 5 *P.Berl.* 5883 and 5853.
- 6 Plautus, *Cn* 439.
- 7 Celsus, *Med.* 5. 23. 3; Miller 1969: 4, 82. Plutarch, *Sulla* 13, gives an account of Sulla's siege of Athens, where there is reference to the tyrant Ariston giving pepper to a priestess in Athens. But there is no mention of pepper by Plautus in the previous century.
- 8 Verg. *Aen.* 7. 705. These contacts are discussed further in Ch. 7.
- 9 Augustus, *Res Gestae* 31.
- 10 For example, the kings of Pandya, Strabo 15. 1. 4.
- 11 Strabo 2. 5. 12; it is difficult to imagine that the 20 ships per year under the Lagids (Strabo, 17, 1, 13) could have grown to 120 in the four years of Roman rule. As noted below, pepper was still rare in Rome in 13 BC when Horace wrote (*Ep.* 2. 1. 270), so not much was coming yet from India.
- 12 News of the excavations at Berenike is regularly published in the numbers of *Egyptian Archaeology* – e.g. 8, 1996, pp. 9–12; 9, 1996, p. 28; 11, 1997, p. 26; 13, 1998, p. 27; also in Sidebotham and Wendrich 2000, 1998 and 2000. The Egyptian land routes and rock shelters are discussed by De Romanis 1997b.
- 13 Tac. *Ann.* 3. 52–4 – *ad externas aut hostilis gentes*.
- 14 Tac. *Ann.* 6. 16–17. Discussed by De Romanis 1997a.
- 15 See especially Turner 1989, with my review of De Romanis and Tchernia 1997 in *JRArch* 13, 2000.



- 16 K.M. Slane in Begley 1996: 351–68.
- 17 Sidebotham and Wendrich 1996: 53, 315; Sidebotham 2002 gives a summary of the 1998 excavation reports contained in Sidebotham and Wendrich 2000.
- 18 Pliny, *NH* 6. 84–5.
- 19 Pliny, *NH* 32. 23–4; De Romanis 1997b.
- 20 On the date of the *Periplus*, see the chapters by C. Robin and de G. Fussman in De Romanis and Tchernia 1997.
- 21 Turner 1989: 27, obsessed by the number of silver denarii of Augustus and Tiberius, affirms this explicitly.
- 22 Pliny, *NH* 6. 101 and 12. 84; Crawford 1979: 207 makes the point about Pliny's lack of concern.
- 23 Pliny, *NH* 6. 101.
- 24 *Contra* Warmington 1974: especially 90–106. Turner 1989 invents a 'mini-boom' to account for the increase in coin finds of the Antonine period; which illustrates the fragility of numismatic evidence.
- 25 Dio 68. 15 and 68. 27. 1.
- 26 *Eparchos k(lasses)* – *SEG* viii, 703.
- 27 S.E Sidebotham and W.Z. Wendrich, *Egyptian Archaeology*, 9, 1996, p. 28. The excavation of the late Roman commercial and residential quarter are reported in Sidebotham 2002.
- 28 *OGIS* 674.
- 29 Listed in more detail in Ch. 7.
- 30 Ael. Arist. *Or.* 26. 11–13.
- 31 A text and translation are provided by Harrauer and Sijpesteijn 1985; they translate the phrase *kata Muzeirin* as 'bei Muziris' = 'at Muziris' – but in my view the more natural meaning is 'concerning Muziris'. Rathbone 2000: 40 translates the phrase as 'for (the trip to) Muziris'; but in either case one cannot conclude from the text that the contract was made with a merchant who was living in Muziris, as Casson 1989: 14, etc. I have discussed the text in more detail in Gurrukul and Whittaker 2001.
- 32 Maloney 1976: 28–30 and Champakalakshmi 1996: 117–40 give a list of the sites that have been excavated, but the pottery analysis is constantly being revised, and locally produced 'rouletted ware' is often confused with Roman *terra sigillata*. For example, the 'rare pink ware' found at Alagankulam could be either African Red Slip Ware' or 'Afghan ware'.
- 33 See the revue of Begley 1996 by A Tchernia, *Topoi*, 8 (1998): 455–6 (with an illustration).
- 34 The collections were not published before the medieval period; Gurukkal and Varier 1999: 160–1 and Gurrukul and Whittaker 2001, where the relevant passages are translated.
- 35 I am much indebted in this section to Tchernia 1997b and De Romanis 1997a.
- 36 Pliny, *NH* 6. 102; De Romanis 1997a: 84–90.
- 37 Tchernia 1997b. The text the *diegesis Palladiou* (= Ps-Callisthenes, III, 7–16) is reviewed and corrected by Derrett 1960. Philostr. *VApoll.* 3, 35 speaks of an ancient law of the Erythrean Sea that forbade ships of war and only permitted single ships on the sea. If true, that would have forced Egyptian merchants to build especially large ships, to include armed guards for their protection and to make a profit – an economic and a political explanation.
- 38 Strabo 16. 4. 22 says that the expedition of Aulus Gellius to Arabia Felix was influenced by the expectations of wealth, one of many such stories of greed in Roman history that never stand up to close examination as economic policy.
- 39 Pliny, *NH* 6. 101.
- 40 Rostovtzeff 1957: 605.



- 41 I have argued this elsewhere, for example, in Ch. 7.
- 42 *PME* 42 gives an example of a 'designated port'; for the details, see Ch. 7.
- 43 Pliny, *Ep.* 10. 41; cited by Andreau 1994: 85; such protection corresponds perfectly with Andreau's definition of the social objectives of Roman imperialism, to protect the economic interests of citizens but never their economic aims; *id.* 89.
- 44 I have said a bit about this in Ch. 7; the Sutras of Panini, dating from the Mauryan Empire of the third century BC, talk of trade loans and agencies. Most recently, see Thapar 2002: especially 245–53.
- 45 Suresh 1999.
- 46 Strabo 15. 1. 4 tells of the gift exchanges. We should not forget the commercial links established by the Hellenistic kings, whose coins have been found, although always in small numbers, at Karur and elsewhere in Tamilnadu, catalogued by R. Krishnamurthy in *Studies in South India coins*, 3–5, 1993–5; see also R. Krishnamurthy, 'Hellenistic coins from Karur: a review', Presidential address to the South Indian Numismatic Society, 9th annual conference, 6–7 Feb., 1999.
- 47 For example, the poem Silappatikaram, *Canto* 5. 12–72; written in the Middle Ages about an heroic age of the past (cf. note 34). The excavations at Arakamedu are published by Begley 1996.
- 48 Daffinà 1996: 269 ; cf. Harl 1996: 302.
- 49 Champakalakshmi 1996: 26–7 and 93–4.
- 50 Pliny, *NH* 6. 105.
- 51 Casson 1986 calculates that a medium ship of 500 tons would have carried a cargo worth 19,000 talents (or 27,000 lb gold). We do not know whether the figures in the papyrus show the value estimated by Egyptian customs before or after the 25 per cent import tax. But we do know that prices rose a hundred-fold (*centiplato*) between India and Rome, Pliny, *NH* 6. 101.
- 52 *PME*, 56; Casson's correction of *megala* (large) for *mesta* is not necessary.
- 53 At Rome pepper sold for four denarii a pound (Pliny, *NH* 12. 29), or about 8,000 denarii a ton; a ship of 500 tons would have had a theoretical value of 4,000,000 denarii (16 million sesterces) on the retail market. If the original purchase price had risen a hundred fold (note 51), the Roman trader would have had to pay 40,000 denarii in India, plus 25 per cent *ad valorem* import tax and perhaps another 25 per cent export tax, plus the freight charges by ship and by camel (the latter were 170 talents in the case of *P.Vindob.* G 40822; but see also note 91 below). Although we cannot calculate the total initial outlay, it was clearly considerable.
- 54 Pliny, *NH* 6. 101, following the interpretation of *compendia* by De Romanis 1997a.
- 55 Jones 1964: 870–1.
- 56 Raschke 1978: 644–7; Sidebotham 1986: 84.
- 57 Tchernia 1997a.
- 58 Sidebotham 1986: 89.
- 59 Jos. *JAnt.* 18. 6. 3.
- 60 Andreau 1999: 136–7 (with earlier bibliography) and 54–6 (maritime loans).
- 61 John Moschus 193.
- 62 Rufin. *Hist. Mon.* 16. The sum, however, represent the value of his entire fortune and not necessarily that of the merchandise.
- 63 *CJ* IV. 63. 3 [408/9]; cf. *CTb* XIII. 1. 5 [364].
- 64 Andreau 1999: 152; the identity of financiers of Indian trade remains unknown.
- 65 Crawford 1979.
- 66 Oros. 6. 19.

- 67 Tac. *Ann.* 6. 16–17; the crisis created by the attempted recall of the loans is analysed by Andreau 1999: 104–7, who provides other explanations for the shortage of money.
- 68 Sidebotham 2002. The importance of India as a transit market between Rome and China is noted by Chinese sources, for example Hou-han Shou, 80, 2921; Liu 1994: 53–75.
- 69 Pliny, *NH* 6. 89.
- 70 Warmington 1974: 233; but I do not share his opinion that the price would have been controlled by the state.
- 71 Raschke 1978: 670.
- 72 Hor. *Ep.* 2. 1. 270 and Miller 1969: 82; Oberaden, *De Romanis* 1997a: 100; Vindolanda, Bowman 1994: 69; the Treasure of Chaource and other examples, Warmington 1974: 183–4.
- 73 Pliny *NH* 33. 164.
- 74 Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35. 18–24 – ‘Travellers in India associate only with the coastal people.’
- 75 Finley 1985: 156.
- 76 Cf. Hibbert 1963: 157.
- 77 Erdkamp 1998: 193–6, who also discusses the rapid rise and fall of prices of basic provisions.
- 78 Love 1991: 91–4.
- 79 *CJ* IV. 32. 26. 1 [528]; *Nov. Just.* 11.
- 80 Love 1991: 165, 220–3, with the references to Weber.
- 81 Ps.-Demosth. in *Dionysod.* 56 (330 bc); de Ste Croix 1974: 48.
- 82 Pliny, *Ep.* 6. 19.
- 83 Philostr. *VSoph.* 2. 21. 2, but in this case perhaps not for personal profit.
- 84 *Dig.* 19. 5. 5. 4 and 16. 5. 12; Tozzi 1961: 470.
- 85 *kata tychen* – *PME* 30–1.
- 86 Paus. 3. 12. 4, interpreted by Harl 1996: 302, as reluctance on the part of Roman traders to pay in coin; but more probably simply the repetition of an old stereotype. Sailors information is castigated by Marinos of Tyre; Ptol. *Geog.* I. pr. 11. 7; cf. my comments in Ch. 7.
- 87 *Dig.* 13. 4. 3.
- 88 Pliny, *NH* 33. 164.
- 89 Hibbert 1963: 181.
- 90 Love 1991: 170; Rougé 1966: 272.
- 91 Pliny, *NH* 12 32.
- 92 Philost. *VApoll.* 4. 32.
- 93 Petr. *Satir.* 76.
- 94 Pliny, *NH* 12. 28–9.
- 95 de Ste Croix 1974: 41–2; Crook 1967: 211 points out that by the use of stipulations (usually oral) the rich could avoid the legal disrepute of usury.
- 96 *de iactu* – *Dig.* 14. 2; de Ste Croix 1974: 57; Crook 1967: 223.
- 97 Aubert 1994: 49, 114.
- 98 *Dig.* 14. 1. 1 *pr.*, with the implications of cheating.
- 99 Pliny, *NH* 33. 163.
- 100 See above, note 54; Petron. *Satir.*, 76.
- 101 Suet. *Vesp.* 16; see J. Andreau’s review of A. Petrucci, *Mensam exercere. Studi sull’impresa finanziaria romana (II secolo a.C – metà del III secolo d.C.*, Napoli, 1991 in *Labeo* 42 (1996), p. 267, who cites Plut. *Mor.* 830E, etc.; but see also Andreau 1999: 25, where he thinks that the rationality behind Vespasian’s business affairs was less to live off the profits than to restore his inheritance.
- 102 *NJust.* 122.

- 103 *P.Mich.V.245*.
- 104 Samuelson and Norhaus 1995: 27.
- 105 Pliny, *NH* 12. 93.
- 106 *PME* 39 and 52.
- 107 D. Rathbone (concerning the crisis of AD 33) in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1996, vol. X, p. 318.
- 108 Tchernia 1997b: 264, *contra* Crawford 1979: 217.
- 109 Hibbert 1963: 185; Miller 1963: 288.
- 110 'From status to contract' is the celebrated evolution described by Sir Henry Maine; Love 1991: 164.
- 111 Justinian failed in his attempt to demand that 'illustrious persons' should demand lower rates of interest than merchants, *CJ* IV. 32. 26. 1.
- 112 Pliny, *Ep.* 5. 4; cf. de Ligt 1993: 202–5.

## 9 ROMAN FRONTIERS AND EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS

When Lord Curzon of Kedleston was asked to deliver the prestigious Romanes Lecture at Oxford University in 1907, immediately after his service as Viceroy of India, he chose as his subject 'Frontiers'. He did so, he claimed, because, despite the obvious importance of frontiers in every diplomatic negotiation, 'You may ransack the catalogues of libraries, you may search the indexes of celebrated historical works, you may study the writings of scholars, and you will find the subject almost wholly ignored'.<sup>1</sup>

I do not know which libraries Lord Curzon had ransacked. But this was 1907, which makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion that he had not actually read any of the extensive works of European geographers who had been writing about frontiers for nearly a century. From Germany, for instance, he was apparently ignorant of – or at least he did not cite – Karl Ritter's pioneering geography of frontiers, *Die Erdkunde in Verbaltnis zur Natur* (1817), a study that had been stimulated by the Congress of Vienna and had become familiar in German universities through the policy of the brothers von Humbolt.<sup>2</sup> Nor did he quote from the massive works of Friedrich Ratzel, who had died in 1904, and whose influential, biological theory of frontiers in *Anthropo-geographie* had appeared as early as 1882.<sup>3</sup> Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* (1897), now regarded as a turning point in political geography,<sup>4</sup> had been prominently reviewed in France, also, by the rising young scholar, Vidal de la Blache, who was working in the recently founded nursery for French diplomats, the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, under Albert Sorel. Sorel himself was a substantial authority on the frontiers of France, important enough to be cited by Marshal Foch and Georges Clemenceau in the frontier negotiations of 1919, just as Vidal de la Blache was later used by General de Gaulle.<sup>5</sup> But none of these European luminaries had been discovered in Curzon's researches.

In truth, if we seek a charitable explanation, Curzon did not mean 'modern works on geography' when he alleged that they had neglected frontiers, but specific, strategic studies of how frontiers were located. It is also clear that he was thinking mostly not about Europe but about the British Empire in India.<sup>6</sup> With the recent memories of Kosovo and East Timor

before us, however, it is difficult to disagree with his general observation, 'Frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war and peace, of life or death to nations'. What captures my interest, however, for the purposes of this chapter is Curzon's repeated claim that within this generalization British India could learn from the Roman Empire. The latter, he said, was 'nowhere so like our own as in its Frontier policy and experience'; and he added that the North-West frontier of India could compare 'point by point with its ancient counterpart and prototype, the frontier system of Rome'.<sup>7</sup> This in turn has stimulated me to pose two questions: the first, to what extent European perceptions, whether right or wrong, of the frontiers of the Roman Empire have shaped, and continue to shape European history; and secondly (by what might be called a feedback or reflux), to what extent the actual experience of European frontiers has changed previously accepted analytical views of Roman frontiers.

The traditional view of Rome and her frontiers is well enough known, since it began as long ago as in the works of Flavio Biondo and the authors of the Enlightenment, such as Montesquieu or Gibbon. The story can, therefore, be briefly retold, and broadly speaking it went as follows. The Empire of Rome expanded steadily for three hundred years from the Republic (second century BC) to the Julio-Claudian emperors (first century AD). By the end of the reign of Augustus (AD 14) the main frontiers had already been established at the great rivers of the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates, and these natural frontiers were maintained for the next three centuries with only incidental, sometimes temporary modifications; the conquest of Britain by Claudius, the search for a 'scientific frontier' between the Rhine and Danube by the Flavians,<sup>8</sup> the annexation of Dacia and Mesopotamia by Trajan, and their abandonment by his successors. So, by the middle of the second century AD the Empire had transformed its frontiers from an open instrument of infinite expansion to a fixed, closed line of defence.

The defence then became institutionalized by military fortresses along rivers or by artificial ramparts and roads in countries such as Britain, Germany, Arabia and North Africa, where they reinforced the natural defences of deserts and unproductive, underpopulated highlands. Impermeable, physical barriers rapidly became moral barriers of exclusion between civilization and barbarism, behind which the imperial army, routinely now on the defensive, increasingly employed native, provincial auxiliaries or foreign mercenaries, such as Germans, Sarmatians and Saracens. By the Late Empire discipline had decayed, hastened on, Gibbon believed, by the Christian Church, although Montesquieu argued that it was because the frontiers had become over-extended in face of new, blind, tribal movements outside. This opinion, we are told, had an important influence of the strategy of Frederick the Great. It was only a matter of time before the dam burst, and not even the Alps, Nature's gift to Italy, could stem the Gothic inundation.

So much for the orthodox account of the history of Rome's frontiers that emerged from the Enlightenment. Until then the Middle Ages had been a period when frontiers in the Roman sense were latent or ignored. Sovereign power was articulated through personal vassalage more than by territorial claims, although linear and regional boundaries are now considered to have played a more prominent role than once believed.<sup>9</sup> But by the fourteenth century territoriality began to replace feudal obligations in the claims of sovereign and absolutist states, and Renaissance authors were beginning to create 'cultural myths' by drawing upon ancient exempla. Petrarch, for example, stressed rivers as natural frontiers of Italy – *certissimos regnorum fines* – and Boccaccio exalted the Alps, which had impeded Hannibal's march, as Italy's natural bulwark.<sup>10</sup> But in the following century Biondo's *Roma instaurata* explicitly compared modern and ancient Rome to pose the dilemma of how a victorious state could remain warlike.<sup>11</sup> So began the manipulation by early modern Europe of what was accepted as the Roman model of state frontiers.

Italy's search for political identity from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries was frequently inspired by studies of the Roman tradition to invent what has been termed 'an Italy of sentiment and dreams'.<sup>12</sup> Roman literature and history were culled to rediscover a political geography, in the process of which the Alps were always stressed as the ideological frontier, as they had been throughout antiquity, despite their unreality then or later as a natural barrier.<sup>13</sup> Even as late as 1945 the symbolism of the Alps as Italy's natural frontier overruled French and Austrian linguistic and ethnic claims in the Val d'Aosta and the Alto Adige.<sup>14</sup>

France, however, was the classic case where the traditional interpretation of Roman frontiers was applied to national claims; the claim, that is, that the integrity of the French 'hexagon' was defined by Nature's boundaries, which were, therefore, the frontiers that must be defended. The gestation of this geographic concept and geo-political ideology has often been discussed and needs only outlining.<sup>15</sup> Although the concept of riverine frontiers were deeply embedded in the French psyche in the Middle Ages, it was Julius Caesar's description of ancient Gaul that became the instrument to legitimize French claims to the natural frontiers of the Rhine, the upper Rhone, the Alps and the Pyrenees. Caesar was first cited in the fifteenth century, as far as I can discover, when Aeneas Sylvius asserted that Alsace was part of Gaul.<sup>16</sup>

But it was not until the seventeenth century that 'la permanence de César' became the cornerstone of national political geography, and was to remain so for two centuries or more.<sup>17</sup> Other ancient authors were called in for support. Whether or not Richelieu's *Testament* is a genuine document is less important than the fact that it mirrored contemporary geo-political aspirations, as is proved by the number of Jesuit advisers at the court of Louis XIII who relied upon Roman historical and geographic texts, such as

those of Strabo and Ptolemy, to justify the king's territorial ambitions, while also entrenching political geography within the educational curriculum.<sup>18</sup> Intellectual weight was added by jurists, such as Grotius in the seventeenth century and his successors in the eighteenth, who liberally exploited the texts of Roman historians, jurists and land surveyors (*agrimensores*) to defend the thesis of natural, territorial boundaries.<sup>19</sup> For the *Treaty of the Pyrenees* (1659) Latin scholars searched the texts for the authority to draw impossible linear, natural frontiers along the mountain crests.<sup>20</sup> A *Declaration* leading up to the *Treaty of Turin* (1760) noted the Roman texts cited by 'learned Doctors' in order to conclude, 'Rivers are the most natural limits because they serve to defend the frontiers ... They are the boundaries which were always chosen in ancient times to separate states, as the Romans did'.<sup>21</sup>

The French Revolution, as is well known from Danton's famous speech of 1793, revived appeals, after a period of quiescence, to the natural frontiers of France in an attempt to consolidate the new nation-state. Roman frontiers and Caesar were again in vogue, despite Napoleon's imperialist expansion, and were made more explicit after the Congress of Vienna (1815) in the ideology of French historiography.<sup>22</sup> 'Les frontières naturelles' became a blatantly geo-political programme after the humiliation of the Franco-Prussian War and the abuses of the *Treaty of Frankfurt* (1871). The programme was developed above all through the influential work of Albert Sorel and his disciple Paul Vidal de la Blache, the first, as the teacher of almost all the French diplomats of his day, the second, regarded today as the father of French geography.<sup>23</sup> In his book written in 1916, replete with references to Roman frontiers and German barbarians, Vidal de la Blache begins: 'One readily repeats that France, like Gaul, has its present position by virtue of the natural development of its destiny.'<sup>24</sup> Three years later in the post-war negotiations, George Clemenceau, citing Sorel, repeated the sentiment: 'The advance on the Rhine was the tradition of our ancestors ... a true frontier'.<sup>25</sup>

Britain, as an island, made no such appeal to a collective memory of territorial frontiers, although, as Febvre noted, there existed deep within the British psyche an embarrassment that a land with no natural divisions had so long been divided into rival kingdoms.<sup>26</sup> Paradoxically, between England and Scotland lies that most visible of Roman frontiers, Hadrian's Wall, which had been studied intensely by antiquarians since the sixteenth century. Although it often followed no obviously natural features, the impressive remains appeared designed to exclude untamed Scots and it created a powerful theme in British political geography of artificial, closed frontiers that drew a moral line between barbarism and civilization.<sup>27</sup>

It was the British Empire of the nineteenth century in India, however, which stimulated British politicians and geographers to join the mainstream of European perceptions, as they scoured the Roman Empire for models over the whole range of legal, administrative and military history. Comparisons



abounded and, as we saw earlier, Curzon's lecture on 'Frontiers' in Oxford was very much in this tradition.<sup>28</sup> Francis Haverfield, Professor of Archaeology at Oxford and affectionately known as 'The Pope of Roman Britain', used the inaugural lecture of the Roman Society in 1911 to demonstrate how the Roman Empire 'lights up our own Empire, for example in India, at every turn'.<sup>29</sup> The policy of Oxford University, indeed, was to encourage the best of its students to enter the colonial service.<sup>30</sup> Even Halford Mackinder, another lecturer at Oxford, larded his theories of European strategy with comments on Roman frontiers, which he claimed he owed to Haverfield's influence.<sup>31</sup> This was despite the fact that Mackinder's remarkable paper in 1904, 'The geographical pivot of history', had objectives quite different from those of colonial administrators, which were to become foundation stones of German geo-politics in the years before the Second World War.

Although many of the parallels drawn between Rome and India we would now judge to be superficial, it is easy to see why they appeared attractive at the time. The size of British India and its population appeared roughly the same as the whole Roman Empire; both were controlled by armies of approximately the same size, composed of native and colonial troops.<sup>32</sup> But reiterated throughout the many works of contemporary writers was the traditional perception of Roman frontiers. 'Both Empires', said Lord Bryce, 'have been favoured in their extension and their maintenance by the frontiers which Nature had provided'.<sup>33</sup> The danger, was, he added, that England, like Rome would be tempted beyond these limits, and he compared the disaster of Varus in the Teutoburg Forest with the retreat from Kabul in 1843. The term 'scientific frontier' originated in the supposed advantages of the road from Kabul to Kandahar, which was compared to Rome's search for a shorter frontier and Hadrian's 'regular system of frontier defence' in Britain and Germany.<sup>34</sup> The provincialization and barbarization of the army, Bryce concluded, served as a warning to England not to dilute her Indian army by trusting native Pathans and Gurkhas (an irony of history, given the key role of the Gurkhas in the British contribution to the recent settlement in East Timor).

There were good reasons, therefore, for Europeans to study Roman frontiers. 'After all', Curzon said with Rome in mind, 'half the warfare of the European continent has raged around the Frontier barriers of the Alps and the Pyrenees, the Danube and the Rhine'.<sup>35</sup> But theory had to compete with experience. And experience radically challenged Curzon's own traditional perceptions. Just as in practice the British in India and the French in Indo-China had advanced beyond the natural frontiers of the Indus or Meecong, so too, he perceived, 'Augustus selected rivers ... as Frontiers of the Roman Empire, though strategic reasons soon tempted the Romans beyond ... The teaching of history is that rivers connect rather than separate.' Mountain

ranges were little better, since, 'Both the entrance and the exit of the passes [must be] in the hands of the defending power.' Walls and palisades, as in the Roman Empire, were 'more a line of trespass than a Frontier'. Demarcated, fixed boundaries against primitive people were anachronistic. The colonial scramble for Africa created conditions, as in antiquity, where frontiers were not barriers but conventions.<sup>36</sup> India's North-West frontier, in fact, was not a line but a deep zone of different frontiers, administrative, military and political. Others after Curzon perceived that the Indian army, which was supposedly contaminated by native sepoys, was in reality a model of efficiency compared with the tragic incompetence of the British army in the Boer War.<sup>37</sup>

In retrospect it is interesting to note how many of the British studies, which included comparisons with Rome, were, like their French counterparts, stimulated by lessons drawn from the First World War and produced on the eve of Versailles, when the frontiers of Europe were to be redrawn. Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich, for example, wrote a military manual in 1916, re-issued in 1918, on political frontiers and boundary making, which drew from his practical experience to make many surprisingly penetrating comments, despite his blimpish, racist views and a certain creativeness in his Roman historical examples. He aimed, he said, 'to see if by the light of history or the dispositions of geography there is a reasonable possibility of a rearrangement' in Europe's boundaries', and he expressed the hope that, after the war, peace in the Balkans, which had also been a constant preoccupation of the Romans, could be maintained. The irony is not lost on us when he suggested some international force should be organized 'backed by the sword' in order to allow Serbia to form a united Slav state 'with a great future before her'.<sup>38</sup>

The practical experience of the British in India was not the only force that changed perceptions of frontiers. The French encounter with history had likewise revealed tensions between Roman texts and the reality on the ground. Although reverence for Julius Caesar had virtually airbrushed out of history the subsequent frontiers created by Augustus and his successors beyond the Rhine,<sup>39</sup> Richelieu's theoretical ideal of natural frontiers did not in practice prevent him from extending French strongholds beyond the Rhine or the Alps. Support for the Gonzaga-Nevers inheritance at Mantova was one example that was aimed at blocking Spanish ambitions.<sup>40</sup> The Pyrenees frontier, for all the learned Latin texts, proved a delusion, since traditional, jurisdictional sovereignty on either side remained beyond the territorial demarcations for some 200 years after the treaty.<sup>41</sup> As part of the expansionist policy of Louis XIV in the late seventeenth century, Vauban constructed some of the greatest fortresses of Europe since Roman Trier and Cologne. But he himself never spoke of a linear or natural or static frontier. His system along France's northern frontier was, as he described it, 'less a continuous line ... than a *cordon de noeuds*', double lines and river communi-

cations that formed an open, unlimited 'frontier region'. His instruction that a frontier should be constructed, 'in such a way that it closes the enemy's way into our country and facilitates our entry into his', resonated remarkably with Roman practice.<sup>42</sup>

By the time of the Revolution it was abundantly clear that the natural frontiers of ancient *Gallia* were no more than a geopolitical 'representation', symbols that served as instruments of aggression. In the words of Febvre, 'They were not referring to a fact but claiming a divine right ... They set a tempting myth against a dull fact.'<sup>43</sup> If a lesson was needed, Napoleon's campaigns provided it. One of those who served with him exclaimed that the rivers of Europe, 'which seem so well created to separate nations, ... nowhere form the real line of the frontiers'.<sup>44</sup> In the years after the First World War the orthodoxy which had been created by the historians of the Enlightenment was under attack. Febvre was iconoclastic. He abandoned all use of ancient texts or the opinions of those, like Montesquieu, who believed them, and he rejected the determinism of natural conditions. Natural frontiers were only conventions imposed by the strong on the weak, and in antiquity they were zones, never lines. There was, he said, need for greater study in antiquity 'of the concept of frontiers as well as their real outline on the ground'.<sup>45</sup> The view was echoed more bluntly by Jacques Ancel in the light of the reality of a new world war. There were no natural frontiers, no enclosed counties, no rivers or mountain limits. Historical frontiers were mere vanities, no more than political isobars that exercised no restraining power. Germany, he predicted, would expand in every direction. Even more radically he praised the Roman frontier practice of employing barbarian soldiers, thereby, he said, 'permitting constant infiltration from *barbaricum*', and infusing new blood 'to Romanity in decline'.<sup>46</sup>

The target of Febvre's venom was, famously, Friedrich Ratzel, whose name appears on the first and last page of *La terre et l'évolution humaine* (1922). And with Ratzel we pick up the third thread of European perceptions of Roman frontiers, this time from Germany. Since, again, there have been some excellent studies of German nationalism and geopolitics,<sup>47</sup> I can limit myself to the points where they impinge on my theme. Already by the late Middle Ages the name *Germania* was being contrasted with *Gallia* to describe the eastern and western kingdoms of the Franks, a division reinforced by the supposedly pure language of *Deutsche* against the contaminated Latin languages of *Welsche*. From a common language to a common culture of the Germanic *Stämme* (tribes) was an easy mental transposition, in order to generate the concept of *Volkstum*, a nation, whose *Naturgrenze* (natural boundaries) were defined by language and race, not by territory.<sup>48</sup>

These cultural aspirations received powerful encouragement from the humanists of the sixteenth century, and more particularly by the discovery of the manuscript of Tacitus' *Germania*, which provided Germans with a Latin text to counterbalance that of Caesar. The *Germania* confirmed the ancestral

distinctiveness of the *Volk*. 'The peoples of Germany', Tacitus had said, 'have never been tainted by intermarriage with other peoples, and stand out as a nation separate, pure and unique'.<sup>49</sup> Commentators seized upon Tacitus' assertion that Germanic tribes stretched from the Carpathians to the northern ocean, although less enthusiasm was shown for his statement that they were separated from Gaul and the Balkans by the Rhine and Danube.<sup>50</sup> In the same century Conrad Peutinger acquired the famous and only known map of the Roman Empire, the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, which notoriously does not display any frontiers but only itineraries crossing to points beyond the visible walls and rivers.<sup>51</sup>

Two other intellectual developments reinforced German preoccupations with race and language in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the anthropology of the Enlightenment and the 'discovery' of Indo-European languages. Both were given intellectual respectability by serious scholars; the former, for example, by the lectures of Emmanuel Kant in the University of Königsberg (published in 1789), which argued that miscegenation produced the degeneration of races; the latter through the work of an English colonial judge in India, William Jones, who in 1788 traced German linguistic origins to India. Each received enthusiastic support in the early nineteenth century from German geographers, such as Karl Ritter and Heinrich Berghaus, as well as from philologists like Friedrich Schlegel, inventor of the Aryan myth, or Jacob Grimm, whose towering thesis of Indo-European *Einwanderung* ('immigration') and *Volk ohne Raum* ('people without space') created a powerful platform for the launch of later theories of *Lebensraum* and expanding frontiers.<sup>52</sup> Underlying the theories was a rejection of the restrictions of traditional perceptions of Roman frontiers. Germans, said Conrad Franz in 1873, must 'win another battle like that of Arminius, to free us from the hold of Roman law, ... a step towards the liberation of Western Europe'.<sup>53</sup> It was Prussia after the Congress of Vienna (1815) which gave substance to these aspirations.

Prussia became 'la terre des géographes' mainly, although not solely, due to the influence of the von Humboldt brothers, who established the teaching of what Halford Mackinder has called 'a strategic mentality' throughout all schools and universities; 'Not merely', Mackinder explained, 'the conventional boundaries established by scraps of paper but permanent physical opportunities'.<sup>54</sup> At the same time Bismarck was putting into practice long-cherished dreams of *das Deutschtum*, a German-speaking Empire, which culminated in the Franco-Prussian War (1870) and France's loss of Alsace and Lorraine by the Treaty of Frankfurt. The war unleashed the fury of scholars and politicians, who incorporated frontiers, both ancient and modern, into the intellectual debate. The public was treated to a bitter clash of open letters between the two most distinguished ancient historians of the day, Theodore Mommsen and Fustel de Coulanges, each virtually brandishing their copies of Tacitus or Caesar in support of rival claims to the

Rhine frontier. 'The value of a natural barrier is not what it was', wrote Mommsen. 'Great rivers, being great highways, should in all reason be national property, not national boundaries.' Fustel was appalled. 'I am astonished that a historian like yourself should pretend not to know that it is neither race nor language that makes a nation.' 'History perhaps tells you that Alsace is a German country ... But to what Europe should we refer? ... That when ancient Gaul held the whole Rhine and when Strasbourg, Saverne and Colmar were Roman towns?'<sup>55</sup> Mommsen's intervention still rankled in 1918 when Vidal de la Blache accused him of admiring the barbarians who invaded the Roman Empire: 'It is regularly the case that the barbarian defeats the more civilised. But why should we support their barbarities?'<sup>56</sup>

This is the background to Friedrich Ratzel, whose importance for the perception of Roman frontiers lay more in the emphasis he gave to the function of frontiers than to their strategic location. An enthusiastic supporter of the Franco-Prussian War, he turned soon afterwards to political geography, although trained in zoology and much influenced by theories of social Darwinism. He rapidly made his mark with a stream of publications of which *Anthropo-geographie* (1881) and *Politische Geographie* (1897) were the most celebrated. His thesis, that the state possessed frontiers resembling the skin of a living organism, which expanded and contracted according to scientific, determined laws, was an attack upon traditional perceptions of frontiers. But what stands out in his work and that of his American disciple, Ellen Semple, is how often they had recourse to the history of Roman frontiers.<sup>57</sup> The law of the natural growth of states, for instance, was illustrated by Rome's growth from a village to an Empire, unrestrained by rivers or mountains. The process, they claimed, was documented by the work of Roman *Kriegsgeographen*, Strabo, Tacitus and Polybius.<sup>58</sup> One can hear the contemporary European debate in the background: 'Rivers unite, and although both sides of the Rhine may once have been occupied by Gallic tribes, the Teutonic people have made it into a German river.' There was no such thing as fixed *Naturgrenzen*, 'since Nature abhors fixed boundary lines and sudden transitions'.<sup>59</sup> The reality behind an abstract boundary was always a broad fringe (*Saum*), which became a 'border zone of assimilation'. The Vandals or Goths, therefore, did not deserve their reputation as destroyers, since they had 'assimilated Roman civilization' over a long period on the frontiers.<sup>60</sup> The weakness of Rome by contrast was its multi-ethnicity and over-extension. Hence its loss of political control and communications from the centre.<sup>61</sup>

In essence Ratzel was forecasting and shaping future European Grand Strategy. His work struck a cord with Germans after their losses of the First World War and the bitter realities of the Treaty of Versailles, and stimulated a flood of works contrasting natural and political frontiers. Not least were the geo-political studies of Karl Haushofer, who always referred to Ratzel

when discussing German *Lebensraum*. However, he understood Roman history less well than Ratzel when he claimed that Germany, *unlike* Rome, had built its frontiers upon zones or Marks not boundary lines.<sup>62</sup> At the Nuremberg trials Haushofer claimed that he had given a copy of Ratzel's works to Hitler, although, he added, Hitler had never understood them. Haushofer's favoured pupil, Rudolf Hess, doubtless had a better grasp. Despite the fact that Hitler claimed that Roman history was 'The best teacher not only for today but for all periods'<sup>63</sup> and was much impressed by the gigantism of Roman imperial architecture after his visit to Mussolini's *Mostra Augustea* in Rome,<sup>64</sup> his citations from Roman examples were simplistic, sometimes mistaken and always ambivalent. He was far less enthusiastic than Rosenberg, the ideologue, or Himmler.<sup>65</sup> In reality Hitler reflected much more closely the purist, German, humanistic tradition of a *weltberrschendes Volk*, anti-Roman, anti-'Judeo-Celtic' and anti-Roman Catholic.

There are only two more bricks to put in place in the structure of this survey of revisionist historiography which changed the face of European perceptions of frontiers, although neither is strictly European at all. The first is American and the second drawn from China. From America came Frederick Jackson Turner's paper of 1893, 'The significance of the frontiers in American history', which was said to have had 'a more profound influence on thought about American history than any other essay or volume ever written on the subject'.<sup>66</sup> While Jackson himself was at pains to stress America's 'peculiar experience', which he perceived as a liberation from European historiography, he also believed that this experience 'reacted upon the old world and influenced the direction of its thought'.<sup>67</sup> His education also included ancient history, especially whilst carrying out research at The Johns Hopkins University, where he studied Mommsen and Droysen alongside the new German political geographers. This was, incidentally, the same school of history as that attended by his friend, the future President Woodrow Wilson, who was to play such a major role in rewriting the frontiers of Europe.<sup>68</sup>

But in general it would be fair to say that Jackson saw no real value in Roman colonialism for the understanding of American frontier history which, given the contemporary orthodoxy of Roman history, was not surprising. In any case, Turner was more interested in colonists than in colonies. But the permanent and comparative value of his contribution lies not in his flawed, central thesis of the link between frontiers and character formation, even if this idea appealed to Curzon as a way of saving British youth 'from the corroding ease and morbid excitements of Western civilization'.<sup>69</sup> Rather it lies in his subsidiary themes of the frontier as an unstable zone, not synonymous with a closed boundary or juridical limit, 'a process rather than a fixed geographical region'; hence a source of continual adaptation to, and redefinition of alterity.<sup>70</sup>



More universal in its application, and for me personally a major influence, is the remarkable study by Owen Lattimore of the *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, which he broadened into a frontier theory through a series of subsequent papers.<sup>71</sup> It is important for the argument being developed here to note that Lattimore's theory was derived almost entirely from personal autopsy as a traveller along the Inner Mongolian and Turkestan frontier, as well as from his experience as a political adviser to Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>72</sup> The perspective, however, was social and ecological rather than political, and he underlined centre-periphery relations more than institutionally defined limits. Spectacular as the Great Wall appeared as a line (though only one of many) between civilization and barbarians, the frontier, he found, was always a broad zone, a compromise between the economically viable, agrarian society within and the pastoral society beyond the border.<sup>73</sup> The great nomad conquests of China, furthermore, came not from the open high steppes but from the borderlands, where the margins between the extremes of the centre and the exterior were 'contaminated' during periods of stability.<sup>74</sup> In this process Lattimore compared the British experience in India and the frontiers of the Roman Empire. An imperial boundary, he stated, is not solely concerned with keeping out barbarians but it represents the optimum growth of one particular society.<sup>75</sup> Lattimore's influence has been widely recognized by European historians, although it is true that the model is only strictly relevant to pre-industrial societies.<sup>76</sup> For the reinterpretation of Roman history, however, it has provided a dramatic, new instrument. He has also inspired more recent studies of Chinese spatial identity and the historical interface between frontier ideology and practice, which read uncannily like descriptions of the frontiers of the Roman Empire.<sup>77</sup>

These, then, are the new perspectives, born of European experience or observation, which have returned on the tide to wash up against the Roman frontiers. The orthodox perception of Roman frontiers which influenced early modern European ideology is now in its turn being transformed by the reality of European history. Naturally, it would be too much to hope for consensus among ancient historians, or that modern historians would read the recent views of ancient historians before citing examples from Roman history.<sup>78</sup> But at least the terms of the debate have changed. This is partly because archaeology has revolutionized the flow of information, and the focus of interest has shifted from where the frontiers were located to what function they served. They can, in other words, be studied both objectively and subjectively.<sup>79</sup> Frontiers and boundaries are now perceived as historically less permanent and geographically more complex than once thought, without any necessary evolution from one to the other.<sup>80</sup>

The most obvious point of pressure on the old orthodoxy is the attack upon the existence of natural frontiers. Romans, such as Tacitus, Herodian or



Josephus, who defined the great rivers of empire as its frontiers were, like Richelieu and Danton, proclaiming symbolic 'représentations' not military realities. Archaeology shows clearly that they were neither restraints to expansion nor defensive barriers, but lines of communication and supply.<sup>81</sup> The sacred Roman boundaries between Gaul and Spain, which were invoked by the negotiators of the *Treaty of the Pyrenees*, were no more realistic for the Romans than for the commissioners of 1659. The walls and army of the Roman Empire gave a magnificent impression to Aelius Aristides in the second century AD of a defensive ring of stone and steel, but Vauban's equally majestic fortresses in northern France or China's monumental Great Wall were far from static lines of defence. Archaeology has proved that Hadrian's Wall in Britain was temporarily left behind almost as soon as it was built, and that the *fossatum* walls in Africa was never designed to exclude barbarians.

Nor were Roman frontiers single boundary lines. They were complex systems set within deep zones. The visible walls in Tripolitania are found as far as sixty kilometres behind the forts, probably, therefore, serving as boundaries of administration. As Semple deduced from Ratzel, such zones 'removed the sharp edge of cultural antagonism',<sup>82</sup> and this fact has forced ancient historians to rethink the reality of moral frontiers or Roman images of 'the Other'. Were the so-called 'barbarian invasions' in the later Empire really the great destructive force portrayed by tradition or were they simply the perceptions of conservative insiders? The same question arises from Lattimore's description of transformation of China, which was effected by the 'reservoir' of increasingly assimilated nomads along the frontier.<sup>83</sup> While Turner's concept of an open gateway frontier in the expansion of the United States has tempted some ancient historians to see analogies with Rome's imperial growth, Lattimore's model of ecological frontiers as a compromise between the range of conquest and the economy of rule, helps us to understand why Roman frontiers stopped where they did.<sup>84</sup> The scientific, rational frontier of Curzon's India was a fantasy, although some Roman historians still cling to the concept. They do so, perhaps, because of the stimulus given by Ratzel, Mackinder and others to the geo-political search for a Grand Strategy, which has provoked a harsh debate among ancient historians.<sup>85</sup>

The final question must be whether the concepts of Roman frontiers have any further place in contemporary European thought, now that the colonial governors and politicians who were nurtured on the texts of Greece and Rome have faded into history. The answer, it would seem, is that there may be some life in the old world yet. A recent conference on frontiers held at Saarbrücken was introduced by the words, 'Borders and the concept of "border" are bound to become topical issues now that western Europe is discussing the abolition of economic and political borders', after which several contributors began by referring back to Roman history.<sup>86</sup> The reason

for this may be sometimes, perhaps, only intellectual chic. But the collapse of the Iron Curtain has bequeathed to Central Europe the dilemma of redefining itself without any guide between the contradictory claims of historical territories, political actualities and cultural identities. There are still acute tensions between the Latin, multi-cultural tradition of symbolic frontiers and the purist, German tradition of rival ethnic groups. Ethnic solutions have so far failed to produce stability, as the tragic events in Bosnia and Kosovo have demonstrated, and the Owen–Vance plan for non-contiguous, ethnic pockets looks ultimately doomed to failure.

It may be, as Bertrand Badie has suggested recently, that, with the diminishing role of the nation-state, the very concept of territoriality and frontiers is also out of date.<sup>87</sup> He, too, makes use of Roman history to legitimize his argument that a multi-ethnic, supra-territorial power must figure somewhere as a solution in the search for new solidarities, whereby frontiers become less important than acculturation. This is what the Romans used to call *Romanitas* and what ancient historians now call Romanization. Any look at recent publications on frontiers shows that a desire still persists to examine the Roman past in order to comprehend the European future.<sup>88</sup> One example, chosen more or less at random, makes a striking analogy between the ‘barbarians’ closing in on the frontiers of the later Roman Empire and the European Union facing similar pressures from the poor of Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans.<sup>89</sup> They, too, are demonized as the new ‘barbarians’ but, like the Germans of the fourth century, they are seeking not to destroy but to find employment. The saving grace of the Roman frontier was its porosity and its capacity to accommodate these migrants. ‘The Roman *limes*’, says one writer, ‘was a flexible concept: a closed/open strategy where there were zones of exchange and buffers (“marches”) surrounding the Empire, exactly as there are today with the EU’.<sup>90</sup> Through the invisible Roman frontiers of transition the so-called ‘barbarian’ migrated, interacted, intermarried and adapted to achieve what we now term not ‘The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire’ but its ‘Transformation’.

Not every detail of the comparison rings true, but one could not ask for a better example to show that Roman frontiers are still alive in European perceptions and still worth studying.

In the next chapter I look at the issue of migration and the parallel experiences of Europe and Rome.

## Notes

1 Curzon 1907: 4–5.

2 Also translated into French in 1836 as *Géographie générale comparée*; Y. Lacost introduction to Korinman 1990: VIII–IX.

3 The subtitle of volume two is *Die geographische Verbreitung des Menschen*. Other, subsequent titles of Ratzel announced his specific interest in frontiers – e.g.

- Über allgemein Eigenschaft der geographischen Grenze* (1892); *Die Gesetze des räumlichen Wachstums der Staaten* (1896), etc.
- 4 Raffestin 1980: 8 calls it 'un moment épistémologique'. The work had already run to a second edition in 1903 before Curzon spoke.
  - 5 Foucher 1986: 137.
  - 6 'I wonder if my hearers appreciate the part that Frontiers are playing in the everyday history and policy of the British Empire' (Curzon 1907: 8). Nevertheless he does make some remarks about Napoleon's disastrous frontier policy, the wars of Bismarck and the Russian–Turkish conflicts.
  - 7 Curzon 1907: 8, 54.
  - 8 The term 'scientific frontier' is jargon used by some ancient historians to describe a line which maximized the balance between economy and security. Its origin is discussed below; cf. Whittaker 1994: 60.
  - 9 Bonenfant 1953. Foucher 1986: 118 discusses the importance of 'la géopolitique chrétienne'.
  - 10 Petrarck, *de remediis utriusque fortunae* (1559), 2. 92; Boccaccio, *Dict.Geog.*; see Mazzacurati 1987: 342–50.
  - 11 Michel 1982, citing Flavio Biondo, *Roma instaurata* (3 vols, 1531), pp. 84–91.
  - 12 Braunstein 1982: 47.
  - 13 For antiquity, see Giardina 1994: 47; for modern symbolism, see Ricciardi 1987.
  - 14 Guichonet and Raffestin 1974: 103.
  - 15 Most recently by Nordman 1998. It will be obvious how much I am indebted to this excellent study.
  - 16 Consciousness of rivers is clearly established by the Treaty of Verdun (843), defining the middle Frankish kingdom of Lotharingia as that of the Quatre Rivières. Sylvius is cited by Albert Sorel 1897; cf. Pounds 1951: 152. The Alps are not named by Caesar in his opening description of Gaul (*BGall.* 1.1), but were clearly intended to define Gaul, as he shows later (*BGall.* 3. 1 and 7).
  - 17 Nordman 1998: 45–6, who notes sixty translations of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* up to the nineteenth century.
  - 18 Nordman 1998: 99–104, 125.
  - 19 The most interesting citation from the *agrimensores* is Varro's category of *arcifinius* borderland; for which see Nordman 1979: 81–3; discussed in its original context by Whittaker 1994: 20.
  - 20 Mazarin argued that the commission's task was to search for 'the ancient limits which divided the Gauls from the Spains, and not the historical frontier of the two crowns' – cited by Sahllins 1989: 47.
  - 21 *The Declaration of Nice* (1703): 'Rivers are the most natural limits because they serve to defend the frontiers: hence they are called *arcifin* by the Doctors ... These are the boundaries which were always chosen in ancient times to separate states, as the Romans did, who had bounded their empire on the German side by the Rhine, from the Scythians and Moesians by the Danube, and from the Parthians by the Euphrates' (*Archiv.Département. Alpes-Maritimes, Fiume Varo. Mazzo 3, no. 4* quoted by Nordman 1979: 85).
  - 22 The *Treaties of Bâle* (1795) and *Campo Formio* (1797) applied supposed Romano-Gallic principles of natural river frontiers in France's advance to the Rhine. Foucher 1986: 135–6 cites Henri Martin (1838–56), whose *Histoire de France depuis les temps les plus reculés* 'played' the references to Roman Gaul and became 'the historic bible of the middle classes'.
  - 23 Y. Lacoste introduction to Korinman 1990: XIII; cf. Vidal de la Blache 1918: 263.

- 24 Vidal de la Blache 1918: 1 – ‘On répète volontiers que la France, comme la Gaule, s’est assise à cette place en vertu du développement naturel de ses destinées.’
- 25 Quoted in Foucher 1986: 137 – ‘La poussée sur le Rhin était la tradition des nos ancêtres ... une vrai frontière.’
- 26 Febvre 1970: 325. Francis Bacon advised King James in 1603 to adopt the single title of ‘Great Britain’ for the unified crown, on the analogy that in antiquity the single names *Graecia*, *Hispania*, etc. carried an ideological message; Foucher 1986: 119.
- 27 For example, Davies 1974 [1932]: 6, writing about British India: ‘Rome fell because her dykes were not strong enough to hold back the flood of barbarian inroads’ – a lesson, he argued, for great powers that neglect their frontiers.
- 28 Other essays by colonial administrators include Sir Charles Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (Oxford, 1912), Lord Cromer, *Ancient and modern imperialism* (London, 1910). Even *Le Figaro* on the occasion of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee (1897) declared that Rome had been ‘equalled if not surpassed’ by the British Empire.
- 29 Haverfield, *JRS*, 1 (1911), xvii; cited by Majeed 1994: 88.
- 30 This was explicitly stated by Jowett, one of the greatest scholars of antiquity; Freeman 1994 cites the references.
- 31 Mackinder 1919: 55, 58, 60, etc. For his debt to Haverfield, see Mackinder 1902: 230.
- 32 The figures cited by Bryce 1914: 5–6 and 155 were for India: – area 2 million sq. miles, population 315 million, army 350–400,000 soldiers; for the Roman Empire – area 2.5 million sq. miles, population 315 million, army 300,000 soldiers. Not all these figures would be accepted today, but the Native States were, presumably, not included.
- 33 Bryce 1914: 14; cf. a governor of Bengal who believed that the British had ‘pretty well reached the limit set by nature’, which some thought was the River Indus, others the Himalaya mountains; Morris 1992: 16.
- 34 Bryce 1914: 8; Davies 1974 [1932]: 16–17.
- 35 Curzon 1907: 8.
- 36 Curzon 1907: 19–21, 37, 48–9.
- 37 Davies 1974 [1932]: 185; cf. Semple 1911: 212, Morris 1992: 296.
- 38 Holdich 1916: 289, 300–6; 1918: 9. The weakness of Holdich’s Roman history is evident when he claimed that the Antonine Wall in Scotland had been built in AD 80 by Tacitus! (Holdich 1916: 163–4). A contemporary study by C.B. Fawcett, *Frontiers: a study in political geography* (Oxford, 1918), 92–8, suggested a possible solution in the Balkans might be to deport minority populations – ethnic cleansing, no less.
- 39 Goudineau 1990: 9–12; Nordman 1998: 14.
- 40 Strasbourg was regarded not as a frontier but as the ‘entrée en Allemagne’; the bridgehead at Brisach happened to repeat the fortress of Valentinian’s Roman frontier in the fourth century AD; Pigneron was held to control Savoy and Montferrat to stop Spain; Alliès 1980: 20; Nordman 1998: 91–4.
- 41 Sahlins 1989, 53–9; Nordman 1998: 192.
- 42 Cited by Febvre from S. Le Prestre de Vauban’s *Mémoire des places frontières de Faldres* (Paris, 1678) in Burke 1973: 210; Nordman 1998: 244–54; Foucher 1980: 60–1.
- 43 Febvre in Burke 1973: 213; Y. Lacoste introduction to Korinman 1990: v.
- 44 H. de Jomini, *Précis de l’art de la guerre* (Paris, 1837), quoted by Foucher 1986: 132.
- 45 Febvre in Burke 1973: 211–13, translated from Febvre 1928: 328–31.

- 46 Ancel 1938: 183, 194.
- 47 I am indebted especially to Poliakov 1974 and Korinman 1990.
- 48 Poliakov 1974: 69–77; Pounds 1954: 58. In 1501 Jakob Wimpfeling, the Alsatian reformer, used the newly discovered *Germania* to prove that Alsace had always been German; Rives 1999: 71. The claim was reinforced by the massive cosmography of Sebastien Münster, dubbed the ‘Strabo of Germany’; Nordman 1998: 474.
- 49 *Germ.* 1; cf. 2 and 4.
- 50 Attacked by Resellianus, In *Cornelii Taciti Equitatis Romani Germaniam Commentaria* (1610). The first edition by Conrad Celtis (1500) enthusiastically fixed German frontiers in the Sarmatian and Scythian plains; Poliakov 1974: 82; Pounds 1951: 54–5. In the University Library of Cambridge there are 14 German editions of the *Germania*, 3 German translations and 14 German commentaries.
- 51 Peutinger was author of *de mirandis Germaniae* (1530), but it is difficult to assess the impact of the map on German historical geography. I have developed these ideas further in Ch. 4.
- 52 Poliakov 1974: 101, 190–7; Weigert 1942: 224.
- 53 Abfertigung der national liberalen Presse neben einer höchst nötigen Belehrung über den Ultramontanismus, Leipzig 1873: 35; quoted by Poliakov 1974: 307.
- 54 Mackinder 1919: 26–7; the term ‘terre des géographes’ comes from Korinman 1990: 9.
- 55 Mommsen’s letters are collected in Mommsen *et al.* 1871: 13, although it is not clear to which letter Fustel de Coulanges 1893 was replying. Mommsen, although a liberal politician and no admirer of Bismarck’s domestic policy, wrote a series of letters to La Perseveranza to persuade the Italian people not to join France against Germany and thus ruin Europe, as had happened during the Roman Empire. Mommsen’s later speeches on Tacitus’ *Germania* and ‘Die einheitliche Limesforschung’, published in *Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1905), are remarkably free from crude, political geography.
- 56 Vidal de la Blache 1918: 201. If Ratzel was the villain of Febvre’s attacks, there is no doubt that Vidal de la Blache was the hero.
- 57 Ratzel’s work was disliked by the father of American frontier studies, F.J. Turner, although his influential paper, ‘The significance of the frontiers in American history’ in 1893 (= Turner 1920), contains similarities with Ratzel’s views on the impermanence of natural barriers and visions of space, as expressed in Ratzel’s work on America, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (2 vols, Munich, 1873); Bogue 1998: 129. Turner had studied at Johns Hopkins University under Herbert Baxter Adams, the scholar who had brought the German theory of the state as a biological organism into American academic life; Hofstadter 1969: 60–1.
- 58 Ratzel 1882: 115–19; Semple 1911: 44–5. Semple states in the introduction that her adaptation of Ratzel’s *Anthropo-geographie* had been read and approved by Ratzel.
- 59 Ratzel 1882: 114; Semple 1911: 204.
- 60 Semple 1911: 86–7, 208, 229–30; cf. Korinman 1990: 48.
- 61 Ratzel, *Die Gesetz des räumlichen Wachstums der Staaten* (1896), 40; Semple 1911: 191, 230.
- 62 Korinman 1990: 273; Weigert 1942: 226; Parker 1985: 58.
- 63 Quoted by Villard 1972. Heinrich Himmler not only ordered a facsimile edition of Tacitus’ *Germania* to be made from the earliest known manuscript, the codex Aesinas, but he also used his SS commandos to raid and steal the original from Count Balleani; Rives 1999: 70–1.

- 64 Scobie 1990: 14; Hitler and Bormann 1988: 111.
- 65 Despite keeping a portrait of Arminius beside that of Bismarck in the Arbeitszimmer of the Chancellery, Hitler thought that Arminius had been the commander of the Third Roman Legion; Hitler and Bormann 1988: 486.
- 66 Charles A. Beard, cited by Hofstadter 1969: 48.
- 67 Turner 1920: preface.
- 68 Turner's first teacher, W.F. Allen, was an able Roman historian; Bogue 1998: 83. On Wilson, see Hofstadter 1969: 60–1. One can only speculate whether Wilson, having seen the effect of the fluid national frontiers approved by German theorists of the organic state, in reaction underlined the imperative need for immovable frontiers. 'There is but one way to wipe out Bolshevism: determine the frontiers and open every door to commercial intercourse'; quoted by Jean Gottmann, *The significance of territory*, Charlottesville, 1973, p. 141.
- 69 Among the many critiques of Turner's thesis, the classic work is Billington 1973. 'Outside of the English Universities no school of character exists to compare with the Frontier' (Curzon 1907: 55–6).
- 70 Powell *et al.* 1983: 4; Guichonnet and Raffestin 1974: 36; Papagno 1987: 77.
- 71 Lattimore 1940, Lattimore 1962; cf. Whittaker 1994, *passim*, especially 85–6.
- 72 Lattimore 1940, introduction. Hofhauser declared Lattimore to be the outstanding political geographer of his day; Weigert 1942: 12, 146. Lattimore told me, if my memory serves me well, that he was the first Westerner to have travelled the Inner Mongolian frontier both ways.
- 73 'That which was politically conceived as a sharp edge was persistently spread by the ebb and flow of history into a broad and vague margin' (Lattimore 1940: 238).
- 74 Lattimore 1940: 238.
- 75 Lattimore 1940: 239.
- 76 The point is made by Paolo Prodi's introduction to Ossola *et al.* 1987: 13, and by Papagno 1987: 77.
- 77 See, for example Williams, D.M. 1996: 670, describing Han spatial identity – 'The system of outer walls was never a permanent or tidy barrier separating mobile herders from sedentary farmers ... The imposing barricades functioned more like a screen than an envelope, because they allowed for economic and cultural exchange ... (on) the edge of two soil zones ... The walls clearly served as a visible ideological marker of domesticated space ... etc.'
- 78 Note, for example, Prescott 1987: 45, or Foucher 1986: 75, asserting that unlike the Great Wall of China, the Roman walls in Britain and Germany were closed frontiers in a system of defence, despite citing Lattimore.
- 79 Papagno 1987: 64; Alliès 1980: 32–3.
- 80 Lapradelle 1928: 9–11; Sahlin 1989: 3.
- 81 Isaac 1990: 410–13; Whittaker 1994: 35; Febvre 1970 [1922]: 329; Nordman 1987: 39.
- 82 Semple 1911: 229–30; E.C. Semple herself later wrote *The geography of the Mediterranean region: its relation to ancient history*, London, 1932.
- 83 Cf. F. Wakeman, *The fall of imperial China*, New York, 1975, p. 71, on the ideological vision of the walls in China: 'To the Chinese it marked the border between civilization and the barbaric hoards ... To the nomads it was a barrier that challenged and beckoned.' In fact Bryce 1914: 77, who warned that too much education and assimilation of Indians would destroy the frontiers, had a point.
- 84 Troussset 1987; Okun 1989; Whittaker 1994: 85–97.
- 85 Some of the debate can be followed in Wheeler 1993 and in Ch. 2.
- 86 Haubrichs and Schneider 1993.

87 Badie 1995.

88 Note, for example, Austria's enthusiasm for the European Union as a means of embracing ethnically diverse links; Barker 1998. Italy has used the EU carpace to establish 'Euroregioni' as a solution to age-old problems of frontiers in the Tyrol and Istria; Strassoldo 1998.

89 King 1998. The same notion is expressed by S.C. Rufin in his book with the suggestive title, *L'Empire et les nouveaux barbares*, Paris, 1991.

90 King 1998: 111.



## 10 THE USE AND ABUSE OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE

In the introduction to *Police et migrants* recently published by Blanc-Chaléard and others, the authors stress that the subject of migrants and foreigners in modern France could provide 'un dialogue utile entre des historiens travaillant sur des périodes différentes'.<sup>1</sup> That has been the trigger for this chapter, to see whether such an approach can offer enlightenment about Roman society. The various papers in the French collection have put forward three propositions as a model for historical comparison:

- The French Revolution and the formation of the Republic led to a development in the concept of citizenship, through increased stress on the citizen's obligations (military service, etc) and on his social and political rights, such as those embodied in the *Code de la Nationalité* of 1889 which defined and identified nationals.<sup>2</sup> The corollary of this proposition is that there was a need to identify foreigners and to distinguish between them and strangers; that is, between insiders and outsiders.<sup>3</sup> Hence developed progressively elimination of internal territorial divisions, but an obsession with the control of immigrants in order to reinforce the ideology that the Nation was defined by its frontiers.<sup>4</sup> The concept of 'ethnic identity', as has often been pointed out, is an artificial construct and the invention of the nation-state.<sup>5</sup>
- Heightened national sensibility created a panoply of bureaucratic controls as instruments for the identification and registration of citizens, in order to distinguish them from strangers and immigrants; passports and papers were demanded at check points along frontiers as well as along internal itineraries and at lodgings; what one author calls a veritable 'culture administrative et policière', however ineffectively applied.<sup>6</sup> Broadly speaking the citizen was separately identified from the foreigner by the tax that he paid and his registration in a parish.<sup>7</sup> Discrimination against immigrants was reinforced by xenophobia and fears for security, even though such a policy defied the historical reality that the most successful European states have been those open to immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

- The reason for such success historically has been due in large part to the immigrants' capacity to satisfy the internal requirements of the labour market and trade; hence attitudes towards immigration fluctuated according to demand.<sup>9</sup> Immigrants were thus used and abused. But we must not forget – how could we in the light of contemporary history? – the allure of Western riches and the pressure of illegal immigrants from the impoverished Third World, many of them from countries with former colonial ties.<sup>10</sup>

Those are the propositions from the French experience in the nineteenth century. The Roman Empire of the fourth century AD is well suited to such a comparative study, since it was a period when immigration, or what some Romans called 'barbarization', of one sort or another affected almost every strategic decision designed for the preservation of the Roman state. If we ask, therefore, how far the proposals suit the facts or enlighten our understanding of immigration in the Later Roman Empire, what strikes me immediately is the *counterfactual* framework of the model. France progressed from the most extreme absolutism in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, through the Revolution of 1792, to the Republic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the Roman Empire the process was reversed. Evolving from the Republic of the first three centuries BC, by way of what Syme called the 'Roman Revolution' of Augustus, Rome proceeded to the absolutism of second century AD emperors and to the extreme 'dominate' in the fourth century. So the question is whether the phenomena of immigration were turned upside down, also.

Before I look at the scheme point by point, it is worth considering the character of the information about the subject that the Roman sources produced and how that, too, compares with its modern counterpart. It may be an eternal verity that immigration, as a subject for debate, will always be obscured by prejudicial, sensational and often ephemeral information, or misinformation. The fact that today 'less than half the illegal immigrants cross the nation's borders clandestinely'<sup>11</sup> is unlikely to alter popular opinion, formed from newspaper headlines, of hundreds of illicit migrants daily bursting through the frontiers.<sup>12</sup>

And so it was in the Later Roman Empire, when discussion about immigration was at its peak. It is frustrating but perhaps unsurprising that most of our so-called facts about immigrants derive from panegyrics, such as the *Panegyrici Latini* delivered by a string of Gallic orators; or from those written by Libanius, Symmachus, Themistius, Claudian; or conversely from the invective of men like Synesius and Claudian. Almost all these speeches were delivered before the emperor, or purported to have been so. Not that the historians of the later Empire, such as Ammianus or Eunapius-Zosimus, or law codes and iconography are silent. But they provide fewer details. And even those historical details are often presented in the context of court syc-

phancy or contemporary polemics; the praise, for example, that Ammianus tells us the courtiers lavished upon Constantius II for admitting immigrants from the Limigantes or upon Valens for receiving the Goths.<sup>13</sup>

But panegyric and invective present problems for the historian not unlike those faced when reading tabloid newspapers. They are essentially rhetoric, composed within formal genres and adopting set techniques of allegations, demonization and slogans, whose priority was effect, not truth. 'Simulated argument' (*hypothesis eschematisme*), for example, aimed 'to curb what one actually says, but to apply the spur to what one leaves unsaid'.<sup>14</sup> Being delivered before the emperor, they tended, says a modern commentator, 'To congratulate the emperor for the qualities he most conspicuously lacked.'<sup>15</sup> Rhetorical exaggeration of the dangers or benefits of immigrants demonized the barbarian in order to increase the glory of imperial victory.<sup>16</sup> Apart from the general difficulty of accepting precise figures in any ancient source,<sup>17</sup> the size of movements of population is doubly difficult to assess concealed behind the rhetoric in praise of an emperor. How, for example, can one quantify a statement such as, 'On your orders, Diocletian Augustus, Asia filled the deserts of Thrace by the transfer of its inhabitants'?<sup>18</sup>

Panegyric is by its nature triumphalist, proclaiming the submission of the enemy, the mission of Rome and, like monuments or coins, reflecting official ideology. The speeches were composed 'to catch a moment of historical time', to fit the occasion, not the historical facts. Details were unreliable and facts became symbols.<sup>19</sup> Libanius' panegyrics on Julian's victory over the Franks conspicuously skirted over the controversy attending the settlement of immigrants in Toxandria, which Ammianus presents as *faute de mieux*.<sup>20</sup> Statements to suit the political occasion were often contradictory. Claudian rejoiced that barbarian troops had assimilated Roman loyalties and would save the Empire, but he then praised Stilicho for sacrificing barbarian auxiliaries rather than Roman soldiers in battle.<sup>21</sup> Themistius congratulated peasants for resisting the barbarians, but they were the same peasants who were described in a rhetorical *topos* as longing for the barbarians.<sup>22</sup> Such opportunistic views were not reliable reflections of public opinion, and I doubt if they can be reconciled.<sup>23</sup>

Invective was usually false when claiming to represent public opinion, since in reality it suited that of the emperor or the politicians in power. It played on prejudice and did not offer serious political advice. Synesius' speech, *de regno*, was obviously not delivered as it stands but rewritten later in a more favourable political climate.<sup>24</sup> His famous warning before a politically hostile court that the Gothic soldiers employed in the Roman army were like wolves among the guard dogs (*de regno* 22A) contrasts with his praise of the ethnic unit of Hunnigards as 'faithful watch dogs' (*Ep.* 78) at a later time when his political friends had gained power.<sup>25</sup>

Orators were not drawn from a cross-section of society, and certainly did not represent the lower classes. The Gallic Latin panegyricists were either

men who were or had been in imperial service, even if they sometimes appeared before the emperor through local initiatives. The attitudes towards immigrants which we encounter in these kinds of sources were those of intellectuals, often from the upper class and, increasingly throughout the fourth century, Christian.<sup>26</sup> Class statements have bedevilled the immigrant question in every age, and the Later Empire was no exception. Although a poll showed that American economists unanimously believed twentieth-century immigration had had either a favourable (20 per cent) or very favourable (80 per cent) effect on the nation's economic growth, popular opinion about immigrants is still irrationally characterized in the words, 'The people who came here in earlier times were good folks, but the people who are coming now are pure scum.'<sup>27</sup> Even in an age of economists and opinion polls, true statements, as Foucault has told us, are not about how things are but about who is in charge.

Let me now return to immigration into the Roman Empire by rehearsing a few facts and figures. They can be summarized briefly, since they have been well enough studied and documented.<sup>28</sup> The actual vocabulary referring to immigrants, terms such as *laeti*, *dediticii*, *gentiles*, *tributari* and others, is varied and inconsistent, probably reflecting their many diverse statuses and conditions. Even the differences between those who settled on negotiated terms, *dediticii* and *foederati*, are unclear and overlap.<sup>29</sup> Military *voluntarii*, illegal immigrants, and those imported as slaves, often later manumitted, over long periods of infiltration can rarely be identified with any sort of precision.

The demographic effect is likewise impossible to judge with any confidence, but the figures for such migrants, when they are given, are large, and the sources give an impression of substantial numbers – perhaps as many as a million over the fourth century, I have suggested, although the total could have been twice as high.<sup>30</sup> Obviously such estimates carry no weight, but at least they give an idea of what the possible cumulative effect might have been, if we put them alongside modern figures. Immigrants could have augmented the population of the Roman Empire, often calculated at about 60 million, by about 0.5 per cent in each generation. That would have increased the population stock over the century by 1.6 per cent. In Britain today 2.8 per cent of the population are drawn from ethnic groups born outside the country. In Britain that has produced a workforce as high as 8 per cent of the total, since a disproportionately high number of immigrants are of working age.<sup>31</sup>

The majority of the migrants, apart from the élites, are portrayed as working on the land or serving as recruits in the army, or both. Most sources describe their conditions as those of servitude, although some were wealthy enough to own slaves themselves. Some, perhaps many, lived in enclaves

under military authorities (*praefecti, archontes*), others on imperial and private estates. But there are also several references to migrants in cities as builders and artisans.<sup>32</sup> Archaeology, while an imperfect tool for detecting ethnicity, suggests more continuity, homogeneity and less crisis in the countryside than was once believed, where immigrant communities, sometimes under their own leaders, serviced Roman agricultural regimes (particularly the villa estates).<sup>33</sup>

Social integration at the lower class levels is difficult to judge. There are references to immigrant bands of robbers and marauders (as at Lyon in AD 357), and to attacks on newly arrived Goths in the cities of Thrace, Asia and Italy after 366, which I shall discuss, but most of the new arrivals disappear into the mass of provincial poor or *marginali*. Only rarely can they be identified archaeologically by their artefacts (such as combs) or their dwellings (such as the distinctive Germanic *Grübenhäuser*).<sup>34</sup>

The army, as ever, was a central institution of integration. Migrants learned to speak Latin, they adopted Roman arms and uniform, despite the conventional representations of them in ethnic dress on monuments, and they married Roman women on retirement.<sup>35</sup> Although various units of the army bore ethnic names, migrants also appear sometimes, perhaps often, in mixed units with Roman provincials. At a higher social level, notwithstanding some snobbery or even violence, there was generally no problem in accepting competent foreign-born élites into what we today call 'professional and managerial' categories of employment. And, just as in modern Western countries, their numbers were recognized as essential for national survival.<sup>36</sup>

Since this a book about frontiers, we must consider their relationship to migration. The Roman Empire of the fourth century was in some ways undergoing the same kind of transformation as the modern nation-state in the face of globalization. Both can be viewed as what Karl Barth called 'disordered societies'; that is, as societies where traditional values were in conflict with new interests, when relations between national and foreign cultures were being renegotiated and when the concept of ethnicity was being redefined under pressure from the external frontiers.<sup>37</sup> In the Later Roman Empire, therefore, we should not expect consistency between old xenophobic, imperialist stereotypes of the sort repeated from Caesar to Cassiodorus, about the incivility of barbarians dressed in skins who were smelly, untrustworthy and uncultured, and the actuality of what Victor called 'the partnership of many outsiders in the defence and extension of Roman law'.<sup>38</sup> Such contradictions were part of the discourse.

Nothing reveals the tensions more than the dialogue concerning the frontiers and border controls. The map of the world in the public portico of Autun showed everything as Roman: *in illo nihil videmus alienum*, the Gallic

orator proclaimed.<sup>39</sup> Yet the term *barbaricum* was for the first time given a territorial reality in literature and on the documents of the imperial chancellery.<sup>40</sup> In this century imperial monuments, from the Arch of Galerius to the Column of Theodosius, continued to display barbarians conventionally crushed beneath the feet of imperial armies. But, as the representations grew more abstract, it was scenes of the provincialization and *receptio* of immigrants into the Empire that were depicted in more realistic detail on coins and medallions. A good example is the celebrated medallion of Lyon, which gives us one of the most graphic pictures of immigrants entering Roman territory under escort.<sup>41</sup> At the same time as barbarians were being pilloried as a chronic menace to *Romanitas*, emperors were praised for allowing *cultores barbari* to pass the frontier and become farmers and soldiers.<sup>42</sup> *Barbaritas* and *Romanitas* were not fixed, objective territorial definitions but shifting cultural concepts.<sup>43</sup>

The Christian message was equally ambiguous, veering between the gospel of universalism on the one hand and the desire to keep morally corrupt foreigners at arm's length on the other.<sup>44</sup> Non-Christian Roman *pagani* and heretics were equated with barbarians or snakes in language that barely concealed their similarity to internal, migrant *gentiles*.<sup>45</sup> But the bitterness of Sulpicius Severus in the twilight of Roman Gaul, who said that immigrants had not assimilated but betrayed the Empire, must be set against Prudentius' statement that God had restrained the barbarians and made them into Romans.<sup>46</sup>

Above all, and notwithstanding the ideology of an imperial barrier separating off barbarian *gentes* 'that have sprouted up' around the provinces, in the words of the Verona provincial list, the reality was different. Despite the rhetoric of barbarians 'howling around the empire on all sides', or the frontiers bristling with defensive controls, thanks to 'the forethought of Diocletian', the image of the impermeable dam was constantly and visibly being confused.<sup>47</sup> It was confused not just because of the *gentes saevissimae* who, in Ammianus' language, 'leapt over' the frontiers or secretly infiltrated into the Empire 'for theft or banditry', nor because of what some pagans considered to be Constantine's misguided abandonment of a clear frontier line.<sup>48</sup> Much more confusing was the explicit imperial policy over many years of allowing thousands of immigrants to settle in Roman territory and the increasing adoption of foreign élites into the highest levels of the court establishment.

The result was inevitable. The frontiers became less and less distinct culturally and physically, as garrisons in the frontier provinces were progressively manned by immigrant units of *limitanei*.<sup>49</sup> Many, as in AD 360, were recruited from *voluntarii* or *laeti*, some of whose families lived close to the Roman borders with the Alamanni.<sup>50</sup> A barbarian prince came over the frontier to dine with the Roman commander, an Alaman soldier *scholarius* returned to his home beyond the frontier 'on pressing business'.<sup>51</sup> Military

contingents of *laeti* are recorded in over half the *civitates* of Gaul north of the Loire, quite apart from other contingents of Sarmatians, *gentiles*, and so on.<sup>52</sup> Some were probably recruited from enclaves of migrant communities, of which the best known is Toxandria in Belgica, where *dediticii* Salian Franks were established and where archaeology confirms progressive settlements of immigrant groups.<sup>53</sup> In these circumstances one could not expect frontiers to have been controlled very strictly.

Nevertheless, checks on immigrants and traders at the borders, customs duty and economic sanctions against hostile tribes, which are well enough documented from the earliest Empire, continued into our period.<sup>54</sup> Valens, for example, imposed trade restrictions on the Goths in 369, several laws were passed against the export of strategic material, as were numerous measures concerning the levy of *vectigalia*.<sup>55</sup> This might well be thought to imply tight immigration control at the frontier. But we should distinguish between periods of war or active hostilities and the more settled conditions which followed. That was a distinction during most of the earlier Empire, too. Themistius implies that Constantine's treaty with the Goths in 332 included an open frontier for traders on the Danube.<sup>56</sup> Customs tax was often levied inland, which implies unrestricted entry, and it was collected by private contractors not military guards. Legislation concerning the duties of river patrols on the Danube made no reference to checking merchants or immigrants.<sup>57</sup>

It is difficult to believe, too, when Constantine or Julian claimed sovereignty over Franks or Alamanni beyond the Rhine, that they imposed impediments on individuals who wanted to cross over into the provinces. The nearest occasion I can find to passports being used falls during Alaric's occupation of Italy when Constantinople decreed that 'all points of departure from the provinces' must be guarded against infiltrators 'either openly or secretly', unless they were carrying letters from the western court.<sup>58</sup> But this was during a sudden crisis and was not the norm. What emperors took care to regulate were movements of large tribal groups across the frontiers, which was a dangerous and therefore a military operation.<sup>59</sup> For this reason we cannot take the occasion in AD 375 when several thousand Tervingi and Greuthingi Goths were held at the frontier while demanding asylum in a time of extreme upheaval as an example of standard frontier, immigration control.<sup>60</sup> On the Persian front we have records of checks against spies and infiltrators in time of war or imminent war, but otherwise there are many references to travellers, and particularly pilgrims, travelling freely both ways, usually following itineraries that on Roman maps took no account of borders.<sup>61</sup>

In the light of all this I can now return to the propositions in the French model of migrants with which I began. In contrast to the stress upon citizenship in the new, revolutionary Republic of the nineteenth century, in the



later Roman Empire frontiers became softer and immigration control more lax at the same time as citizenship and ethnic distinctions within the Empire were becoming blurred. The universal grant of citizenship by the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 AD was only a formal recognition by the state of a long process that had diminished the concept of citizenship and eroded the distinction between *cives* and *peregrini* in the provinces. By the fourth century status and wealth counted for more socially and legally than citizenship. A *peregrinus*, who was once anyone who was not a Roman citizen, now became the term for any stranger, and not necessarily a foreign national.<sup>62</sup> This creates a difficulty for us in understanding the status of migrants. While destroying the distinctiveness of Romanness, the *Constitutio Antoniniana* underlined the legal distinction between full citizenship and the lower status of *dediticius*. That is the same term that was the institutional term in use by the fourth century to signify negotiated settlers who came from beyond the frontiers. Does this mean, then, that discrimination against non-Roman citizens was replaced by exclusion of immigrants?

The answer is probably not so, in general, although the precise significance of *dediticius* in the later Empire is a puzzle. In the second century AD, before the Antonine Constitution, *peregrini dediticii* had been classed by Gaius alongside criminous freedmen who could never be promoted to citizenship nor registered as members of municipal communities.<sup>63</sup> Hence, perhaps, the immigrant *dediticius* became subsumed within the general category of *peregrini* who were forever 'strangers'. Contemporary writers used terms like *peregrini milites* and *xenoi* for soldiers who had not been born Romans or *commeantes peregrini* for migrant *dediticii*.<sup>64</sup> But it is more complicated than that. In AD 383 when all *peregrini* were expelled from the city of Rome ethnic foreigners in the capital must have been included among them. But it was not only foreigners who were forced to leave, since among them was probably Ammianus himself, and he was certainly a Roman citizen.<sup>65</sup> What counted, therefore, was not their ethnic foreignness but that they could not claim a local *origo* in the city, even if they were citizens of another *civitas* of the Empire.

This blurring of the difference between foreigners and strangers made it relatively unimportant whether immigrants ever became Romans juridically. It has been claimed, in any case, that, since *dediticii* were not an hereditary class, the *Constitutio Antoniniana* envisaged their progress to full *civitas* in one generation.<sup>66</sup> And that appears to be confirmed by the example of Flavius Magnentius. Although his parents were members of a laetic community in Gaul, in other words immigrants, he himself went on to become an army officer and even a pretender to the purple.<sup>67</sup> But there are suspicions that some higher officials who bore the name Flavius did so, not because they claimed citizenship, but to advertise their status in relation to the emperor.<sup>68</sup> The sources on occasions give the impression that there was nothing automatic about progress towards citizenship for immigrants. They

might, therefore, have been like the criminous Junian Latins, noted by Gaius earlier, and have carried their exclusion permanently. A law in the fifth century, for example, implies that *laeti*, who were analogous to *dediticii*, were a recognized social category and states that their children still served under 'the yoke of servitude'.<sup>69</sup>

I conclude from these confusing and apparently contradictory examples that we should not assume any single bundle of rights for all *dediticii*, but that their conditions were negotiated according to circumstances. That is why it is also difficult to separate them from *foederati* who, as their name implies, were foreigners with recognized, treaty rights.<sup>70</sup> Some were offered land at the emperor's disposal in return for military service, some were allocated land as *coloni* on private estates, which presumably made them liable to conscription like any citizen, some were attached to municipalities and could have possessed a registered *origo*, while still others were enrolled in *corpora* alongside *coloni* and slaves.<sup>71</sup> We should not, as we have been recently reminded, underestimate the benefits of private legal rights for Roman citizens.<sup>72</sup> But the fundamental point for most immigrants in remote country districts, or even if they were labourers in towns, is that such advantages were neither relevant nor possible in a society where justice favoured the rich and all others were considered more as *subiecti* or *hypekooi* than *cives*.<sup>73</sup>

To sum up, far from the homogenization of what the *Constitutio Antoniniana* called the *patria communis*, that is, the population of the Roman community, internal, social divisions became stronger. Ironically, however, the refinements of status distinctions and social divisions served as a more effective vehicle than any legal measure to allow immigrants to integrate at all levels. What mattered was not whether you were a citizen but whether you could attain equal social or economic status. In this respect, the Roman Empire of the fourth century was the reverse image of the nation-state in the nineteenth century. The juridical personality of the citizen was almost eliminated as frontier controls relaxed and as immigrants were accommodated in ever greater numbers.

Going on to the second proposition, we should not expect to find great interest or refinement in the instruments for the internal control or identification of immigrants, if status replaced citizenship as the main fault line of discrimination in the Later Roman Empire. Xenophobia, of course, still continued, as the earlier examples show, but it was not universal or exhibited to the point of institutional exclusion.

Census and tax registers were an important means of keeping identities of French citizens separate from immigrants in the nineteenth century. The Romans, too, developed such bureaucratic institutions to high levels of efficiency through local municipal agencies and liturgical burdens on local élites. Although we know less from surviving Egyptian *papyri* about fourth-century tax cycles than about earlier periods, census returns continued to give detailed information about taxpayers, their families and their depen-

dants.<sup>74</sup> Julian made use of municipal and village records when identifying missing prisoners of war, and even village potteries seem to have kept written lists of workers.<sup>75</sup> So the instruments for identity checks were in place. But they were not used to distinguish citizens from foreigners. Peregrines and slaves were also registered, as in the days before the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, in order to establish their liability to duties (*munera*) and benefits, just as all *coloni* were recorded in the post-Diocletianic tax regime, regardless of their ethnic origin or status. Tax paying, therefore, was not part of the concept of citizenship. *Dediticii* on the land were required to pay *vectigalia* and classed as *tributarii* from the moment of their settlement.<sup>76</sup> When the Hunnic Sciri prisoners were settled under particularly harsh conditions as *coloni* tenants in AD 409, in order to control their movement, even in this condition they were no different from Roman *censibus ascripti*, the stress in the legislation again being on status (*condicio*) and *origo*, not ethnic origin.<sup>77</sup>

In enclaves settled by immigrant *laeti* and *gentiles* who supplied military recruits, the army prefects or *archontes* must have held records of their names and exercised surveillance. The Roman camp at Oudenberg in Belgica was still occupied by Roman officers, as were many other forts in northern Gaul, even after the area was heavily populated by immigrants.<sup>78</sup> That presumably meant that a check could be kept on their movements. But this was no more discriminatory than state measures to pursue Roman-born military deserters, or those avoiding the census, or sons of veterans and vagrants.<sup>79</sup> Outbreaks of discrimination did take place. But not too much should be made of the ill-treatment of Goths in AD 366 by the cities where they were segregated. Although the attacks upon them were undoubtedly racial, they were also, says Ammianus, 'unexpected' (*praeter spem*) and regarded as atypical, shocking behaviour on the part of Roman municipal authorities, who had deliberately encouraged popular resentment and contempt; furthermore, the Goths were not originally immigrants at all but foreign allies sent to support the rebel, Procopius.<sup>80</sup>

I doubt, also, whether foreign-born immigrants could be easily distinguished from Roman-born provincials. When Theodosius was searching for Gothic raiders in Macedonia in 391, the spy staying at an inn was not obviously different in his clothes or looks from any other traveller. Although xenophobic stereotypes about barbarian dress and weapons are commonplace in the literature, things like wearing trousers, animal skins, long hair, and so on, serious doubts have been voiced about the validity of such ethnic markers.<sup>81</sup> Many Romans were said (often, and not always as a political insult) to have adopted barbarian dress and habits; trousers are depicted on Trajan's column worn by Roman soldiers and they were also manufactured inside the Empire. Not all Germans had long hair.<sup>82</sup> One of the problems of Gallic archaeology has been precisely the difficulty of tracing immigrant communities by their artefacts. In short, there is no reason to believe that

even external barbarians could have been easily identified by national dress or racial characteristics, let alone those who had settled within the Empire. The semiotics of conservative ideology must be separated from the realities of late Roman society in process of transformation.

This, I believe, is the perspective from which we should view the laws of the late fourth and early fifth centuries forbidding the wearing of boots, trousers, garments of skin or long hair in the city of Rome.<sup>83</sup> They were supposedly the cultural markers of barbarians. But it is difficult to see them as serious measures. They were issued in the aftermath of the fall of Stilicho, who was dubbed a semi-barbarian by his political enemies, and they reflected the hysteria at Rome facing the menace of Alaric's Visigoths in Italy. Horror stories, for example, were in circulation that Alaric intended to make Roman aristocrats wear animal skins.<sup>84</sup> Insofar as the laws were, therefore, anything more than a symbolic show of defiance by snobbish conservatives, they were directed against external intruders and infiltrators not migrants. They were paralleled by a spate of laws at the same time which, unlike other, earlier legislation in the *Theodosian Code*, substituted the word 'barbarian' for foreigners.<sup>85</sup> Rome and Constantinople were always ultra-sensitive to outsiders infiltrating the privileged population of the capitals. I noted earlier one of several, periodic attempts to expel vagrants or peregrine strangers from Rome, as also happened at Constantinople. But the expulsions did not discriminate against foreign migrants, since all those who could not claim the capitals as their *origines* were included.<sup>86</sup>

Interestingly, this is the exact opposite of what happened in Paris in 1791/2, when only foreign migrants, that is non-French nationals, were expelled from the city in order to conserve resources for the poor.<sup>87</sup> Once again, therefore, French and Roman practices were inverted, the one seeking to conserve national identity, the other maintaining purely parochial exclusiveness.

If the contention is correct so far, that the late antique Roman world was the reverse of the model of nineteenth-century France, it would be inconsistent if we discovered that abuses practised against migrants were more severe than those suffered by Roman citizens of similar status. For this reason Roman peasants found it relatively easy to accept and sometimes marry into migrant communities, as is suggested by the archaeological evidence of Gaul where Romano-Gallic and Germanic huts were built side by side and artefacts were used in common.<sup>88</sup> At the other end of the social scale Roman aristocrats like Symmachus, Ambrose or Sidonius easily admitted foreign-born élites, men such as Arbogast, Richomer and Bauto, into their lists of correspondents, and they recognized the caste marks of nobility among them.<sup>89</sup>

It is, of course, hard to believe that the widespread, imperial propaganda of contempt for barbarians and prisoners did not have some negative effect

on Roman behaviour towards immigrant settlers. The images of *receptio*, such as those on the Lyon medallion and the 'hut-type' coins portraying small, inferior barbarian immigrants being surveyed or escorted by large, victorious soldiers and emperors, exactly repeated the literary picture created by the panegyricists of prisoners cowering in the market places of Gallic cities waiting to be settled.<sup>90</sup> How true or typical this was is one of the problems of the sources discussed at the beginning. There are some obvious examples of maltreatment and contempt. In AD 366 Valens deliberately distributed Gothic soldiers around the cities of the Eastern Empire so that Romans could 'realize their feebleness'. When Julian publicly stated that Goths were only good for slavery, he must have encouraged brutality by many slave traders and owners.<sup>91</sup> Cruel exhibitions of Frankish and Saxon prisoners in the amphitheatre must likewise have encouraged soldiers to commit atrocities and generals to break truces.<sup>92</sup> The most notorious example of abuse was against the Tervingi Goths fleeing the Huns in 376, who were robbed of possessions and women while negotiating terms of asylum, although both Ammianus and Eunapius regarded this as criminal behaviour by corrupt Roman officers against imperial orders.<sup>93</sup>

Once again we must distinguish between behaviour towards present or recent enemies and immigrants in general. Prisoners and recent asylum seekers are always vulnerable to abuse, and we know of several occasions when famine and disease forced old barbarian enemies to seek employment and refuge in Roman territory.<sup>94</sup> But I can find no case where such behaviour had a direct repercussion on the treatment of *dediticii* after they were settled.<sup>95</sup> Julian restrained his army from slaughtering the newly surrendered Salii in Toxandria by reminding them that these people were now Roman subjects on Roman territory.<sup>96</sup>

The theme of use and abuse can be examined more closely under three headings – military, economic and political.

The value and use of immigrant soldiers in defence of the Roman Empire hardly needs restating, since only a bigot could have been blind to Rome's dependence on foreign-born recruits as loyal defenders of the state. Those were exactly Julian's words when he called them *propugnatores mei reiique publicae fortes et fidi*.<sup>97</sup> Although no ancient writer attempted, and no modern author is able to estimate reliable figures, immigrants could have made up over 20 per cent of the army for most of the fourth century, and the figure could have been far higher after the heavy losses and transfer of *limitanei* to central field armies by the early fifth century.<sup>98</sup> That indicates the extent to which the strain on Roman manpower was relieved by migrants.

Foreign-born volunteers and immigrants were liable to conscription (*praebitio tironum*) as part of the conditions of their settlement, which the Gallic panegyricist claimed they 'were happy' to fulfil. Julian's obsession with the return of prisoners-of-war in 357, to whose numbers, he boasted, he had added 10,000 foreign prisoners of military age to serve Rome, indi-

cates how precious an asset they were.<sup>99</sup> Whether this also indicates a deep population decline or rather short-term crisis management is debatable. A recent study of the census documents from Roman Egypt argues that although there is evidence of a serious contraction of the population through epidemics between the late second and late third centuries, we should be cautious about estimating how long the Egyptian population fell short of its sustainable size or in extrapolating regional information for other parts of the Empire.<sup>100</sup>

The recorded instances of abuse of foreign-born recruits, on the other hand, have the odour of rhetorical *topoi*. Theodosius at the battle of Frigidus in 394 was praised because 'he preferred to use barbarian legions against the enemy and risk them first'. But the same joy at the death of ethnic auxiliaries is repeated by Claudian in the wave of anti-barbarian hysteria in the early fifth century, noted earlier, after defeats by the Goths at Pollentia and Verona.<sup>101</sup>

Stories of abuses of the military conditions under which *deditticii* and *foederati* served sound more authentic. In AD 360 Constantius II demanded ethnic units from the Gallic army for his Eastern expedition which would, according to Julian, have broken earlier agreements and deterred future volunteers, while the foreign soldiers themselves claimed it would have exposed their families to the enemy. Whether this was true, however, is in some doubt, since it was part of a war of propaganda waged by Julian and his supporters against the Emperor.<sup>102</sup> Manipulation and withdrawal of payments negotiated under treaty to allied troops, which so angered Alaric, was not unknown, though not quite the same as abuse of immigrants.<sup>103</sup> But there must always have been resentment among Roman soldiers against foreign, élite troops, especially if they received special treatment or pay.<sup>104</sup>

A major benefit of migrant recruits was, according to court flatterers, not because they were better soldiers,<sup>105</sup> but because, they said: 'In place of the annual levy of soldiers in the provinces the treasury would gain a huge sum of gold.' The assertion is repeated elsewhere with the addition that Roman provincials, too, were 'glad to contribute gold to save their lives'.<sup>106</sup> The value of immigrants was perceived, therefore, as relieving pressures on the fiscal system. Immigrants provided substitutes for rural recruits, thus leaving agricultural workers on the land to increase state revenue, since they increased the capitation tax and added extra income through the system of *adaeratio*, which bought them exemption from the military levy. There clearly were concerns in the imperial chancellery for the tax regime and for the rents from imperial estates, which was reflected in contemporary legislation. Themistius, too, voiced worries (speaking probably on behalf of the emperor) that rich landowners were placing too much burden on their rural tenants.<sup>107</sup>

These fiscal and economic benefits to rural production coincide with the concern expressed by the Gallic panegyricists about *agri deserti* and high



taxes, and hence their praise for 'so many farmers in the Roman countryside', both as immigrants and as returning prisoners.<sup>108</sup> This is not the place to review the many references to *agri deserti* and whether they represent a serious decline in production or only short-term fluctuations. All the same, the most recent archaeological studies conclude that many regions of Gaul showed 'a high degree of continuity' in the fourth century, and they urge us to be more hesitant in talking about crisis or depopulation.<sup>109</sup> The essential point, however, is that, whatever the true state of affairs, immigrants were officially perceived as good for the economy by bringing down the price of food and by servicing local markets through increased production.<sup>110</sup>

Whether the peasants of the Gallic countryside felt the same pleasure at the fall in market prices is another matter, and it may have provoked resentment. If modern experience is any guide, there is a sharp difference between economists, who calculate that immigrants are essential to economic growth, and popular opinion, which always believes that immigrants are undesirable because they depress the labour market.<sup>111</sup> But there is no evidence to show that there was institutional, social discrimination against foreign-born workers, once settled inside the Roman Empire. In legislation, at least, they were associated with other *coloni*, *servi*, *coloni ascripti* and *corporati*, as well as sometimes owning slaves themselves, as did other richer *coloni*.<sup>112</sup> They were, like most provincial rural workers, more or less exploited by the rich according to their various conditions.<sup>113</sup> But not because they were migrants.

The effect of such migrations in terms of security are interesting. The long history, since Augustus, of frontiers open to foreign migrants, and the even longer history of liberal access to citizenship and Romanization, undoubtedly acted as a safety valve for the constant pressure exerted by exigent poor or ambitious outsiders, and proved a successful formula for internal, political stability. One of the benefits mentioned in the treaty that permitted immigration by Goths in AD 382 was explicitly 'to remove from the frontier a suspect force' (*manus suspecta*).<sup>114</sup>

Apart from the military and economic value of lower status immigrants, foreign migration had a more powerful social impact through the dramatic introduction into the Roman military and political establishments of foreign-born élites. In the century between AD 350 and 476 a by no means complete list of officers in the Roman army catalogues at least 23 per cent of the total as either barbarians or probable barbarians, a figure which rises to 30 per cent among the highest ranks of military *magistri*.<sup>115</sup> This is an astonishingly high number, given that non-Romans are inevitably under-represented in the sources. A similarly impressive list could be drawn up for civil and administrative positions, although the highest senatorial and civil court offices were more conservatively guarded. Nevertheless, even in this sphere of activity Ammianus thought fit to note the large number



(*multitudo*) of Franks who 'were flourishing at the court' in 355, perhaps as many as a third of the total according to one study.<sup>116</sup>

No one can doubt the importance of the second generation of these high-status immigrants. Stilicho, whose father had been a Vandal officer in the Roman army, rose to be one of the bulwarks of Rome. Some of the leaders kept their ethnic links beyond the frontiers while serving Rome, as exemplified by some high-profile, but necessarily exceptional cases; Mallabaudes was both *comes domesticus* and *rex Francorum* in 378; Vadomar, a defeated king of the Alamanni, became *dux Phoenices* in 361 while his son remained a king of the Alamanni.<sup>117</sup> Quite apart from their influence on Roman politics, therefore, such men must have been valuable in keeping the peace or in assisting Roman traditional tactics of setting barbarian tribe against tribe.<sup>118</sup> The immigrant leaders were for the most part loyal, and not a single example is known of one who returned to his origins.<sup>119</sup>

I conclude that the value of immigrants to Rome, just as to modern European states, cannot be questioned. But both the use and abuse of immigrants in Roman society, with its priorities of caste over class and culture before nationalism, produced an ethnic blindness unknown in post-Revolutionary France; and it was this characteristic that allowed the relatively easy transformation from the Roman Empire to the successor, medieval kingdoms.<sup>120</sup> The Roman Empire contrasts with the model of the modern nation-state, where Liberty and Equality for its citizens has yielded illiberal and unequal treatment of immigrants. Is it going too far to say that democracy defines the lines of discrimination?

Roman frontiers were not political barriers but social, cultural and moral definitions of community and alterity, the very opposite of the fixed frontiers of ethnicity and territoriality created by the rise of the nation-state.<sup>121</sup> We demonize immigrants as 'new barbarians', religious fundamentalists and wreckers, although most of them, like the Germans of the fourth century, are seeking not destruction but employment. But love them or hate them, there is no way such migrants can be stopped under present conditions of free communications and globalization. Despite Shengen (1990) and the Third Pillar of the Maastricht Treaty 80 per cent of illegal immigrants result from expired visas.<sup>122</sup> Is there, therefore, a lesson to be learnt from Roman policy of accommodation and open frontiers, through which the so-called barbarians migrated and were integrated. The result was not what we used to think of as 'the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire', but its 'Transformation'. This is not perhaps a comfortable idea for Europe in the twenty-first century.

## Notes

- 1 Blanc-Chaléard et al. 2001: 11.
- 2 Pertué 2001: 63; Douki 2001: 109. Noirel 2001: 120.
- 3 Noirel 1998: 80.

- 4 Berlière and Levy 2001: 396; Garnot 2001: 202.
- 5 Pohl 1998: 6–9.
- 6 Blanc-Chaléard *et al.* 2001: 16; cf. Noirel 1993: 1998.
- 7 Noirel 2001: 120, although neither was new to the Republic.
- 8 ‘Les premières nations de l’Europe sont les nations de sang essentiellement mélangé’; Duroy 2001: 91, citing I. Renan (1992), *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation*, Paris.
- 9 Douki 2001: 107; Berlière and Levy 2001: 413; Nicolas 2001: *passim*.
- 10 Nicolas 2001: 393.
- 11 Fix and Passel in B. Edmonson and J.S. Passel (eds) (1994), *Immigration and ethnicity: the integration of America’s newest arrivals*, Washington DC: 4, cited in Simon 1995. The experience of the USA is true also in Britain
- 12 *The Guardian*, 28 December 2001, reported that an average of a hundred illegal immigrants per night are attempting to enter Britain by lorries, trains and tunnel, but makes no mention of how many get through.
- 13 Amm.Marc.19. 11. 7 – AD 359, 31. 4. 4 – AD 376.
- 14 Philos. *VSoph.* 597; Cameron and Long 1993: 139–40.
- 15 Dagron 1968: 84.
- 16 Drinkwater 1996.
- 17 Zos. 4. 7. 2 claims that 10,000 Goths were distributed in the Danube regions by Valens in 366, against Amm. Marc. 26. 10. 3, which says 3,000.
- 18 *Pan.Lat.* 8(5) 21. 1.
- 19 Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 34–5.
- 20 Liban. *Or.* 15.32, 18.75; Amm.Marc. 17. 8.
- 21 Claud. *IV Cos.Hon.* 487, in *Eutrop.* 1. 383, *VI Cos.Hon.* 222.
- 22 Them. *Or.* 16. 181b–c, *Or.* 8. 115c.
- 23 As, for example, Chauvot 1998: 273 suggests is possible.
- 24 Camerlon and Long 1993: 129ff.
- 25 Synes. *de regno* 22A, *Ep.* 78.
- 26 Gaudemet 1984.
- 27 Simon 1995. J.-P.Stroobants, *Le Monde*, 9 June 2002, notes a similar disjunction in Europe between European governments fearful of public opinion against immigrants and employers desperate for labour.
- 28 A list of most ancient references is in de Ste Croix 1981: Appendix II. For earlier work, see the references in Whittaker 1982.
- 29 See most recently Wirth 1997, Heather 1997, Chrysos 1997.
- 30 The figure in Whittaker 1994: 231 has been challenged by Drinkwater 1996: 23, on the grounds that archaeology has produced little evidence of ‘German’ culture, and on the assumption that the estimate was only of illegal immigrants. The first objection is irrelevant and the second incorrect.
- 31 *CIA World Factbook 2000*; Home office *RDS Occasional Paper* no.75, 2001.
- 32 Wealthy – *CTh* VII.13.16[404]; builders – *Lib.Or.* 13. 30–1.
- 33 See most recently Ouzoulias *et al.* 2001.
- 34 Balmelle and Van Ossel 2001.
- 35 Pohl 1998: 27–40; cf. Elton 1996a.
- 36 In the UK the outflow of British in 2001 was 374,000 and inflow of non-British 387,000; but in the professional and managerial categories there was a net outflow; Home Office, *RDS Report* no.75, 2001.
- 37 Theuws 2000: 4–7, Amory 1997: *passim*, especially p. 5.
- 38 Balsdon 1979 provides many examples of stereotyped attitudes; Victor, *Caes.* 16.
- 39 *Pan.Lat.* 9(5) 21. 3.
- 40 The first example in literature is Eutropius 7. 9, 9. 4., who was *magister memoriae* at Valens’ court. But the term appeared already in inscriptions of the third century and in laws of the 320s; Chauvot 1998: 213.

- 41 Demougeot 1984: 133–6, Demougeot 1968: 408 and Mathisen 1993: 40 note a similar abstraction and failure by the authors of the late fourth century to distinguish between external, barbarian ethnic groups.
- 42 Lassandro 1986.
- 43 Chauvot 1998: 6–8.
- 44 Strangers should be driven out of the cities, John Chrys. *Hom.* 37 (= pg 60, 267); marriage with any stranger was wrong, Ambr. *Ep.* 62. 34. See Chauvot 1998: 429–59.
- 45 For example, Prudent. *c. Symm.* 1. 449 – *sint haec barbaricis gentilia numina pagis*. Demougeot 1984: 141; Trout 1996.
- 46 Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2. 3 – ‘Roman soil has been ... betrayed under the pretext of peace to those who surrendered (*dedentibus se*) ... who have been mixed into our armies, cities and provinces, living among us but not coming over to our ways’; Prudent. *c. Symm.* 2. 602–4 – ‘God has everywhere taught the *gentes* to bend their heads ... and everyone to become Romans.’
- 47 *Anon. de re. bell.* 6. 1, Zosimus-Eunapius 2. 34.
- 48 Amm. Marc. 26. 4. 5, 31. 7. 2. Other refs. in Whittaker 1994: 192–4. Constantine’s frontier policy is attacked by Eunapius-Zosimus in the same passage above as his earlier praise of Diocletian.
- 49 By the early fifth century, in part due to the withdrawal of *comitatus* troops to meet the Gothic invasions, the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows the Rhine front almost entirely in the hands of ethnic units, which is confirmed by the spectacular archaeology at the Rhine fort of Geduba (Krefeld Gellep); Whittaker 1994: 204, 250–1.
- 50 Amm. Marc. 20. 4. 4, 20. 4. 10.
- 51 Amm. Marc. 21. 4. 3, 31. 10. 3.
- 52 Rivet 1976.
- 53 Vermeulen 2001.
- 54 For example, Tac. *Germ.* 41 – some tribes were allowed to cross *sine custode* but others restricted to trade and contact *in ripa*, usually at supervised market sites near military camps; Mócsy 1974: 126–9, Ørsted 1985: 254–61.
- 55 Valens – Them. *Or.* 10. 206; export restrictions – Thompson 1982: 13–66; import duty – *CTb* IV. 13 (*de vectigalibus et commissis*).
- 56 Heather and Matthews 1991: 44n.
- 57 *CTb* VII.16.3 [412]; cf. Jones 1964: 257–9.
- 58 *CTb* VII.16.2. I am grateful to Roger Bagnall for drawing my attention to the *pittakia* permits referred to on the Coptos tarriff and on ostraca found at Mons Claudianus. But the editors of the ostraca think that these were probably permits giving entitlement to us the installations along the road; see A. Bülow-Jacobsen in Bingen *et al.* vol. II, 1997: 73–5 for references.
- 59 Heather 1991: 129–30.
- 60 Amm. Marc. 31. 4. 1.
- 61 Lee 1993: 55–6, 164–5, who also cites an incident in the 530s, when some Goths crossed secretly dressed as a bishop with his entourage. But note that they were caught only on their return and at Constantia, which was not on the frontier.
- 62 Gaudamet 1984: 13, Liebeschuetz 1998.
- 63 The texts are from Gaius: Jones 1968: 130–8, Crook 1967: 45. Wirth 1997: 26 also finds the terms puzzling.
- 64 *Pan. Lat.* 8(5) 12.1; Julian, *Ep. ad Ath.* 285B, Amm. Marc. 31. 4. 10.
- 65 Amm. Marc. 14. 6. 19, *Symm. Ep.* 3. 7; cf. Ambrose, *de off.* 3. 44. 52. Ammianus in Rome – Matthews 1989: 13. Foreigners in Rome – Jerome, *Ep.* 107. 2 – ‘*turbae* of monks each day from India, Persia, Ethiopia’.
- 66 Wolff 1976: I. 235ff.; Demandt 1989: 76.

- 67 *PLRE* I, s.v. 'Magnentius', for a discussion of the sources. But Zos.2. 46 suggests that M. had received special privileges from Constantine, and grants of citizenship for veterans was commonplace.
- 68 Discussion in Liebeschuetz 1998: 135–9, Chauvot 1998: 129–31, including the problem of *conubium*.
- 69 *NSev.*2.
- 70 Wirth 1997: 33–7; Heather 1991: 122–6. Gorla 1984: 332 notes that *foederati* and allies were subject to Roman criminal law when on Roman territory.
- 71 *CTb* X.12.2.2 [368], XI.7.2 [319], *CJ* XI.48.12 [396], *CTH* V.6.3 [409], *NSev.*2 [465]; cf. Whitaker 1997: 259.
- 72 Stessed recently by Garnsey and Humfress 2001: 89–90; but also by Gorla 1984: 285–6; Gardner 1993: 187–8. I am grateful to Peter Garnsey for allowing me to read his forthcoming paper, 'Roman citizenship and Roman law in the late Empire', which sets out the discussion fully.
- 73 Chrysos 1997: 199; Gaudemet 1984: 10–11. Gorla 1984 notes the climax in the sixth century when Justinian (*Nov.* 78.5) established the norm as the elimination of differences between citizens and *peregrini* under the title of *subiecti*
- 74 Bagnall and Frier 1994: 9–27, although they suggest less need to record non-Roman population after 212.
- 75 Zos. 3. 4. 4–7; cf. Eunap. fr. 19, Jul. *Ep.ad Ath.* 208C. Potteries in Gaul – Vertet 1990.
- 76 *CIL* X. 6225 – *ad vectigalia praestanda*, although dating from the first century. *Amm.* 19. 11. 6 – *ut tributariorum onera subvenirent et nomen.* *Pan.Lat.* 5(8) 12. 3 shows that extra labour helped cities to meet tax obligations, although it is not certain that the reference here is to migrants; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 203.
- 77 *CTb* V.6.3 [409]; cf. *CTb* IV.23.1[400].
- 78 Vermeulen 2001.
- 79 Cf. Neri 1998: 80–2.
- 80 *Amm.*Marc. 31. 6. 3; Eunap. fr. 37.
- 81 The story is in Zos. 4. 48. For doubts about ethnic markers, see especially Pohl 1998 and Amory 1997: Appendix 4 for many examples.
- 82 *Diocl. Edict* 7. 42, 7. 44.
- 83 *CTb* XIV.10.2 [397], 10.3 [399], 10.4.[416].
- 84 Prudent. *c. Symm.* 2. 699.
- 85 Only eight laws contain the word 'barbarian', seven of them issued between 397–410; *CTb* IX. 14. 3 [397], 42. 22 [408], X. 10. 25 [408], V. 6. 2 [408], 6. 3 [409], VII.13. 20 [410], IX. 14. 24 [419]. Others have seen these laws as allied to those which denied access to Rome by *agentes in rebus* and palatine soldiers and a programme to clean up unruly mobs in Rome; *CTb* XIV. 11. 1 [399], Chauvot 1998: 325.
- 86 See note 65. Vagrants – *CTb* XIV. 18. 1 [382], Justin, *Nov.* 80. The snobbery of old Romans had long been experienced by Jews; Ruggini 1987: 96, Gaudemet 1984: 12–15.
- 87 Pertué 2001: 63–4.
- 88 See the articles collected in *Revue du Nord (Archéol)* 77, 1995, especially those by Van Ossel and Kazanski.
- 89 *Amm.*Marc. 21. 12. 25, 31. 12. 15, contrasts crude, low-born Nevitta with refined Richomer.
- 90 Coins etc. – Burns 1994: 11–13. *Pan.Lat.* 8(5) 9. 1–4.
- 91 Eunap. fr. 37, *Amm.*Marc. 22. 7. 8. Augustine, *Ep.*. 10\*. 5 complains that unscrupulous slave traders were capturing Roman citizens as though they were barbarians from beyond the frontiers.
- 92 E.g. *Amm.*Marc. 28. 5. 4–7 – Saxons, 29.6.5 – Quadi. Chauvot 1998: 126–7.

- 93 Amm.Marc. 31. 4. 9–11; Eunapius fr. .42.
- 94 Thompson 1982: 236–7; Whittaker 1983 and 1994: 222.
- 95 A possible exception was after Stilicho's fall in 408, when Zos. 5. 33 says that mutinous 'Roman soldiers' massacred the families of barbarian soldiers in imperial service who occupied property in northern Italian cities. It was provoked by military rivalry and fears of Alaric, not local resentment, and denounced as an act of impiety.
- 96 Eunap. fr. 18. 1; cf. Amm.17. 8. 4.
- 97 Amm.Marc. 20. 5. 3.
- 98 Elton 1996b: App. 2 catalogues just under 20 per cent barbarian or probable barbarian among the recorded names of lower ranks in the *comitatus* over a period of 100 years; but he does not try to analyse the locally recruited *limitanei* or *bucellarii*, *domestici* and other irregular units, which would have contained mainly migrant recruits. Jones 1964: 679–86 estimates from the *Notitia Dignitatum* the overall sizes of western and eastern armies, but the source is no guide for migrant recruits.
- 99 *Pan.Lat.* 8(5) 9. 4. Zos. 3. 4. 4–7, Julian, *Ep.ad Ath.* 280C.
- 100 Bagnall and Frier 1994: 173 argue that populations were more stable in the Later Empire than contemporary perceptions of disasters believed, and that fertility was a more important factor than mortality. But see now Scheidel 2001, especially ch. 2 and pp. 249–50.
- 101 Zos. 4. 58, Claud. *VI Cos.Hon.* 222.
- 102 Amm.Marc. 20. 4. 9–10, 13. cf. Liban. *Or.* 12. 64; *Or.* 14. 29; *Or.* 18. 113; Julian, *Ep.ad Ath.* 283.
- 103 Zos. 5. 36, cf. Jord. *Get.* 268 – Valamer.
- 104 See the example cited earlier, note 95.
- 105 Which is questionable; see Elton 1996b.
- 106 Amm.Marc. 31. 4. 4, 19. 11. 7.
- 107 Them. *Or.* 8.115C; *CTb* VII. 13. 2 [370], 13. 7 [375]; Chauvot 1998: 195–7.
- 108 *Pan.Lat.* 8(5) 1. 4, 9. 1–4, 21. 1, 6(7) 5. 3, 6. 2, 5(8) 5. 4–6, 6. 1–7, 12. 3, 2(12) 22. 3. Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 274 rightly note that Autun's worry was fiscal not demographic.
- 109 Ouzoulias *et al.* 2001: 125, 558–9 and *passim*. My views on *agri deserti* are in Whittaker 1993: ch. 3.
- 110 *Pan.Lat.* 8(5) 9. 3.
- 111 This is in spite of the fact that an average immigrant family puts about \$2,500 into the pockets of every home-born American by way of annual tax contributions; Simon 1995.
- 112 See note 32.
- 113 For the range of workers, Banaji 1997.
- 114 *Pan.Lat.* 2(12) 32. 3.
- 115 Elton 1996b: App. 2.
- 116 Amm.Marc.15. 5. 11; Waas 1965.
- 117 References to Mallabaudes and Vadomar are collected in *PLRE* I, s.v. 'Mallabaudes' and 'Vadomarius'.
- 118 E.g. *Pan.Lat.* 11(3) 16–18 – if this is not simply a rhetorical topos; cf. Tac. *Germ.* 33.
- 119 Jones 1964: 222.
- 120 See the perceptive study by Amory, which stresses the unimportance of ethnicity in the Later Roman Empire. Ethnic identity was constantly evolving, highly relative and redefined according to social circumstances – 'ethnographic discourse did not merely describe society: it attempted to order and reorder it' (Amory 1997: 314).

- 121 See the comments by C. Raffestin: 25–8, G. Papagno: 77 and G. Steiner: 332 in Ossola *et al.* 1987. I have repeated here some of what I have said at greater length in Ch. 9.
- 122 D. Biego, 'Frontiers and security of the European Union', in Anderson and Bort 1998: 152. The inefficiency in all periods of the instruments of control is one of the themes of Blanc-Chaléard *et al.* 2001.

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132–6; as 'wives' of ordinary soldiers  
132–4, 136–7