

ROME POST-COLONIALE, ET AU-DELÀ.
RELIGION, POUVOIR ET IDENTITÉ

Post-Colonial Rome, and Beyond. Religion, Power and Identity*

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Abstract

Roman archaeology is one of the major sub-fields of archaeology in which post-colonial theory has flourished, and not just in relation to the role of the past in the present, but also as a means to approach the interpretation of the Roman world itself. The region of North Africa was a major focal point for some of the earliest post-colonial studies on the Roman Empire, and has remained an arena of investigation for scholars influenced by the Anglophone debate on post-colonial theory, which emerged in the 1980s and flourished in the 1990s, often with a focus on Roman Britain. Religion is both a key

Résumé

L'archéologie romaine est l'un des sous-domaines majeurs de l'archéologie dans lequel la théorie postcoloniale s'est épanouie, et pas seulement en relation avec le rôle du passé dans le présent, mais aussi en tant que mode d'aborder l'interprétation du monde romain lui-même. L'Afrique du Nord a été une région d'intérêt importante pour certaines des premières recherches postcoloniales sur l'empire romain, et a par la suite été une arène d'investigation pour les chercheurs influencés par le débat anglophone sur la théorie postcoloniale, qui s'est développé à partir des années 1980, et en particulier dans

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source of evidence and an obviously important theme in understanding cultural change, interaction and power, and thus it has likewise been of interest to scholars from within and beyond the region. Here, I give an overview of the work of some of the influential Roman archaeologists working within the post-colonial tradition. I also consider the complex intersections of ancient and modern, and of Britain and North Africa, found in this body of work, and evaluate the impact this tradition of thought continues to have on Roman archaeology going forwards.

Keywords

Agency, creolization, deconstruction, discrepancy, hybridity, post-colonial, subaltern

les années 1990, souvent avec un accent sur la Grande-Bretagne romaine. La religion est à la fois une source essentielle de matériel et un thème manifestement important pour comprendre le changement culturel, l'interaction et le pouvoir, et elle a donc également intéressé les chercheurs de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur de la région. Dans ce chapitre, je donne un aperçu du travail de certains des archéologues romains influents travaillant dans la tradition post-coloniale. Je considère également les intersections complexes de l'ancien et du moderne, de la Grande-Bretagne et de l'Afrique du Nord, trouvées dans ce travail, et j'évalue l'impact que cette tradition de pensée continue d'avoir sur l'archéologie romaine à l'avenir.

Mots-clés

Agence, créolisation, déconstruction, discordance, hybridité, postcoloniale, subalterne

1. Introduction. From “Romanization” to Post-Colonialism

The emergence of a post-colonial phase in Roman archaeology, particularly in North Africa, ought to be seen as an entirely predictable development. In a regional context, the work of Marcel Bénabou in the 1970s and 1980s was obviously pioneering in this approach¹, but across the breadth of scholarship on the Roman world, other engagements with interdisciplinary post-colonial agendas came a little later, and have been quite uneven in their application to different parts of the empire. In particular, the Anglophone debates around “Romanization” from the beginning of the 1990s have drawn significantly on post-colonial writers, and have been applied particularly to the study of Roman Britain, but increasingly to several other regions, including that of interest in this volume. This in itself sets up an interesting dichotomy between post-colonial writing influenced by the local experience of dual layers of empire (Roman and European), and post-colonial writing which triangulates between an ancient context of subjugation and a modern one of domination (as in Britain). Even more complex permutations come into play when the latter scholarship is applied by Anglophone, European or American scholars writing about a region like North Africa, risking the imposition of a new form of academic colonialism². The political aspects of post-colonial approaches will be highlighted throughout this essay, as they are inherent to the project, but before tracing the contours of Roman post-colonialism – and its successor paradigm of globalization – a brief word needs to be said on its origins and wider dissemination in archaeology.

Post-colonialism is a wide-ranging body of scholarship which resists definition into a single school of thought. With precursors in the writing of anti-racist writers like W.E.B. Du Bois in the USA³, landmarks in the development of post-colonial theory are marked by a series of mid-20th cent. figures, particularly Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), Homi K. Bhabha (1949-), Edward Said (1935-2003), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-). Crucially, these writers crafted critical accounts of the experience of European imperialism from the perspectives of

1. M. Bénabou, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, Paris, 1976.

2. J. Hawley, “Post-Colonial Theory”, in A. Gardner, M. Lake and U. Sommer (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Archaeological Theory*, Oxford, 2015, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199567942.013.035.

3. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York, 1903 (1982); K. Mostern, “Postcolonialism after W.E.B. Du Bois”, *Rethinking Marxism*, 12.2, 2000, 61-80.

the colonized, and of the centrality of colonial projects to the development of modern European cultures, using tools derived from Marxism, post-structuralism, and other branches of continental philosophy⁴. Subsequent work has pursued both different strands within this theoretical toolkit, and diverse regional dynamics around the world, across a range of disciplines, ranging from cultural studies and English literature, to archaeology. In our field, broadly construed, there have also been diverse applications of post-colonial perspectives. Roman archaeology is illustrative of one of these, and indeed is somewhat groundbreaking, in seeking to use post-colonial concepts to break down traditional identification with the Roman empire among scholars of that entity. Few other studies of ancient empires have done the same, perhaps because the lineage connecting Rome to modern empires is so strong. The other, arguably much more dominant strand, is the critique of archaeology as an adjunct to colonialism in many global contexts. This theme actually makes up the bulk of chapters in volumes like the *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology*⁵, within which there are very few references to work by Romanists. This curious situation exemplifies how Roman archaeology remains somewhat cut off from debates in mainstream archaeology, even when we have much that is distinctive to contribute⁶. What that contribution has been will be reviewed in the following sections, in which I highlight some of the key themes that have structured the intersecting post-colonial scholarship on Roman North Africa, Roman Britain, and beyond.

2. De-Constructing Roman (and Imperial) Narratives

One of the major strands of post-colonial Roman archaeology extends the critique of imperial discourses contained, more or less explicitly, within modern European literatures to two distinct domains: scholarly (and popular) writing about the Roman empire, and written sources produced within the Roman empire. With respect to the first of these, there are distinct connections and parallels between 19th and 20th cent. accounts of the Roman occupation of Britain – and of other north-western provinces – and of parts of North Africa under the control of French, Italian or British colonial authorities. That these accounts also bear comparison to Roman-period texts which justified Roman imperialism is, in turn, no accident, since both were produced in similar contexts, and the modern study of the archaeology of the Roman empire was of course conducted by scholars well-schooled in those texts. One of the foremost chroniclers of these relationships, particularly in the context of British scholarship, is Richard Hingley, whose wide-ranging analyses of the links

4. J. Hawley, “Post-Colonial Theory...”, *op. cit.*, n. 2; A. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London, 2015 (3rd ed.).

5. J. Lydon, J. and U.Z. Rizvi (eds.), *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology*, Walnut Creek, 2010; cf. also C. Gosden, *Archaeology and Colonialism*, Cambridge, 2004.

6. A. Gardner, “Debating Roman Imperialism. Critique, Construct, Repeat?”, in M.J. Mandich, T.J. Derick, S. González Sánchez, G. Savani and E. Zampieri (eds.), *TRAC 2015. Proceedings of the 25th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, Oxford, 2016, 1-14.

between modern and ancient colonialism⁷ has been accompanied by detailed studies of particular regions and monuments within the British isles⁸. As we will see below, most of the themes Hingley has highlighted are absolutely relevant to North Africa, as well⁹. Other important contributions include those by Philip Freeman, particularly in debate with Hingley over the career and legacy of Francis Haverfield, the chief architect of “Romanization” as a paradigm in Romano-British archaeology, and much further afield¹⁰. Through the work of these, and other, scholars, the period between 1990-2010 saw a widespread realisation of the impact of modern colonial agendas in Roman archaeology.

While, in this work, some of the key post-colonial thinkers are cited a little more sparingly than in relation to other topics, considered below, the influence of particularly Edward Said’s detailed critiques of modern imperial cultural stereotypes¹¹ is strong, and the method of colonial discourse analysis is central to these efforts¹². Haverfield, who in turn was influenced by the pre-eminent 19th cent. German scholar Theodor Mommsen, has been a significant focus in these analyses, given the long shadow his *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1912) cast over Roman provincial archaeology for three-quarters of a century¹³. As noted, there is debate between Freeman and Hingley over the degree to which Haverfield was fully aligned with the imperial ideology of Britain at the turn of the 20th cent.¹⁴, but there is little doubt in the overall picture of a nascent Romano-British discipline that was both influenced by an identification between Britain and Rome, and which fueled that identification in the kinds of archaeology conducted. Indeed, the history of English, and later British identification with Roman “civilization” and imperial destiny goes back quite far, certainly to the origins of overseas empire in the 16th cent., if not to the first English empire – the conquest of the British isles and Ireland – of the high Middle Ages¹⁵. While in Britain, this attitude

7. R. Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen. The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*, London, 2000; R. Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906. A Colony so Fertile*, Oxford, 2008.

8. E.g. R. Hingley, *Hadrian’s Wall. A Life*, Oxford, 2012.

9. D. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another. Imperialism and the Maghreb”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism. Post-colonial Perspectives*, Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3, Leicester, 1996, 49-69.

10. E.g. P.W.M. Freeman, “British Imperialism and the Roman Empire”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism...*, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 19-34; P.W.M. Freeman, *The Best Training-Ground for Archaeologists: Francis Haverfield and the Invention of Romano-British Archaeology*, Oxford, 2007.

11. E. Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1978; E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London, 1993.

12. J. Webster, “Roman Imperialism and the ‘Post-Imperial Age’”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism...*, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 1-17 (7).

13. F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, Oxford, 1912 (2nd ed.).

14. P.W.M. Freeman, “British Imperialism...”, *op. cit.*, n. 10; R. Hingley, “The ‘Legacy’ of Rome. The Rise, Decline, and Fall of the Theory of Romanization”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism...*, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 35-48.

15. R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire. Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*, Oxford, 2000; R.B. Hitchner, “Globalization *avant la lettre*. Globalization and the History of the Roman Empire”, *New Global Studies*, 2.2, 2008, 1-12.

required some mechanism by which supposedly superior Roman talents might be passed onto the early British, particularly once alternative, Anglo-Saxon, origin myths started to be problematic in the run-up to the First World War¹⁶ – hence the invention of “Romanization” – in North Africa, precisely the same imperial identification could be made by British, and French and Italian scholars, but without the same scruples. As Mattingly has documented¹⁷, drawing upon regional scholars such as Abdallah Laroui and Bénabou¹⁸, European colonial archaeologies in North Africa were underpinned by an identification between these powers and Rome. The only difference with Britain, or Gaul, was that there was little need to hold back on the darker implications of this narrative for indigenous communities, so that outright racist interpretations followed. As we will see below, such interpretations were not only morally wrong, and rooted in inappropriate comparisons, but were also deeply impoverished accounts of the archaeology – something which is true of Britain, too.

A further strand of colonial discourse analysis is, as a logical extension of the foregoing, the deeper interrogation of our Roman-period sources. Just as part of the identification between European scholars and the Roman empire was based on fairly uncritical schooling in the Classics, so moving on from that identification to a post-colonial position requires a different attitude to the texts which, for so long, were simply taken at face-value as histories of the Roman period. Of course, like Victorian or Edwardian scholarship, which I have over-simplified above, there was nuance in the way Roman writers dealt with empire¹⁹, but there is clearly much potential for post-colonial readings of texts like Tacitus’ *Germania*, or the section of the *Agricola* (21) where he appears to describe a kind of deliberate “Romanization”, but is also – or perhaps more – presenting something of a critique of Roman moral decay²⁰. While this strand has been, understandably, somewhat more developed in Classics and Ancient History than in provincial archaeology²¹, it has become an important check on the dominance of limited numbers of historical writers over our narratives of Roman Britain²² – and elsewhere. Writing about

16. R. Hingley, “The ‘Legacy’ of Rome...”, *op. cit.*, n. 14, 37.

17. D. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another...”, *op. cit.*, n. 9.

18. A. Laroui, *L’histoire du Maghreb, un essai de synthèse*. Paris, 1970; M. Bénabou, *La résistance africaine...*, *op. cit.*, n. 1.

19. See *supra*, P.W.M. Freeman, “British Imperialism...”, *op. cit.*, n. 10; R. Hingley, “The ‘Legacy’ of Rome...”, *op. cit.*, n. 14.

20. C. Forcey, “Beyond ‘Romanization’. Technologies of Power in Roman Britain”, in K. Meadows, C. Lemke and J. Heron (eds.), *TRAC 96. Proceedings of the 6th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, Oxford, 1997, 15-21; cf. E. Dench, *Empire and Political Cultures in the Roman World*, Cambridge, 2018, 7-9.

21. See e.g. C. Ando, “Colonialism, Colonization: Roman Perspectives”, in D.L. Selden and P. Vasunia (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Literatures of the Roman Empire*, Oxford, 2016, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/978019969944 5.013.4; L. Hardwick and C. Gillespie (eds.), *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, Oxford, 2007.

22. E.g. R. Laurence, “Roman Narratives. The Writing of Archaeological Discourse – a View from Britain? (with comments and reply)”, *Archaeological Dialogues*, 8.2, 2001, 90-122; M. Millett, *The Romanization of Britain. An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation*, Cambridge, 1990.

the accounts Juvenal and Plutarch provide of aspects of Egyptian culture, including religion, for example, Richard Alston highlights the misunderstandings, the legitimization of control, and the beginnings of the Orientalism described by Said, as we might expect²³. He also, though, recovers important evidence for the transformative effect of cultural encounters like this on the “Roman” core, and thus the potential for de-centering the empire and looking at it from the margins. This process is the subject of the next section.

3. De-Centering Rome

Alongside the historiographical critique of the development of “Romanization” theory in 19th and 20th cent. imperial contexts, a powerful line of attack on that paradigm has been the simple argument that “Roman” is an overly simple label for a very complex, and historically dynamic, set of identities. It is not surprising that this should result from the increasing awareness of the complexity of provincial archaeologies in the post-War period, with more and more data generating more and more variability in time and space, particularly as the rural settings in which most people lived started to receive belated attention²⁴. The recognition that there was a problem with the category of “Roman” was a key part of the critical debate surrounding Millett’s *The Romanization of Britain*²⁵. A range of different approaches to deconstructing a unitary concept of “Roman” culture developed during the 1990s and beyond, from “bricolage” to “creolization”²⁶, and while some of these pointed towards ways of understanding the dynamic creation of Roman identity in different periods²⁷, others highlighted the significant divisions within Roman-period societies. A particularly important concept in the articulation of the latter has been “discrepant experience”, deployed especially by David Mattingly²⁸, drawing directly upon the work of Edward Said.

23. R. Alston, 1996. “Conquest by Text. Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism...*, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 99-109.

24. R. Hingley, *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain*, London, 1989.

25. E.g. J.C. Barrett, “Romanization. A Critical Comment”, in D.J. Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism*, Portsmouth (RI), 1997, 51-64; P.W.M. Freeman, “‘Romanisation’ and Roman Material Culture”. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 6, 1993, 438-445. Cf. S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, London, 1997.

26. N. Terrenato, “The Romanization of Italy. Global Acculturation or Cultural Bricolage?”, in C. Forcey, J. Hawthorne and R. Witcher (eds.), *TRAC 97. Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, Oxford, 1998, 20-27; J. Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces”, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105, 2001, 209-225. See below for more on the latter.

27. E.g. E. Dench, *Romulus’ Asylum. Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*, Oxford, 2005; G. Woolf, “The Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures”, in J. Metzler, M. Millett, N. Roymans and J. Slofstra (eds.), *Integration in the Early Roman West. The Role of Culture and Ideology*, Luxembourg, 1995, 9-18.

28. D. Mattingly, “Being Roman. Expressing Identity in a Provincial Setting”, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 17, 2004, 5-25; D. Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession. Britain in the Roman Empire, 54 BC – AD 409*, London, 2006; D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity. Experiencing the Roman Empire*, Princeton, 2011, esp. 203-245.

As applied in both Britain and North Africa, this approach has sought to break open the Romano-centric perspective of traditional scholarship.

In responding to some criticism of his application of this perspective, Mattingly has rightly highlighted how the term “discrepancy” accommodates not only the multivocality, or plurality of identities, with which our evidence seems to correlate, but the crucial insight – absolutely in tune with post-colonial theory – that empires are not inherently harmonious enterprises²⁹. As such, Mattingly not only seeks to break down the many axes of identification whose intersection will be relevant to consider in the archaeological study of local or regional patterns – from gender and age to religion, status and occupation – but also the structural mechanics of power in the Roman world, which have also been surprisingly neglected, or at least over-simplified, in traditional approaches³⁰. In his detailed study of Roman Britain through this lens³¹, Mattingly breaks the population down into three broad communities – military, urban and rural – and considers the variation between and within them. An example particularly relevant to this volume is the divergent trends in religious practice between the military and non-military communities, with further differences between the degree of hybridity accepted in urban and rural communities. The archaeological patterns underpinning this are striking, particularly the dramatically different distributions of inscribed altars, found primarily in the military zone of northern Britain, and of “Romano-Celtic” temples and curse tablets, found in the south³². In North Africa, there is even more potential for this kind of approach, with not only the diverse contours of Roman identities to consider, but also the varied influences of Punic, Hellenistic and a range of distinctive indigenous cultures making a seemingly much more complex mosaic than later Iron Age Britain.

Mattingly charts this in Tripolitania with epigraphy, and other evidence for religion too, highlighting not only strong continuities from the pre-Roman period into later times via the Saturn cult, for example, but also clear distinctions between rural communities and the urban elites or the military³³. Just as in Britain, our ability to understand the lives of the majority rural population was, for a long time, limited by the focus within the traditional paradigm on military and elite settlements. As that focus has changed, whether through new research agendas or changes to development-led archaeology³⁴, then so our interpretations have too, and this reflects the deeply entangled development of method, data and theory in

29. D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity...*, *op. cit.*, n. 28, 213.

30. See now M. Fernández-Götz, D. Maschek and N. Roymans, “The Dark Side of the Empire. Roman Expansionism between Object Agency and Predatory Regime”, *Antiquity*, 94.378, 2020, 1630-1639.

31. D. Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession...*, *op. cit.*, n. 28.

32. D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity...*, *op. cit.*, n. 28, 223-232.

33. D. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another...”, *op. cit.*, n. 9; D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity...*, *op. cit.*, n. 28, 236-245.

34. M. Fulford and N. Holbrook, “Assessing the Contribution of Commercial Archaeology to the Study of the Roman Period in England, 1990-2004”, *The Antiquaries Journal*, 91, 2011, 323-345.

our discipline³⁵. Taking a different approach to Mattingly, and one less directly critical of the “Romanization” paradigm, but nonetheless seeking to correct the imbalances in traditional provincial archaeology in North Africa, is David Cherry³⁶. In his detailed analysis of epigraphic evidence from Mauretania, Cherry makes an argument for limited interaction between communities in this part of the Roman world, outside of urban/elite contexts, and that this was reinforced, rather than transformed, by the activities of the military in the region. As one reviewer points out, while epigraphy is a good source to challenge traditional narratives based on limited literary sources, it is not ideally comprehensive across the social spectrum, and much more excavation of rural sites is needed³⁷. However, as it is only within the last few years that such results are really available anywhere in the empire³⁸, truly de-centering Rome remains an ongoing project that will gather pace into the future.

4. Recovering Indigenous Agency

In lieu of all of the evidence we might need to fully document discrepant experiences of empire, other approaches to indigenous agency within Roman colonial settings have sought to highlight themes like resistance, particularly within the religious sphere. Resistance was of course a central theme in the work of post-colonial North African scholars such as Laroui and Bénabou, with the latter especially highlighting the implicit cultural opposition to Rome in the continuity of religion from Punic and indigenous traditions³⁹. Religion is also a key theme in some of the early Anglophone applications of post-colonial theory, such as Jane Webster’s discussion of the power of epigraphic naming of deities in Roman Britain, particularly as part of the syncretic identification of local gods with those from the Classical “pantheon”⁴⁰. Webster emphasises the asymmetries of colonial name-pairing in this context, but also highlights, in dedications to local deities made without a Classical equivalent, and often on behalf of lower-ranking members of society, the potential for an articulation of resistance. Such an approach is clearly applicable in many other provincial contexts. Webster is a key figure in the development of post-colonial approaches in Romano-British scholarship⁴¹, and

35. A. Gardner, “Debating Roman Imperialism...”, *op. cit.*, n. 6; A. Gardner, “Thinking about Roman Imperialism. Postcolonialism, Globalization and Beyond?”, *Britannia*, 44, 2013, 1-25.

36. D. Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa*, Oxford 1998.

37. S.T. Parker, “Review of D. Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa*”, *The American Historical Review*, 106.3, 2001, 1032-1033. Cf. K. Olson, “Review of D. Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa*”, *Canadian Journal of History*, 36.3, 2001, 531-532.

38. E.g. A. Smith, M. Allen, T. Brindle and M. Fulford, *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain, I. The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, London, 2016.

39. D. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another...”, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 58-59.

40. J. Webster, “‘Interpretatio’. Roman Word Power and the Celtic Gods”, *Britannia*, 26, 1995, 153-161.

41. E.g. J. Webster, “Roman Imperialism and the ‘Post-Imperial Age’”, in J. Webster and N.J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism...*, *op. cit.*, n. 9; J. Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces”, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105, 2001, 209-225. See below for more on the latter.

later crafted a distinctive approach to cultural interaction in subordinate communities in the Roman empire via the phenomenon of “creolization” in the Caribbean and southern United States⁴². Like “discrepant experience”, this approach was intended to find more nuance in processes of colonial culture change beyond the dichotomy of “Romanization” and resistance⁴³, while still focusing attention on the majority of people in Roman provincial contexts who had relatively little power. Webster has continued this avenue in more recent work on the neglected archaeology of Roman slavery⁴⁴, again a topic requiring much further attention.

Among a range of other, diverse post-colonial approaches across Roman archaeology, applied to contexts from Spain to Turkey⁴⁵, and seeking similar insight into the lives of the colonized, Peter Van Dommelen’s work is particularly significant in the regional context of North Africa. In several recent studies, showing the vitality of the post-colonial tradition as well as its connections to Marxism, via the theory of subalternity developed by Gramsci (an important influence on Spivak and others), Van Dommelen seeks evidence for the lives of the rural poor in the archaeology of the Punic cultural zone, focusing on the pre-Roman period but with obvious relevance to the latter. With Maria López-Bertran⁴⁶, he explores rural cults in the Punic world and, specifically, the varied worship of the Demeter cult, appropriated from Greek into Punic religion in the 4th cent. BCE. Given her domain of agricultural fertility, certain seasonal festivals and sets of votive objects, including figurines and lamps, are common cult features, and connect the western Mediterranean and North Africa to the eastern Greek world. However, as Van Dommelen and López-Bertran argue, variations in the composition of assemblages, and locations of shrines, across the Punic west show that rather than telling a story of either simplistic Greek influence, or Carthaginian imposition, the evidence shows local reworking and manipulation by subaltern, non-elite populations⁴⁷. This exemplifies the detailed, contextual study necessary to move post-colonial studies from critique, to rebuilding new narratives⁴⁸, and shows the continual relevance of such approaches, even as other paradigms have come to influence Roman archaeology in the last decade or so.

42. J. Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces”, *op. cit.*, n. 26.

43. J. Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces”, *op. cit.*, n. 26, 216-217.

44. J. Webster, “Less beloved. Roman Archaeology, Slavery and the Failure to Compare”, *Archaeological Dialogues*, 15.2, 2008, 103-123.

45. E.g. M. Given, *The Archaeology of the Colonized*, London, 2004; A. Jiménez Díez, *Imágenes híbridadas: una aproximación postcolonialista al estudio de las necrópolis de la Bética*, Madrid, 2008; M. Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism. Consumption, Entanglement and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France*, Berkeley, 2010.

46. P. Van Dommelen and M. López-Bertran, “Hellenism as Subaltern Practice. Rural Cults in the Punic World”, in J.R.W. Prag and J.C. Quinn (eds.), *The Hellenistic West. Rethinking the Ancient Mediterranean*, Cambridge, 2013, 273-299.

47. P. Van Dommelen and M. López-Bertran, “Hellenism as Subaltern Practice...”, *op. cit.*, n. 46. Cf. P. Van Dommelen, “Rural Works and Days. A Subaltern Perspective”, *World Archaeology*, 51.2, 2019, 183-190.

48. P. Van Dommelen, “Postcolonial Archaeologies between Discourse and Practice”, *World Archaeology*, 43.1, 2011, 1-6; P. Van Dommelen, “Fetishizing the Romans”, *Archaeological Dialogues*, 21.1, 2014, 41-45.

5. Conclusion. From Post-Colonialism to Globalization and Beyond

This brief and necessarily selective overview of the post-colonial phase in Roman archaeology is by no means a finished story; the research tradition is of such significance in the context of the Roman world, and particularly in North Africa, that there is much work still to do. However, after appearing to be at the cutting edge of debate in the 1990s, in particular, both conferences and publications have moved on to another aspect of our contemporary world as a model for the Roman empire: globalization. Literature making use of this comparative perspective has been around since the turn of the millennium, and whereas post-colonial approaches tend to focus on the political hierarchies and inequalities of empire, and seek evidence of indigenous agency as a corrective to dominant discourses, globalization approaches highlight more economic aspects, particularly emphasizing the heightened connectivity of the Roman world, and changes to patterns of production, consumption and so on⁴⁹. While there are some similar concerns, such as the formation of local, hybrid identities in dialogue with larger-scale trends⁵⁰, the critique of empire which is embedded in post-colonial approaches is lacking. To some, this may be an attractive aspect, as perspectives such as Mattingly's have attracted charges of presenting an overly negative view of the Roman world⁵¹. However, since this was simply an attempt to rebalance earlier, positive views – and there is plenty of evidence of colonial violence – that seems misplaced⁵². Furthermore, globalization and post-colonialism can be seen as two sides of the same coin, characterizing the modern world from more dominant or more subordinate perspectives, and as such they are both intrinsically linked⁵³, and both necessary – though perhaps not sufficient – to try to capture the diversity of experiences in the Roman world⁵⁴. Certainly, post-colonial perspectives are absolutely still valid approaches to be pursuing in future work.

49. See e.g. R.B. Hitchner, "Globalization *avant la lettre*...", *op. cit.*, n. 15; M. Pitts and M.J. Versluys (eds.), *Globalisation and the Roman World. World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, Cambridge, 2014; M.J. Versluys, "Understanding Objects in Motion. An Archaeological Dialogue on Romanization", *Archaeological Dialogues*, 21.1, 2014, 1-20.

50. E.g. M. Pitts, "Globalizing the Local in Roman Britain. An Anthropological Approach to Social Change", *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 27, 2008, 493-506.

51. E.g. A. Selkirk, "Review of D. Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession. Britain in the Roman Empire*", *Current Archaeology*, 205, 2006, 30.

52. D. Mattingly, "War and Peace in Roman North Africa. Observations and Models of State-Tribe Interaction", in R.B. Ferguson and N.L. Whitehead (eds.), *War in the Tribal Zone. Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, Santa Fe and Oxford, 2000 (2nd ed.), 31-60; D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity...*, *op. cit.*, n. 28. Cf. M. Fernández-Götz, D. Maschek and N. Roymans, "The Dark Side of the Empire...", *op. cit.*, n. 30;

53. S. Krishna, *Globalization and Postcolonialism. Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, 2009. Cf. R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture. Unity, Diversity and Empire*, London, 2005.

54. Cf. A. Gardner, "Thinking about Roman Imperialism...", *op. cit.*, n. 35; A. Van Oyen, "Deconstructing and Reassembling the Romanization Debate Through the Lens of Postcolonial Theory. From Global to Lo-

This last point is true in all parts of the Roman empire, and clearly is particularly so in North Africa. The region produced the first truly post-colonial scholarship of the Roman world⁵⁵, and many of the issues linked to the legacy of colonial archaeology in North African countries remain significant⁵⁶. While new research in the region takes vastly greater account of these issues and the needs of local communities, the region as a whole is varied and, in places, there are quite conflicting agendas for the direction of national heritage research⁵⁷. It is also true that, just as Roman archaeologists were taking an interest in theoretical approaches to globalization, contemporary events began to point toward a crisis in that trend, with heightened nationalism and re-bordering in many different parts of the world. Post-colonial theory, with its attention to the complexity of empire, and its lasting influence, is as useful in understanding the evolving contemporary situation as much as the dynamic interactions between local, Greek, Punic and Roman influences of antiquity. It also provides a common basis for scholarship rooted in the region, and from other parts of the empire with their own modern imperial legacies to contend with⁵⁸, which is sorely needed to forge a truly post-colonial Roman archaeology.

cal and Back?”, *Terra Incognita*, 6, 2015, 205-226.

55. M. Bénabou, *La résistance africaine...*, *op. cit.*, n. 1.

56. D. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another...”, *op. cit.*, n. 9.

57. E.g. C. Fenwick, “North Africa”, in N.A. Silberman (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Archaeology*, Oxford, 2012 (2nd ed.); E.A.A. Garcea, “Postcolonial Criticism in One World Archaeology. Where is North Africa’s Place?”, *Archaeologies*, 1, 2005, 110-117.

58. Cf. A. Gardner, 2017. “Brexit, Boundaries, and Imperial Identities. A Comparative View”, *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 17.1, 3-26.