

Preface

'Yet another conference on the R-word...'¹ Was it worth it? Both the lively discussion on the day, and the papers presented here, suggest it was. There was a broad (but not unanimous) consensus that it really is time to abandon 'Romanization'. As Jo Crawley Quinn expresses it later on, in the paper which kick-started the day,

'... the very structure of the word, however ingeniously defined, forces Mediterranean cultural and economic history to be about Rome. It puts Rome in the centre of immensely complex social and cultural processes that (as apparently in Africa) may have only a tangential relationship with Roman activity. ... The problem is that it *dictates* a field of research.'

We feel no remorse for having stuck with the word. The constructive self-reflexivity which the debate encourages can be seen not merely in the culturally and politically charged contemplations of Richard Hingley's concluding paper, but in Clara Berrendonner's critique of N. Terrenato. Berrendonner echoes Crawley Quinn: 'Le critère privilégié pour étudier la romanisation de Volterra a donc en bonne part contribué à fonder la thèse de la permanence de la cité.' Paradoxically, Romanization's great virtue may be to rescue us from excessive Romano-centrism.

A move away from the Roman, to the local, had begun well before this conference. But our aim was to move further from the mainstream by stressing locations and periods that have featured less in the Romanization debates: North Africa and Sicily in the Republican period; intellectuals and urban environments in the Greek East (in the Republican period); prosopography and pottery in Volaterrae; military equipment in early Roman Italy. In fact, what emerged during the day is that the debate about the R-word is not purely a semantic one. The word does indeed dictate the debate. Simply weakening the term, or rendering it more subtle (or complex) is not sufficient - as long as one retains the term it structures the questions being asked. As a result we question the value of 'Romanization' or even 'socio-cultural change' as domains for study.

Several of the papers tackle areas which have seen little study, and which have little raw data that can directly be brought to bear on the traditional question of Romanization. A frequent introductory refrain, and one that is familiar, is the apparent *lack* of change. But, the more subtle point that emerged during the day was that change of ideology, of function, of identity, of social orientation, may not be reflected in readily detectable ways. This may not be news, but it is clear that Romanization

¹ See our remarks in anticipation of this conference, in A. Merryweather and J. Prag (2002), "'Romanization'? or, why flog a dead horse?", *Digressus* 2: 8-10.

causes one to look in the wrong places, especially 'Augustan Romanization'. Civic urbanism and euergetism may continue; but their social role may change. Re-orientations in taxation may have subtle but crucial effects on local societies. We certainly do not deny the inception of Roman rule. But where and how should we look for its effects? And is it necessarily the most important element in any given locale?

What happens in the Mediterranean world in conjunction with the rise of Rome is undoubtedly a subject worthy of study. Richard Hingley's paper eloquently makes the now-obligatory case for relevance. But, if we abandon Romanization, we need an alternative road-map for incorporating the local into empire. Hingley's suggestion of globalization provides one such route. But the question of how we study it, and whether this is even the perspective from which we should study it, is a debate which these papers open up and which we hope will continue.

On-line publication was intended to enable rapid dissemination of the day's proceedings. The papers have all been subject to comment and revision since their original presentation, but with severe time limits imposed. The authors have provided their e-mail addresses and welcome responses. Our other aim in publishing on-line is to encourage on-going dialogue and debate: either direct to the author(s), or, might we suggest, in submissions to this journal, *Digressus*.

Six of the papers which follow are revised versions of papers delivered at a post-graduate conference held at the Institute of Classical Studies, London, on 15 November 2002. The seventh, that of Clara Berrendonner, was distributed to participants, but not presented on the day. An eighth, presented on the day, on *gymnasia* and garrisons in Republican Sicily by Jonathan Prag, is not included here. Although we originally promised participants that only minimal revisions would be required, all the papers have been reworked to a greater or lesser degree since their original presentation. We are most grateful for their efforts and their patience! On behalf of the participants, we wish to thank Nicholas Purcell and Ray Laurence for their participation on the day and their ongoing feedback after the event, Richard Hingley both for his participation and his willingness to contribute a written version of his paper, and the editors of *Digressus* for their patience and enthusiasm. The day was made possible by the generous support of the Institute of Classical Studies (School of Advanced Studies, University of London) and the Jowett Copyright Trustees. We ourselves found the day extremely stimulating and productive. The next meeting may not use the dread R-word, but another meeting there certainly shall be.

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& Jonathan Prag