DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION TRAJECTORIES
OF THE NOMADIC POPULATION IN ROMAN NORTH AFRICA
(1ST–3RD CENT. A.D.)

Wouter Vanacker

Along and within the imperial boundaries in North Africa Rome encountered numerous (semi-)nomadic tribes and confederations. The aim of this paper is to give a short overview and evaluation of the different perspectives of modern research on the relations between (semi-)nomads and sedentary communities in North Africa during the Roman period. It is argued that the rise of the symbiosis perspective has offered a valuable counterweight against the traditionalistic view of opposition and antagonism. However, scholars should be aware of the fact that the various sources point to differentiated integration trajectories, both negative and positive. More attention should be paid to the various motives of Roman and indigenous actors which moulded and shaped these integration trajectories, and to the specific contexts in which they appear.

1. *The Nomad Kept Out:*
The Traditional Perspective of Antagonism and Exclusion

It has long been a truism in studies on relations between sedentary communities and (semi-)nomads in North Africa that Rome had to deal with endemic nomadic insubordination and disinclination to integration. Scholars perceived “ces terribles Maures” as a permanent threat to stability and order.¹ Such viewpoints were subsequently reinforced by studies

¹ R. Cagnat, *L'Armée romaine d'Afrique et l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique sous les empereurs* (Paris 1912), 98. L. Harmand, *L'Occident romain : Gaule – Espagne – Bretagne – Afrique du Nord (31 av. J.C. à 235 ap. J.C.)* (Paris 1960), 279 (quote); J. Burian, ‘Zur Geschichte der nordafrikanischen einheimischen Bevölkerung in den ersten zwei Jahrhunderten u. Z.’, *Studii clasice* 3 (1961), 171; M. Rachet, *Rome et les Berbères. Un problème militaire d'Auguste à Dioclétien* (Bruxelles 1970); M. Benabou, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation* (Paris 1976); T. Kotula, ‘Les Africains et la domination de Rome’, *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 2 (1976), 345. R.I. Lawless, ‘Romanization and Berber resistance in Mauretania Caesariensis (western Algeria)’, in M. Galley (ed.), *Second International Congress of Studies on Cultures of the Western Mediterranean (1978)* II (Alger 1978), 166.

emphasizing the complete lack of social, economic and cultural transformation of indigenous societies.² These opinions were inspired both by contemporary colonialist experiences and by new questions and insights put forward in early post-colonial historiography. Certainly, they resulted in part from the extensive focus on literary sources, which tended to mention nomadic groups almost exclusively in the context of conquest, insurgency and resistance. Ancient authors did not hide their negative perception on nomadism in general and displayed poor insights in the social reality of nomadism in the North African interior.³

Modern scholars have subsequently constructed extensive overviews of revolts, wars, military expeditions and punitive campaigns, attested by literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources. These overviews incorporated a lot of attestations – albeit indirect – like temporary increases of the number of *auxilia* in the Mauretaniae or the construction of city walls. Furthermore, it has been understood that the diplomatic negotiations between Roman governors and indigenous tribal leaders of the Baquates at Volubilis suggest periods of chaos and disorder.⁴ Similarly, the view has been held that further conflict indicators can be seen when considering the establishment of special offices. In Mauretania, the *procuratores pro*

² For instance: Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1); D. Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa* (Oxford 1998).

³ On the Greek and Roman perception of nomadism, cf. P. Troussel, 'Villes, campagnes et nomadisme dans l'Afrique du Nord antique : représentations et réalités', in P.-A. Février, Ph. Leveau (eds.), *Villes et campagnes dans l'empire romain. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'U.E.R. d'Histoire (Aix-en-Provence 1980)* (Marseille 1982), 198–201; B.D. Shaw, 'Fear and loathing: the nomad menace and Roman Africa', in C.M. Wells (ed.), *Roman Africa* (Ottawa 1980) (Ottawa 1982), 29–31; B.D. Shaw, '"Eaters of flesh, drinkers of milk": the ancient mediterranean ideology of the pastoral nomad', *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982–1983), 5–31; G. Devallet, 'Vagi, palantes Afri: quelques réflexions sur l'image romaine du nomade africain', in F. Bejaoui, *Histoire des Hautes Steppes. Antiquité – Moyen Âge (Sbeitla 2001)* (Tunis 2003), 31–38; M. Sartre, 'Les nomades dans l'Empire romain', in C. Moatti, W. Kaiser, Chr. Pébarthe (eds.), *Le monde de l'itinérance en Méditerranée de l'antiquité à l'époque moderne. Procédures de contrôle et d'identification* (Bordeaux 2009), 58–60. Nomadic society was perceived as "l'antithèse de la civilisation" according to Y.A. Dauge, *Le barbare : recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation* (Bruxelles 1981), 620–626. It was situated at "le degré zéro de l'humanité", cf. P. Troussel, 'L'image du nomade saharien dans l'historiographie', *Production pastorale et société* 10 (1982), 101–102.

⁴ On the rise of troop numbers, for instance during the reign of Trajanus and Antoninus Pius cf. Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 185 and 196–200; Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 126 and 138–139. On the construction of the city walls of Volubilis Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 203; Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1) 147; M.C. Sigman, 'The Romans and the indigenous tribes of Mauretania Tingitana', *Historia* 26.4 (1977), 431; of Banasa: Sigman 1977, op. cit. (n. 4), 435. On this particular interpretation of the negotiations, cf. Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 203; Sigman 1977, op. cit. (n. 4), 429–434.

legato have been seen as attestations of military confrontations, since they seem to attest the assignation of a special command of legionary units assigned to these procurators. It has been related that also other offices such as a *dux exercitus Africae et Mauretaniae* (ca. AD 85) and an equestrian *subprocurator Mauretaniae Tingitanae* (ca. AD 104) also point out the incidence of more serious conflicts in Mauretania.⁵

Generalization and bold overestimations are typical features of publications defending a maximalist reconstruction of insurgency. When the rebels are generally called *Mauri* in the *Historia Augusta* it is of course unclear and in fact highly improbable that the insurrection comprised all Moorish tribes and confederations.⁶ Yet this general denomination has often been adopted easily in modern accounts, although the different geographical and chronological contexts of the wars and revolts elucidate the various identities of Rome's opponents. The supposed link between different conflicts is less apparent when the sources receive a closer look. For instance, the connection of Ser. Sulpicius Galba's special mission in Africa (cf. *infra*) with the Revolt of Aedemon, as postulated by Rachet, seems highly doubtful.⁷ This connection has also been subtly suggested by Benabou's synchronization of both conflicts.⁸ The latter's hypothesis that both revolts of AD 118 and AD 122 should be perceived as one great rebellion assorts to the same category of strategies by which the image of endemic and wide-spread indigenous resistance has been constructed and reinforced without clear-cut hard evidence.⁹ There is no indication whatsoever to argue that every conflict should be perceived as a Roman offensive campaign or an indigenous reaction against Roman oppression.

⁵ *Dux*: AE 1903, 368: *duci exercitus Africi et Mauretanici ad nationes quae/sunt in Mauretania comprimendas* (l. 8–10). Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 110. *Subprocurator*, cf. CIL III, 14195, 4–9 = AE 1899, 64.

⁶ For example, HA, *Aur.* 21.1 and *Com.* 13.5.

⁷ Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 129. Similarly: S.L. Dyson, 'Native revolt patterns in the Roman empire', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 3 (1975), 165–166.

⁸ Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 93.

⁹ As I have argued elsewhere, the first *tumultus* (HA, *Hadr.* 5.8) should be connected with the execution of Lusius Quietus and a possibly related uprising of the Baquates: W. Vanacker, 'Aedemon, Lusius Quietus and the Baquates. Ties of resistance and cooperation', *Mnemosyne* (2013). The second conflict is denoted as "motus Maurorum" in the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadr.* 12.7) and was suppressed by AD 122. It is probably connected in some way with the military constructions at Igilgili (around AD 128, to the detriment of certain land rights of the Zimises, cf. *infra*) or more plausibly at Rapidum (CIL VIII, 20833). Laporte has provided an extensive study of the latter camp J.-P. Laporte, *Rapidum. Le camp de la cohorte des Sardes en Maurétanie Césarienne* (Sassari 1989).

In many cases, by its nature, the evidence simply does not allow for a precise identification of the conflict's initiators.¹⁰

Traditional scholarship pointed to the economic antagonism between nomads and sedentary groups as a key primal factor behind the many wars and revolts that continuously marked Roman North Africa. The pastoral nomadic economy has often been perceived as inherently hostile to the agricultural organization of sedentary communities. The belief has been held that groups of pastoral nomads and sedentary agricultural communities were involved in an on-going battle for the sparse fertile lands and that seasonal migrations were fundamental obstacles to the development and growth of the agricultural export economy. Scholars have therefore thought that the termination of pastoral movements was a primordial goal of Roman military strategy, and that this intention repeatedly resulted in rebellion, since "il seminomadismo tribal (...) si trovava oramai inserito in un contesto geopolitico dove la sedentarizzazione, e conseguentemente la privatizzazione dei suoli, conoscevano un sensibile incremento".¹¹ The Revolt of Tacfarinas (ca. AD 15–24) was considered to be a typical example, as the construction of the road between Ammaedara and Tacape seemed to have been the crucial event that sparked the conflict.¹² It was believed that frontier infrastructure such as walls and ditches were essential tools to keep the nomads out of the civilized sedentary world.¹³ Scholars also related that the nomadic segment of the indigenous population was repulsed to infertile territory or insurmountable and unattainable mountain reservations, for instance to the Aurès massif.¹⁴ Furthermore,

¹⁰ This is clearly so in the case of the special office of Sex. Sentius Caecilianus (cf. *infra*) and C. Velius Rufus (cf. *supra*), as well as for the many direct and indirect traces dating to the reign of Trajan and Antoninus Pius, or the fate of L. Flaminius *ab hostem in pugna / occisus* (l. 7–8) on the Saltus Philomusianus (*CIL* VIII, 14603).

¹¹ E. Migliario, 'Gentes foederatae. Per una riconsiderazione dei rapporti Romano-Berberi in Mauretania Tingitana', *Rendiconti della Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 10.3 (1999), 442.

¹² T.R.S. Broughton, *The Romanization of Africa proconsularis* (Baltimore, London 1929), 89–90; J.-M. Lassère, 'Un conflit "routier": observations sur les causes de la guerre de Tacfarinas', *Antiquités africaines* 18 (1982), 11–25.

¹³ L. Leschi, 'Recherches aériennes sur le "limes" romain de Numidie', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1937), 256–262. J. Guey, 'Note sur le limes romain de Numidie et le Sahara au IV^e siècle', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 56 (1939), 178–248. J. Baradez, *Fossatum Africae. Recherches aériennes sur l'organisation des confins sahariens à l'époque romaine* (Paris 1949).

¹⁴ Broughton 1929, *op. cit.* (n. 12), 98–99 and 121–123; T. Frank et al., *An economic survey of ancient Rome IV. Roman Africa, Roman Syria, Roman Greece, Roman Asia*, (Baltimore 1938), 35; R. Syme, 'Tacfarinas, the Musulamii and Thubursicu', in P.R. Coleman-Norton, F.C. Bourne, J.V.A. Fine (eds.), *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan*

they believed that Rome pursued an active sedentarization policy, of which *centuriatio* was an essential tool.¹⁵

The assessment of the socio-cultural integration of nomadic actors tends to be somewhat ambivalent. Socio-cultural integration implies the abandonment of a life style, of values that distinguish the nomad from the sedentarist. Due to the dearth of sources attesting the socio-cultural transformation of tribal societies, traditional scholarship concluded that social structures and the culture of nomads were hardly affected. Whittaker has argued that in large parts of North Africa Roman occupation changed little to the traditional social, economic and cultural fundamentals of the tribe, particularly when considering this at the local clan level.¹⁶ A few decades earlier, Camps stated that the third century inscriptions attesting the so-called *Dii Maurii* are indications of the lack of cultural integration in many parts of North Africa. In his view, these *tituli* were set up by Roman officials or Roman-sided actors to rally support from the indigenous divinities against native rebels. Camps further postulated that the lack of concordance with Roman divinities suggests that these gods were “des dieux et des génies indigènes, des divinités aux caractères fuyants qui n’ont pas trouvé place dans le panthéon romain”.¹⁷ Scholars have connected Roman sedentarization policy with berber insurgence, which in turn has been referred to as a negative illustration of the value of social and cultural continuity for the development of acculturation processes amongst the indigenous society and the durability of Roman dominance.¹⁸ And while the *Tabula Banasitana* clearly attests the attribution of Roman

Chester Johnson (Princeton 1951), 124; Burian (1961), op. cit. (n. 1), 168–169; Kotula 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 345–346; Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 431–432. M. Dondin-Payre, ‘Recherches sur un aspect de la romanisation de l’Afrique du Nord: l’expansion de la citoyenneté romaine jusqu’à Hadrien’, *Antiquités africaines* 17 (1981), 110.

¹⁵ R. Chevallier, ‘La centuriation et les problèmes de la colonisation romaine’, *Etudes rurales* 3 (1961), 73.

¹⁶ C.R. Whittaker, ‘Land and Labour in North Africa’, *Klio*, 60 (1978), 331–362, at 344–350.

¹⁷ G. Camps, ‘L’inscription de Béja et le problème des *Dii Mauri*’, *Revue africaine* 98 (1954), 255. Later it has been argued that these dedications should be linked to the enrolment of Moorish auxiliaries in the Roman army. They may also allude to deliberate efforts of (political and religious) conciliation. Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 309–330; P.-A. Février, ‘Religion et domination dans l’Afrique romaine’, *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 2 (1976), 305–336; E. Fentress, ‘Dii Mauri and Dii Patrii’, *Latomus* 37 (1978), 507–516. In reaction to these authors, Camps sustained his main argument in a more recent paper: G. Camps, ‘Qui sont les *Dii Mauri*’, *Antiquités africaines* 26 (1990), 131–153.

¹⁸ P. Le Roux, ‘Intervention de P. Le Roux sur l’exposé de Ph. Leveau’, in Février, Leveau 1982, op. cit. (n. 3), 92.

citizenship to tribal leaders of the Zegrenses, one can still doubt whether the attractions of citizenship could really convince other members of the Zegrenses to affiliate themselves more intensively with the Roman Empire and its cultural traits. The ‘colloquium inscriptions’ informing us about the aforementioned diplomatic negotiations between Roman procurators and the Baquates indicate how slowly – or rather, how unsuccessfully – Roman citizenship took root among the indigenous elites of nomadic tribes. The evidence concerning the Baquates and the Zegrenses seems to suggest that the acquirement of citizenship did not result into nor follow from intense participation in urban communal life.¹⁹

2. *The Nomad Returns: Symbiosis and Negotiated Integration*

Scholars have reacted against the traditionalistic view of Roman Africa as “un nœud de problèmes complexes aux solutions douteuses et transitoires” by looking for traces of positive relations between nomads and sedentary communities.²⁰ A close examination of the literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources reveals that the image of endemic resistance against Roman oppression and forced settlement should be nuanced and instead make place for “una visione più sfumata”.²¹

Of major importance is the abandonment of the traditionalistic view that the sedentary and nomadic economy are mutually exclusive. Anthropological studies have shown that they are complementary, especially because of the non-autarchic character of nomadic economies. In the view of Khazanov it is the non-autarchic economy, which necessitates that the nomads gain access to and acquire vital commodities from sedentary communities, most frequently through trade or raiding.²² Hence,

¹⁹ For the ‘colloquium inscriptions’ cf. *CIL* VIII, 21826 = *AE* 1894, 45 = *AE* 1941, 115. *AE* 1953, 78 = *AE* 1957, 202. *AE* 1953, 79 = *AE* 1957, 203. *AE* 1957, 204. *AE* 1953, 80. *AE* 1987, 1092. *AE* 1942/43, 54 = *AE* 1946, 52 = *AE* 1946, 275 = *AE* 1987, 1093. *AE* 1952, 42 = *AE* 1953, 77 = *AE* 1957, 201 = *AE* 1987, 1090a = *AE* 1987, 1094. *AE* 1952, 43. *AE* 1954, 110. *AE* 1920, 44. *AE* 1921, 23. As Sigman related with respect to the Zegrenses: “this tribe remained remarkably uncultured. Although they were subject to Roman taxes, and the Juliani were Romanized, the greater part of the tribe seems to have been resistant to Romanization.” Sigman 1977, op. cit. (4), 437. For the *Tabula*, cf. *AE* 1971, 534.

²⁰ Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 250.

²¹ C. Melani, ‘Roma e le tribù della Mauretania Cesariense’, *Athenaeum* 82.1 (1994), 153. A notable work that subscribes to this tendency: A. Gutsfeld, *Römische Herrschaft und einheimischer Widerstand in Nordafrika*, (Stuttgart, 1989).

²² A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Madison, 1994), xxxi–xxxii; 70; 202–227. This so-called *trade or raid paradigm* has been tested by other scholars studying the

imposing or providing regulated access to the market economy could have engendered a two-fold advantage for Rome: in one sense, essential commodities could be obtained by the nomadic actors through trade, thus lessening the chance of raiding. In another sense, such commercial transactions could have provided significant tax revenue. In the light of these perspectives the tax inscription of Zarai of AD 202 becomes all the more interesting.²³ The tariff details leathers, hides, clothing and riding equipment as well as agricultural products of oasis economies. The tariff not only highlights the value and overall importance associated with the exchange of pastoral goods, but also emphasizes a number of noteworthy tax exemptions. Aside from the regular beasts of burden *pequaria* were *immunia* (l. 22), as well as cattle destined for the local market (l. 11: *in nundinium immunia*).²⁴ One should not easily concur with Morizot's suggestion to combine at l. 21–22 *maxima pecuaria immunia* ("very big flocks are exempt from taxes").²⁵ It is important to recognize that such exemptions could ultimately highlight the efforts made by the Romans to devise and adopt a tax policy that was lenient enough for nomads to migrate into the province peacefully and to participate in the market economy.²⁶ A similar policy can be observed in Germania, where the Romans seem to

political tensions between the Xiongnu Empire and China, cf. N. Di Cosmo, 'Ancient Inner Asian nomads: their economic basis and its significance in Chinese history', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.4 (1994), 1092–1126.

²³ CIL VIII, 4508 = 18643.

²⁴ On the local market as the cattle's destination, cf. P. Troussset, 'Le tarif de Zará: essai sur les circuits commerciaux dans la zone présaharienne', *Antiquités africaines* 38–39 (2002–2003), 362.

²⁵ P. Morizot, 'Les échanges commerciaux entre la côte méditerranéenne et à l'intérieur du Maghreb au II^e siècle vus au travers du Tarif Zará', in J.-R. Gaborit (ed.), *Circulation des matières premières en Méditerranée, transferts de savoirs et de techniques. 128^e Congrès National des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques (Bastia 2003)* (Paris 2009), 162.

²⁶ Shaw 1980, op. cit. (n. 3), 47. According to Johannesen, it is unclear whether the commodities were entering the province, or going out. R. Johannesen, 'The textile industry in Roman North Africa', *The Classical Journal* 49.4 (1954), 158. Darmon posed that products were traded in both ways across the frontier and along a southwest-northeast axis. J.-P. Darmon, 'Note sur le Tarif de Zará', *Cahiers de Tunisie: revue des sciences humaines* 47–48 (1964), 19 ff. Troussset has argued that the *garum* mentioned in the tax inscription was produced along the Syrtes: P. Troussset, 'Le franchissement des chotts du sud tunisien dans l'antiquité', *Antiquités africaines* 18 (1982), 58. Later he posed that the tax records two axes of trade and migration (north-south and east-west): Troussset 2002–2003, op. cit. (n. 24), 368–369. However, Morizot has related that an east-west axis is rather improbable, as trade along the north-south axis could bring along the same products more easily and more quickly: Morizot 2009, op. cit. (n. 25), 160–163. Interestingly, Fentress perceived this tariff as evidence on the progressive development of specialized nomadic pastoralism: E.W.B. Fentress, 'Romanizing the Berbers', *Past & Present* 190 (2006), 29–30.

have made concessions to local economic structures and conditions when levying taxes in kind (ox-hides) among the Frisians.²⁷ In this context of Roman engagement in motivating and inducing material exchange within the market (and controlling the security risks connected to this point of assembly) it is useful to recall Janon's assumption that colonists were settled and military camps constructed exactly on locations of contact where seasonal markets existed.²⁸ It is possible that the epigraphically attested protection of an annual fair by both Roman and indigenous gods at Bordj Bou Arreridj illustrates and emphasizes the continuous character of commercial exchange.²⁹

It has now been acknowledged that the limes in North Africa did not always form a closed barrier, either between the Empire and the unconquered lands, or between two different socio-economic organizations.³⁰ As Janon put it: "le fossatum est un signe, il concrétise le passage de l'extérieur à l'intérieur d'un monde que Rome prétend contrôler; cela ne veut pas dire qu'il l'interdise".³¹ By its nature the *fossatum* does not seem to have been able to hold off an army, even of moderate size.³² Particularly troublesome to the traditional archaeologists are the large gaps in these lines, which are difficult to rationalize in a military context. Shaw

²⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4.72. J.H.F. Bloemers, 'Relations between Romans and natives: concepts of comparative studies', in V.A. Maxfield & J.M. Dobson (eds.), *XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (1989)* (Exeter 1991), 414. Market control in frontier regions was also influenced by strategic concerns (cf. the reasoning behind barring the Marcomanni from market access during the reign of Marcus Aurelius: Dio Cass. 72.11.3).

²⁸ M. Janon, 'Remarques sur la frontière de Numidie', in Maxfield, Dobson 1991, op. cit. (n. 27), 483. Le Roux noted that in other parts of the Empire the Romans took care to control traditional centres of temporary political, religious as well as commercial/economic importance and to assure their continuity. Le Roux 1982, op. cit. (n. 18), 91–92.

²⁹ *CIL* VIII, 20627 = AE 1894, 96 = AE 1909, 123 = AE 2002, 1694. Whittaker observed that "larger, regional markets are usually located on the borders of complementary production zones": Whittaker 1978, op. cit. (n. 16), 347. For an in-depth study of various aspects of North African periodic markets (and Roman control of them), cf. B.D. Shaw, 'Rural markets in North Africa and the political economy of the Roman Empire', *Antiquités africaines* 17 (1981), 37–83.

³⁰ M. Euzennat, 'Recherches récentes sur la frontière d'Afrique (1964–1974)', II, in D. Haupt & H.G. Horn (eds.), *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms II: Vorträge des 10. Internationalen Limeskongresses in der Germania Inferior (Xanten 1974)* (Bonn 1977), 441. Mattingly has observed that the defence lines did not always converge with the official frontier (although they sometimes did!), though he pointed out that many (thus not all of them!) were located near the limits of the agricultural zone. D.J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (London 1995), 107 and 113.

³¹ M. Janon, 'Lambèse et l'occupation militaire de la Numidie méridionale', in Haupt, Horn 1977, op. cit. (n. 30), 477.

³² Cf. the observations of Troussset: P. Troussset, *Recherches sur le limes tripolitanus* (Paris 1974), 139–141.

nevertheless proposed an alternative military explanation. In regard to the *clausurae*, a defence system of walls and ditches often guarded by watch-towers and forts, he posed that they were intended to protect “uniquely exploitable bands or ‘belts’ of land running along the bases of the Saharan mountain massifs”.³³ The validity of his explanation can be questioned, for instance in the case of the *clausurae* which clearly had to facilitate the control or restriction of movements towards the lower Oued Zraia, Oued Skiffa and Oued Genini in the sector of Ras el Aïn/Talalati.³⁴ Furthermore, an economic rationale has been perceived behind these *clausurae*. Rather than to obstruct them, the Romans seem to have sought to direct and channel nomadic movements through check-points where the incoming goods could be taxed efficiently.³⁵ In this same vein, Janon pointed to a comparable economic role adopted by the army when taking into account the military occupation of the Aurès.³⁶ Nevertheless, the view is still defended that the *clausurae* (also) served as “a labour-saving device in the policing of the region”, aimed at preserving symbiotic relationships between arable farmers and nomads.³⁷

Yet the idea of opposition between mountain and plain has undoubtedly experienced a significant blow by studies carried out in the Aurès mountains highlighting that agriculture in this region not only pre-dated the Punic era but was ultimately boosted by Roman military presence within and around the massif.³⁸ The more traditional view maintains that

³³ Shaw 1980, op. cit. (n. 3), 46.

³⁴ On these *clausurae*, cf.: Troussset 1974, op. cit. (n. 32), 97, 102, 139–140; D.J. Mattingly & G.D.B. Jones, ‘A new *clausura* in western Tripolitania: Wadi Skiffa South’, *Libyan Studies* 17 (1986), 87–96. Troussset discovered similar *clausurae* in the sector of Remada/Tillibari: P. Troussset, ‘Nouvelles barrières romaines de contrôle dans l’extrême sud tunisien’, *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Série B, Afrique du Nord* 24 (1997), 155–163. The *clausurae* of the region have been discussed at great length in Mattingly 1995, op. cit. (n. 30), 106–115.

³⁵ E.W.B. Fentress, *Numidia and the Roman Army: Social, Military and Economic Aspects of the Frontier Zone*, BAR. International series (Oxford 1979), 112–113; Mattingly & Jones 1986, op. cit. (n. 34), 94; C.M. Wells, ‘The problems of desert frontiers: chairman’s comments on the session’, in Maxfield & Dobson 1991, op. cit. (n. 27), 479; Cherry 1998, op. cit. (n. 2), 62; S. Matz, ‘Befestigung im Nirgendwo’, *Antike Welt* 38,1 (2007), 55–59. Matz did not seem to take a clear position in the debate (cf. the construction of a strong defence to ward off the threat of nomadic invasions mentioned on p. 55 vs. a weak border defence with tax and canalization functions p. 59).

³⁶ M. Janon, ‘Paysans et soldats’, in C.M. Wells (ed.), *Roman Africa* (Ottawa 1980) (Ottawa 1982), 58; 61f.

³⁷ Mattingly 1995, op. cit. (n. 30), 113–114.

³⁸ Cf. Janon: “Il n’y a donc pas de raisons de voir dans l’Aurès antique une région déshéritée” in Janon 1977, op. cit. (n. 31), 477. And elsewhere: Janon 1982, op. cit. (n. 36), 56–58; Janon 1991, op. cit. (n. 28), 482–483. Formerly, Camps has recognized a substantial

it was due to the Roman import of irrigation techniques that agriculture took root in the African soils to the south. However, the overriding indigenous character of these techniques has since been recognized.³⁹ In his study on land use and agricultural settlement in Mauretania Caesariensis Leveau has discarded the antagonism between mountain and plain. As he stated elsewhere: “dans les campagnes de l’Empire romain, voisinent des formes d’organisation de l’espace rural parfaitement hétérogènes qui n’obéissent à aucun déterminisme physique ou climatique”.⁴⁰

A kind of inclusive policy has been noted in respect of the containment strategy, the supposed policy to confine (semi-)nomadic communities to infertile territories or reservations. Contrary to what the adherents of the antagonistic these would believe, Fentress and Shaw have stated that the semi-nomadic Musulamii were definitely not confined to unproductive reservations during the land measurements and allocations in the reign of Trajan.⁴¹ Nevertheless, it should be admitted that in other cases the Roman advance in the interior clearly engendered the loss in land rights to the indigenous tribes.⁴² But two *tituli* commemorating land assignments to the *gens Numidarum* by Hadrian illustrate the attitude of Roman land seizure, which was clearly negotiated and at times compassionate. It should be emphasized, though, that these inscriptions do not mention that the initiative to create them came from the indigenous actors themselves: *Ex indulgen/tia Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Had(riani) Aug(usti) fines / adsignati gen/ti Numidarum / per C(aium) Petroni/um Celerem /*

pre-Roman agricultural development in both (!) plains and mountainous areas of North Africa, based on texts (esp. Herodote) and archaeological research: G. Camps ‘Massinissa ou les débuts de l’histoire’, *Libyca* 8 (1960), 17–19 and 69–91 (esp. 72–75 on irrigation techniques).

³⁹ B.D. Shaw, ‘Lamasba: an ancient irrigation community’, *Antiquités africaines* 18 (1982), 93; D.J. Mattingly, ‘New perspectives on the agricultural development of Gebel and pre-desert in Roman Tripolitania’, *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 41.1 (1986), 53.

⁴⁰ P. Leveau, ‘Paysans maures et villes romaines en Maurétanie Césarienne centrale. La résistance des populations indigènes à la romanisation dans l’arrière-pays de Caesarea de Maurétanie’, *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome. Antiquité* 87.2 (1975), 857–871. Quote: P. Leveau, ‘Une ville et ses campagnes: l’exemple de Caesarea de Maurétanie’, in Février, Leveau 1982, op. cit. (n. 3), 183.

⁴¹ The land measurements and allocations activities conducted during the reign of Trajan have left many traces in the epigraphic record: *CIL* VIII, 22787 = *AE* 1910, 20. *CIL* VIII, 22788. *CIL* VIII, 10667 = 16692. *CIL* VIII, 4676 = 28073a = *AE* 1898, 39a. *AE* 1907, 19–21. *AE* 1923, 26. *CIL* VIII, 28703b = *AE* 1898, 39b. Fentress 1979, op. cit. (n. 35), 76; Shaw 1980, op. cit. (n. 3), 42.

⁴² For instance the case of the Zimises in *CIL* VIII, 8369.

proc(uratorem) Aug(usti) pr[o(uincia)] / [M(auretaniae) C]aes[ariensis] (CIL VIII, 8814; also see CIL VIII, 8813).

A final argument in favour of the inclusion of nomads within the margins of the sedentary economy is their potential as an utile labour force during harvest. A letter of Augustine can be perceived as a rare attestation of the employment of nomadic workers in agricultural contexts.⁴³ The “*falcifera turma*” mentioned in the inscription of the harvester of Mactar (CIL VIII, 11824, at l. 13) can also allude to a workforce of nomadic origin. According to Whittaker, the double line of defence in several parts of Roman North Africa should be connected with the organization of labour migration.⁴⁴

These observations made scholars reconsider the evidence on the military conflicts, and “the long-held notion that indigenous resistance to Roman occupation was ferocious and unremitting”.⁴⁵ Especially the indirect attestations have received much attention. The increase of troop numbers is mostly difficult to date. The construction of city walls, it was pointed out, did not necessarily mean a real military threat but should be linked with the need felt to express urban prestige.⁴⁶ Special offices have also been stripped from their military meaning. Defenders of the symbiosis perspective have dismissed the idea that the *procuratores pro legato* were provided with a legionary command. Frézouls presented a number of inventive but hardly seductive alternative explanations.⁴⁷ Likewise, Spaul argued that the purpose of assigning a procuratorship *pro legato* was merely to distinguish the regular governmental *procurator* from a financial or administrative procurator. In my opinion, this view is

⁴³ Aug., *Epist.* 46.1–6 and 47.1–2. Shaw 1980, op. cit. (n. 3), 47–48.

⁴⁴ Whittaker 1978, op. cit. (n. 16), 349–350.

⁴⁵ Cherry 1998, op. cit. (n. 2), 40.

⁴⁶ R. Rebuffat, ‘Enceintes urbaines et insécurité en Maurétanie Tingitane’, *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome* 86.1 (1974), 513–514; E. Frézouls, ‘La résistance armée en Maurétanie de l’annexion à l’époque sévérienne. Un essai d’appréciation’, *Cahiers de Tunisie: revue des sciences humaines* 29 (1981), 55–56. Contra: M. Euzennat, ‘Les troubles de Maurétanie’, *Comptes Rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 128.2 (1984), 382–383.

⁴⁷ These included the emperor’s deliberate augmentation of a favourite’s prestige, the lack of equestrians of suitable rank, the increase of the procurator’s authority vis-à-vis the indigenous population on both sides of the frontier in order to facilitate administrative measures or road constructions, and even “la volonté (...) de donner plus de réalité à la liaison entre les deux Maurétanies.” Frézouls 1981, op. cit. (n. 46), 51–52. This stands in contrast to the straight adherence to the traditional interpretation he expressed formerly in E. Frézouls, ‘Les Baquates et la province romaine de Tingitane’, *Bulletin d’archéologie marocaine* 2 (1957), 109.

untenable as the office of *procurator pro legato* appears too irregularly in the Mauretaniae (and beyond). The argument that *pro legato* implies the extraordinary acquisition of *imperium*, military power which regular governmental *procuratores* did not have, is strengthened by the synchronic attestations of a *procurator pro legato* and military expeditions lead by equestrian officers in Tingitana in the early years of the reign of Claudius.⁴⁸ Similar efforts have been made to question the traditional interpretation of certain special offices as indicators of warfare. For instance, while the most zealous defendants of the antagonistic perspective interpreted Sex. Sentius Caecilianus' assignment as *legatus Augusti pro praetore ordinandae utriusque Mauretaniae* around AD 75 as an attestation of conflict, it has also been put forward that the office was not a military assignment but comprised administrative activities.⁴⁹ A counterargument may be formed by the literary attestation of a *proconsul extra sortem*. Around AD 45 this office was given to Ser. Sulpicius Galba *ad ordinandam prouinciam et intestina dissensione et barbarorum tumultu inquietam*. At least in the latter case, *ordinare* clearly implicates a military task.⁵⁰ The traditional view is obviously confirmed by precedents, namely by the *legati* sent to Mauretania to establish direct Roman rule about thirty years before the assignment of Sex. Sentius Caecilianus.⁵¹

Positive political integration trajectories have been constructed and have received much attention. Political relations in Mauretania do not seem to have been uniformly unstable and antagonistic. In Caesariensis, imperial loyalty becomes apparent in the case of the Maccues, who subscribed to typical negotiation systems of patronage.⁵² Near the empire's

⁴⁸ J. Spaul, 'The Roman "frontier" in Morocco', *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London* 30 (1994), 113. Cf. Plin., *nat.* 5.11 and *AE* 1924, 66.

⁴⁹ *AE* 1941, 79 (l. 12–13). Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 149–153; Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 103–104, versus: P. Romanelli, *Storia delle province romane dell'Africa* (Roma 1959), 296; T. Kotula, 'Culte provincial et romanisation. Le cas des deux Maurétanies', *Eos* 63 (1975), 403–04; Frézouls 1981, op. cit. (n. 46), 58; Euzennat 1984, op. cit. (n. 46), 375. According to Migliario, the office comprised both administrative and military responsibilities: E. Migliario, 'Gentes foederatae. Per una riconsiderazione dei rapporti Romano-Berberi in Mauretania Tingitana', *Rendiconti della Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 10.3 (1999), 442. Similarly: A. Marcone, 'Nota sulla sedentarizzazione forzata delle tribù nomadi in Africa alla luce di alcune iscrizioni', in A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa romana. Atti del IX convegno di studio* (Nuoro 1991), 107.

⁵⁰ Suet., *Galba* 7.1.

⁵¹ M. Licinius Crassus Frugi in AD 40–41 (*CIL* VI, 31721 = *AE* 1973, 16); and Hosidius Geta and Suetonius Paulinus in AD 42 (Dio Cass. 60.9.1–5).

⁵² *AE* 1904, 150. A person of lesser status has been remembered as "*defensor gentis*" in Numidia, which also points to the possibility to negotiate Roman policy (*CIL* VIII, 8270). A similar "*defensor*" named Flavius Geminus appears in *CIL* VIII, 25902 = *AE* 1897, 48 =

mountainous periphery in southwest Tingitana, the abovementioned ‘colloquium inscriptions’ of Volubilis are now understood as commemorations of the reaffirmation of peace between Rome and the Baquates when a new king came into power.⁵³ In my view, these formal recognitions of local leadership no doubt weakened local resistance against Roman dominance. At the same time, these *colloquia* actually show that typical features of nomadic political structures were unaffected by external influences – like the absence of a real dynastic sequence and the easy come-and-go of confederate structures. Instead, they point to Roman acknowledgement of their fluidity.⁵⁴ The *Tabula Banasitana* gives an idea of the deliberate attribution of Roman citizenship to cooperative leaders of the Zegrenses. Such diplomatic efforts unquestionably succeeded in enfeebling tensions by providing formal recognition of local leaders. This approach lessened the importance of a dense military occupation. These observations correspond to Melani’s observation that the absence of a large army in North Africa may indicate that the Romans had to deal merely with “conflitti di lieve entità e relativamente ristretto pericolo”.⁵⁵ The low intensity of the conflicts may have been the outcome of Roman political attempts to tie local kings and kinglets to its cause and to prevent the establishment of large confederations.

In contrast to a number of supporters of the antagonistic train of thought, champions of the symbiosis perspective have argued that the advent of Roman domination did cause socio-cultural changes to indigenous (semi-)nomadic societies. In these studies, the ‘survivances’ are not longer explained as deliberate acts of traditional “résistance culturelle”. Rather, they have been perceived as essential features of the mixed culture, which developed in the absence of a deliberate Romanization policy.⁵⁶ It has been related that the increasing influence of the market and Roman

151 = 1998, 1579. Cf. Whittaker 1978, op. cit. (n. 16), 354. In the latter case, however, the interests of tenant farmers are at stake. Hamdoune has related that these personal meetings may form part of pre-Roman traditional ways of conferring and recognizing tribal loyalty: C. Hamdoune, ‘Un aspect particulier des relations entre les Romains et les *gentes*: le patronat’, *Antiquités africaines* 37 (2001), 164.

⁵³ E. Frézouls, ‘Rome et la Maurétanie Tingitane: un constat d’échec?’, *Antiquités africaines* 16 (1980), 80; Frézouls 1981, op. cit. (n. 46), 49; Spaul 1994, op. cit. (n. 48), 105–108. In fact, these views tend to converge with the opinion of Romanelli expressed long time ago, cf. Romanelli 1959, op. cit. (n. 49), 373.

⁵⁴ Only one *princeps* seems to have been appointed or supported by the Romans (Aurelius Canarta). His son’s appearance in Rome may not be coincidental (*CIL* VI, 1800 = *AE* 1941, 118).

⁵⁵ Melani 1994, op. cit. (n. 21), 173.

⁵⁶ K.-P. John, ‘Nordafrika im Widerstand gegen Rom’, *Klio (Beihefte)* 62 (1980), 595.

efforts to regulate and tax indigenous land use sparked processes of economic individualization. These processes went together with a reform of social organization, which became less egalitarian and hence more apt to the Roman social order.⁵⁷ In some instances, the elites of these tribes became eager to adopt Roman socio-cultural traits. An example can be found, again, among the Musulamii. Various inscriptions point out that both the epigraphic habit – of course, not a new socio-cultural phenomenon in North Africa – and the Latin language were adopted by certain members of the Musulamii.⁵⁸ Here, an important impact may have come from mediating communities, which Saddington termed the Empire's semi-periphery, namely the *municipia* and *coloniae*.⁵⁹ Interestingly, tribal territories may have been tied to such urban nuclei. Fentress has argued with respect to the Musulamii that they became the *attributi* of Theveste, since no boundary stones mark a separation between their territory and that of the *colonia*.⁶⁰ Their leaders were incorporated into the town's elite, as can be seen in the cases of A. Larcus Macrinus and Sextius Victor, both *princeps gentis Numidarum*.⁶¹ Hence, this process could have engendered a change of traditional social structure, and the social and cultural values and practices by which it was legitimized. A different situation can be perceived among the Nybgenii. Their lands were far more infertile, and after delimitation they seem to have formed a *ciuitas stipendiaria* centred on the Civitas Nybgeniorum without any ties with *municipia* or *coloniae* nearby.⁶²

The advent of Roman control and the connection to the market economy in Tripolitania seems to have sparked the development of agriculture in the pre-desert.⁶³ This process may have coincided with the formation

⁵⁷ Fentress 2006, op. cit. (n. 26), 21–22; 30.

⁵⁸ AE 1904, 76. AE 1917/18, 39. AE 1980, 971. CIL VIII, 28035. In comparison to the *princeps gentis Numidarum* mentioned below the integration of these tribe members into the local social and political town structures is much more difficult to trace.

⁵⁹ D.B. Saddington, 'The parameters of romanization', in Maxfield & Dobson 1991, op. cit. (n. 27), 416.

⁶⁰ Fentress 1979, op. cit. (n. 35), 76.

⁶¹ Among other examples: AE 1905, 10 and CIL VIII, 8826 = 20628.

⁶² Delimitation of the Tiberian period cf. CIL VIII, 22786a–k, during the reign of Trajan: CIL VIII, 22787 = AE 1910, 20 and CIL VIII, 22788. The *civitas* was made a *municipium* by Hadrian: CIL VIII, 83.

⁶³ R. Rebuffat, 'L'arrivée des Romains en Tripolitaine intérieure', *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Série B, Afrique du Nord* 19 (1983), 249, 252; M. Reddé, 'Occupation humaine et mise en valeur économique dans les vallées du nord de la Libye: l'exemple du Wadi Tlal', *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Série B, Afrique du Nord* 19 (1983), 179–180.

of a rural aristocracy of tribal origin. Mattingly suggested that Roman land delimitation could have played a crucial role in the deliberate articulation of elite status.⁶⁴ I believe this suggestion cannot remain undoubted since the practice of delimitation of tribal lands has been attested by boundary stones, which identify the indigenous actors collectively, not individually.⁶⁵ The perception of cadastration as a tool to promote social stratification within a tribal society seems more seductive than Whittaker's interpretation of the delimitations as measures to separate and prevent large confederations. The latter's viewpoints on the general continuity of traditional social and economic relations are also difficult to support in this context, although it is unclear to what extent official(ly conferred) landownership differed from indigenous conception and practice, and to what extent the "systematic exploitation of other people in the region" implied social continuity or disruption.⁶⁶

3. *A Quest for Discrepancy*

Some major conclusions can be drawn from this overview. The most important conclusion deals with the apparent impulse to perceive or impose a certain linearity or uniformity upon the relations between nomadic and sedentary populations in Roman North Africa. The view of an ever present threat to Roman rule, of endemic resistance, should be nuanced. At the same time, one should be aware that the eagerness felt in more recent research to reconstruct relationships that were utterly peaceful easily makes one present new truisms based on the highly controversial interpretation or avoidance of important evidence. One of the major setbacks to the devotee of a particular perspective is the fact that the huge amount of assumptions based on generalizations are so easy to adjust for anyone who takes a closer look at the evidence. One should abandon the idea that the Moors or the Romans had shown standard behaviour that did not change over the long time span of the Roman occupation of

⁶⁴ Mattingly 1986, op. cit. (n. 39), 52 and cf. 61 for his view on a deliberate Roman policy to encourage "local elites to identify common interests, involving the latter in the consolidation of their local political and social dominance and the concentration of wealth and land in their hands".

⁶⁵ *AE* 1940, 70. Similarly, *AE* 1999, 815. *AE* 2004, 1878. *CIL* VIII, 270 = 11451 = 23246 = *AE* 1907, 17. *CIL* VIII, 4676 = 28073a = *AE* 1898, 39a. *CIL* VIII, 10667 = 16692. *CIL* VIII, 28073b = *AE* 1898, 39b; *AE* 1907, 19–21. *AE* 1923, 26.

⁶⁶ Whittaker 1978, op. cit. (n. 16), 350; Mattingly 1986, op. cit. (n. 39), 52 (quote).

North Africa. Instead, one should continue to explore the highly discrepant integration paths of specific tribes. One should take the elements into account that led to the so-called “differenzierende politik” or “rapporti ambigui” of Rome towards the inhabitants, and her motives.⁶⁷ In the same vein, we should at least try to discern which internal and external concerns and impulses influenced indigenous attitudes.

Especially in Mauretania the sources tend to give a highly differentiated perspective on the political relationship between nomads and Romans. While the traditional view of ever bellicose and rebellious Moors should be abandoned, more recent attempts to reconstruct a wholly different image, of persistent tranquillity and peace, should definitely be countered as well. A clear example of such a recent ‘minimalist’ reconstruction can be found in Spaul’s revisionist treatment of the evidence on the character of Roman rule and local resistance in Mauretania Tingitana. In order to defend the argument that the province was hardly struck by internal disorder, the author had to minimize or simply neglect evidence like the Moorish raids in Baetica and the importance of the appointment of the *procuratores pro legato*.⁶⁸ The same author suggested that the enemies of the Salenses were wild animals, despite the fact that the neighbouring tribe of the Autololes are even literally attested as a serious threat to the town and epigraphic evidence reports endemic injustice and theft of livestock.⁶⁹ The large military presence in the province may indeed have

⁶⁷ Such a strategy of differentiation may be evoked by Strabo: “...for the divisions of the country have been made in various ways, inasmuch as its occupants have been several in number and the Romans have dealt with them in different ways at different times, treating some as friends and others as enemies, the result being that different parts were taken away from, or presented to, different peoples, but not in the same way.” (Strabo 17.3.12). Transl.: H.L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* VII, LCL (London & Cambridge 1967), 178–181. G. Waldherr, ‘Turba Maurorum. Byzantiner und Mauren in Nordafrika’, in H. Heftner, K. Tomaschitz (eds.), *Ad fontes! Festschrift für Gerhard Dobesch zum fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag am 15. September 2004* (Wien 2004), 839. Melani 1994, op. cit. (n. 21), 173.

⁶⁸ On the Moorish incursions, see, apart from archaeological traces: HA, *Aur.* 21.1. *CIL* VI, 41140 = *AE* 1934, 155 = 1957, 121 = 1958, 26. *CIL* II2/5, 783 = *CIL* II, 2015 = *AE* 1961, 340. *CIL* II, 1120. *CIL* VIII, 2786. HA, *Aur.* 22.11–12. HA, *Sept. Sev.* 2.3–4. On the *procuratores pro legato*, cf. *supra*.

⁶⁹ J. Spaul, ‘Across the “frontier” in Tingitana’, in W. Groenman-Van Waateringe, B.L. Van Beek, W.J.H. Willems, S.L. Wynia (eds.), *XVIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Kerkrade 1995)* (Oxford 1997), 255. *AE* 1931, 36 and 38. Cf. Plin., *nat.* 5.5. Frézouls’ argument that it was just a minor conflict is more persuasive: Frézouls 1980, op. cit. (n. 53), 89; Frézouls 1981, op. cit. (n. 46), 63. Similarly, Rebuffat: ‘il s’agit proprement d’un brigandage’. Rebuffat 1974, op. cit. (n. 46), 502. The hypothesis of a serious confrontation is defended by Rachet 1970, op. cit. (n. 1), 195; Benabou 1976, op. cit. (n. 1), 137; Sigman 1977, op. cit. (n. 4), 427–429.

induced the situation that “only a very rash chieftain would have been prepared to face an army of that size”, yet its presence as well points out how precarious the attained stability may have been.⁷⁰ Minimalist and maximalist reconstructions tend to contain similar flaws.

How can we explain the discrepancies in the relations between the nomadic and the sedentary communities in Roman Africa? What could have determined the creation of the divergent individual integration trajectories of nomadic tribes?

Firstly, I argue that the indigenous susceptibility to social and cultural changes may have varied according to tribal structure and the specific type of nomadism practiced. The more the nomadic aspect had been developed within the indigenous society, the more the traditional societal organization underwent disruption and the more counter-developments were imminent. Thus the same developments and influences could have been perceived differently among desert nomads and semi-nomads. This assumption makes one doubt the value of Burian's theory concerning the economic and political implications of what he perceived as a Roman settlement policy. He posed that the creation of reservations fostered the settlement of the tribes, who subsequently became fighters for the Roman cause because of their changed economic basis.⁷¹ But if one acknowledges the observation that these so-called reservations did not exclusively consist of infertile lands and that some tribes already comprised of an extensive agricultural segment before the Roman conquest, then the economic explanation of their changed political affiliation becomes less appealing.

Concerning the political relations between nomads and sedentary groups, the size of the tribes Rome encountered, as well as their potential to form large confederations, could have been important as well. One would expect that smaller tribes were more likely to form ideal targets for Roman expansionist ambitions. On the other hand, large tribes and confederations living on the frontier could be a threat Rome felt necessary to remove. It is noteworthy that whenever ancient sources go beyond general labels to identify the rebels (like Gaetuli, Numidii or Mauri), merely great tribes and confederations have been mentioned (Garamantes, Musulamii). Unfortunately, many attestations of conflict do not give a more precise identification of Rome's enemies. It is to be expected that

⁷⁰ Quote: Spaul 1994, *op. cit.* (n. 48), 116.

⁷¹ Burian 1961, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 169.

small conflicts in which minor tribes were involved, are more likely to remain unattested.

Interactions and influences were less likely developed in the case of tribes living in more remote regions, in areas, which were difficult to access or situated across the frontier. Other tribes with a more permeable socio-economic structure and cultural matrix that enabled interaction between both Roman and other indigenous cultures could have widened the impact significantly by mediating these contacts and influences.⁷² This may have been one cause of different trajectories observed between the tribes of Tingitana and those of Numidia.

The existence, amongst the indigenous elites, of earlier experiences in the mediation between their tribes and other dominant sedentary powers may have played a significant role as well. In part, positive integration paths in North Africa could have been facilitated by earlier contacts with other empires, as had been the case for the semi-nomadic tribes living in the hinterland of Carthage and other Punic settlements. The Roman client kings of Mauretania, Juba II and Ptolemaeus no doubt exercised supreme power on a number of (semi-)nomadic tribes although they were imposed on them. The use of highly mobile Moorish *auxilia* against Tacfarinas gives evidence of the loyalty they enjoyed by part of the (semi-)nomadic tribes they were expected to control. Just a part of them, however, since both Dio Cassius and Tacitus attest that their rule was not accepted by other tribes who took up arms against them.⁷³ The Maccues of Caesariensis also seem to assort to this category of tribes that had connections with pre-Roman empires, as they provided auxiliaries to the Punic army during the Second Punic War.⁷⁴

Roman political and economic aspirations could have played an important role as well, and this was to some extent related to the geography of the region. Not every part of North Africa paid off the efforts to ensure Roman domination, or could sustain large settlements. The development of an export oriented market economy and its protection could have encouraged a more intensive effort to control and fully subjugate Numidian and Gaetulian tribes in the east. On the other hand, the poor revenue

⁷² Cf. Bloemers 1991, op. cit. (n. 27), 453.

⁷³ Dio Cass., 55.28.3–4. Tac., *Ann.* 4.23. On the (unsuccessful) role of the client kings to assure order in the region, and its possible impact on Gaius' decision to dissolve the protectorate, cf. W. Vanacker, 'Conflicts and instability in Roman North Africa and Gaius' *Realpolitik*', in: *Latomus* (forthcoming).

⁷⁴ Plb., 3.33.15.

and low strategic importance of the western part of Mauretania may have led to a political strategy of *laissez-faire* and indirect control that suited the Romans better. Ancient military strategists, it has been related, may have looked upon Tingitana as a buffer zone only, defending the province of Baetica against Spanish marauders.

Finally, Roman aspirations of conquest or exploitation should not always be perceived as ever-present and static. Lawless posed that the lack of sources on rebellions and military operations tend to indicate that *Caesariensis* was marked by relative tranquillity during the first decades of its existence and may well have been the result of Roman *laissez-faire* and disinterest in the interior of the province, rather than of successful military deterrence.⁷⁵ The silence in the sources can either point to the presence of positive relations, or to the absence of any intense relations at all.

4. Conclusion

The nature and availability of the sources inevitably makes any attempt to reconstruct specific integration trajectories of nomadic tribes in Roman North Africa incomplete and susceptible to conjecture. Many tribes have been mentioned occasionally by an ancient cartographer or encyclopaedist but have not been attested otherwise. The question then rises to what extent the specific integration stories of better known tribes are related to those tribes who are less or not traceable in the record. Indirect indications can be provided by the location and density of Roman military constructions or the creation of urban centres, but scholars have argued that their presence could have been motivated by other reasons than military concerns.⁷⁶

It can be sensible to assume that the lack of sources describing social and cultural integration exactly reveals a segregated society. However, in many regions political and economic symbiosis may have predominated over the processes of expulsion or containment of the nomads. One should

⁷⁵ Lawless 1978, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 161. However, as it is mentioned above, there may have been some attestations of conflicts.

⁷⁶ See for instance Janon's views on the military occupation of the Aurès (note 28). Morizot, however, defends a more conservative view on the subject: P. Morizot, 'Deux ouvrages militaires de la province de Numidie révélés par la photographie aérienne: le camp de Bedoura et le fort de Yabous', in Groenman-Van Waateringe, Van Beek, Willems, Wynia 1997, *op. cit.* (n. 69), 450.

not derive from its absence in the record – which is essentially the product of an elite that was essentially urban and sedentary – that nomadism was efficiently repulsed.

To conclude, the case studies discussed above clearly show a large diversity of political, juridical, economic and cultural integration patterns. They indicate that nomads were not ‘naturally’ hostile to integration, and that Roman policy not merely aimed at the inclusion of the sedentary while containing or expulsing the nomad population.