CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE: ONE EMPIRE, MANY CULTURES

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Integration and Romanization

The conference that this volume of Impact of Empire is based upon, was dedicated to “Integration at Rome and in the Roman World”. Looking at the call for papers for that conference, we read the following: “We are therefore explicitly looking for papers that deal with the juridical, social and political aspects of this process of inclusion...on the following themes: integration and juridical statutes, Roman citizenship and local citizenship, cities and tribes; integration and political history, conception of Imperium Romanum, provinciae, ciuitates and imperial power; integration and social history, Roman concept of ciuitas, local elites and ordines; integration and ‘Romanness’, frameworks of social life, cultural and cultural practices.”

I have quoted this at some length, because this passage shows how much integration is taken for granted. The word “integration” is repeated in the context of many different fields – actually covering all of society except the economy which is not singled out, but which might be considered to fall under the heading of “social life” and “cultural practices”.1 It also summarizes all of this as a “process of inclusion”. The integrative power of the empire is the point of departure. As the French title of the conference, «Les voies de l’intégration à Rome et dans le monde Romain», made clear, contributors were supposed to study the ways in which integration was arrived at, its modalities. Maybe one was also to look at persisting local diversity and at those missing out because they could not or would not be integrated, but it seems fairly obvious that participants were to consider above all the success story of the Roman empire as a progressively more integrated whole – until it starts disintegrating again.2

1 J. Hoffmann-Salz, Die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der römischen Eroberung. Vergleichende Untersuchungen der Provinzen Hispania Tarraconensis, Africa Proconsularis und Syria (Stuttgart 2011) is an exemplary study of integration in the economic field – with conclusions which can readily be compared with my argument below (see esp. 441–498).

2 About those left out of the integration process, eloquently: R. Hingley, Globalizing Roman culture. Unity, diversity and empire (Abingdon 2005), 116. Also, apparent integration
“Success story” is a way of putting it that would probably be disputed: integration and inclusion could be used in a neutral sense. Or could they? Let us look at a recent example of a study of integration. In the volume entitled *Comment les Gaules devinrent romaines*, there are contributions on new administrative structures, urbanisation, innovative burial practices, changing patterns of land use, especially the establishment of a villa economy, and the introduction of “viticulture, oléiculture et fructiculture”. The book is a valuable collection of studies, well-documented and nuanced in its interpretations. Its authors have taken on board the debate on Romanization; it is obvious they have read Greg Woolf: they take care to show that the Gauls were not as barbaric as previous generations thought they were, and that although the Romans may have romanized Gaul, the Gauls had their input into the process. But even if this is never stated explicitly, it is to be understood that much of what the Romans bring (and which gets accepted by the locals and then takes on its own dynamics and so on) is an improvement upon the previous situation – certainly the vines, olive trees and a range of fruit-bearing shrubs and trees seem to get the attention attributed to them because they are essential for France, at least gastronomically, to come into existence. So it must be all for the best. The importance of a Roman past for the nation state, or, in a more recent ideological turn, the Roman empire as a precedent for, if not forerunner of, a united Europe, seems to imply that being conquered by Rome is “a good thing”. Rome as the purveyor of literacy, advanced building techniques and agricultural practices, an infrastructure that in part is still functioning, of Christianity and so on: it could hardly be bad. So when we speak can be used as what has been called “transculturation”: the mimicry of the dominant culture in order to mock or subvert it.

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3 P. Ouzoulias and L. Tranoy (eds.), *Comment les Gaules devinrent romaines* (Paris 2010).
5 Of course, there are several who argue for the opposite view: the bad Roman imperialists – because imperialists and empires are bad altogether. Such “empire bashing” is a fruitless affair, burdened with anachronistic notions. For a recent example, see T.H. Parsons, *The Rule of Empires. Those who built them, those who endured them, and why they always fall* (Oxford 2010). This is sympathetic in its attack on neo-cons and their imperialist nostalgia – but looking for the villain of the piece, I would tend to end up with the nation state. Parsons sees empires as extractive and exploitative. From the top down, these institutions seem rational and relatively benign, but in reality it took intimidation, naked force, and institutional slavery to produce all the grand monuments and cultural achievements of the ancient world (23). It is intriguing to see how this is undercut by an interesting analysis of the cultural make-up of the empire. The Romans are said to have been more open to easing the line between citizen and subject than their successors in
of integration into the Roman empire of areas and peoples that are conquered by Rome, that generally is seen as a success story, from at least one of the above perspectives.

I am aware that I do Comment les Gaules devinrent romaines injustice, but its argument reminds me of the famous scene from the movie The Life of Brian, by the Monty Python team, in which Reg, the would-be leader of a Jewish rebellion against Roman rule, rhetorically asks: “what have the Romans ever done for us”? His followers do not recognize it for a rhetorical question and come up with: “The aqueduct. And the sanitation! And the roads”. Reg retorts: “Well yes obviously the roads… the roads go without saying. But apart from the aqueduct, the sanitation and the roads…” His audience goes on to mention irrigation, medicine, education, health, wine and, of course, how could one forget, public baths! “And it’s safe to walk in the streets at night now. Yes, they certainly know how to keep order… let’s face it, they’re the only ones who could in a place like this”. Reg, exasperated: “All right… all right… but apart from better sanitation and medicine and education and irrigation and public health and roads and a freshwater system and baths and public order… what have the Romans done for us?” “They brought peace!”. How deftly the scriptwriters have moved from material items starting with the aqueduct to the immaterial benefits of being part of the Roman empire: safety, order, peace. They are supposed to have taken their cue from a Talmudic passage criticizing Roman achievements as purely Roman self advancement, of no benefit to the conquered. But this ancient denial of the beneficial nature of Roman rule (and its modern counterpart) is in fact put under discussion here by having Jewish revolutionaries express a most favourable opinion about Roman rule.

But I do not so much object to the idea of the Roman empire as a success, as to the idea of a Roman success story. Talk about “what the Romans bring”, all these “Roman concepts” and “Romanness” in the call for papers seems to bring us back to the discourse of Romanization. Some might not find this objectionable because they never rejected the concept. In fact,
It is vulgar, ugly, anachronistic and misleading. It calls up the image of Rome on the one side and the conquered society on the other, both more or less static and homogenous. However, there are not two but multiple parties involved, and not one of these parties is static or homogenous. It also implies a Roman point of view, and does so in its very etymology – no amount of redefinition can sanitize this away. Surely, integration was in part a Roman policy. The much-quoted words of Agricola are not just Tacitean rhetoric; they describe what Romans tried to do to secure their territories. But the way the Romans viewed things, is not necessarily what they really looked like. Besides, policy is normative, and the real world behaves differently. We risk an enormous simplification of the complex processes at work in the creation of the Roman empire. This has all been shown many times over, in decades of debate about Romanization, of debunking of the very concept, laying bare its ideological roots. But I daresay we still have this whole idea of Romanization at the back – or front – of our minds. It resonates in the very notions of integration and inclusion as laid out in the call for papers.

Integration and Homogenization

But cannot integration be used in a perfectly neutral sense? Yes, I suppose one can use it that way. But still I want to problematize the very notion of integration. I cannot help thinking that the only way we can progress towards a better understanding of the extremely complex issues underlying words like ‘integration’ or ‘inclusion’, is by comparison, more specifically by confronting (our interpretations of) the ancient sources with social science models based on empirical evidence from the field of migration studies and studies of culture contact and acculturation.

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8 The whole idea of a set of “original cultures”, seen as unified, stable, persistent phenomena, which then give rise to hybrids (supposedly less authentic), should be rejected. What we see are new phenomena under new conditions. As E. Shils, ‘Roots: the sense of place and past: the cultural gains and losses of migration,’ in W. McNeill and R.S. Adams (eds.), Human migration. Patterns and policies (Bloomington 1978), 404–429, 417 has put it: “all cultures are amalgamated cultures” (my italics). Pure unadulterated culture is a “naïve romanticism”. So-called unitary cultures are not unitary, not in their origin and not in their development.
9 On the importance of an empirical evidence base, see G. Myrdal, Asian drama. An inquiry into the poverty of nations (New York 1968), 24: “Generalizations about reality… precede specification and verification. They constitute ‘theory’ in research. Theory… must no
This comparative effort might easily be lost amongst the minutiae of juridical and political developments, and so on. Not for the first time will I quote my mentor Henk Versnel: “the classicist must allow himself to ‘become’ a psychologist (or a sociologist, anthropologist, ethologist for that matter) as far as his health, capabilities and efforts will allow him. The alternative is that he refrains categorically from any interpretation in the real sense of the word”.

Thirty years on I still find that even with a subject such as “integration” – the concept itself of course derived from the social sciences – the input of these disciplines is overlooked or avoided: Comment les Gaules devinrent romaines has a bibliography at the back of about 600 titles – some four of these are from the field of social science, all the others are by archaeologists, ancient historians, epigraphers. Or, not to limit ourselves to a single example: in the Proceedings of the 1981 Cortone colloquium on acculturative processes in the ancient world, there is an excellent introduction by Giuseppe Nenci who discusses the introduction of the word “acculturation” by J.W. Powell in 1880 (in his Introduction to the study of Indian languages), and its ultimate formulation in the famous ‘Memorandum for the study of acculturation’ by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits of 1936, and who analyses the debate about the term as supposedly an example of the imperialistic gaze (which it is not).

Nenci took his cue from the XIIe Congrès international des sciences historiques, Vienna 1965, where acculturation had already been a main topic, and from the VIe Congrès international des études classiques, Madrid 1974, which took it up again, as “Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien”. How surprising that there is no or almost no theoretical background to any of the papers in the over 1100 pages of the Cortone Proceedings (including papers authored or co-authored by Nenci). In fact, at the conference of which this volume is the result, I was struck by the absence of an explicit theoretical and
methodological social science framework in most papers. I am not conducting a polemic along the lines of Moses Finley, saying that there is but one way in which to do ancient history; I am merely advocating that it is profitable to look over the fence, when one is after “interpretation in the real sense of the word”.

So what – not considering the Romanization issue, already dealt with above, though that and what follows cannot really be seen apart – would be the problem with “integration”? At first sight, it seems quite obvious that integration is what we see happening within the Roman imperial context: the extension of Roman citizenship, the establishment of Roman forms of government, the creation of a new infrastructure, the spread of Latin, and of cultural norms and forms ultimately derived from a Mediterranean context. We end up with an empire of which every part has a lot of features in common with any other part. A Roman military presence underlies such convergence: even if the locals are willing partners, it all started with conquest. This is more or less why both now and then the phrase “The Roman Empire” was deemed an appropriate designation for the political unit in question. All this might seem self-evident. Of course, we then can go on to look at the local diversity underlying this imperial unity. Before long we will be speaking of the global and the local which develop hand in hand, and one might even be tempted to use the word “glocalization”. And this seems self-evident as well. Of course, in

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12 With the honourable exception of Emily Hemelrijk, Clifford Ando, and especially Rens Tacoma (who also happens to be a pupil of, inter alii, Henk Versnel) and Wouter Vanacker (I base myself on the abstracts and the papers as given at the conference, not on the edited texts in this volume).

13 ‘Mediterranisation’, a concept used in paleoanthropology, in studies of flora and fauna, especially of the Black Sea region, and in studies of diet and of global warming, was recently re-defined and set to work as a cultural concept: see A. Schellhout, “Mediterranisation” of Celtic-Germanic religion, unpublished MA thesis, Leiden 2012 [available online at the Leiden Repository, https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/]. This certainly is a big improvement over Romanization; but it still obfuscates the true state of affairs.

14 E. Morawska, A sociology of immigration. (Re)Making Multifaceted America (Basingstoke 2009), 147 defines glocalization as the implanting of outside elements into everyday existence of the inhabitants of receiver-country localities so that they become a natural part of their orientation and practices. Cf. ibid., 2: “This simultaneous process of homogenization and diversification characteristic of the contemporary world whereby international migration plays a crucial role has been called by sociologists glocalisation”. To the aspect of diversification we will have ample opportunity to return. One should not use “glocalization” when dealing with the ancient world, because global is the wrong word to apply to Antiquity, also to the Roman Empire, where things were not literally global (App., Roman History, Preface 7: “they [i.e. the Roman emperors] wisely wish to preserve what they have rather than to extend the empire endlessly”), and more importantly because globalization is a concept that exclusively addresses recent historical developments. See F.G. Naerebout,
an empire stretching from Scotland to the Sahara desert, there will be
local variations. The local element may be stronger – as when the Roman
cultural presence is seen as a mere veneer beneath which the local is alive
and well and ready to bounce back as soon as the Roman influence, read
military might, wanes; or it may be weaker – as when some parts of
the empire are thoroughly integrated into the Roman cultural world (roman-
ized, as it is still called despite this life-time of debate on the concept of
Romanization already referred to).15 And this seems self-evident again.
The ins and outs are debatable, but the main outlines are clear enough.
Or are they?

Integration as sketched in the above outline is about homogenization:
the constituent parts of the empire, despite different points of departure
and different trajectories, are made more similar. We find this notion
reiterated left and right: “ordering the disorderly” and “standardizing the
multiform”, moving towards “a unitary symbolic system” or “a consensual
identity”.16 Even the most careful conclude that there was “a convergence
between the desires of certain provincials and the publicized aims of
Rome”.17 One could question whether there was homogenization at all,
and if there was (any), whether it was intentional or merely accidental.

‘Global Romans? Is globalisation a concept that is going to help us understand the Roman
empire?’, *Talanta*, 38–39 (2008), 149–170. Add the forceful plea by J.A. Scholte, ‘Globaliza-
tion,’ s.v. in R. Robertson and J.A. Scholte (eds.), *Encyclopedia of globalization* (New York
2007), 526–532, 529, to restrict the concept of globalization to “the unprecedented growth
of transplanetary connectivity in recent times”. Happily, we do not need the word ‘global-
ization’, nor globalization theory. A useful concept such as “connectivity” can be put to
work without the globalization framework.

15 Cf. F. Millar, ‘Local cultures in the Roman Empire: Libyan, Punic, and Latin in Roman
Africa,’ in Id., *Government, society, and culture in the Roman empire* (Chapel Hill 2004; first
clude for one area that Graeco-Roman culture remained the merest facade, for another
that it completely obliterated a native culture. More commonly, we will find a mixture
or co-existence of cultures. In such a situation, again, the local element might have been
culturally and socially insignificant, or, as it was in Egypt and in Judaea, embodied in a
coherent traditional civilization with its own language, literature, customs, religion, and
(in Egypt) art forms”.

16 J. Farrell, *Latin language and Latin culture, from ancient to modern times* (Cam-
bridge 2001), 1; K. Hopkins, ‘The political economy of the Roman empire,’ in I. Morris and
W. Scheidel (eds.), *The dynamics of ancient empires. State power from Assyria to Byzantium*
(Oxford 2009), 186 (who takes care to stress that the Romanness that is the yardstick of
unity or consensus is changing in the very process of integration). E.M. Orlin, *Foreign cults
in Rome. Creating a Roman empire* (Oxford 2010), 7–8: in the encounter between Rome
and “others”, which is not so much “Romanization” as negotiation between two parties,
Romanness is taken for granted, but it cannot be taken for granted as it itself is negotiated
in the encounter with others.

17 Hingley, op. cit. (n. 2), 63 (he uses the word “acculturation”).
Burbank and Cooper, in their popular diachronic account of imperial power, maintain that it is the nation state that homogenizes – it proclaims commonality (even where this is untrue). The empire, however, declares the non-equivalence of its multiple populations. But both are incorporative. Incorporative to me seems to be on the same level as integration. Homogenization is what may follow as a consequence of incorporation, or must follow as a consequence of (a policy of) integration. The main point I want to make, however, is a different one: that the very fact of integration (convergence) carries divergence within itself.

Integration and Current Debate

The moment we use the word “integration” we enter into an arena of intense scholarly debate by social scientists and social historians, and, not unrelated of course, of equally intense political debate, reacting to but also shaping public opinion. Let us start with the political debate: this has been ongoing ever since minorities, whether indigenous or immigrant, were seen as in some sense problematic; this is of course very much linked to the rise of the modern nation state, especially in its nineteenth-century guise – which is still with us. In fairly recent history, in Western Europe, we have gone through a phase of multiculturalism: the conviction that different strands of culture can exist side by side; cultural diversity is viewed as an asset. Now the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and the ideal is that everyone should assimilate to the majority culture of whatever region; cultural diversity is seen as a liability.

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18 All foregoing expressions are taken from J. Burbank & F. Cooper, Empires in world history. Power and the politics of difference (Princeton 2010), 8. Cf. the special issue of the journal Monde(s) Histoire, Espaces, Relations, n° 2, novembre 2012, which presents a discussion of “empires” in general, and offers a debate about the Burbank-Cooper volume in particular (Empires. De la Chine ancienne à nos jours, Paris 2011, in the French translation). There, S. Benoist reviews the Roman part of Burbank-Cooper. In this context one should consider the possibility that only the Roman empire amongst empires is integrative, while other empires want to avoid integration (Clifford Ando, in discussion during the conference).

19 I do not use divergence in the sense of K. Pomeranz, The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy (Princeton 2000), which usage was taken up by W. Scheidel, ‘From the “Great Convergence” to the “First Great Divergence”: Roman and Qin-Han state formation and its aftermath,’ in Id., (ed.), Rome and China. Comparative perspectives on ancient world empires (Oxford 2009), 11–23, nor do I mean divergence in the sense of Hingley, op. cit. (n. 2), 71: alternative, deviant or discrepant readings of common cultural traits.
Both ways of looking at things depend on the presuppositions that, first, diversity is actually or potentially problematic and should be “managed”, and, secondly, the erroneous idea that such large-scale and long-term processes as culture contact and its acculturative consequences can be managed at all, by some kind of social engineering. Consequently, “integration” has become a loaded concept: it is supposed to happen, or not, or to be impossible, it is either a good thing or a bad thing. Popular opinion is usually less variable than political positioning, and tends to reject diversity and prefer unity – but without much consistency. Politicians may either go with or against popular opinion – they may also try to influence popular opinion to further their own ends.

Scholarly debate in part reflects the political debate. Especially social scientists can be called upon to provide the research to prop up political decision making. But in the end the ideologically charged contributions get filtered out, and we end up with a view of societies that is evidence-based. Here we can learn that the presence of minorities or long-term contact with “the other” is not intrinsically problematic – there is no problem for people to worry about or for politicians to solve. Next we learn that integration is a common pattern (with exceptions, no doubt, but common nevertheless). Bring culturally diverse units into a larger whole, whatever way, and in due course nobody will be able to tell the difference: it will all amalgamate. As Hoerder puts it: “much of the immigrants’ input into cultures and social systems over time appears neither as ‘foreign’ nor as deliberately constructed, since, once adopted, innovations become part of the Self and are considered indigenous” A main point is of course that

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20 Diversity is negatively associated with segregation, social fragmentation, instability, tension, conflict, even terrorism: J. Stillwell and M. Van Ham (eds.), Ethnicity and integration. Understanding population trends and processes, volume 3 (Dordrecht 2010).
21 I will limit myself to a single example to illustrate the prevailing climate – at least amongst part of the constituency to whom the following document so obviously panders. Donner, Dutch minister of the interior, came out with a government paper in 2011, in which multiculturalism was declared a failure (one should suppose: as a policy; the cabinet of which Donner forms part rejects the relativism implied in multiculturalism) and responsible for the incomplete integration of newcomers. Integration should be pushed forward (but NOT by government: restrictions and sanctions should force individuals to take their integration into their own hands), and it should be clear that one culture – even if it is changing – should be the dominant, national one.
22 D. Hoerder, Cultures in contact. World migrations in the second millennium (Durham 2002), 8; Cf. Morawska, op. cit. (n. 14): 5, on the time- and place-specific contexts of the interaction between individual’s or group’s volition and structures (i.e., the more or less enduring organizations of social formations and cultural relations); ibid., 114: the process of assimilation is incidental to everyday lives, it occurs by itself, so to speak: a lot of individual
this implies change all around. This is very much the classic definition of integration (also called assimilation) by Robert Park & E.W. Burgess of the 1920s Chicago School: “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.”

The so-called “new assimilation theory” also sees such convergence, but distinguishes two stages: first acculturation, followed by socio-cultural integration. Milton Gordon, who was a founding father of the new theory, saw this essentially as one-way traffic: migrants adapting to the host society; Richard Alba and Victor Nee, more recent protagonists of assimilation theory, however, stress that it is a two-way process. We will return to their ideas below.

choices add up to the process of acculturation (Morawska uses that word on the same page).

After R. Alba and V. Nee, *Remaking the American mainstream: assimilation and contemporary immigration* (Cambridge, MA 2003), 19; Alba and Nee stress that this definition leaves room, and was supposed to do so, for the persistence of the specific characteristics of individuals and groups – in fact, Park and Burgess opposed the idea of a total “Americanization”.

M.M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American life: the role of race, religion, and national origins* (New York 1964); R. Alba and V. Nee, ‘Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration’, *International Migration Review* 31 (1997), 826–874; Alba and Nee, op. cit. (n. 23). Opposed is the racial/ethnic disadvantage model, which sees successful integration blocked by both sides (apart from the disadvantages experienced by the migrant, there is also active discrimination by the receiving population). This model deals with the so-called “new” immigrants (post 1965) to the U.S. and seems to have a short term perspective. Hypothesis of persisting ethnicity (the “ethnicity-forever-approach”: E. Morawska, ‘The sociology and history of immigration’, in V. Yans-McLaughlin [ed.], *Immigration reconsidered. History, sociology and politics* [New York 1990], 187–240, 218) is based on a limited time frame and on the study of specific situations. In fact, we see all kinds of affiliations. There may be symbolic ethnicity (also called optional ethnicity), with a lot of invented tradition: this is all part of the assimilation process. For instance, you do not have to stress you are of Dutch descent and join in the “klompendans” in Michigan, unless you do not in fact feel Dutch anymore, in some unquestioning way. This should not be confused with resilient ethnicity: the disadvantaged who rebel by exaggerating their ethnic separateness. But all evidence points to eventual socio-economic mobility and thus to convergence. For an attempt to combine the disadvantage and the convergence models: A. Portes and M. Zhou, ‘The new second generation: segmented assimilation and its variants’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 590 (1993), 74–96, on “segmented assimilation”: assimilation and negative assimilation (“structural acculturation”).

Alba and Nee, op. cit. (n. 23), 25.
I focus on migration (in the sense of human geographical mobility, even when unfree, involuntary and so on – this is all called “migration” in a social science context). First of all migration is basic to human societies of all periods: people are constantly on the move and it is this which is one of the important driving forces of human culture and society. The opposing view is that of the myth of autochtony and homogeneity. But it is migration that is the norm. That the Roman empire is full of migratory movement needs no further illustration. Walter Scheidel turns this into a main characteristic of the empire: “how did the relentless spread of Roman power change people’s lives? From military mobilization, urbanization, slavery, and the nexus between taxation and trade to linguistic and religious change and shifting identities, the most pervasive consequences of empire had one thing in common: population movements on an unprecedented scale.” People move into cities, the empire is travelled by countless traders, scholars and students, pilgrims, and tourists, soldiers and officials go where they are ordered. All who consider the benefits of moving elsewhere to outweigh the costs of doing so, and who are triggered by the enormous increase in possibilities, are on the move. Such dynamic culture contact is indeed the key to understanding the Roman empire. Here we should note a danger involved in focusing on migration: the danger that the presence of culture traits that are thought to belong to culture X, Y or Z are seen as necessarily indicating the presence of migrants from a particular cultural (and/or ethnic) background. For instance, we

26 Migration is usually discussed completely separate from “Romanization”, as if the two have nothing to do with each other. The intimate connection between the one and the other was analyzed by Ylva Klaassen in her excellent “Leaving his native land, he came to this region”. Processes of migration, integration and cultural change in the Roman empire (unpublished MA-thesis Leiden 2009), now summarized in Ead., ‘Migration and integration in the Roman world. A new approach towards culture and identity’, Talanta 42–43 (2010–2011).

27 Or even wider: the assumption of a static past, “the world we have lost”, enracinement. Hoerder, op. cit. (n. 22) states that migrants cannot undermine a stable society, because societies are not stable, and if they are, they are petrified and people do not migrate to them but from them. Strange to have Morawska, op. cit. (n. 14), 1 speak of “once-homogenous societies”.


see what we label a Greek element in a non-Greek context and interpret this as an indication of a Greek presence in that same context. Leaving aside the difficult (but very relevant) issue of how to establish what is Greek, this is obviously untrue, for two reasons: a Greek element can be distributed by non-Greeks; a Greek element need not be distributed at all, but it can be a case of appropriation. Still, migration is a main factor (the “how did it really work” of Fergus Millar) – only one should never jump to conclusions as to the identity and place of origin of any migrant on the basis of supposedly “typical” cultural traits. Material culture and ideas travel with humans – in the ancient world exclusively so (I think we can safely discount the odd written text – which of course in itself is a material object that has to be handled by someone to get it from A to B). So it always starts with mobility of some kind. For an item to survive in its new, generally inhospitable surroundings, there even has to be repeated mobility, what is called “ongoing migration”. It is a well-known phenomenon that if a migrant group undergoes constant rejuvenation by new arrivals, its original culture and language survive longer. But I am

30 Let us take a concrete example: the Roman province of Britannia. In the epigraphic record, with a few additions from literary sources, we have 845 named individuals who certainly or very likely were born outside the province and migrated there (all types of migration included) – most epigraphically attested, a few from literary sources, or both. These comprise 180 Roman officials, 332 members of the Roman army, and 333 civilians, including slaves. RIB now has 3 527 inscriptions (with the publication of the third volume in 2009). So one quarter (23.95%) of all inscriptions mention “foreign born” individuals. Of course, only part of the 3 527 inscriptions name individuals, so the percentage of foreigners amongst known individuals will be even higher. If we look at civilians only – to get rid of some of the bias caused by the huge overrepresentation of the military – the percentage will still be quite high. There is no need to be very precise, because these figures have to be handled with care anyhow: migrants are much more likely to leave traces than locals (at least in the Roman context), for instance the 43 traders attested (on the Nehalennia altars), the 33 fabri, and the 54 slaves and freedmen. Thus, we cannot say anything about the percentage of newcomers in the total population. But in absolute figures the influx must have been quite large in order to leave us with two migrants per annum when only eight individuals per annum are attested at all. The above is based on J. Gruson, Kosmopolitisme in Romeins Britannia. De multiculturele dynamiek van een provincie (unpublished MA-thesis Leiden 2008); cf. several contributions to H. Eckhardt (ed.), Roman diasporas. Archaeological approaches to mobility and diversity in the Roman empire (Portsmouth, RI 2010) (its contents are as much epigraphic as archaeological).

31 This is not to deny the importance of writing as a means of overcoming distance in space and time (see Hopkins, op. cit. [n. 16], 178), but my point is that even if sender and receiver of a letter are at the far ends of the empire, we still need someone to literally carry the letter across that huge space. The telegraph and everything that came after led to a space-time compression that is of a completely new order (cf. n. 14 above on the contemporaneity of globalization).
not interested in survival as such: survival for an increased period of time means an increase in the opportunities for acculturation.\textsuperscript{32}

So theory says that we should see integration following from culture contact. Only, the theory is mainly concerned with immigrant minorities in a dominant culture – they get integrated into it (which is not the complete story, we will come back to that, but certainly the main part of it). In the Western half of the Roman empire, we see local cultures integrated into the culture of the migrants: the language and habits of Roman soldiers, officials and traders become more or less dominant, depending on what part of the empire we are speaking of. We could compare many instances of integration in nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonies: it is the culture holding political, military and economic power that can assert some measure of dominance. That is of course the integration we have been speaking of above: integration on an imperial scale, not the integration of migrants into local culture – of which kind of integration there will have been plenty in the ancient world, but most of the time it does not interest us. It is, however, of some interest and relevance to consider questions like the following: does a trader of Palmyrene descent settled in the north of Britannia learn to speak (some) Celtic? Does he turn to indigenous deities? For how many generations will his descendants feel Palmyrians? Or at least outsiders or newcomers?

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Chr. Ehret, ‘Linguistic testimony and migration histories’, in Lucassen, Lucassen & Manning, op. cit. (n. 28), 113–154, on language: integration is what will take place, however long the survival rate (three centuries at the most, usually far less); word borrowings and pidginization are a continuous process. Interesting in this respect is T.P. Bonfiglio, \textit{Mother tongues and nations: the invention of the native speaker} (Berlin 2010), who shows that the idea of a mother tongue is absent from the ancient world. He discusses the unbiassed bi- or multilinguism of the Roman empire (alas limiting himself largely to the relationship between Greek and Latin – a much broader view of the interaction of languages in the Empire is offered by M.S. Visscher, \textit{Landscape of languages. The position of provincial languages in the Roman Empire in the first three centuries A.D.} [unpublished MA-thesis Leiden 2011]). Bonfiglio’s notion of unbiassed multilinguism can find support in empirical research into the plurilinguism of contemporary Morocco: see M. Benítez Fernandez, J.J. de Ruiter and Y. Tamer, \textit{Développement du plurilinguisme. Le cas de la ville d’Agadir} (Paris 2010). Their study of the use and appreciation of classical Arab, local Arab dialects, Amazigh and French contradicts J.N. Adams, \textit{Bilingualism and the Latin language} (Cambridge 2003), 755, who states that diglossia implies the setting up of a hierarchical relationship between the languages concerned.
Migration drives forward convergence, and as a substantial part of the total number of migrants are carriers of the dominant culture, the empire integrates culturally. As the existence of a common culture fosters immigration, integration leads to more immigration leads to greater integration.33 But let us look at it from another perspective: that of the local community where the immigrants come in. That local community is faced with – as long as migration continues – the introduction of new habits, new products. Seen from within their own cultural repertoire this means divergence. Paradoxically, in every constituent part of the empire, convergence means divergence. The cultural repertoire diversifies.34 This is what Hoerder calls the “immigrants’ input”. That input is a relatively neglected element in the social science literature. Debate revolves not so much around the enrichment of the receiving cultures, as about homogenization across cultures (comparable to the integration in the Roman Empire). Current concern about homogenization sees it as resulting from globalization, and usually looks at it in a negative light, using expressions such as Americanization, McDonaldisation, and Disneyfication.35 America is considered an imperial or hegemonic power, exporting its culture to every part of the globe, if not actually forcing it on everybody. But also other homogenizing policies by hegemonic powers, such as the sinification of Tibet, are discussed in the same manner. On the one hand, this is nuanced by those who point to local agency: the adoption of foreign cultural elements, which are “domesticized”, fitted into local cultural patterns and thus turned into new, but nevertheless native elements. On the other hand, whether this domestication takes place or not, in any case the introduction of new elements into an existing culture will, from

33 Shils, op. cit. (n. 8), 424.
34 Morawska, op. cit. (n. 14)}, 1–2, puts its succinctly: migration is an important contribution to globalization and at the same time a diversifying sociocultural force in the local communities where the immigrants settle. Cf. the quote from Morawska in n. 14 above. Alba and Nee, op. cit. (n. 23), 25 stress that this is a two-way process (I look at it from only one end here), and that not only x substitutes for y, but that there can also be an extension of repertoire. Cf. ibid., 282: the paradigm of the melting pot implies fusion into a new, unitary culture; but much change occurs as the mainstream expands to accommodate cultural alternatives (often after some reworking to make them less exotic).
35 G. Ritzer, ‘Homogenization’, s.v. in R. Robertson & J.A. Scholte 2007, op. cit. (n. 14), 575–579. This encyclopedia has no entries on heterogeneity, pluralism, diversity or divergence.
the perspective of that culture, not be seen as homogenization, but as diversification. The choices increase in number. This might even be the case when a foreign import replaces (kills off, if you want) an existing bit of culture. If the number of imports is large and consists of several competitive items coming from various sources, one might still end up with a more diversified cultural landscape. Of course, this in its turn can be evaluated negatively as well: there will always be those who consider any possible alternative for local traditions as a threat to an assumed identity. But even though it is obvious that every situation has to be judged on its own merits, the very notion of an unchanging and unadulterated local culture has to be rejected – as was already stated.

As said above, divergence is not an important topic in social science theory or empirical research. A lot of the relevant literature is anecdotal.36 Manning speaks of migration as an engine for social change, because of “the dynamics of ideas”: “The benefits of migration at the aggregate level are equally important. The exchange of language, customs, and technology leads to innovations… known goods and services are spread among communities … the movement of people speeds the movement of plants, animals, and minerals …”37 Shils, who adheres to the disadvantage model, stresses the cultural impoverishment that can result from migration (adding that a culture can also work towards impoverishment without any migrants to assist); however, he is one of the few to speak at some length about the gains brought by migration: “the gain lies in the widened scope of reference – or awareness – and appreciation in the hybrid culture to which immigrants contribute … The immigrants gain to the extent that sooner or later their more gifted descendants will acquire something of this (high, host) culture. The host society gains, too … the mental cosmos of a society is extended … a society which acquires immigrants and which in the course of time assimilates them by transmitting its own culture to them also assimilates some of their culture into itself. Not all of

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36 Typical of the anecdotal nature is the stress on popular culture: Shils, op. cit. (n. 8), 413: earlier waves of immigrants [to the U.S.] left their imprint on popular culture; cf. Morawska, op. cit. (n. 14), 151: the receiver country has a taste for the popular culture of the newcomers. See also n. 41 below. J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen, Winnaars en verliezers. Een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie (Amsterdam 2011) end every chapter in their account of immigration into the Netherlands with a balance sheet, in which they also pay some attention to cultural enrichment, mostly of a culinary or popular culture nature, but also pointing out creative individuals, such as literary authors.

37 Manning, op. cit. (n. 28), 2, 11.
the growth of a central culture through immigration is ‘bastardization’ in the pejorative sense.” The Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz sums it up as follows: “There is now a world culture, but we had better make sure what this means: not a replication of uniformity but an organization of diversity, an increasing interconnectedness of varied local cultures.”

“An organisation of diversity” is exactly what I argue is brought about by the Roman Empire.

Now we can go one step further: the divergence is not merely the other face of integration as described above (i.e. integration looked at from the local perspective). There is a much broader range of divergence – which in its turn can be seen as integration in a wider sense than was here discussed before. Integration is not only conquered territories A, B or C being incorporated into a “Roman” empire. It is also territories A, B and C being integrated with each other. Rome may be the instigator of the empire and its raison d’être, but Rome’s empire is a huge set of entities whose contacts are greatly intensified by being incorporated in the empire – as was discussed above under the heading of migration. “Increased connectivity” is convenient shorthand for this development. That does not mean that everything is directed by, let alone channelled through Rome. Intra-empire contacts are free for all. Thus every part of the empire – but the one more than the other – is confronted with an influx of people from several other cultural spheres and thus with an extension of the cultural

38 Shils, op. cit. (n. 8), 419. Shils speaks about acculturation in the light of the presence of a single “high culture” which completely dominates the scene. We may ask (if such cultures exist at all) whether Roman culture is in the same league.

39 Quoted after J. Nederveen Pieterse, Ethnicities and global multiculture. Pants for an octopus (Lanham MD 2007), 198. If we replace “world culture” with “Roman empire”, we are not much amiss. For world culture, cf. Shils, op. cit. (n. 8), 421–425: common culture, Weltkultur. Even in globalizing times, we may doubt the concept of a “world culture”.

40 R. Häussler, ‘Signes de la “romanisation” à travers l’épigraphie : possibilités d’interprétations et problèmes méthodologiques’, in Id. (éd.), Romanisation et épigraphie. Études interdisciplinaires sur l’acculturation et l’identité dans l’Empire romain (Montagnac 2008), 9–30, 13: “Rome n’est pas nécessairement le point de repère pour les sociétés indigènes.” However muddled Häussler’s account (where we move from “romanisation”, by way of “globalisation culturelle”, “interactions, contact culturel ou acculturation” to “articulation” (as anti-globalization), “ethnogenèse” and “construction identitaire”), it still offers a good theoretical departure; the papers in the volume do not live up to this. Wolfgang Spickermann, ‘Romanisierung und Romanisation am Beispiel der Epigraphik der germanischen Provinzen Roms’, ibid., 307–320, 307, states that the frontier provinces have “eine sehr heterogene Bevölkerung… die mit Ausnahme einiger weniger Gebiete keineswegs auf eine einheitliche Kultur zurückgreifen konnte”. One would have liked him to elaborate on this.
repertoire that goes far beyond “Roman imports”, material and immaterial. Some items can be traced to their origin, many cannot – how would one characterize a bit of Syrian culture imported into Gaul by a North-African, and re-exported after some re-packaging by a Rhineland trader to Britain? We could say that as soon as an indigenous culture appears to be integrated into the Roman empire as a consequence of conquest, it turns multicultural. To a local observer it is of small or no import that now, having been integrated into the empire, his environment has a number of traits in common with elsewhere in the empire; to that same observer it is of great import that his choice of dress, food, literature, religion, complete lifestyle, even language, is increased manifold. One might readily compare modern cosmopolitism and globalization: a local observer does not care whether some South Sea islander now watches the same television series and buys the same branded articles as he does. What he cares about is his own changing environment – change that will either be seen as beneficial, profitable, pleasurable, or that will instil insecurity and fear. This will hardly have been different in the Roman empire, although the pace of change may have been slow enough to avoid the strains and stresses so obvious today.

Not many ancient historians have been very explicit about this divergence. Most explicit is Jörg Rüpke who, limiting himself to the religious life of the Empire, in a few well-chosen lines almost manages to summarize much of what I have been saying above. His keyword is “Pluralität”, cultural pluralism (here especially cultual pluralism): “Standardisierung heisst nicht Nivellierung oder ‘kleinster gemeinsamer Nenner’: Religion wurde in diesem Prozess zunehmend komplexer. Wie gezeigt, wuchs die Zahl der religiösen Zeichen, der Götter für die individuelle Auswahl massiv an… Aber auch die Funktionsvielfalt wurde gesteigert”. Also Barclay

41 Nederveen Pieterse, op. cit. (n. 39), 96 belittles the positive view as “confetti culture”, “multiculturalism light”, restricted to increased consumer choice. This addresses one of the things wrong with globalization, but some people may be true multiculturalists. It is impossible to make such fine distinctions for the ancient world. More to the point is E. Cashmore, ‘Introduction’, in Id. (ed.), Encyclopedia of race and ethnic studies (London 2004), xiii–xix, at xvii on plurality and its acceptance versus a “philosophy of the absolute” (and the ethical problems involved in this).

discusses this growth of choice – and the need to negotiate one's way through it. \(^{43}\) Barclay rightly stresses the many sources contributing to this diversity (even there where an unchanging tradition was claimed to exist): “there were so many kinds of ‘Greek’ to become. And the Jew-Greek encounter is… only part of a far more complex cultural pattern, in which Jews in the Diaspora engaged with different native traditions, which were themselves transformed in their encounters with ‘Hellenism’.

Did Rome favour diversity? That they favoured integration is obvious: they looked for a modicum of coherence within their empire. But that empire is held together not only by Roman force and Roman benefits in exchange for taxes and so on, it is also an empire that has a real existence because the constituent parts interact. The cultural landscape is thereby diversified. I know of no source where Romans celebrate this diversity (indeed, we have the opposite where this diversity reaches Rome itself: then it is seen as threatening, from a typical xenophobic stance). But there are also no indications of Rome trying to stop this process, in favour of exclusive homogenization – something they could not have done anyhow. There is the possibility that they were not aware of this cultural divergence at the local level (but, as we have just seen, when “at home” they were very much aware of it). However, they may have noticed it, and they may very well have judged that divergence is not necessarily a bad thing, hand in hand with integration as it goes.

I see the Empire as a big machine designed (not knowingly, as an explicit policy, with a grand overall design, but wrought bit by bit) to facilitate movement of people, and thus culture contact and acculturation. The empire enables people – and with people ideas, religions, artefacts, in fact everything – to travel, to migrate, to interact. It produces and further connectivity. The empire also produces integration; indeed, that the empire does so ensures its very survival as an empire. Without a certain modicum of integration there would be no empire. But in becoming an integrated part of empire, its constituent parts become “imperial”, in the sense of part of an empire, i.e. open to a wide range of outside influences,

\(^{43}\) In the sense of J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Using and refusing. Jewish identity strategies under the hegemony of Hellenism’, in M. Konradt and U. Steinert (eds.), Ethos und Identität. Einheit und Vielfalt des Judentums in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit (Paderborn 2002), 13–25, at 16–17 a positive strategy: “conflictual fusion” or “resistant adaptation”. One uses and refuses, and what one uses, one uses to one’s own ends. Of course, there is a power factor: dominance, hegemony may force others (if only by denying social recognition) to adapt. But the actual power relationships are different all the time.
and thus multicultural. This is what Rome is all about: it is not about being Roman in some restricted sense, but about being part of a larger whole that for want of anything better we call after its instigators: the Roman empire, but which seen from a cultural point of view is not Roman at all, but, in its own way, as multicultural as any multicultural society of today.