Introduction: shadows and fragments

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> . . . This Rome where the past lies weltering
> In the blood of the present[1]

1944. An army advances towards the heart of Rome – in ruins like so many other cities all over Europe. Yet here the ruins, or at least most of them, predate the war, this war at any rate. Indeed the ruins themselves, as ruins, are being fought over. For the previous twenty years Mussolini had been laying claim to Rome's imperial heritage, integrating the remains of ancient monuments into a new vision of the city. Yet German and Allied leaders also claimed a particular entitlement to these stones; a letter of Eisenhower, the Allied Commander-in-Chief, dated 29 December 1943 and addressed to all commanders, instructed them to respect Italy's historical monuments wherever possible, for they 'by their creation helped and now in their old age illustrate the growth of the civilisation which is ours'.[2] On each side, army leaders urged their men to save Rome from the barbarians. Italians might identify either force as descendants of earlier invaders; in June 1944, shortly after the Allies had taken the city, a Roman aristocrat congratulated their commander: 'Yours is the first barbarian army in history to have taken Rome from the south.'[3]

In the 1930s and 40s, when probably the majority of British officers and maybe German, too, would have had a significant classical element in their education, Rome was still – or perhaps again – a very potent symbol.[4] In exploring the growing sense of cultural crisis in the interwar years, writers from Britain, Germany and other countries found parallels with the decline

[1] Cecil Day Lewis, 'A letter from Rome' lines 38–9, in *An Italian Visit* (London 1953). The poem was written after Day Lewis visited Rome in 1948.

[2] Appendix 'C-1' to Report 20345/0/MFAA. In fact considerable damage was inflicted by Allied Troops. I am grateful to Elizabeth Speller for drawing these documents to my attention.

[3] Wiseman (1992) 12.

[4] On the place of the classics in British education see Stray (1998). In Germany the dominant position of the Gymnasium (whose curriculum included a significant classical element) was under threat in the interwar years, yet it was still viewed as the most prestigious form of secondary education (Marchand 1996).

of imperial Rome increasingly suggestive.[5] Roman history became a renewed and central concern; Walther Rehm commented, in a major book on the theme of the decline of Rome in western thought published in 1930, that this subject was an especially insistent one, 'when an age was itself stirred and disquieted by a sense of decadence, when it desired to obtain certainty about the historical and spiritual position it occupies in its life'.[6]

Rome has long had a special place in western thought in part because it is always already familiar. Augustus Hare's literary guide, *Walks in Rome*, first published in 1871 but many times reprinted and read by countless travellers to Rome in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, opens with the following observation:

> An arrival in Rome is very different to that in any other town in Europe. It is coming to a place new and yet most familiar, strange and yet so well known. When travellers arrive at Verona, for instance, or at Arles, they generally go to the amphitheatres with a curiosity to know what they are like; but when they arrive at Rome and go to the Coliseum, it is to visit an object whose appearance has been familiar to them from childhood, and long ere it is reached, from the heights of the distant Capitol they can recognise the well-known form; – and, as regards S. Peter's, who is not familar with the aspect of the dome, of the wide-spreading piazza, and the foaming fountains, for long years before they come to gaze upon the reality?[7]

We visit Rome knowing already that this is the city of the Colosseum, the city of St Peter's. Hare echoes the words of many earlier travellers, Gibbon, Goethe – and countless others whose responses are less often quoted. Soldiers in the Allied force entrusted with the capture of Rome in 1944 were issued with guidebooks to ensure that the most important sites remained undamaged, where possible – and that these visitors, too, should recognise the monuments of their own cultural heritage.[8]

Rome is the eternal city whose durability can also offer a more general reassurance.[9] Byron provides the best-known English version of a medieval saying attributed to the Venerable Bede:

> While the Coliseum stands, Rome shall stand;
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
> And when Rome falls – the World.
> (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV stanza 14, lines 1297–9)

The Colosseum, though crumbling, still stands. Rome can and often does signify permanence, order, authority; speaking in 1904, the distinguished

[5] Ziolkowski (1993) esp.6–26.
[6] *Der Untergang Roms im abendländischen Denken: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichtsschreibung und zum Dekadenzproblem* (Leipzig 1930) vii, cited by Ziolkowski (1993) 15.
[7] Hare (1871) 1. [18] I am again endebted to Elizabeth Speller for this information.
[9] On the association of Rome with eternity even in antiquity see Edwards (1996a) 86–8.

classicist J. W. Mackail reminded the Classical Association (a society composed of academics and teachers, as well as those with a general interest in the classics): 'Law, order, reverence for authority, the whole framework of political and social establishment, are the work of Rome on the lines drawn once for all by the Latin genius.'[10]

But the *pax Romana*, the Roman peace, ultimate gift of a city-state founded on fratricide, was sustained through bloodshed. The figure of the Colosseum, so often used to stand for Rome, reveals something of our ambivalence to the Roman empire. Is it possible to think of the Colosseum, that symbol of Rome itself, without thinking of the blood that flowed there, the brutal enactments of Roman power over the animal world, over conquered barbarians, over offenders against Roman justice, over Christian martyrs?[11] Indeed Byron's own descriptions of the Colosseum played a significant part in sustaining the sinister associations of the ruined arena – associations inextricably bound up with visitors' responses to this monument in particular and to Rome in general.

What did (and does) Rome stand for? The high culture of Cicero and Virgil – so long staples of the curriculum for later European elites? The resolute republican heroism of Horatius defending the bridge (vividly evoked in Macaulay's Lays) or Regulus (celebrated by Kipling) who returned to certain and horrific death at his enemies' hands rather than break his word – noble examples to soldiers of later centuries? Or perhaps the pernicious decadence of the emperors Nero and Heliogabalus – a terrible warning of the consequences of tyranny – or even of empire itself? And we cannot forget that other Rome, the city of St Paul and St Peter. Though Romans are often thought of as the enemies of the early Christians, it was precisely through the web of the Roman empire that Christianity was able to spread so rapidly. And it is Christianity which ultimately preserved its old enemy, though in a new form. For Christendom, stretching out from the eternal city, has served only to reinforce the old association of Rome with empire.

Rome's seemingly boundless capacity for multiple, indeed conflicting, signification makes it an extraordinarily fertile paradigm for making sense of – and also for destabilising – history, politics, identity, memory and desire. Rome is at once as familiar as a dog-eared school text-book and as alien as the terrible cult of the priest of Nemi with which J. G. Frazer opened his seminal work of social anthropology of 1889 *The Golden Bough*.

[10] Quoted by Vance (1997) 200. Mackail and his audience, of course, had a vested interest in justifying the increasingly embattled place of classics in the curriculum.

[11] On the associations of the Colosseum, see Vance (1989) I: ch. 2; Quennell (1971). There is no definite evidence that the Colosseum was used for the execution of Christians.

Scope of this volume

This book will explore responses to Rome from the late eighteenth century to the end of the Second World War. We see our project as a distinctive exercise in the writing of cultural history. The essays which follow engage with a wide range of questions relating to the receptions of ancient Rome during this period in the history of Europe. They also offer a variety of strategies for exploring uses of the past both public and also more personal. Some of what the contributors have to say might also be applied to receptions of other periods in history – the Italian Renaissance or classical Athens, for instance. Yet we also wish to argue that Roman antiquity has a very particular place in European culture. This is, of course, generally accepted for Rome's impact on earlier times but is perhaps rather less commonly acknowledged for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[12] Even the new edition of *The legacy of Rome* (1992) pays surprisingly little attention to more recent periods.[13]

One aim of this collection is to re-evaluate the received idea that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ancient Rome was displaced from its position of dominant cultural authority, as a passion for ancient Greece swept over Europe. Certainly many leading writers and intellectuals looked to ancient Greece for inspiration. Comparisons were drawn between Greek and Roman literature and society which were often to the disadvantage of the Romans. 'We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece', Shelley wrote in 1821 in the preface to *Hellas*, crediting Rome merely as a means of spreading Greek civilisation.[14] But the importance of Rome was also brought into new relief by events such as the French occupations of the city in 1798 and 1809. Coleridge, for instance, lamented bitterly the fate of the place 'which, in ancient times was the civil, and in modern times, the spiritual metropolis of Europe, which is endeared by so many recollections and associations to the statesman, the soldier, the admirer of the arts, and the man of letters; of which the name alone calls before our imagination every sort of literary and martial glory'.[15]

Rome may have fallen out of favour with some writers and intellectuals of the early nineteenth century, yet to focus on Romantic Hellenomania as the dominant element in responses to classical antiquity is to privilege the disposition of certain representatives of 'high' culture over the responses of other interpretative communities. In Britain, for instance, Greek was only

[12] Though see now Vance (1997), as well as Vance (1989) vol. I and Patterson (1984).
[13] Cf. Wiseman (1992) 11.
[14] Cf. Jenkyns (1980) ch. 1; Clarke (1989). This was, of course, a contestatory claim.
[15] Cited by Webb (1996) 24–5.

ever studied at a small number of exclusive schools.[16] Of the Victorian 'classical' painters, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, whose subjects were so often drawn from the Roman world, enjoyed considerably greater popularity than the Hellenophile Lord Leighton.[17] In the field of British architecture, the Greek revival of the early nineteenth century was a short-lived phenomenon; Rome, however, remained important throughout the century (and in the early years of the twentieth) as a model particularly for public buildings associated with imperial administration.[18] Greece may have been a more exotic and exclusive destination for wealthy travellers but those who could not afford to travel abroad could still share in the growing interest in material traces of the past by studying local antiquities which often included Roman remains.[19]

The studies offered here explore a number of the sometimes strange and unexpected places where Roman presences have manifested themselves in recent times. Rome has been a pervasive presence, often playing a significant role – as, for instance, in T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* (discussed by Martindale) – even where it receives little explicit mention. Contributors to this volume are drawn from a range of disciplines and approach their material in sometimes very different ways. An emphasis on the variety of modes and contexts in which ancient Rome has been used over the past two centuries is itself a significant aspect of our project. Kennedy's essay, which follows this introduction, raises a number of general themes in relation to some central texts which are explored further in later papers. The order of the rest of the volume is largely chronological (with some exceptions in the interests of thematic continuity).

The influence of ancient Rome over the past two centuries is a vast topic. This collection of essays does not seek to be comprehensive. Several essays (Bann, Huet, Prettejohn and Stone, in particular) explore Rome's presence in the visual arts of France, Britain and Italy.[20] Music and theatre have, however, been largely omitted.[21] The place of Roman studies in school and university teaching (discussed in two important recent studies) is not covered here.[22] Classical scholarship plays a relatively minor role in our discussions, while no attempt is made to offer a complete survey of the influence of ancient Roman authors on great writers of the last two centuries (in any case, these are areas which have received extended scholarly

[16] Cf. Stray (1998). [17] Cf. Prettejohn in Becker et al. (1996) 101–8.
[18] See Metcalf (1989) and Port (1995).
[19] Cf. Vance (1997) esp.14–18, 243–6. On increased preoccupation with the concrete in responses to the past in the nineteenth century, see Bann below.
[20] Other recent work in this area includes Jenkyns (1991); Becker et al. (1996); Liversidge and Edwards (1996).
[21] For some discussion of Roman themes in plays and opera see Vance (1997) esp.41–9.
[22] On these topics see Stray (1998) and Marchand (1996).

treatment in recent years).[23] Reasons of space have obliged us to omit the large and complex question of responses to ancient Rome in the United States of America (we do, however, include Henry James and T. S. Eliot who made their homes in England).[24] The majority of essays concentrate on British responses. Among other western European countries, only France, Germany and Italy are discussed in any detail. Nevertheless, the comparative element is crucial to this collection of studies.

Retrieving Rome

Significant Roman traces may be discerned in the work of two writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sigmund Freud and J. G. Frazer, who have played a vital role in the formation of modern sensibilities. Freud was fascinated by both the literary and the archaeological remains of antiquity and had an intense but ambivalent attitude to Rome itself.[25] In his essay of 1930, 'Civilisation and its discontents', he famously offers the city as an analogy for the human mind:

> Now let us by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past – an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one.[26]

Freud goes on to describe the appearance of Rome in different historical periods – manifestations of the city which are to be imagined as simultaneously visible. This arresting description of a synchronous, palimpsestic city, often cited by scholars, repays further consideration. In Freud's image, all of Rome's past is at once present; only a slight change in perspective is needed to glimpse each different version of the city. Each phase both is and is not Rome. Rome is a totality and one which necessarily defies the imagination (having set out at some length his image of Rome as an analogy for the human mind, Freud ultimately sets it aside as unsatisfactory).

Rome has often served as the embodiment of time – a place where the survivals of different historical eras are visibly layered upon one another. As the eternal city, it has also been made to stand for the transcendence of time. Freud's suggestive image, in making all Rome's pasts simultaneously fully present, collapses these two aspects. Several essays in this collection (Martindale's, in particular) explore tensions between approaches to Rome

[23] On classical scholarship see collections of essays ed.Christ and Momigliano (1989) and ed. Gabba and Christ (1989 and 1991). On individual authors, see particularly Martindale (1984) and (1988), Hopkins and Martindale (1993), Turner (1993), Ziolkowski (1993), Vance (1997).
[24] American responses to Rome are admirably discussed in Vance (1989) I.
[25] On Freud's familiarity with the ancient world in general see Mitchell-Boyask (1994).
[26] (1930/1985) 257–8. This passage is quoted at greater length in Kennedy below.

which could be described as 'historical' – seeing the city under the aspect of time – and those which are rather 'archaeological' – seeing it under the aspect of eternity. How far must we make a choice between, on the one hand, telling stories, framing narratives about Rome's past and, on the other, making sense of Rome through surveying its surviving fragments, mapping their current relationships?

The complexity of Freud's relationship with the city also highlights a number of issues relating to identity which will be central to the present collection of studies. Despite his lifelong fascination with Rome, Freud did not visit the city until 1900. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he writes of a series of dreams based on 'a longing to visit Rome'.[27] This failure to visit the city Freud himself associates with the incompleteness of his own participation in European identity. Rome, for Freud, symbolised western culture, but a Christian culture to which he, as a Jew, could never fully belong. As he became increasingly aware of anti-semitic feelings among his school-fellows, he came to identify with Rome's great enemy, Hannibal, leader of the semitic Carthaginians.[28] Leonard Barkan suggestively comments: 'Rome, with its own appropriated past, is . . . a Family Romance for those who identify themselves with Western culture. . . . For Freud personally, Rome was an object of unfulfilled but ambivalent desire.'[29] As we shall see from a number of the essays which follow, the idea of Rome has for many people served to articulate questions of identity in a similarly insistent manner.

Roman antiquity is invoked at the very beginning of *The Interpretation of Dreams*; the epigraph Freud chose for his book is taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*: *flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo* – 'If I cannot persuade the powers above, I shall move those below' (7.312). This quotation, he wrote to his friend Willhelm Fliess, was meant to hint, in psychoanalytical terms, at repression.[30] Rome, the city he had dreamed of but not yet seen,[31] could offer a suggestive and culturally resonant model for the exploration of uncharted areas of human existence. Virgil offered guidance to the underworld of the psyche.

This choice is interestingly in tune with one made by Freud's contemporary J. G. Frazer.[32] The classical allusion of *The Golden Bough*'s title and the work's initial discussion of the cult of Nemi in ancient Roman Italy served

[27] (1900/1976) 282. Notes added by Freud in 1909 and 1925 indicate that he subsequently became a 'constant pilgrim to Rome'. On the complexity of Freud's relationship with Rome, see Schorske (1991). [28] (1900/1976) 282. Cf. 285.

[29] (1991) 16–7. Note also Margaret Ferguson's discussion in Patterson (1984).

[30] Quoted by Ziolkowski (1993) 3.

[31] See (1900/1976) 282 for an account of one of Freud's dreams of Rome which drew on 'a well known engraving of the city'.

[32] Freud himself, of course, drew extensively on Frazer's work (cf. especially his essay 'Totem and taboo' first published 1913).

in general to legitimate Frazer's unfamiliar methods and claims through an appeal to the authority of Roman antiquity. More particularly, as Mary Beard has recently emphasised, the title presented Frazer's work as itself enabling the reader to explore the murky and dangerous world of primitive rites and superstitions and emerge unscathed – like Aeneas visiting the underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid*, whose ability to come back to the upper world is guaranteed by his golden bough.[33]

In other respects, too, Frazer's vast synthetic work (which enjoyed enormous popularity with the reading public) can be seen as drawing on habits of thought bound up with the classical education the author shared with so many of his peers.[34] The extreme comparativism of his work was itself an approach which one might see as, in part at least, conditioned by the central place of the, one might argue, intrinsically comparative discipline of classics in nineteenth-century British elite education.[35] Majeed's essay later in this volume explores the comparative approach and the use of references to ancient Rome in British discussions of the administration of India. *The Golden Bough* itself served, in its exploration of a multitude of exotic practices drawn from a huge geographical area, to provide for Frazer's readers an inspiring image of the British imperial project.

National, political and religious identities

Freud found the Christian associations of Rome alienating. Others have found Rome appealing for its non-Christian associations. Pagan Rome has often been drawn on as a source of authority prior, and in opposition, to that of divinely sanctioned kingship.[36] Rebelling against the *ancien régime* of church as well as monarchy in the late eighteenth century, French revolutionaries took as names for themselves Cato, Gracchus and Brutus. Karl Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* writes of the power of invocations of the past to mediate radical change: 'Just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language. Thus . . . the Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman republic and the Roman empire.'[37] The routing of the Tarquins and the

[33] Beard (1992).
[34] Frazer also wrote a lengthy commentary on Ovid's *Fasti* published in 1929.
[35] The study of comparative philology which originated in the late eighteenth century focussed particularly on classical European and Asian languages. For the more general intellectual impact of this discipline, see Dowling (1986).
[36] Cf. Gay (1967).
[37] (1967) 10. Cf. the comments made by Chateaubriand, cited by Vidal-Naquet (1995) 102.

assassination of Caesar – those two emblematically anti-monarchical moments from ancient Roman history, happily conflated in the name of Brutus – made clear the political intentions of those who invoked them, while also appealing to the authority of antiquity.[38]

The more conservative American predecessors of the French revolutionaries, rebelling against British rule, also figured themselves as Romans, founders of new republican institutions.[39] George Washington, for instance, lacked a classical education (unlike many of the leaders of the American revolution) but claimed his favourite play was Addison's *Cato* (1713) – a story celebrating the self-sacrifice of a Roman republican hero. America's first president, recalled from his rustic retreat, was himself hailed as a new Cincinnatus. The rule of a foreign monarch overturned, the political classes of the thirteen states declared they would follow the examples of Brutus, founder of the Roman republic, and Publius Valerius Publicola, another semi-mythical figure crediting with initiating key elements in Rome's constitution. Their new balanced constitution, they claimed, was based on that of ancient Rome as described by Cicero and Polybius. Rome could offer Americans dissatisfied with British rule an alternative model of government sanctioned by centuries of tradition – and associated with the classical education which remained a prime marker of elite status in the American states.

Rome then could function in the late eighteenth century as a revolutionary alternative to the existing order – a model familiar to all educated persons yet distant enough in time to allow latitude of interpretation. Here, as in other very different contexts, appeals to ancient Rome could help to articulate developments perceived as new and shocking. Rome could offer examples of republican (as well as autocratic) government – though conservative critics were quick to appropriate Roman parallels for their own purposes. In a sense, the revolutionary moments in America and, particularly, France can be seen as marking a turning point in the influence of Rome. Soon Athenian democracy was to become the preferred model for the advocates of more extensive popular participation.[40]

Rome, especially in its association with the Catholic church, but also because of the extent of its empire in antiquity, has often served as a symbol of cosmopolitanism (a habit of thinking exemplified in Macaulay's

[38] Invocations of Brutus are discussed by A and J. Ehrard (1989). On appeals to Rome generally in the context of European revolutions, see Vance (1997) ch. 2 and Vidal-Naquet (1995) ch. 5.

[39] See Richard (1994) and Sellers (1994). Both argue against the older view that the Roman flavour of constitutional debate in the 1770s and 80s was merely superficial.

[40] See Turner (1981) esp.187–263 and Vidal-Naquet (1995). The example of Rome was still invoked in discussions of later European revolutions but usually as a negative model. Cf. Vance (1997) 24–53.

response to St Peter's, discussed by Edwards later in this volume). For many centuries Latin was the common language used by scholars and churchmen. Champions of vernacular literature constructed Latin as the supranational other against which local identities were to be defined. Mme de Staël's novel *Corinne, ou L'Italie* (1807), whose heroine was presented as offering her aristocratic British lover an emotional as well as historical guide to the sites of Rome (before going on to Naples, Venice and other cities), accompanied countless visitors to Rome in the nineteenth century and exercised an extraordinary influence over their responses to the city.[41] Yet *Corinne*'s author also played a key part in developing ideas of nationalism which could be seen as heralding the demise of Roman cosmopolitanism as a European ideal.[42] The novel's eponymous heroine could herself be read as embodying Italy (an Italy at that time united only by language – and French conquest);[43] the contrasting qualities of northern and mediterranean national characters are stressed throughout the work (as they would be, too, in de Staël's important study of German identity, *De l'Allemagne*, of 1810–13).[44] Corinne's spontaneous and yet learned responses to the remains of antiquity are presented as an integral aspect of her (ostensibly) Italian nature. Corinne's Rome, then, despite its appeal to visitors from many European countries, is Italian rather than cosmopolitan. De Staël's vision of Italy was in direct opposition to that of Napoleon, who occupied Rome from 1809 to 1814 (following an earlier French occupation in 1798), when it briefly held the position of second city in a new empire – that of France.[45]

Later in the nineteenth century, champions of Italian nationalism sought to appropriate the remains of Roman antiquity for their own cause.[46] Yet it is not only Italians who have exploited appeals to ancient Rome for nationalistic purposes. A key issue for several contributors to our collection is the different ways in which ancient Rome has been used to articulate national identities in Britain, France and Germany also. Here too one may trace a profound tension between different uses of Rome – in this case between Rome's association with particular national characteristics (Roman in opposition to Carthaginian, Greek or barbarian) and Rome's association with the law, language and culture held in common by diverse peoples.

[41] Guide books, such as Hare (1871), quote from it repeatedly.
[42] Cf. Marchand (1996) 158–60.
[43] Cf. McGann (1984) 93. For further discussion of *Corinne*, see Kennedy and Chard below.
[44] This work began by emphasising the distinctive characters of the northern nations which had resisted the tyranny of Rome. Cf. Isbell (1994).
[45] De Staël's opposition to Napoleon led to her exile from France. Her influence as his opponent was so great that one contemporary observed: 'People said that in Europe one had to count three Great Powers, England, Russia and Mme.de Staël', cited by *ibid.* 6.
[46] For appeals to Roman antiquity in the context of Italian nationalism, see Springer (1987) and Vance (1997) 49–53.