

Introduction

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How did the Romans become an imperial power? This was, understandably, a pressing question for Greek authors living in a world newly subject to Rome, and no less than three of them preserve variations on one Roman answer. On the eve of the First Punic War, a certain Roman Kaeso is reported to have boasted in the following manner to a Carthaginian senior official:¹

... «ἡμεῖς» εἶπεν «οὕτως πεφύκαμεν (ἔρω δέ σοι ἔργα ἀναμφισβήβητα, ἵνα ἔχῃς ἀπαγγέλλειν τῇ πόλει) · τοῖς πολεμοῦσιν εἰς τὰ ἐκείνων ἔργα συγκαταβαίνομεν, κἀν τοῖς ἄλλοτρίοις ἐπιτηδεύμασι περίεσμεν τῶν ἐκ πολλοῦ αὐτὰ ἡσκηκότων. Τυρρηνοὶ γάρ ἡμῖν ἐπολέμουσαν χαλκάσπιδες καὶ φαλαγγιδόν, οὐ κατὰ σπεύρας μαχόμενοι · καὶ ἡμεῖς μεθοπλισθέντες καὶ τὸν ἐκείνων ὀπλισμὸν μεταλαβόντες παρεταττόμεθα αὐτοῖς, καὶ τοὺς ἐκ πλείστου ἐθάδας τῶν ἐν φάλαγγι ἀγώνων οὕτως ἀγωνιζόμενοι ἐνικῶμεν. οὐκ ἦν ὁ Σαυνιτικὸς ἡμῖν θυρεὸς πάτριος, οὐδ' ὕσους εἶχομεν, ἀλλ' ἀσπίσιν ἐμαχόμεθα καὶ δόρασιν · ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἵππεύειν ἰσχύομεν, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ἢ τὸ πλείστον τῆς Ῥωμαικῆς δυνάμεως πεζὸν ἦν. ἀλλὰ Σαυνίταις καταστάντες εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνων θυρεοῖς καὶ ὕσσοις ὀπλισθέντες ἵππεύειν τε αὐτοὺς ἀναγκάσαντες, ἄλλοτρίοις ὀπλοῖς καὶ ζηλώμασιν ἐδουλωσάμεθα τοὺς μέγα ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς πεφρονηκότας. οὐδὲ πολιορκεῖν, ὧς Καρχηδόνιοι, ἐγίνωσκομεν · ἀλλὰ παρὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μαθόντες, ἀνδρῶν τοῦ ἔργου πεπειραμένων, κἀκείνων τῶν ἐπιστημόνων καὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐν πολιορκίαις δεδυνήμεθα πλέον. μὴ δὴ Ῥωμαίους ἀναγκάσητε ἄψασθαι τῶν θαλαττίων · εἰ γὰρ ἡμῖν δεήσει ναυτικοῦ, πλείους μὲν καὶ ἀμείνους ὑμῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ κατασκευασόμεθα ναῦς, κρεῖττον δὲ ναυμαχήσομεν τῶν ἐκ πλείστου ναυτικῶν».

¹ This is the lengthiest version of Kaeso's speech, preserved in the Πλουτάρχου ἢ Κεκιλίου Ἀποφθέγματα Ῥωμαϊκά ("Roman anecdotes of Plutarch or Caecilius"), which was discovered in a Vatican codex and published by H. von Armin in 1892. Authorship and date are disputed: Beck's commentary and biographical essay at *BNJ* 839 posit an early first-century BCE date; Humm 2007 (followed with reservations by Woerther 2015: 139–43) attributes the work to the Augustan-era rhetorician and historian Caecilius of Kale Akte; Gabba 1991: 45–8 argues for post-Augustan composition. Another version of the speech is preserved in Diodorus (23.2) and its core argument is paralleled in Polybius (1.20.15).

... “We,” he stated, “have thrived thus (and I’ll tell you the most unambiguous things for you to take and announce to your city): we agree with our enemies to their terms, and we surpass in foreign customs those who have been practicing the same things for a long time. For the Etruscans had bronze shields and were in the phalanx when they fought us, and did not fight in maniples; and we, swapping our armor and taking up theirs, lined up in formation against them and striving in that fashion were victorious over men who had long been accustomed to fighting in the phalanx. The Samnite rectangular shield was not customary among us, nor did we make use of javelins; we fought with round shields and spears. Nor were we strong at cavalry-riding; all or nearly all of Roman military might was infantry in nature. But when facing off against the Samnites in war, we equipped ourselves with their shields and javelins and fought them on horseback, and with the help of foreign weapons and customs we enslaved those who were puffed up about themselves. We did not know how to wage siege warfare, Carthaginians; but after learning from the Greeks, men thoroughly knowledgeable about the practice, we have become superior to the experts and to all men in siegecraft. Do not force the Romans to take to the sea! For if we need a fleet, in a short time we will build more and better ships than yours, and we will prevail in sea-warfare over those who have been sailing for a long time.”²

This speech is not solely an ideologically charged exaltation of the Romans as quick students: Emilio Gabba hits the nail right on the head in characterizing the passage as “a theory of *imitatio* applied to the history of a nation.”³ Revealingly, the competitive emulation through which (according to Kaeso) Rome made itself master over its adversaries is partly structured around objects and their appropriation: Roman spoliation of Etruscan armor and weapons allows them to imitate Etruscan tactics; likewise for Roman spoliation of Samnite armor and weapons. This discourse about Roman supremacy links the acquisition of new goods and social practices with knowledge of their proper deployment: the Romans (so the Greeks say the Romans say) master their empire by taking things over, appropriately. How was this understanding of imperial domination as mediated by successful appropriation reflected and refracted through Roman literature, art, and material culture – from the apex of the Republic to the apex of Empire?

² *Ineditum Vaticanum* § 3. All translations in this introduction are our own.

³ Gabba 1991: 46. Polybius’ representation of Romans as speedy learners: Walbank 1957–79: I.75. The innovations flagged in the *Ineditum Vaticanum* resulted in “one of the most significant military revolutions in European history”: Potter 2014.

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Taking up this question, this volume examines cultural appropriation by Rome and Romans, evident in literary practices ranging from plagiarism to quotation, and material practices ranging from spoliation to commercial import. As a critical term for the analysis of cultural products and practices, “appropriation” traces its origins to the American Appropriation artists of the 1970s (e.g., Jeff Koons, Sherrie Levine, and Richard Price) and to theoretical discussions of contemporary art from the 1980s and 1990s. The term has since been taken up (or taken over) by art historians working ever further afield from this charged moment in postmodern art-making and its specific interrogation of modern notions of authenticity, authorship, and originality. In transit, appropriation has become “a vertiginous concept,” raising mutually entangled questions of “possession, ownership, making-one’s-own . . . [of] repetition, imitation, copying; [of] propriety, morality, ethics; [of] the dynamics of power, resistance, subversion.”⁴ Its definition and theoretical implications are best articulated in a 1996 essay by Robert Nelson, which already extends the term’s applicability well beyond the contemporary art world: Nelson’s paradigmatic example of appropriation in action is a statue group of four horses set above a cemetery gate in Texas, which he identifies as copies of the gilded bronze horses of San Marco in Venice, which had themselves been brought to Venice from Constantinople, and to Constantinople from Rome.

In his discussion of appropriation, Nelson draws particular attention to its “active, subjective, and motivated” nature. Situating himself within the French structuralist and post-structuralist traditions, Nelson introduces appropriation – in the context of the visual arts – specifically as an alternative to less precise and less agentive terms such as “borrowing” (“as if what is taken is ever repaid”) and “influence” (“that elusive agency”).⁵ In casting aside this existing anodyne terminology, Nelson calls attention instead to the transformative, and in some ways violent, quality of the semiotic shift entailed by the act of appropriation. Indeed, appropriation does not happen incidentally, without conscious effort, but rather results from deliberate and purposeful actions on the part of identifiable actors or cultural forces. The net effect, however, is a distortion rather than a negation of what has been appropriated: the “prior semiotic assemblage” – an object, a motif – maintains its former connotations, albeit with a shift in meaning. Over time, then, varied and sometimes contradictory significations accrete, yielding a semiotic bricolage that always carries with it vestiges of its earlier lives. For this reason, plotting the life history of

⁴ Mathur in Baselitiz *et al.* 2012: 181; Kinney 2012: 1. ⁵ Nelson 1996: 162.

appropriated texts and objects can represent in microcosm the study more broadly of cultural history, or indeed of culture itself.

Nelson was wary of this expansive potential: he cautions that, “taken too far, the act of appropriation becomes a theoretical Pac-Man about to gobble up all other theoretical terms and methods and thus to be rendered analytically useless.”⁶ In the twenty years since Nelson first published his essay, however, scholars working on everything from the postcolonial art of South Asia to the use of *spolia* in the Arch of Constantine have found in appropriation a rich analytical framework. Proponents now call not for limiting the concept, but for its continued expansion. Taking a “wide-angle view of appropriation’s theoretical repercussions,” art historian Saloni Mathur sees “the need to broaden the concept, to stretch it expansively across contemporary culture . . . and to enliven it with the enormous challenge of the most recent dynamics of global interaction.”⁷ This broad sense of appropriation’s usefulness, as a way of getting at culture and at the interactions between cultures, undergirds the current volume – though of course our interests lie in Roman culture, and the dynamics of interaction across the ancient Mediterranean world.

By bringing an expansive concept of appropriation to bear on Roman literary and material practices, we hope to invigorate and intertwine two prominent strands in Classical scholarship. Scholars of Latin literature have long acknowledged the programmatic and cultural importance of Rome’s competitive emulation of Greek literary models: this practice has been identified in the earliest moments of Roman literature, which indeed tropes itself as a “takeover” of a specific form of Hellenism.⁸ In a similar vein, the proliferation of intertextual studies in Latin literature has drawn attention to the “dynamics of appropriation” at work when a Roman author quotes, cites, or otherwise alludes to another text, whether Latin or Greek.⁹ Meanwhile, in the fields of Roman art and archaeology, there has been a surge of interest in plunder and the significance of its display in the city, along with a dramatic revision of how we understand Roman “copies” of Greek art.¹⁰ These exciting conversations are taking place on

⁶ Nelson 1996: 165. ⁷ Mathur in Baseltz *et al.* 2012: 182.

⁸ Generally West & Woodman 1979; Hinds 1998; Hutchinson 2013, especially on the times and spaces where contacts between Greeks and Romans took place. On Roman literature’s “takeover” of Hellenism, see Feeney 2005 and now Feeney 2016. For Roman takeover of Greek political/philosophical ideas, see ch. 7 of Lane 2015.

⁹ Hinds 1998 was trailblazing. For intertextuality’s significance in classical studies, see Fowler 2000: 115–37; for a bibliography of major intertextual treatments of Latin poetry, see Coffee 2013.

¹⁰ On plunder, see especially Miles 2008; Rutledge 2012. On the push against *Kopienkritik*, see Bergmann 1995; Perry 2005; Marvin 2008.

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parallel but largely unengaged tracks, as disciplinary boundaries within Classics continue to obscure the interaction between literary and material modes of cultural appropriation. Only a small number of monographs have looked at both, and always with an eye to understanding one specific facet of what this volume will suggest is a multifaceted whole.¹¹ The need for interpretive frameworks capable of comprehending and evaluating literary and material appropriation as two sides of the same coin thus remains acute. Bringing together philologists, historians, and archaeologists, this volume bridges the disciplinary divides in pursuit of an interdisciplinary perspective on Roman appropriation – understood not as a set of distinct practices, but as a hydra-headed phenomenon through which Roman culture made and remade itself throughout antiquity.

To underline the interrelationship between the many heads of this hydra, our volume has adopted a shorthand name for the beast: *cargo*. As the excerpt from the *Ineditum Vaticanum* with which we began suggests, Romans were attentive to the significance of objects appropriated from others to their culture's historical trajectory. And yet, for the Kaeso of the excerpt, every successful appropriation of a class of weaponry was logical and inevitable; the model-cum-history of appropriation envisioned thus effaces the contingent and accidental in favor of the purposeful and deliberate. In counterpoint to the implicit triumphalism of the excerpt, our emphasis on cargo is in part motivated by a desire to recover precisely those contingencies that drove the incorporation of goods from all over the Mediterranean into Rome's many social worlds. This act of recovery entails a move from any narrative that would sanitize Roman domination and/or celebrate its value as self-evident and unproblematic. Rather, one of this volume's main objectives will be to probe the violent interactions through which cargoes are sent into circulation – and through which the individual and aggregate meanings of these cargoes experience distortion.

With this end in mind, this volume seeks both to highlight the significant points of contact between Roman literary and material appropriative practices and to formulate and apply interdisciplinary models for examining Roman appropriation. To that end, the theoretical perspectives adopted by our contributors take into consideration the broad sweep of recent scholarship on empire-building – Roman as well as modern. By way

¹¹ E.g., Marvin 2008, on Roman sculpture; Dufallo 2013, on Roman ecphrasis. Young 2015, esp. 52–88 on material and literary appropriation in Catullus' polymetrics, comes closest to our volume's intended cross-fertilization.

of contextualizing our volume's intended contributions, we turn next to a summary of this research and its implications for our overarching argument.

The motor of Roman appropriation was the imperial project that shaped the trajectories of individuals and communities throughout the Mediterranean world. In its exploration of this dynamic, *Empire of Plunder* builds on the past several decades of prolific scholarship on the Roman Empire's mechanisms for constructing and reaffirming local, regional, and transregional identities. In a challenge to previous generations of scholarship that read provincial material culture as a marker of top-down Romanization (with sophisticated or unsophisticated locals on the receiving end), Marcel Benabou and others have argued for resistance's role in the negotiation of imperial local cultures. In a pioneering 2001 article, Jane Webster applied a model of creolization developed by specialists in early modern and modern colonial cultures to the Roman provinces; Richard Hingley's subsequent adaptation of theories of globalization for the study of the Empire drew from another well of postcolonial research. C. R. Whittaker and Greg Woolf have investigated how an "ethic of civilization" came to be instantiated in the drive to restore discipline in the Roman East and in the drive to create order in the West; Roman Roth and colleagues have documented the tension between homogeneity and integration that continuously resurfaces in Roman texts and material cultures; and Andrew Gardner has repurposed Anthony Giddens's concept of structuration to elucidate how soldiers realized their identities through material culture in Roman Britain.¹²

Although much attention has been (deservedly) paid to the articulation of Roman power at the periphery, less often remarked is the extent to which the productions of the periphery drive the internal redefinition of Rome itself. In provincial settings as well as in Rome, the projection of Roman power was not endorsed uncritically: anxieties over luxury and its perceived social consequences gave birth to intellectual discourses and "affective communities" concerned with critiquing empire.¹³ Projection

¹² Resistance in North Africa: Benabou 1974; Mattingly 2003. Creolization: Webster 2001. Globalization: Hingley 2005, now to be read with the essays in Pitts & Versluys 2015. The "ethic of civilization": Woolf 1998. Homogeneity and integration: the essays in Roth & Keller 2007. Structuration as a lens for Roman Britain: Gardner 2007. On cultural memory and imperial local cultures, see now the essays in Galinsky & Lapatin 2016. For a modern take with examples drawn from Cameroon, cf. Mbembe 1992.

¹³ Roman critiques of luxury: Zanda 2011; cf. Gorman & Gorman 2014. The term and conceptual rubric of "affective identities": Gandhi 2006.

generated more than contingent anxieties, however: our volume argues that the funneling of artifacts, bodies, and practices from periphery to center and center to periphery constituted Roman identity. In the exercise of empire, Rome *became* a culture of cargo.

Through its investigation of Rome's appropriative reach, this volume targets not only Romanists and students of the ancient world but also scholars working in other temporal and geographical settings; our expectation is that these different disciplinary communities will derive profit both from this volume's exposition of material and from the various theoretical frameworks employed to contextualize and tease out the material's significance. Postcolonial interventions such as Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (2004) are important to the story we seek to tell. In the spirit of Bhabha's call for understanding terms of cultural engagement as "produced performatively," our volume brings out the performativity of Romanness and the tactics and strategies deployed to stage it; indeed, as Dufallo's and Richlin's essays underline, it was on the stage itself that commodities of various kinds were converted into social values. Our volume's debts to postcolonial theory will also be apparent in the space we allocate not only to the elite but also to the sub-elite brokers of cultural traffic (slaves, merchants, soldiers) who roamed – or were dragged – across Mediterranean landscapes and boundaries.¹⁴ The violence of these movements conditions the "geo-biography" of Roman literature (Myers on Gallus in Egypt)¹⁵; this same violence is, we argue, indispensable to understanding the range of significations that accrue to the spoliated and inscribed artifacts on display at Rome (Haimson Lushkov on annalistic spoliation, Biggs on re-spoliation).

In developing interdisciplinary models for examining Roman appropriation, this volume continues the trend in cultural studies of setting literary and material appropriative practices alongside each other.¹⁶ The chapters that unravel the microhistories of displaced objects – Punic War monuments (Biggs), the Pergamene Gauls (Rebeggiani), and Egyptian obelisks (Parker) – bear on current discussions of appropriation within culturally mobile contexts, such as Stephen Greenblatt's edited volume *Cultural Mobility* (2009). Greenblatt's miniature history of appropriation opens

¹⁴ Bhabha 2004: 3 on performativity, 17 and *passim* on "transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions . . ."

¹⁵ We borrow "geo-biography" from the afterword of Anderson 2006. For the diffusion of literary works in/alongside contemporary (globalized) commodity networks, see Moretti 2000, 2003; Parks 2015.

¹⁶ As exemplified most recently by the essays in Huck & Bauernschmidt 2012.

with non-Roman appropriations of Rome in Late Antiquity; in a similar vein, recent years have seen a volume addressing appropriations of Rome from Late Antiquity to the modern age and another volume exploring appropriation as a widespread cultural phenomenon that likewise begins with Late Antique spoliations of Rome.¹⁷ The range and disciplinary impact of these works bring into even clearer focus the need for a sustained exploration of appropriation in and by Republican and Imperial Rome.

One collection of chapters does come close to our own in interests and range: *Rome the Cosmopolis* (2003), edited by Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf. Appropriation figures explicitly in some contributions (Edwards, “Incorporating the alien: the art of conquest”; Vout, “Embracing Egypt”), and implicitly in others (Beard, “The triumph of the absurd: Roman street theatre”; Elsner, “Inventing Christian Rome: the role of early Christian art”). In documenting the imbrication of city and empire – Rome as both *urbs* and *orbis* – the focus of *Rome the Cosmopolis* remains on the centripetal pull that the city of Rome exerts; its papers locate the act of appropriation in Rome itself. Our volume, however, decentralizes appropriation from the city of Rome, tracking the spread of cargo to Roman Italy (Richlin), Roman trade networks (Fulton), and other Roman provinces (Daniels, Myers, Parker). Our goal is to highlight the importance of appropriation as a foundational practice through which Rome (broadly conceived) made and remade itself, as a Republic and as an Empire, on Italian soil and abroad.

We come now to the arrangement of chapters. The volume is divided into three parts – “Interaction,” “Distortion,” and “Circulation” – each one containing three or four chapters and a short response penned by one of the editors. The groupings of chapters are thematic rather than chronological, geographical, or generic: the goal in each part is to bring out a key facet of Roman appropriative practice and to explore its manifestations in different times and places, across different genres and media.

Under “Interaction,” we trace how the Roman encounter with alterity was negotiated at sites of conquest and in the disposition of spoliated goods. These *spolia* – whether textual or material – acquired new (Roman-imposed) meanings as they were torn from their previous contexts of use and reception, reconstituted under the eye of the conqueror, and memorialized in Roman literature. The four chapters in this part therefore analyze how Latin literary works from different genres and historical periods comment on, enact, and even replicate material appropriations. Individually and as an ensemble, these contributions illustrate the

¹⁷ The former: Prusac & Seim 2012. The latter: Brilliant & Kinney 2011.

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sustained interaction and interrelation of literary and material appropriative practices. Basil Dufallo explains Plautus' *Menaechmi* as a dramatization of Roman material and cultural appropriation writ large (and the crises of identity attendant to these activities). Ayelet Haimson Lushkov reads Livy's source-citations about *spolia* in the aftermath of battle as if they too were war-won artifacts. Thomas Biggs unravels Augustan repurposings of Republican naval monuments and their (mis)readings in Augustan and post-Augustan literature. Stefano Rebeggiani traces the meanderings of Pergamene statues and Hellenistic poetry across the Mediterranean to Rome and the Vespasian *Templum Pacis*. In his response, Matthew P. Loar draws together the chapters' major themes, elaborating the potential usefulness of "microhistory" as a framework for writing Roman cultural history through the lens of appropriation.

In "Distortion," we engage explicitly with Robert Nelson's claim that "successful" appropriation is "a distortion, not a negation of the prior semiotic assemblage . . . it maintains but shifts the former connotations to create the new sign."¹⁸ The three chapters in this part examine the semiotic reconfigurations undergone by objects and motifs as they travel through the time and space of the Roman empire, with an eye to how prior meaning is preserved, transformed, or effaced – and to what end. In a close reading of Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, Marden Fitzpatrick Nichols shows that "preserving" the "original" meaning of appropriated architectural motifs was crucial to the process of repurposing them for Rome's world culture. Jennifer Trimble's contribution bears this out further by demonstrating that the Ara Pacis makes a very precise (but long unrecognized) citation of an Egyptian temple style, and the structure's full impact depends on viewers recognizing the citation and knowing the semantics of the original temples. Nichols and Trimble thus key us in to the delicate balance of meaning maintained and meaning changed in Roman appropriations and Roman discourses on appropriation. Grant Parker then tests the limits of this balance in the *longue durée*, tracing the manifold distortions of obelisks and obelizing objects in transit around the ancient Mediterranean and eventually across the modern Atlantic. Carolyn MacDonald's response concludes the section by reflecting on a crucial question that emerges from the three chapters: What does it mean to speak of Roman appropriation as "successful"?

In "Circulation," we examine how objects accumulated new meanings in and through travel. Different kinds of cargo (up to and including

¹⁸ Nelson 1996: 119.

human) were variously susceptible to climatic, ecological, and/or administrative disruptions at each stage of transit. The four chapters in this part challenge stemmatic understandings of the appropriative process, highlighting instead the importance of circulation and contingency. Amy Richlin's contribution explores how Roman comedy bears traces of – and witness to – the circulation of human cargo. With the help of *chaîne opératoire* theory, Carrie Fulton studies the networks and middlemen through which cargo was transported across the Roman Mediterranean. Micah Myers brings to light how the Gallus papyrus from Qasr Ibrim was implicated in and remains symbolic of multiple registers of textual and human circulation. Taking up numismatic evidence, Megan Daniels scrutinizes the circulation of Herculean iconographies in Iberia before and after the Roman conquest. At section's end, Dan-el Padilla Peralta's response assesses how each chapter advances our understanding of the relationship between circulation and connectivity and sketches how one might go about writing complementary histories of circulation's material vectors.

We would be remiss in concluding this introduction if we did not openly acknowledge two of this volume's limitations. The first is geographical. Responding to the interests and competencies of the editors, some of the chapters circulate between Roman Italy and mainland Greece (Dufallo, Richlin, Nichols); others voyage further afield to Egypt (Myers, Trimble, Parker), Spain (Haimson Lushkov, Daniels), and Asia Minor (Rebeggiani). Two chapters sail over the sea and the history of political and commercial encounters on/underneath its surface (Biggs, Fulton). Whole regions of the globalized Mediterranean have been skirted or sidelined: our chapters do not engage extensively with the cultural and economic aftershocks of Rome's encroachments upon the Near East; the shifts in identity paradigms set in motion by the intensification of networks of trade and plunder in Roman Britain and Gaul; the movements of troops, ships, and cargo across the Balkan, Danubian, and Black Sea borderlands; or the growing cultural and economic importance of North Africa's production of commodities throughout our period.¹⁹ However, in light of the salvos lately being fired at the “methodological nationalism” of traditional

¹⁹ Generally on the need to look East in conceptualizing the Hellenistic and Roman worlds: Millar 1998; Purcell 2013. For the case of Roman Arabia, see Bowersock 1998. Britain: Mattingly 2007. Gaul: Dietler 2010. Balkans and Danube: Bounegru 2006. Black Sea: Wheeler 2012. North Africa: the essays in Milanese *et al.* 2010.