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Creolizing the Roman Provinces

JANE WEBSTER

Abstract

"Romanization," a concept first discussed by the British scholar Francis Haverfield in 1905, remains the dominant model for intercultural change in the Roman provinces. Building on recent critiques of Romanization, this paper suggests that Romanization—which is simply acculturation—has merits as a means of envisaging the processes by which provincial elites adopted the symbols of Rome, but that the concept is fundamentally flawed when applied to the majority populations of the provinces.

Drawing on developments in Caribbean and American historical archaeology, it is suggested that the Roman provinces may more usefully be regarded as *creolized* than as *Romanized*. Creolization, a linguistic term indicating the merging of two languages into a single dialect, denotes the processes of multicultural adjustment (including artistic and religious change) through which African-American and African-Caribbean societies were created in the New World. It is argued here that a creole perspective may fruitfully be brought to bear upon the material culture of the Roman provinces. Taking aspects of Romano-Celtic iconography as a case study, it is argued that a creole perspective offers insights into the negotiation of post-conquest identities from the "bottom up" rather than—as is often the case in studies of Romanization—from the perspective of provincial elites.*

"Romanization," a term first used by Francis Haverfield,¹ defines the process by which the Roman provinces were "given a civilization."² It remains the dominant concept in the analysis of Roman provincial culture, but has recently been subjected to sustained critique, particularly in Britain.³ These criticisms have emerged for several reasons, but taken together they demonstrate that Romanization is a simplistic and outmoded model of provincial culture change.

Despite a decade of discussion on the weaknesses of the Romanization model, work to replace it

has only just begun. New studies are now emerging,⁴ focusing on the capacity of individuals to find their own way of "becoming Roman" (or not). This work shares some fundamental characteristics with the present paper, which contributes to the replacement of Romanization by putting forward a new framework for the analysis of contact and culture change within the Roman provinces. This framework is termed creolization.

In order to build something new it is helpful to reflect on the factors informing the demise of the old. The first part of this paper therefore reviews the historical origins of Romanization and explores the criticisms subsequently leveled against it. Several of these studies have incorporated historiographical analysis,⁵ and it is not my aim to re-tread that ground. My purpose here is to review the decline of Romanization in order to propose a new model. Thus, in the central section of this paper I suggest a new approach to Roman Britain, moving beyond the simplistic notion of Romanization as a civilizing process, emulated at all levels of society. Building on my recent work,⁶ which has borrowed from developments in Caribbean and American historical archaeology, I suggest that we should think of the societies that emerged in the Roman provinces not as Romanized, but as *creolized*. Finally, these arguments are drawn together in a case study on the creolization of religion in Roman Gaul.

ROMAN VIEWPOINTS ON ROMANIZATION

We have a reasonably good sense of metropolitan Roman thinking on cultural interaction with provincial populations, and of the importance that the Romans attached to the dissemination

*I should like to thank David Mattingly for his comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and for his enthusiastic encouragement of my work on creolization. Many thanks to the staff of the Department of History, University of West Indies (Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica), who also encouraged my interest in the application of creole models to the Roman world.

¹ Haverfield 1905–1906.

² Haverfield 1923, 11.

³ I have chosen here to focus on the development of Romanization studies in Britain, since British scholarship has had a particular influence on the study of Romano-Celtic art and iconography, the theme of my case study. The history of Gallic

Romanization studies, from the influential early work of Julian (1908–1926) and de Coulanges (1891) to more recent work by Goudineau (1979), Clavel-Lévêque (1989), and others, is usefully summarized by Woolf (1998, 1–23).

⁴ Recent studies include Barrett 1997a, 1997b; Forcey 1997; Jones 1997. Two recent collections (Webster and Cooper 1996; Mattingly 1997) have also explored new approaches to identity in the Roman provinces.

⁵ Richard Hingley's work has been particularly important in this context. See in particular Hingley 1995, 1996.

⁶ Webster 1997a, 1997b, forthcoming.

of their culture throughout the provinces.⁷ Roman culture was of course never static: it comprised a fluid repertoire of styles and practices altered, not least, by absorbing and adapting influences from the provinces.⁸ By the first century B.C., nevertheless, a set of Roman cultural values had crystallized, encapsulated in the term *humanitas* ("civilization").⁹ Imperialism, in this context, came to be regarded as a civilizing mission: it was Rome's destiny and duty to spread *humanitas* to other races, tempering barbarian practices and instituting the *pax Romana*.¹⁰ Together with this civilizing ethos, on the other hand, went an approach to cultural interaction guided by political pragmatism. It had been understood from the time of the conquest of Italy that political and cultural assimilation went hand in hand, and that the fostering of Roman cultural values among provincial elites was essential for the development of a unified ruling class. An understanding of the importance that the Augustan and later administrations attached to provincial elites in this respect has in turn informed recent studies of Romanization, and in particular the influential work of Martin Millett, discussed below.¹¹

Roman attitudes are important here because they made it possible for provincials to become Roman, not as a matter of ethnicity or even enfranchisement, but by wielding a specific cultural repertoire.¹² The fact that some provincials came to identify themselves fully with the values of Roman civilization cannot be doubted,¹³ but in terms of the argument presented below, it is important to stress that efforts to naturalize Roman values were aimed by one elite (in Rome) at another (in the provinces).¹⁴ A province is, however, more than simply the sum of its elites. How, and with what success, did Romanization operate at lower social levels? That is the question posed by this paper.

SHORTCOMINGS OF ROMANIZATION

Romanization is simply another word for acculturation: a concept seized upon by some Romanists in the belief that it takes us beyond a one-sided view of cultural change,¹⁵ but comprehensively trounced in studies of intercultural contact in more recent colonial contexts precisely because it does not. To understand what is wrong with acculturation, we may turn to the comments of a non-Romanist, Leland Ferguson: "Originally, acculturation simply identified mutual culture exchange between people in contact. However, in recent years acculturation has commonly come to mean . . . 'the adoption of traits of another group.' In social science this generally means the adoption of European traits or patterns by non-European people . . . The central idea of this modern 'Eurocentric' view of acculturation is that either through choice or through force, non-European people in contact with Europeans gave up their traditional ways and became like Europeans."¹⁶

Ferguson is here discussing the shortcomings of acculturative approaches to European contact with Native Americans and Africans in colonial America, but if we replace "European(s)" with "Roman(s)" we can grasp instantly that Romanization is an acculturative model of exactly the type described by Ferguson. Richard Reece, who defined Romanization simply as "foreign influence,"¹⁷ well understood that, despite the rhetoric about cultural interchange, what is really envisaged is a one-sided process (it is not, in the end, termed *Romanization* for nothing). Romanization thus does not conceive of a two-way exchange of ideas: rather, it presupposes a linear transfer of ideas from the center to the provinces, in the course of which provincial society becomes cumulatively more Roman in its ways.

Why did such a model of contact and culture change come to dominate the study of the Roman

⁷ See Woolf (1998, 1–23; 48–76) for a helpful overview on these issues.

⁸ The development of the Roman pantheon is a case in point here: Beard et al. 1998, 339–48.

⁹ Most clearly set out by Brunt (1976).

¹⁰ The Roman concept of *humanitas* and the imperative to disseminate it to the *barbaroi* are discussed in detail by Woolf (1998, 54–60). Pliny the Elder (*NH* 3.39) referred to Italy as "chosen by the power of the gods . . . to gather the scattered realms and to soften their customs and unite the discordant wild tongues of so many people into a common speech so that they might understand each other, and to give civilization to mankind."

¹¹ Millett 1990a, 1990b.

¹² Within limits: as Woolf notes (1998, 19), cultures of ex-

clusion operated at all levels of Roman society.

¹³ See here Woolf's (1998, 1–7) elegant account of the aspirations and deeds of the Gallic orator Eumenius, a wealthy and powerful late third-century citizen of Autun.

¹⁴ *Humanitas*, in this context, was a concept that specifically defined elite ideals and aspirations: Woolf notes (1998, 55) that despite its applicability to humankind, *humanitas* embodied "concepts of culture and conduct that were regarded by the Romans as the hallmarks of the aristocracy in particular."

¹⁵ Studies of the Roman provinces drawing specifically on the notion of acculturation include Slofstra 1983; Millett 1990a, 1990b; Hanson 1994.

¹⁶ Ferguson 1992, 150, n. 22.

¹⁷ Reece 1988, 3.

provinces? And in what ways has the notion been modified since its inception?

HAVERFIELD'S ROMANIZATION (1920S–1960S)

The German historian Mommsen¹⁸ first coined the term “Romanizing,” but it was the British scholar Haverfield¹⁹ who offered the first sustained analysis of a process he termed “Romanization.” Haverfield suggested that Rome maintained its empire in two ways: by organizing frontier defenses and by fostering the growth of “internal civilization” within the provinces.²⁰ Haverfield termed this civilizing process Romanization, the means by which non-Romans were “given”²¹ a new language, material culture, art, urban lifestyle, and religion. His two central conclusions regarding the Romanization process were: “Firstly, Romanization in general extinguished the distinction between Roman and provincial, alike in material culture, politics and language. Secondly it did not everywhere and at once destroy all traces of tribal and national sentiments or fashions.”²²

These conclusions still inform the study of provincial societies today, but they present a paradox. On the one hand, Romanization was deemed to be an empire-wide process, molding diverse peoples in the image of metropolitan Rome, and in the process creating new Romans: “One uniform fashion spread from the Mediterranean throughout central and western Europe, driving out native art and substituting a conventional copy of Graeco-Roman or Italian art, which is characterized alike by technical finish and neatness, and by lack of originality and dependence on imitation.”²³ As a result, one of the lasting by-products of Haverfield's focus on the uniformity of Romanization has been, as Woolf recently put it, “a tendency for [provincial] studies to focus on cultural homogenization, sometimes seen as inevitable, rather than on the creation of cultural difference.”²⁴

On the other hand, however, Haverfield argued that Romanization was arrested or assisted according to the various political and economic structures it encountered in the provinces. Within Britain, Romanization was most successful in the lowlands,

the towns, and among the upper classes. It was least successful among the “peasantry,” where aspects of native culture (such as religious belief) “seem to have survived more vigorously.”²⁵ Because he regarded the Romanization of urban elites as representative of the cultural development of the entire population, Haverfield did not expand upon *why* pre-Roman traditions were more vigorous among the peasantry. In a brief discussion of these issues, the failure of nonelites to Romanize was put down to the “latent persistence” of folk customs—“superstitions, sentiments, even language and the consciousness of nationality”²⁶—which he argued lingered, at a dormant level, among rural communities.

COLLINGWOOD AND “FUSION” (1930S)

Haverfield's equation of Romanization with the spread of superior (Roman) lifeways and material culture did not remain unchallenged. Collingwood's reading of the material culture of Roman Britain²⁷ was in some respects a direct challenge to Haverfield's viewpoint. As Collingwood wrote, “we cannot be content simply to assert that Britain was Romanized. The civilization we have found existing in even the most Romanized parts of Britain is by no means a pure, or even approximately pure, Roman civilization bodily taken over by the conquered race. What we have found is a mixture of Roman and Celtic elements. In a sense it might be said that the civilization of Roman Britain is neither Roman nor British, but Romano-British, a fusion of the two things into a single thing different from either.”²⁸

Collingwood's view of Romano-British culture as a syncretistic or hybrid culture, which resembles in certain respects the creolization model proposed here, has left an important legacy in Romano-British studies.²⁹ But what is not found in Collingwood's work, or that of his inheritors, is a sense that fusion processes cannot be studied in isolation from the consideration of power (that is, an acknowledgment of the fundamental inequalities of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized). This consideration underpins all recent writing on creolization in the Americas, where cultural fusion,

¹⁸ Mommsen 1885.

¹⁹ Haverfield 1905–1906.

²⁰ Haverfield 1923, 10–11.

²¹ Haverfield 1923, 11.

²² Haverfield 1923, 18.

²³ Haverfield 1923, 19.

²⁴ Woolf 1998, 15.

²⁵ Haverfield 1923, 21.

²⁶ Haverfield 1923, 22.

²⁷ Collingwood 1932.

²⁸ Collingwood 1932, 92.

²⁹ Collingwood has had a particular influence on approaches to the development of Romano-Celtic art and religion, most clearly seen in the work of Martin Henig (1984, 1995) and Miranda Green (1996, 1989, 1997, 1998).

among nonelites in particular, is studied in terms of the desire to maintain indigenous beliefs, traditions, and language, while simultaneously, and often tactically, adapting aspects of a dominant material culture. For these scholars, the syncretisms developed by modern creole communities are a balancing act, in which the complex relationship between power and identity is always to the fore. In Collingwood's work, fusion is argued to have taken place differentially,³⁰ with the upper classes and the towns at one end of a sliding scale, and the lower classes and the villages at the other. Fusion is seen as a problem-free process at all levels of society, however, taking place beyond the politics of power, with a dynamic requiring no more elucidation than Haverfield had offered. Collingwood's view of the villages of Roman Britain is thus much like that of Haverfield's image of the peasantry: "a stratum of population in whose life the Roman element appears hardly at all; if we must still call their civilization Romano-Celtic, it is only about five per cent Roman to ninety five Celtic."³¹ We are no nearer here to addressing *why* that Roman 5%, and not more, was adopted, than we were with Haverfield. Nevertheless, although Collingwood nowhere addressed the issue specifically, it is clear that he shared Haverfield's belief that Celtic survivals could not have represented either resistance to Roman culture or an adaptation of it, arguing that the Celtic revival among un-Romanized peasants during the late Roman period was in no sense a sign of disaffection with Rome.³² On this level, then, Collingwood's work did not represent a shift in focus from Haverfield's reading of Romanization as the rapid civilization of native elites, and the more halting dissemination of some aspects of that civilization to the poor.

THE NATIVIST COUNTERATTACK (1970s–1980s)

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a new development. "Nativist" counterapproaches emerged, stressing the purity of indigenous cultural traditions in the post-conquest era. Nativist scholars in-

troduced for the first time the notion of *resistance* to the overtures of Roman culture, completely inverting Haverfield's conception. The first of these nativist strands emerged in North Africa, a region which had experienced recent colonization by Europeans, and within which the notion of empire in general as "given" civilization was met with considerable skepticism.³³ In the west, a different type of nativist countermodel emerged that can be traced back to Haverfield's own uncertainties³⁴ about the extent to which the peasantry could really be said to have Romanized. This nativist strand echoed ideas expressed in the writing of Vinogradoff in the early years of this century,³⁵ but mainly flourished in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁶ For the nativists, who pointed to the slow uptake of Latin, the rapid demise of towns, and an apparent Celtic revival in the later empire,³⁷ Romanization was little more than a surface gloss beneath which Celtic lifeways survived unscathed. Side by side with Romanization, as Reece expressed it, the nativist school thus envisaged a "British way, which most people in Britain followed before Romanization began, kept to while Romanization was in full flood, and which came back into fashion, or rather became the general way, when Romanization was no more than a symmetrical memory."³⁸ In *this* Roman Britain, to paraphrase Forcey,³⁹ a Roman veneer was applied to Celtic woodwork. That is, a tactical use of the symbols of *Romanitas* took place in public, but behind closed doors, the majority of Britons declined to become Romans. For the British nativist school then, the Roman way was neither embraced nor resisted, but largely ignored.

The difficulty with the British nativist model was that, by polarizing Roman and native identities and material culture, it failed to explain the emergence of those features of provincial culture (including aspects of religion and art) that were evidently Romano-Celtic hybrids, and that scholars such as Collingwood, themselves challenging Haverfield's polarized approach to Roman and native culture (civilization versus latent persistence), had so ably identified. It is worth noting here that in the Amer-

³⁰ Collingwood 1932, 92.

³¹ Collingwood 1932, 92.

³² Collingwood 1932, 93.

³³ Laroui 1970; Benabou 1976a, 1976b. For a comprehensive overview of the rise of the nativist position in the Maghreb (which focused on overt resistance to Rome), see Mattingly 1996.

³⁴ Haverfield 1923, 59.

³⁵ Forcey 1997.

³⁶ The work of Richard Reece on the rapid decline of the symbols of *Romanitas* in some urban settings in Roman Britain was particularly influential here: see Reece 1980, 1988. A nativist perspective also influenced studies of Romano-British settlement (Smith 1978; Hingley 1989) and ritual (Scott 1991).

³⁷ Haverfield 1923, 60–8.

³⁸ Reece 1988, 74.

³⁹ Forcey 1997, 17.

icas, a very similar charge to that levied against the nativists was also raised in reaction to early attempts to identify "Africanisms" (African-derived cultural traits) in the archaeological record of slave communities, a practice which in the 1980s was an important antecedent to the emergence of an archaeology of creolization.⁴⁰ Some of these early studies fixed on the identification of "African survivals" as a means by which Africans could be shown to have resisted European lifeways. It quickly became apparent, however, that this resistance-based approach to African survivals actually hampered the elucidation of the part African lifeways had played in the emergence of creole African American identities. In Romano-British studies, for similar reasons, the nativist model became a cul-de-sac, but in this case it was bypassed not by developing a new approach to the integration of Roman and Celtic lifeways (as happened in the Americas), but by falling back on the trend of thinking about Romanization as the gradual triumph of one set of lifeways over another, which has continued from Haverfield to the present.

At the same time, however, the nativist counterattack also left an important legacy. Its effects can be seen in Martin Millett's reworking of Haverfield's model in the early 1990s, in which he explicitly addressed the nativists' criticism that Haverfield's Romanization gave indigenous Britons no active role in the development of post-conquest material culture.

MILLETT'S ROMANIZATION (1990s)

Haverfield's view of the Romanization process has been superseded by Millett's influential model of Romanization as native-led emulation.⁴¹ This model, as Millett himself stated,⁴² built on Haverfield's foundations, but it made two major advances. First, Millett successfully attempted to reconcile Haverfield's view that the provinces were "given a civilization"⁴³ with the British nativists' contention that the indigenous population played an active role in accepting or rejecting Roman culture. He achieved this by accepting Haverfield's contention that Romanization was largely a spontaneous process,⁴⁴ but

at the same time placing the motor for the adoption of the symbols of Romanitas firmly in the hands of native elites. In Millett's model, native elites, who had been given the power to govern, provided that power was exercised in broad accordance with Roman principles, emulated Roman material culture in order to reinforce their social position.⁴⁵ The symbols of Romanitas, which provided status indicators for the elite and set them apart from the remainder of society, were gradually adopted lower down the social scale through a self-generating process of progressive emulation. In these terms, Millett recast Romanization as an active process rather than a passive one, and the native population (or native elites at least) were given a part in shaping a new social structure that "owes as much to the native as to the Roman ingredient."⁴⁶

Millet's approach to the Romanization of elites owed a debt not simply to nativist approaches, but to broader discussions about the role of Rome itself in this process. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, debate grew as to whether Rome had a deliberate policy of Romanizing her subjects.⁴⁷ Some tension between notions of state-sponsored Romanization and hands-off Romanization (whereby the state was assumed to trust that the empirically persuasive charms of Roman culture would be enough to ensure its adoption), has in fact always been present. Haverfield also had been uncertain about this, stating that "the advance of this Romanization followed manifold lines. Much was due to official encouragement by statesmen who cherished the ideal of assimilating the provinces or who recognized more cynically that civilized men are easier to rule than savages. More, perhaps, was spontaneous."⁴⁸

In recent years, it has become widely accepted that Augustus ushered in a new era, during which the power of imagery emanating from the metropolitan center consolidated imperial authority and aided the Romanization of provincial elites. At one end of the spectrum, some scholars have seen this new cultural program less as a deliberate policy than as a naturally evolving process;⁴⁹ at the other, scholars have argued that Augustus and his successors were engaged in deliberate state intervention.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ The transition from the search for Africanisms to a focus on African American creolization in the archaeology of slavery in the United States is described by Singleton (1999, 7–8).

⁴¹ Millett 1990a, 1990b.

⁴² Millett 1990a, 1.

⁴³ Haverfield 1923, 11.

⁴⁴ Haverfield 1923, 14.

⁴⁵ The key features of Millett's reading of the Romaniza-

tion process are set out explicitly in Millett 1990b, 37–8.

⁴⁶ Millett 1990b, 37.

⁴⁷ See Millett 1990b; see also Woolf 1998, 22 n. 74.

⁴⁸ Haverfield 1923, 14.

⁴⁹ Zanker 1990.

⁵⁰ A position advanced most forcibly by Whittaker (1997, 143–63).

Millett came down firmly on the side of Zanker's notion that the rapid adoption of the metropolitan cultural program in the west was a result of spontaneous competition between natives "within every social class."⁵¹ He thus saw Romanization "as a result of accidents of social and power structures rather than deliberate actions."⁵²

Another important feature of Millett's model was to shift attention away from provincial homogeneity (with which Haverfield had been concerned) towards provincial differences. In the 1980s and 1990s, work on the western provinces placed a much greater focus than Haverfield had done upon the nature of interaction between later pre-Roman Iron Age societies and the persistence and transformation of those societies following their incorporation into the empire.⁵³ This important development has been summarized by Jones, who has argued that although this work has contributed significantly to our understanding of provincial societies, it has remained "almost exclusively concerned with the emulation of Roman material culture in the legitimization of political power."⁵⁴

This leads to some major difficulties. First, it leaves intact Haverfield's implicit contention that the Romanization of elites was the only Romanization that mattered (as Haverfield wrote, "the rustic poor of a country seldom affect the trend of its history").⁵⁵ Second, it ensures that provincial heterogeneity is largely explained as a reflection of the heterogeneity in Iron Age societies (and the differential degrees of pre-Roman Romanization to which those societies were exposed), rather than as a reflection of post-conquest choices. In other words, it is still assumed, as Haverfield had assumed, that had provincial populations entered the period of Roman fashions in what Richard Reece termed "a state of grace,"⁵⁶ Romanization would have proceeded at an equal rate everywhere.

Things may have moved on in Romanization studies, then, but Millett's model is actually very similar to Haverfield's: both are primarily concerned with

the relationship between native elites and Rome, and both are based on a belief that the impetus for provincial change was emulation of Roman culture.

EMULATING ROME

Haverfield was convinced that what Rome offered native societies was self-evidently better than their own culture. The reasons for this were, however, more complex than a simple faith in the virtues of under-floor heating and painted wall plaster. Haverfield's writing was underpinned by the belief that in civilizing the provinces, Rome fostered the values of the modern Western world.⁵⁷ For Haverfield, Romanization was inevitable because it was nothing less than the triumph of the classical cultural values on which his own European, imperialist, turn-of-the-century worldview was itself based. Until quite recently, Romanization continued to be conceptualized in such progressive terms, summarized in Sellar and Yeatman's comment that "the Roman Conquest was, however, a *Good Thing*, since the Britons were only natives at the time."⁵⁸ Several factors informed this progressive approach, not the least of these being that the Romans believed it themselves.⁵⁹ But does this mean we must believe it too?

As Richard Hingley has argued,⁶⁰ it must be remembered here that provincial Roman archaeology developed against the backdrop of modern European imperialism, which reached its maximum extent with the "Scramble for Africa" in 1875–1900, and which was itself popularly regarded as a civilizing force. Common sense suggests that these two imperial projects became to some degree conflated in the minds of the scholars who, in the early 1900s, formulated the cornerstone texts on the Roman provinces. Considerable debate has raged on this topic,⁶¹ but for Hingley, the most persistent critic of Romanization, the concept says more about 19th-century perceptions of European colonial culture and government than it does about the Roman world. He argues that Haverfield's understanding of Roman Britain

⁵¹ Zanker 1990, 316.

⁵² Millett 1990b, 38.

⁵³ Influential studies on the transformation of Iron Age societies include Millett (1990a, 9–39) and the work of Colin Haselgrove: see in particular Haselgrove 1984, 1987, 1990.

⁵⁴ Jones 1997, 35; see also 29–39 for a discussion of the recent focus on the transformation of Iron Age societies.

⁵⁵ Haverfield 1923, 60.

⁵⁶ Reece 1988, 5.

⁵⁷ This point is made explicitly by Haverfield (1923, 10–1). He states the opinion that "had Rome failed to civilize, had

the civilized life found no period in which to grow firm and tenacious, civilization would have perished utterly. The culture of the old world would not have lived on, to form the groundwork of the best culture of today."

⁵⁸ Sellar and Yeatman 1975, 11.

⁵⁹ See supra n. 10.

⁶⁰ Hingley 1995, 1996, 1997.

⁶¹ Webster and Cooper 1996 contains two papers on this topic, offering strongly contrasting viewpoints (Freeman 1996; Hingley 1996).

must be seen in terms of a cycle of interpretation, in which the past was used to inform the present, and in the process of which the Roman past was itself reinvented. Among those inventions (which also included defensive imperialism⁶² and laissez-faire religious tolerance⁶³) was the paradigm of Romanization as civilization.

Whatever we make of this debate, we can surely agree that Romanization was the product of a specific period in European history. Equally, the two nativist reactions to it reflect other moments and histories—the decolonization of North Africa and the new wave of critical post-colonial scholarship this brought, and the backlash in some European quarters against neoimperialism at the time of the Vietnam War. As Woolf has recently emphasized, modern accounts of Roman culture have moved a long way from the absolutist position represented by Haverfield.⁶⁴ Indeed, much post-Haverfield scholarship has sought reasons—beyond cultural superiority—as to why imitation might take place, and has concluded that Roman symbols were not slavishly copied for their own sake but were emulated for both aesthetic and pragmatic reasons.

Millett's reworking of Haverfield,⁶⁵ whereby elites adopt Roman symbols as a means of retaining power and status, introduced the concept that emulation has at least as much to do with the pragmatics of power as with the recognition of superior cultural values. Though he does not explore the extent to which this form of pragmatic emulation was mingled with a recognition of superior cultural values, Millett is thus able to suggest practical reasons why elites would emulate the symbols of Romanitas. Two observations may be made at this point. First, we only have to think about the Druids to realize not all elites shared that reasoning,⁶⁶ and second, what about provincial nonelites? It is when we address this issue that both the weaknesses of Romanization as a model for culture change, and the continuing dependency on emulation as the motor for change, become most apparent.

OPPOSITION TO EMULATION

Since Haverfield's day, it has been acknowledged that at the bottom end of society (and in some regions more than others) Romanization was far less widespread than at the top. Only in the towns, Haverfield argued, could Romanization be shown to have extended throughout several social strata, from elites to the lower social levels.⁶⁷ Elsewhere, civilization took a firm hold only among the aristocracy. The rustic poor, "covered with a superimposed layer of Roman civilization,"⁶⁸ comprised the least Romanized stratum. Efforts to explain this phenomenon, more than any other, highlight the weaknesses of Romanization as a model for cultural change. The explanations put forward do not address localized choices or the development of countercultural movements from the bottom up (a possibility discussed below). Instead, it is assumed that all levels of society must have desired the symbols of Romanization, as did the elites, despite the fact that some social groups, such as the rural poor, had little of practical value to gain from them.⁶⁹ This is not to deny the existence of aspiring elites, whose role in the uptake of Roman lifeways was no doubt particularly important: it is simply to suggest that at some point on the social scale, such aspirations would only be realized (or even entertained) in exceptional circumstances. Exactly where that point lies is an important question, but one little articulated in Romanization studies.

Haverfield also accepted that some features of provincial life (such as religion) involved an interaction between Roman culture and surviving native traditions.⁷⁰ As we have already seen, he regarded these survivals as evidence for the "latent persistence"⁷¹ of indigenous superstitions. The passivity implicit in the choice of the term latent is revealing. It suggests that, however briefly expounded Haverfield's views on the Romanization of nonelites were, he did not consider the factors inhibiting the rustic poor from acquiring Roman material culture as having anything to do with choice. Indeed, Hav-

⁶² See Harris 1979 and, for a recent case study highlighting the continuing repercussions of this theme, see also de Souza 1996.

⁶³ See Webster 1997a, 1997b.

⁶⁴ Woolf 1998, 5. The similar viewpoints of other key figures in the development of Roman provincial archaeology, including Mommsen (1885) in Germany and Jullian (1908–1926) in France, have also been superseded.

⁶⁵ Millett 1990a, 1990b.

⁶⁶ I have discussed elsewhere the spectacular failure of the Druidic elite to embrace the "community of interest" offered

by Rome (Webster 1999).

⁶⁷ Haverfield 1923, 16.

⁶⁸ Haverfield 1923, 79.

⁶⁹ Differential access to the opportunities offered by Rome is discussed by Drinkwater and Vertet (1992, 25–8).

⁷⁰ Haverfield employs the term "coalescence" in describing this interaction (1923, 21).

⁷¹ On latent persistence see Haverfield (1923, 22), where a contrast is drawn between the passive persistence of indigenous cultural traits and the concept of active opposition.

erfield drew an explicit contrast between latent persistence and the idea of active opposition. Such concepts as resistance, the development of countercultures, or the birth of creole cultures simply did not exist in Haverfield's reading of the passive peasantry of Roman Britain.

The fact that Haverfield, writing at the turn of the century, regarded provincial elites as the only active forces in the history and culture in the Roman west, is perhaps unsurprising. What is more surprising is the persistence of this trend into the 1990s. Millett's model—while representing a significant advance in attempting to determine the processes by which elites adopted Romanized material culture—has even less to say on the mechanisms by which Romanization spread to nonelites than Haverfield's did. Millett's contention, as we have seen, is that native elites emulated Roman symbols to reinforce their identification with Rome. Following this: “*Progressive emulation* of this symbolism further down the social hierarchy was *self-generating*, encouraging others in society to aspire to things Roman, thereby spreading the culture.”⁷² Thus, nonelites were Romanized at second hand, emulating the material culture of their social superiors, who had set themselves apart from the lower orders through the acquisition of Roman status indicators. Millett appears to accept—though this is not discussed in any detail—that investment in the symbolic capital of Roman material culture would have rapidly become the only way in which aspiring elites, and those even lower down the social hierarchy, would have been able to enhance their own prospects or express their identity in the new order. The existence of other currencies (that is, of countercultural symbols of identity and status) is not envisaged.

Some recent writing, building on Millett, has even suggested that if we accept that Romanization was the outcome of shared interest between native elites and the metropolitan center, it also follows that Rome would have shown no interest in extending Roman culture to the poor. As a result rural nonelites experienced Rome entirely through the mediation of Romanized elites.⁷³ In such circumstances, it is suggested, it is only to be expected that cultural assimilation in rural contexts will have happened more or less haphazardly.⁷⁴ On the one hand, this argument represents an advance, in that

it at least suggests that without a push from the top (whether Roman or native), Romanization was not the unstoppable cultural force many assume it to have been. On the other hand, this reasoning goes even further than earlier models in denying nonelites any say in their own cultural development. In this scenario of elite indifference, nonelites simply become passive receptors of those random elements of Roman culture that trickle down to them. The unstated assumption here, again, is that these Roman influences were always welcomed.

THE CURRENT STATE OF ROMANIZATION STUDIES

It can be seen that at the end of almost a century of Romanization studies, emulation, assumed to be a spontaneous or self-generating process,⁷⁵ remains the dominant model of native engagement with Roman material culture at all levels of society. But what drove this emulation? Elites and urban dwellers may well have been motivated by pragmatic self-interest, as Millett has persuasively argued, but what did the rural poor have to gain by adopting the symbols of Romanitas? Without an element of self interest, the only motor for change becomes the superiority of Roman culture, bringing us full circle to Haverfield's original (acculturative) conception of Romanization as the unstoppable march of civilization.

Equally importantly, continued faith in Haverfield's notion that anyone who could have Romanized would have when given the chance means that the failure to emulate must be explained, wherever encountered. Unfortunately, the point where the trickle-down effect tapered off is never examined in terms of localized choices. It is instead explained in four ways: latent persistence of folk customs (Haverfield/Collingwood); overt resistance (the north African nativist model); Romanization as a veneer (the British nativist model); and pre-conquest regional differences (the 1990s approach typified by Millett and Haselgrove).

Finally, but most importantly, the only alternatives to wholesale Romanization suggested to date are negative ones: not to Romanize at all (nativist approaches), or elite indifference. All models of Romanization thus lead us to the same place: a polarized provincial world of Romans (or Romanized natives) and natives,⁷⁶ with no gray areas in between.

⁷² Millett 1990b, 38; the emphasis is my own.

⁷³ Millett (1990b) implies this, Whittaker (1997, 155) states it explicitly.

⁷⁴ Or as Whittaker puts it (1997, 155) “by osmosis.”

⁷⁵ “Spontaneous” is Haverfield's term for it (1923, 14); “self-generating” is Millett's (1990b, 38).

⁷⁶ Woolf usefully terms this a dichotomy between Romanization and resistance (1998, 15).

Woolf recently suggested that revisionist studies of Romanization (such as this one) perpetuate that dichotomy by focusing on imperialism and Romanization in terms of the interaction of Roman and native cultures.⁷⁷ It is my contention that only by revising some of our cherished attitudes can we move on from this “either/or” approach to provincial societies in order to understand the processes informing the emergence of new societies in the Roman provinces.

Perhaps the greatest problem with the polarized view of Roman and native culture is that there can be no ambiguity whatsoever about what Roman or Roman-style material culture means: where we find it, we do not find people making active use of it in the negotiation of new identities—we find Romans and aspiring Romans. Where we do not find Roman-style material culture, or find less of it, we are in the company of natives. (Such was the case in northern Britain, which according to the conventional reading failed to Romanize because pre-Roman Romanization had not taken place. On the other hand, pre-Roman Romanization in the south fostered the community of interest upon which successful Romanization of indigenous elites depended.) Again, this polarized view of Roman and native material culture can be traced back to Haverfield, who explicitly ruled out the possibility that provincials, as they became acculturated, could regard Roman material culture with any degree of ambiguity.⁷⁸ For Haverfield, to Romanize was to become Roman, and to use Roman material culture was to espouse all that Rome stood for. Theories have become more sophisticated since Haverfield, but, again, not enough. The British nativist model and that of Millett both suggested that tactical, politically-motivated ways of utilizing Roman culture may have existed. The former, however, supposed that use of Roman culture did not actually change Celtic society—beneath a Roman veneer lay an unsullied pure Celticity—and the latter supposed that these strategies were played out simply in terms of gaining or maintaining a particular social standing in the new Roman order.

Millett's reworking of Haverfield accepted that elites made a *strategic* use of the symbols of Romanitas in order to advance their position. This point

has been reiterated by Woolf, who in his recent study of Roman Gaul refines this position by stressing that part of the reason why Roman culture was widely adopted by provincial elites and would-be elites lay in the fact that “those Roman aristocrats who had taken on themselves the burden of regulating civilization had defined Roman culture in such a way that it might function as a marker of status, not of political or ethnic identity. In this way, ‘becoming Roman’ could again be a strategy, and one strategy among others.”⁷⁹

Thus, there is some recognition today that the use of Samian ware did not necessarily mean the user aspired to the full gamut of Roman values (any more than the millions around the globe who drink Coca-Cola would necessarily view American cultural values as superior). But it must be emphasized again that all these studies have focused on elites. Rome opened up windows of opportunity for elites and aspiring elites that, at a certain point down the social scale, simply disappeared (or never existed at all).

Equally importantly, none of these models allow for adaptive synthesis, in which Romanized material culture could be used in ambiguous ways, simultaneously creating new identities and maintaining key aspects of pre-Roman belief and practice. It is time to replace Romanization with a new framework that does address these issues. That framework is creolization.

FROM ROMANIZATION TO CREOLIZATION

Creolization is a linguistic term indicating the merging of two languages into a blended dialect.⁸⁰ It has come to be used more generally for the processes of multicultural adjustment through which—from the interaction between Europeans, Native Americans, and displaced Africans—African-American and African Caribbean societies were created.⁸¹ It is a term increasingly employed in colonial archaeology in the Americas, and one that could usefully be brought to bear on the Roman provinces.

The development of creole languages is instructive for those attempting to understand the negotiations that shaped colonial societies. Abrahams argues that in the New World colonies, West African slaves had to substitute some of their own words

⁷⁷ Woolf 1997, 340.

⁷⁸ Haverfield's views here are quite explicit: “When [the Roman provincial] adopted, and adopted permanently, the use of things Roman, we may say of him, firstly, that he had become civilized enough to realize their value, and further, that he had

ceased to bear any national hatred against them” (1923, 20).

⁷⁹ Woolf 1998, 239.

⁸⁰ On creole dialects see Abrahams 1983.

⁸¹ The earliest and most influential study of creole cultural development was by Braithwaite (1971).

with English words because they did not have the equivalent terms (especially for the slave-master relationship itself). But substitution of English for African dialects was not the norm. Instead, their language became a mixture of African and English elements, and English, where it was used alone, was employed in a limited range of contexts: "The language of everyday discourse remained essentially creole. Only on certain ceremonial occasions was the European tongue called into play, and then only the most formal style of that speech system."⁸²

Archaeologists working in the Americas have for some time been extending the model of creole language development to the study of material culture,⁸³ suggesting that, like creole languages, creole material culture represents not the gradual replacement of one way of life by another, but the blending of both, in a clearly nonegalitarian social context. Like language, creole material culture exhibits a degree of mastery of two cultural traditions, which can be drawn on to differing degrees according to context. The result is a highly ambiguous material culture, in the sense that it is imbued with different meanings in different contexts. Anne Yentsch's attempts to identify the experiences of domestic slaves in one elite household in Annapolis, Maryland, provides a good example here.⁸⁴ Focusing on cookery, she argues that because slaves were expected to provide some of their own food (grown on allotments), African foodstuffs and ways of cooking were thus maintained. They became, in turn, staple elements of African American creole cuisine. Yentsch emphasizes that what resulted was not simply an African nativist survival; rather, slaves negotiated a way of living that accommodated old and new, and out of this a new ethnicity was created.

Leland Ferguson's work on Carolina plantation slavery⁸⁵ represents perhaps the most detailed and successful application of creolization theory to archaeology to date. Building on the work of the historian and folklorist Charles Joyner,⁸⁶ who applied the creolization concept to the lifeways of 19th-century slaves, Ferguson has developed an approach to colonial material culture in which material things

(artifacts, icons, architecture) are viewed, like words in a dictionary, as building-blocks in the "lexicon of culture."⁸⁷ In creole contexts, Ferguson argues, the "grammar" informing the use of what at first sight appears to be an "acculturated" material culture may be radically different from the material culture itself. Slaves, for example, typically received their material culture from their European masters. Yet Ferguson's work demonstrates clearly that these artifacts were frequently utilized according to sets of values that were principally African. Thus, while the artifacts of slaves might appear to be European American, they were created and used according to the underlying, African-derived rules of slave culture. This dialectic, in turn, contributed to the emergence of a new, African American society.

Three points emerge here. First, just as it would be impossible to understand what it meant to be a person of color in colonial America without examining creole processes, we cannot understand what it meant to be a provincial subject of Rome without focusing on similar processes of negotiation in the Roman world. Second, in any colonial context, those processes are given material expression. In this sense, material culture encapsulates colonial experience. Third, while creole culture is an amalgam of different traits, creolization processes take place in the context of asymmetric power relations. Links with the past are maintained in opposition to the elite-sponsored trajectories of a dominant culture, and maintaining tradition thus carries with it an element of risk. Creolization is frequently, therefore, a process of *resistant* adaptation. What emerges from this process is not a single, normative colonial culture, but mixed cultures.⁸⁸

Given its origins, how can creolization best be exploited in studying the Roman world? Ferguson emphasizes that creolization theory allows for wide-ranging analyses of social and political interaction: "Since the emphasis of such studies is on the process of creolization, cultures need not be commonly known as 'creole cultures' for an analysis of creolization to be applicable."⁸⁹ I suggest that in the same way that European artifacts could be used by slaves—

⁸² Abrahams 1983, 26.

⁸³ The parallels between the creolization of language and material culture are drawn out explicitly by Yentsch in her study of the material culture of domestic slaves in Maryland: "Take, e.g., the process whereby African-born women living in the Chesapeake adapted elements of English cuisine with African cooking techniques and foodstuffs. What Abrahams [supra n. 80] wrote about verbal performance in the Caribbean points the way to what happens with food" (Yentsch 1994,

374 n. 4).

⁸⁴ Yentsch 1994.

⁸⁵ Ferguson 1992.

⁸⁶ Joyner 1974.

⁸⁷ Ferguson 1992, xlii.

⁸⁸ Ferguson (1992, xlii) envisages "a series of interacting subcultures rather than a single creolized blend."

⁸⁹ Ferguson 1992, xli.

not because they aspired to become European but according to an underlying set of non-European rules—provincial artifacts in the Roman world may likewise appear Romanized, but can in certain contexts likewise operate according to a different, indigenous, set of underlying rules. As creole artifacts, they can negotiate with, resist, or adapt Roman styles to serve indigenous ends, and ultimately, they are part of the emergence of creole societies.

CREOLIZING ROMANO-CELTIC RELIGION

Religion has always had a central place in the study of creolization processes. This is because, in many colonial contexts, religious belief has either been the focal point around which overt rebellion has crystallized,⁹⁰ or it has been the aspect of indigenous cultural life most resistant to acculturation. For example, Santería, the creole religion of Cuba, developed as the beliefs and practices of diverse peoples (European Catholics, Christianized indigenous elites, American Indians, and Africans) jostled together, creating a creole synthesis. As we examine Santería, we need to bear in mind the fact that the ethnic make-up of Roman Britain was as complex in its own way as that of the Spanish colonies. In the Roman west, indigenous beliefs encountered a Classical pantheon that was itself the product of centuries of religious interchange between Roman, Greek, and Eastern religions. Added to this, many of the Romans in the west (for example, auxiliary soldiers) came from territories that had also been conquered by Rome, and whose belief systems had already engaged with the Roman pantheon. Britons and Gauls, encountering these already complex gods of Rome, brought other strands of belief and practice into this arena. In Roman Britain and Gaul, as in the Spanish colonies, it seems reasonable to suggest that creole syntheses may also have emerged.

Needless to say, Romano-Celtic religion has never been conceptualized in these terms. The notion of Romanization has instead dominated the study of Romano-British religion, the main sources of evidence for which comprise inscriptions and iconography.⁹¹ It is perhaps easy to see why this has happened. Post-conquest provincial iconography makes

use of media apparently only rarely used in the west before the conquest (sculpture in stone or bronze), and the deities themselves are depicted in human form. It has long been argued that the Iron Age Celts had a reluctance to construct anthropomorphic images of gods, and it has therefore been assumed that after the conquest Celtic peoples adopted from Rome new gods and a new repertoire of anthropomorphic representation, used to depict both Roman and Celtic deities. Anthropomorphic imagery is thus argued to mark both a classically-inspired Romanization of the representation of the Celtic gods, and, through the process of religious syncretism (itself seen as a manifestation of provincial Romanization), the welcoming of those deities into an accommodating Graeco-Roman cosmology. As a result, Romano-Celtic religion has for many decades been interpreted as a neutral syncretism that was not imposed upon the provinces from outside, but reflected the spontaneous desire of polytheistic peoples to accommodate each other's gods.⁹² This position has been modified somewhat,⁹³ but the majority of work still lacks an acknowledgment that Romano-Celtic religious and artistic syncretism took place within a colonial context.

While conventional models of Romanization have no explanatory power regarding the emergence of Romano-Celtic religion, nativist arguments for a Roman veneer overlying an unsullied Celtic religion are of little help either. To regard Romano-Celtic religion—or its visual expression—as Celtic religion expressed in non-Celtic ways is not simply an error; it is a failure to recognize the emergence not of a problem-free syncretism, but of a creole religion. While we hold on to the idea of an emulative Romano-Celtic iconography, we cannot begin to recognize the religion's true nature and understand provincial icons in terms of negotiation with Roman beliefs and values.

In order to explore the workings of creole religion we may turn to Santería, the creole religion of Cuba. Religion across the Caribbean today is a complex mixture of influences: American Indian survivals, Christianity (first Spanish Catholicism, later English Anglicanism), and also African (mainly Yoruba) influences introduced by slaves. As Bran-

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Webster (1999) on millenarian protest movements in post-conquest contexts around the world, and the possible existence of this form of overt resistance in early post-conquest Gaul and Britain.

⁹¹ I concentrate on the latter here: on the former see Webster 1995a, 1995b.

⁹² Important studies advancing this viewpoint include G.

Webster (1986) and Green's earliest studies of Celtic religion (1986, 1989).

⁹³ Green 1997 and 1998, on the genesis and nature of Celtic and Romano-Celtic imagery, are more concerned with the impact of cultural interaction upon religious art than was the case in her earlier work.

don emphasizes in his study of Santería,⁹⁴ such religions grow out of developing creole cultures as an opposition between the ideals of indigenous elites and the aspirations of nonelites. Colonial culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, he states, was “participated in by most of the population regardless of ethnic or racial origin. Comprised of Spanish, Native American, African, and Islamic influences, it remained nevertheless oriented toward Spain and, as a result, was dominated proximally by the vision of Spanish culture current among the island’s hegemonic elite. This elite in its turn saw the ‘ideal,’ the conquest culture promoted by the union of the Crown and the church, as its model and promoted it actively, selectively, and by example to the rest of the population.”⁹⁵ The problem, as Brandon documents, was that the rest of the population did not embrace the same ideal. Making their own selections from Spanish Catholicism (the identity and iconography of the saints) and fusing them with Yoruba deities, the urban poor, among whom were large numbers of slaves and freed slaves of African origin, created a new syncretistic religion. This process took place over a period of several centuries, centered on the years from 1760 to 1870. The visual expression of the resultant synthesis, Santería, is highly idiosyncratic, making use of both Catholic imagery and Yoruba symbols.

Brandon’s point above is that local elites (in the Spanish Caribbean) adopted an ideal to which the Spanish had purposefully guided them, intending to impose Spanish culture and values upon the New World colonies. Millett⁹⁶ makes much the same point in his model of the Romanization of the Roman west, whereby a community of interest was fostered between native elites and Rome, ensuring that local elites were the first to adopt the symbols of Romanitas. But at the root of Millett’s model (as with Haverfield’s) is the supposition that this colonial ideal trickled down through society by a process of spontaneous emulation. Brandon’s point is that different ideals and practices can emerge, as it were, from the bottom up, creating counter- or subcultures. It goes without saying that the social contexts in colonial Cuba and the Roman west were radically different, but the general point is that what is missing from Millett’s model, and from all acculturative models of Romanization, is the possibility for this bottom-up cultural development to take place.

Creole religions like Santería offer an important lesson for students of Romano-Celtic religious syncretism. They demonstrate that there are limits to syncretism, which represents an adaptation, rather than an adoption, of new religious beliefs and practices. Syncretism is thus part of a process of intercultural negotiation, which scholars in the Americas call “resistant adaptation” or “resistant accommodation.”⁹⁷ The iconography that emerges from such negotiations is, as Cuban Santería amply demonstrates, extremely complex, drawing some visual elements from the metropolitan ideal, but conveying a very different, countercultural visual message. Is it possible to see similar processes at work in the iconography of Romano-Celtic religion? One of the difficulties of studying Romano-Celtic iconography is that it is often very poorly contextualized and lacks the depth of information available to scholars of recent historical periods. Indeed, a significant proportion of the Romano-Celtic data comprises stray finds, or poorly-contexted material from 19th-century excavations. It is argued below, nevertheless, that by comparing different categories of iconographic representation and paying close attention to the degree to which different deities are associated with other new developments, such as epigraphy, it becomes possible to isolate some divine figures that seem to be particularly resistant to what (in conventional terms) would be seen as syncretistic Romanization. I suggest below that Epona, the horse goddess from eastern and central Gaul, is a deity of precisely this type.

EPONA: A CREOLE GODDESS FROM ROMAN GAUL

Eastern and central Gaul are areas particularly rich in post-conquest iconography. Three major groups of non-Classical deities occur:

1. Celtic deities paired or twinned with gods from the Graeco-Roman pantheon. The epigraphic *interpretatio Romana* is frequently employed in these cases (e.g., Apollo Moritasgus), explicitly linking a Graeco-Roman and an indigenous deity, or identifying one with the other. Another manifestation of deity pairing is the divine marriage of a Graeco-Roman male deity with a female Celtic partner. The best-known example of this pairing is the divine marriage of Mercury and Rosmerta.⁹⁸

2. A repertoire of clay statuettes, mass produced in the Allier region throughout the second century A.D. One of the most popular deities of this group was the

⁹⁴ Brandon 1993.

⁹⁵ Brandon 1993, 43.

⁹⁶ Millett 1990a, 1990b.

⁹⁷ The former term was employed by Stern in his study of

colonial Peru (Stern 1982, 11). The latter is discussed by Garman (1998).

⁹⁸ Green 1989, 45–73; Webster 1997a.

pipe-clay "Venus," clearly based on the Venus Pudica iconographic type. I have argued elsewhere⁹⁹ that despite the Romanized appearance of Venus and other deities in this category, it is possible to regard these clay statuettes as a pantheon of popular culture, reflecting indigenous fertility beliefs.

3. A series of deities, which although depicted anthropomorphically, are clearly neither Graeco-Roman gods nor based upon classical exemplars. The horse goddess Epona, the horned god Cernunnos, and the hammer god Sucellus, who wears a distinctive *sagum* (Gallic cloak), are the principal deities of this group.

Here, I will principally be concerned with the deities in group 3, and above all with Epona. The iconography of this goddess is more widespread than that of any other Celtic deity in Europe, and she is the one deity of this group for whom some resistance to the Graeco-Roman pantheon has already been suggested in detail.¹⁰⁰ Epona's distribution is concentrated in northern and eastern Gaul, with notable clusters among the Aedui and Mandubii.¹⁰¹ She was also popular with Gallic auxiliaries on the border of Germania Superior, many of whom are likely to have come from the Aedui. Dating of these images is difficult, and usually performed on stylistic criteria alone, but the majority of attempts at dating place the images in the second and third centuries A.D. Images of Epona extend from Britain to Dacia, and writing in the second century, Apuleius mentions figures of the goddess on stables in Rome itself.¹⁰² Her cult therefore appears to have been long-lived and very widespread.

It is important to begin by observing that, with the exception of Cernunnos,¹⁰³ it is not certain that the deities in group 3 were represented in human form before the conquest. Indeed, it is probable that they were not. I suggest this because one of the most obvious post-conquest characteristics of this group is the presence of animal imagery. Cernunnos is depicted as a semi-zoomorphic horned being, and Epona is represented in human form, but is consistently associated with one or more horses. In Burgundy, where her cult probably originated,

she is frequently associated with a horse and a foal. Indeed, the goddess's name apparently derives from the Gallic word for horse,¹⁰⁴ and her identity is dependent upon her horse emblem; she does not exist without it. Conversely, horse and foal imagery does sometimes occur without Epona herself.¹⁰⁵ This zoomorphic trend is less tangible for Sucellus, but there are occasions on which he is associated with dogs.¹⁰⁶ It is very possible that the representation of semi-zoomorphic deities in the post-conquest period may be a continuation of pre-Roman traditions, and this, I suggest, is one of the keys to understanding the transformation of the group 3 deities in the post-conquest period. Drawing on Roman artistic traditions of naturalistic human imagery, pre-conquest zoomorphic deities began to be either consistently represented in human form (as in the case of Cernunnos and perhaps Epona),¹⁰⁷ or realized for the first time in a way that incorporated adoption of the human form (as may be the case for Sucellus and perhaps also Epona).

The large body of evidence for horse imagery in Iron Age contexts, together with Epona's inseparability from the horse and her near-absence from the most Romanized parts of Gaul (Narbonensis in particular) has led to the claim that the goddess is "a Celt among the Romans."¹⁰⁸ I see this as a mistake, because to conceptualize Epona in these terms is to regard her rather in the way that the nativist school of thinking on Romanization regards provincial culture in general: as pure Celticity under a Roman veneer. In this sense, I completely agree with Henig's assertion¹⁰⁹ that it is fallacious to assume that beneath a very thin veneer the Celtic gods remained uncorrupted by Rome. For Henig, however, this was because the Celtic gods, like the Celts themselves, had become Romans.¹¹⁰ This I cannot accept. In my terms, Epona cannot be regarded as a Celtic deity or a Roman one. She is the product of the post-Roman negotiation between Roman and indigenous beliefs and iconographic traditions: she is thus a Romano-Celtic deity but not, as discussed below, the product of a problem-free or spontaneous synthesis. Creole deities en-

⁹⁹ Webster 1997b, following Vertet 1984.

¹⁰⁰ By Linduff (1979).

¹⁰¹ Oaks 1986.

¹⁰² *Met.* 3.27.

¹⁰³ The horned deity or deities grouped as Cernunnos certainly have pre-conquest origins, occurring on petroglyphs at Val Camonica, north Italy, dating from the seventh to fourth centuries B.C. (Green 1986, 193).

¹⁰⁴ As Green (1986, 173) notes.

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., Espérandieu nos. 2046, 2121.

¹⁰⁶ On a series of images from Nîmes, e.g., the god is depicted with a dog (Espérandieu nos. 434, 436–7) or with a dog and a coiled snake (Espérandieu no. 435).

¹⁰⁷ Green (1986, 171–2) suggests that Epona's pre-Roman existence may be reflected in the frequent horse imagery of the later Iron Age.

¹⁰⁸ This term is used in the title of a paper by Linduff (1979).

¹⁰⁹ Henig 1984, 43.

¹¹⁰ Henig 1984, 93.

capsulate the limits to syncretism, and this is particularly true of Epona.

This point may be demonstrated by examining what is absent from Epona's imagery rather than what is present. First, we may note that although many of the stone images of Epona are the product of competent artisanship, and although the goddess is frequently depicted with classical attributes,¹¹¹ there are no instances in which she is paired iconographically with a deity from the Graeco-Roman pantheon. Given the frequency with which other Gallic goddesses enter into divine marriages with male Graeco-Roman partners,¹¹² Epona's resistance to the married state seems important. It suggests there are levels on which she operates beyond the Graeco-Roman pantheon; that despite her emergence into human form, there is a limit beyond which she does not syncretize or Romanize. Cernunnos is similarly resistant to iconographic twinning.¹¹³ It is also interesting to note, in this context, that the hammer god Sucellus is sometimes associated with a divine partner, but she is not a classical one: his partner has the Celtic name Nantosuelta.¹¹⁴

Second, we may note that images of Epona, Cernunnos, and Sucellus rarely incorporate epigraphy. Again, there are some exceptions to this generalization,¹¹⁵ but these are far from common. Epona, in particular, lacks widespread epigraphic attestation. In his 1948 study of Celtic religion, de Vries noted a total of 26 inscriptions naming Epona.¹¹⁶ More examples may well have been identified since the 1940s, but given the widespread nature of Epona's cult (over 300 images of the goddess are known), this seems a very small number of occurrences. In this context, it is important to note that neither Epona nor Cernunnos is epigraphically name-paired, in any instance, with a deity from the Graeco-Roman pantheon. Throughout Gaul, as in Britain, epigraphic name-pairing (Lenus-Mars; Sulis-Minerva etc.) was widely employed for the explicit iden-

tification of Graeco-Roman gods with deities who have Celtic names but localized distributions. It is very interesting, therefore, that the group 3 gods, who were widely worshipped in the Roman west, were not paired with Graeco-Roman deities in this way. As I have argued elsewhere,¹¹⁷ the practice of epigraphic name-pairing was one enthusiastically embraced by high-ranking Roman officials and indigenous elites, but was less enthusiastically adopted by other social groups. Nonelites may have resisted the epigraphic *interpretatio romana* not because they were ignorant, but because they were unwilling to take syncretism this far: while the adoption of the human form may have been acceptable, naming perhaps was considered objectionable.

It may of course be counterargued that the distinctions made here are simply a matter of economics; Latin was only available to elites, and thus those lower down the social scale would not employ it.¹¹⁸ Some of the imagery I have discussed, however, is the product of good quality, and therefore expensive, artisanship,¹¹⁹ and it is unlikely that the individuals who commissioned such icons could not have afforded to incorporate epigraphy if they so chose. More fundamentally, to reduce that element of choice to a simple economic necessity is simply to fall, once again, into the trap of assuming that Romano-Celtic iconography is emulative of a metropolitan ideal. We should by now be wary of assuming that every provincial subject who could afford it would have epigraphized his or her iconography.

Drawing these various strands of evidence together, it is possible to suggest that the group 3 deities, Epona, Cernunnos, and Sucellus, are neither Celtic deities¹²⁰ nor Roman ones. In suggesting that they are Romano-Celtic gods, however, I have tried to move beyond the related concepts of Romanization and syncretism to suggest that these are creole deities who encapsulate the limits to syncretism in Roman Gaul, and who were not actually incorporated into the Graeco-Roman pantheon. They repre-

¹¹¹ Most commonly *cornucopiae*, but also *paterae*, from which she feeds her foal: see Green (1989, 92).

¹¹² The iconography of the Romano-Celtic divine marriage is summarized by Green (1989, 45–73).

¹¹³ The exception which proves the rule here is a very high quality relief from Reims on which the god is flanked by Mercury (Green 1989, fig. 38), but it is interesting here that the composition of the relief leaves no room for ambiguity regarding the principal deity depicted: Cernunnos, a seated figure pouring out grain or possibly coins, dominates the image.

¹¹⁴ Green 1986, 95–6.

¹¹⁵ E.g., the name Cernunnos appears on a relief image of an antlered god that forms part of Tiberian Sailors' Pillar,

Paris (Green 1986, 195).

¹¹⁶ de Vries 1948, 276.

¹¹⁷ Webster 1995a, 1995b.

¹¹⁸ This is certainly the view of Martin Henig (1984, 59), who like myself has argued that language lay at the heart of *interpretatio romana* (the explicit identification of Roman and non-Roman gods). Henig, however, sees this as simply a matter of status, arguing that "in order to be able to 'interpret,' one must first be articulate" (ibid.).

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., the stone images from Meusault and Mellec (central Gaul) in Green 1989, figs. 6–7.

¹²⁰ As Linduff (1979) has suggested for Epona, and Vertet (1984) appears to imply for the entire group.

sent an alternative creole pantheon in Roman Gaul and provide some of the best evidence pertaining to the complex negotiations that characterize Romano-Celtic religion.

Turning back to Santeria, an additional lesson may be drawn out with reference to the group 3 Romano-Celtic deity, Cernunnos. In order to read Santeria icons successfully—to understand the tensions and power play inherent in colonial religious syncretism—it is necessary to pay as much attention to the juxtaposition of symbols (in this case Christian and Yoruba) as to the symbols themselves. This is a point we should remember when we try to interpret the presence of Celtic attributes on representations of deities from the Graeco-Roman pantheon. This practice, like its inverse (the giving of classical attributes to Celtic gods) is conventionally seen as reflecting the problem-free syncretism of two deities. Reference to Santeria may allow us to see greater complexities to this process than formerly envisaged. In this context, Green has pointed to the tendency for some pre- and post-conquest anthropomorphic imagery from Gaul and Britain to cross species barriers, mixing human and animal traits together.¹²¹ The horned god Cernunnos is the most obvious example here. This deity has definite pre-conquest origins,¹²² and it seems likely that the representation of semi-zoomorphic deities in the post-conquest period is a continuation, or strengthening, of earlier western European Iron Age traditions. It is thus particularly interesting to note that in Rome's western provinces, some images of classical deities are also given this semi-zoomorphic treatment.¹²³ For example, a few representations of Mercury from Roman Britain¹²⁴ appear to have horns in place of the god's more usual winged hair or *petasos*. As Green observes, it is sometimes difficult for the modern observer to determine whether horns or wings were intended, but as she points out, this may represent for Romano-Celtic observers a conscious flexibility or ambiguity, allowing the spectator to see what it was appropriate for him or her to see; the classical god or a horned indigenous deity.¹²⁵ Green herself¹²⁶ places this ambiguity in the context of La Tène artistic traditions and Celtic concepts of liminality and polarity. Perhaps it is also possible that this type of flexibility reflects the

ambiguities of both syncretism and the colonial condition itself.

The depiction of Celtic gods in the western provinces was neither a simple emulation of metropolitan art, nor—at the other extreme—a visual expression of nativist opposition to Rome. Rather, as it came into being by negotiating a spiritual pathway between acceptance and resistance, much post-conquest iconography represented a creole art form. Unfortunately, Romanization of form (the use of anthropomorphic imagery) has blinded us to what these icons meant to the people who fashioned and used them. Creolization, as a way to model these complex processes, allows us to reevaluate these images as the active material culture through which new social identities were forged.

CONCLUSION

I have suggested above that, as the inadequacies of Romanization as a model for contact and culture change in the Roman provinces become increasingly apparent, this acculturative model should be discarded in favor of the concept of creolization, which offers a new way to approach provincial material culture in all its forms.

The development of an archaeology of creolization in the New World certainly offers pointers as to where Romanists should now be looking as we attempt a more nuanced study of cultural negotiation in Roman Britain. In the Americas, the emergence of creole communities has always been studied by focusing on everyday material culture, from verandahs, to pots, to clay pipes, to recipes. In the Roman provinces, too, colonial experience for the vast majority of people would have been acted out through the materiality of domestic life. Perhaps it is time, then, to shift the study of intercultural contact in Roman Britain away from elites, on whom so much work has focused, to other social categories; the urban poor, the rural poor, and that technically most invisible of social groups in the ancient world, the enslaved.

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¹²¹ Green 1997.

¹²² See *supra* n. 103.

¹²³ Green (1986, 222–3) has also remarked on this phenomenon.

¹²⁴ Examples include a stone relief from a well at Emberton

(Buckinghamshire) (Green 1986, fig. 98) and another from Uley (Gloucestershire).

¹²⁵ Green 1986, 223; 1997, 906.

¹²⁶ Green 1997, 906.

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