

Multiculturalism and the Roman Empire

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1. Can American Multiculturalism learn from the Roman Empire's Multicultural Experience?

Recently there have been several attempts to illuminate the USA's place in the contemporary world through analogy with the Roman empire. Possibly the main inducement for this is the demise of multipolarized world politics and the coming of *Pax Americana*. The USA is the world's only remaining superpower, much as Rome once allegedly was. Yet the analogy remains rudimentary, mostly confined to terse, impressionistic comments by publicists and international affairs specialists.¹ It can't be otherwise, considering that *Pax Americana* has just set in, thus denying any discussion as *fait accompli*. Above all, there is little adequate historical data to work with. We may well have to wait till American empire declines in order to witness full-fledged comparative analyses of American and Roman empires such as P.A. Brunt's brilliant article comparing Roman and British imperialism.²

Looking at American conditions in the light of their Roman parallel has also been tried in the sphere of domestic affairs, more effectively so for the obvious reason that in this case sufficient material is in store for comparative studies. Slavery has been long a conspicuous topic of these studies, but seemingly outworn nowadays. Another equally manifest and practicable subject is the problems an empire (or a nation) with multiracial or multiethnic population ought to cope with. Yet this focus has materialized only come lately, receiving decisive momentum from American social realities which lead to the multiculturalism movement since the 1980's. The recent article of K. Galinsky,

¹ Cf. J. Nye, *The Paradox of American Power*. Oxford University Press, 2003, *passim*; Z. Brezezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*. Basic Books, 1998, ch. 1.

² Cf. P.A. Brunt, "Reflections on British and Roman Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, 1965; G. Miles, "Roman and Modern Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, 1990. In the meantime, the French historian E. Todd wants to detect in the present American world-order many a symptom of its undergoing decomposition, explaining them as foibles in parallel with and more often against Roman precedents. See his *Après l'Empire*. Gallimard, 2002, chs. 3 and 5. Yet, his premise is hardly agreeable.

a white, male American classicist, is a fine example, and in fact is the one that provoked me to write this paper.³ What I want to do here is to review through the eyes of an East-Asian classicist his suggestion that American multiculturalism should learn from the Roman empire's comparable experience. Thus my task is a double-sided: firstly, to show the present state of the American multiculturalism debate (as well as grasp Galinsky's stance on it); secondly, to explain what the Roman empire's multiculturalism was like and its effects on imperial integration. Let me first clarify the first task in the remainder of this chapter.

Multiculturalism is a recent coinage that literally refers to the state of coexistence in a society of multiple cultures of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality. Yet this literal sense soon pales as one is challenged with the practical question: in what way ought they to coexist? Differing and even conflicting answers are produced, reflecting unique interests and value judgments of respective cultural identities. To put it allegorically: 'different dreams on the same bed (同床異夢)' is of necessity the realities of multiculturalism. Indeed, such was the state of thing in the USA of 80~90's. There, multiculturalism started as a discourse nurtured by progressive sectors, including university campuses, and its cardinal tenet was the equal recognition of each cultural group based upon its own peculiar and intrinsic identity. Though the minorities in gender and sexuality were also involved, the main force and energy mobilized for the cultural movement came from ethnic/racial minorities, especially Afro-Americans, but including ethnic Spanish groups and Asians of different stripes. It is inevitable that the recognition of the struggle of ethnic groups should entail an aspect of denying and even attacking the dominant American majority (frequently dubbed WASPs) and their value-system. Multiculturalism in America often assumed an aspect of 'civil war' between WASPs and ethnic groups.

In a sense, that cultural civil war was a natural sequel to the minority movements triggered by the Civil Rights Movement of the 50~60's. On the other hand, however, it marked a violent rupture with the past by declaring a withdrawal from a consensus for assimilation. Assimilation had been the

³ "Multiculturalism in Greece and Rome," in K. Galinsky (ed.), *Classical and Modern Interactions, Postmodern Architecture, Multiculturalism, Decline and Other Issues*, University of Texas Press, 1992, ch. 5.

keyword controlling the USA's immigrant policy and was also generally accepted as a premise in the Civil Rights Movement. It signified new citizens' Americanization: namely, regardless of origin, they were expected to share and participate in fundamental "American" values and institutions such as freedom, human rights, democracy, and so forth. The curriculum of public education and the use of English as the nation's official language constituted the essential tools of assimilation.⁴ The imagery of 'melting pot' or the Latin legend 'e pluribus unum' inscribed on all USA coinage well reflects that ideal of assimilation.

Yet, in the multicultural enthusiasm of the ethnic and racial minorities of the 80's the ideal began to be seen as an insuperable, huge obstacle in advancement towards real equality between majority and minorities. For, according to the ethnic multiculturalists, the American culture imposed upon them on the pretext of its being the common asset of all Americans was, in fact, nothing but the ethnocentric culture of WASPs, ultimately inherited from Western European civilizations. Curricula of schools, elementary as well as higher, were evident proof of the argument: major subjects in liberal arts, in history, philosophy, literature and music, were unvaryingly filled with western classics. In being forced to learn only the majority's monoculture, they argued, the minorities were losing in two important respects: firstly, in competition with the majority in and out of school, they had to start always with so enormous a handicap that they would be doomed to failure, for which Affirmative Action could never make up fully; secondly, having their cultural identity driven at bay by constant inculcation of the "Others" culture, minorities could hardly be able to have confidence in their own human identity and dignity.

This cultural rebellion unfolded in two directions. One was 'the Battle of the Schools', to cite the words of the distinguished historian, A. Schlesinger, Jr.⁵ As illustrated by the 1989 report for reforming New York State public education, submitted by a committee mostly composed of Blacks and Hispanics, ethnic minorities wanted their particular cultures to be included in curriculum and schoolbooks.⁶ Their vision of preferred America was not anymore the 'melting

⁴ Cf. A.M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. New York, 1991, pp.15-19; N. Glazer, *We are all Multiculturalists Now*. Harvard University Press, 1997, chs. 5-6; L.W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind*. Beacon Press, 1996, ch. 6.

⁵ That is the title of the 3rd chapter of his book cited above.

⁶ Cf. N. Glazer, *op.cit.*, chs. 1-2.

pot' but the 'salad bowl' or the 'glorious mosaic', in which all ethnic and racial elements simply co-exist freed from the pressure of metamorphosis. The motto '*e pluribus unum*' embodying assimilationism now must be substituted by another, multicultural motto '*e pluribus plures*'.

The other direction unfolded was seeking to establish each minority's unique history so that it may recover self-esteem from the glorious past of its ancestry. This movement to employ history as a weapon was especially vigorous among Afro-Americans, who were ready to go back to Africa to find their glorious past. Such antagonists even went further to argue that the roots of European civilization were, in fact, African, and that the Greek philosophy, *par excellence*, was learned or stolen from the Egyptians.⁷ This so-called Afrocentrism needed to be promoted, they thought, as a necessary device in the confrontation with the WASPish eurocentristic monoculture. It was largely by riding on the high tide of Afrocentrism that *Black Athena*, written by the Cornell University Professor M. Bernal, white and male, achieved huge success, causing a sensation on campuses and media.⁸ On campuses, it is reported, white (including Jewish) teachers of classical antiquity were often challenged by ethnic students, in and outside the classroom, on the authenticity of what they were teaching.⁹ Concern over the ongoing multicultural threat to classical studies finally permeated into the 1993 Presidential Address to the American Philological Association. "Where does the Classics fit into this? Sadly, our discipline too often regards development as a threat...And, sadder still, the Classics frequently supplies a prime target for attack, labelled as...the custodian of western tradition, the pillar of Eurocentrism. The current drive for multiculturalism appears in this light as the enemy (of ours)."¹⁰

It was not only white classists, but generally white leading intellectuals, liberal as well as conservative, who saw the developments of multiculturalism as menacing and ominous: ominous for the future of the American nation, for the ferocious ethnocentrism engendered by militant multiculturalists, not to speak of

⁷ Cf. S. Howe, *Afrocentrism: Mythical Past and Imagined Homes*. Verso, 1998, chs. 11, and 14-15.

⁸ The kernel of his argumentation is well condensed in the book's subtitle, *The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*.

⁹ Cf. M. Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*. Basic Books, 1996, ch. 1; D'Souza, *Illiberal Education*. The Free Press, 1991, ch. 4.

¹⁰ E.S. Gruen, "Cultural Fictions and Cultural Identity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123, 1993, pp. 1-2.

separatism, would after all shatter the nation into pieces. A. Bloom's million seller book published in 1987 was voicing conservatives' angry lamentation over the "closing of the American mind" resulting from vociferous clamor for unconditional equality and rampant cultural relativism.¹¹

Even liberals who had been so far sympathetic to the improvement of minorities' conditions expressed great concern over symptoms of decomposition of the nation. The unifying ideas that define nationality were imperative for America to continue its prosperity, or at least to preclude the danger of disintegration. To their understanding, the ideas could not be other than the ones of Western descent, of freedom, democracy, and human rights. In an effort to communicate with ethnic multiculturalists, liberals appealed to characteristic logic: that the Western culture itself was a multicultural product, and that such ideas were the most universal ideals that human civilizations had so far produced.¹² A. Schlesinger put it succinctly: "Our task is to combine due appreciation of the splendid diversity of the nation with due emphasis on the great unifying Western ideas."¹³

With this topography of American multiculturalism, I am now in a position to locate K. Galinsky's standpoint, whose suggestion I propose to review in this paper. To be brief, his stance does not seem to contradict what his ethnic and vocational identity, white classist, would dictate him to adopt: much of white liberals' reaction to multiculturalism is echoed in his article. A few short excerpts will serve: "More generally, a core of shared ideas and beliefs, centering on liberty and democracy (both coming from the "western" tradition, has traditionally been at the center of American culture... Against this stands the cultural tribalism of much of the multicultural movement..."¹⁴ As he sees it, the source of the cultural tribalism is racial and ethnic bigotry. Hence he suggests, "the current multiculturalism debate would be improved by its absence."¹⁵ And as a mirror for improvement he recommends the case of Greco- Roman multiculturalism. According to him, though "the Greco-Roman beginnings of Western civilization

¹¹ Cf. A. Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*. A Touchstone Book, 1987. See especially the Introduction and pp. 88-97.

¹² Cf. A. Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, ch. 5; R.B. Tapp (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Humanist Perspectives*. Prometheus Books, 2000, chs. 8-9 and 13.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.151.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

are the product of many different races and cultures”, racism had no place therein. One may wonder here whom Galinsky blames for the racial bigotry, but only a faint hint is given in a sentence. “The acceptance of Romanization in some provinces...may be of great discomfort to those who today define multiculturalism in terms of the rigid maintenance of separate cultural identities.”¹⁶ Thus, as I understand it, his position in the midst of the multiculturalism debate is as follows: while the American culture is already multicultural and universal enough despite its Western origin, ethnic multiculturalists do not want to concede and be assimilated to American culture because of their racial bigotry and separatism.

We would do well to question the way he attributes the causes of the ongoing cultural war, as well as the way he employs Roman precedent as a lesson only for ethnic multiculturalism. Let me raise a few points of doubt. Firstly, it is not fair to shoulder the blame for racial bigotry only on ethnic multiculturalism. He does seem to avert his eyes from the patent historical fact that racism is a cultural construct Western civilization first invented in the late Medieval Ages and has since elaborated, while ethnic minorities, colored or religious, were fated to be on the defensive against its ideological onslaught. Secondly, though equality is one of the keywords of ethnic multiculturalism, he like all white liberals does not count it in the inventory of the universal ideas that should define American nationality. Is it because equality is an idea that is prone to foster parochialism or separatism for those eagerly desiring it?¹⁷ Thirdly, in looking at the Roman mirror, he is not attentive enough to its significant difference from the American case: that there was no Roman counterpart of the American majority/minorities glass wall, a barrier which is not likely to disappear in a foreseeable future. As we will see, the Roman empire’s uniqueness lies in the fact that it ultimately developed into a state with no master race nor domineering ethnic group. Fourthly and lastly, while he fully knows that Romanization, unlike Americanization, was a process in which different nations and ethnics

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁷ Incidentally, it is to be noted in passing that not a few liberal and even socialist intellectuals in America reacted by swing to the right against the egalitarian movements since 1960’s and that the so-called neoconservatives among them, indeed, regarded the cause of equality as threatening to the American liberty and governmental authorities. cf. P. Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: the Men Who are Changing America’s Politics*. New York, 1979, chs. 1 and 9.

voluntarily participated, not one programmed and imposed from above and center,¹⁸ he seems to disregard the Roman precedent when he exhorts ethnic multiculturalists to conform to the principle of assimilation. *Pace* Galinsky, one may turn the tables and address his suggestion to the American majority so that they may learn from Romans that more openness could get along well with national integration. In the next chapter, I will show in this critical spirit two interconnected aspects of Roman empire: how much openness and multiculturalism was there in the Roman empire? What were its secrets of successful integration over the long duration?

2. Openness, Multiculturalism, and the Secrets of enduring Integration of the Roman Empire

Let's start with the first question. Yet the concept of openness calls for clarification of the identity of its agent: who were they that were open? I would answer the Italian Romans, until they lost gradually their privileges during the Principate through a series of important curtailing factors: the flood tide of municipalization in provinces in the 1st century C.E., the *Constitutio Antoniana*, and further Diocletian's provincialization of Italy in the 3rd century C.E.¹⁹ Till then, Italy had been a sort of master nation reigning over the provinces of Roman empire. In the meantime, openness here signifies the attitudes, both mental and institutional, with which Romans treated or confronted the 'others', who could be provincials or barbarians beyond the frontiers. Let us address the mental aspect first.

It certainly would be idle to emphasize anew with Galinsky that there existed no such a thing as 'racism' among Romans. For racism as a discriminating attitude towards other races based on their biological or physical traits of inferiority, is, by definition, a modern invention.²⁰ Thus, absence of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁹ Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*. Oxford, 1973 (2nd ed.), part. II; W. Simhäuser, "Untersuchungen zur Entstehung der Provinzialverfassung Italiens," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II. 13, pp.401-452. I presume that J.P.V.D. Balsdon thinks similarly, though without elucidation, in his *Romans and Aliens*. Duckworth, 1979. see especially chs. 1 and 5.

²⁰ Cf. G.M. Frederikson, *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton University Press, 2002, ch. 2.

color prejudice was not peculiar to Romans.²¹ Likewise no vicious racial prejudice against Jews had been there comparable to anti-Semitism that began to emerge in the late Medieval Ages on religious pretext.²² True, some literate Romans like Tacitus and Juvenal expressed aversive emotion towards Jews on account of their exclusive and separatist way of life, but overall that attitude did not lead to religious persecution. On the contrary, the Roman authorities were tolerant of their religion and even tended to patronize them on the occasions of dire feud between them and Greeks.²³ And indeed, one cannot be sure that Romans' negative regard for Jews was necessarily severer than that they had for Greeks, which will be discussed below.

Now, the subject of Romans' attitudes towards various categories of *ethne* confronted within and beyond the *limes* of empire. On this I need to simplify things for brevity's sake: the attitudes could be explained by a certain analogy of ambivalent psychology operating generally whenever one confronts strange 'others'. Difference would stimulate mixed feelings like fear, inferiority, contempt and dislike as well as indifference, curiosity, admiration, and superiority.²⁴ And nuance in each and every case is to be determined according to who are 'the others' and what is the nature of the relation with them. For example, in facing Northern barbarians like Gauls and Germans, Romans had fears of their *feritas*, *crudelitas* etc., side by side with the sense of superiority based on techniques of civilization and warfare. Yet, the old fears for the Gauls soon died off as soon as the barbarians were securely incorporated in the empire.²⁵ Afterwards, Romans' fear of the Northern barbarians was gradually transferred to Germans: the remoter their abodes were from the Rhine the stronger the fear. Nuances

²¹ Cf. F.M. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*. Harvard University Press, 1983, ch. 3. The author, himself black, having surveyed the Egyptian, Hebraic, and Greco-Roman views of blacks, concludes the 3rd chapter like this: "...the overall...view highly positive...And above all, the ancients did not stereotype all blacks as primitives defective religion and culture."

²² Cf. Frederikson, *op. cit.*, ch. 1.

²³ A.N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*. Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp.86-101.

²⁴ I think that this ambivalent psychology of otherness is generally approximate to what Fr. Hartog wants to convey by 'rhetoric of otherness' in his *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*. (English trans.) University of California Press, 1988, ch. 6.

²⁵ Cf. L.C. Ruggini, "Intolerance: Equal and Less Equal in the Roman World", *Classical Philology* 82, 1987, pp.191-194; D.B. Saddington, "Race Relations in the Early Roman Empire", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II, 1975, pp.120-122.

between the first and second parts of the *Germania* well illustrate this. The author Tacitus, who certainly had not personally experienced the barbarians, seems to follow the then conventional attitudes: while he gave most commendation to the nearest and best known tribes in the first part, the description of the remoter tribes in the second part was filled with horror. After all, however, superiority rather than fear prevailed, and led frequently to waging wars. Again Tacitus testifies to the pretext or propaganda Romans used when justifying belligerence: they would provide barbarians the benefits of *pax* and *humanitas* (civilized life).²⁶ Though it seems certain that Tacitus here extrapolates from the current imperial ideology, that does not necessarily mean that Romans just like Greeks had inveterate prejudice against barbarians based upon the dichotomy of civilization versus barbarism.²⁷ For Romans knew well that they themselves once had not been credited with *humanitas* (*paideia* or *philanthropia* in Greek).

This brings us to the subject of Romans' attitudes to their cultural superiors, the Greeks. Greeks used to assume cultural superiority over the Romans, regarding them as *barbaroi*, and Romans were well aware of it.²⁸ The making of the Roman legend of Trojan origin itself bespeaks the Roman wish to belong to the Greek world of civilization, and philhellenism was an irreversible cultural trend among the Roman upper classes during the last two centuries B.C.E.²⁹ The Augustan laureate Horace superbly epitomizes the paradox that Greeks who had succumbed to Romans' swords took their captor captive in turn on the strength of culture.³⁰ Thus, some Greek intellectuals like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in the belief that Romans were indeed of Greek descent, even expressed the wishful thinking that Romans should take over upon themselves

²⁶ Tacitus, *Agricola* 30-32; *Historiae* IV. 73-74. cf. P. Veyne, "Humanitas: Romans and non-Romans", in A. Giardina (ed.), *The Romans*. The University of Chicago Press, 1993, ch. 12; G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman: the Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.54-67.

²⁷ A. de Vivo, "L'idea di Roma e L'ideologia dell'Imperialismo in Tacito", F. Giordano, *L'idea di Roma nella Cultura Antica*. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2001, pp.183-214.

²⁸ Cf. C. Champion, "Romans as *Barbaroi*", *Classical Philology* 95, 2000, pp.425-444. For the evidence that the Romans knew the Greek attitude, see Cicero, *De Re Publica* I. 58.

²⁹ Cf. E.S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome*. Cornell University Press, 1992, chs. 1 and 6.; P. Veyne, "The Hellenization of Rome", *Diogenes* 106, 1979, pp.1-27.

³⁰ Horatius, *Epistulae* 2.1.156: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio*. cf. S.E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta*. Cambridge University Press, 1993, ch. 1.

the Greek mission of civilizing *barbaroi*.”³¹ Yet in spite of Romans’ zeal for Hellenism, Romans valued the assumption of common descent hardly at all, and further had a certain ethnic prejudice against Greeks. Ironically, Roman intellectuals tended to attribute to excessive *urbanitas* everything they found negative about *Graeculus* (a pejorative appellation for Greeks), while associating Romans’ generic traits with *rusticitas*.³² As far as I am concerned, this means that Romans, inadvertently or deliberately, placed their self-identity halfway between civilization and barbarism. Hence it would not be far-fetched to infer that Romans were destined to be culturally open. For culturally Romans were not in the position to be arrogant or exclusive.

The institutional aspect of Romans’ openness also contributed a great deal to cultural diversity of Roman empire. Here, the openness of Roman citizenship, which was in striking contrast with the exclusiveness of Greek *poleis*, needs to be emphasized. Why Romans were far more generously admitting aliens is difficult to answer, but one thing is clear: otherwise they might not have survived the earlier wars in Italy, let alone the unification of Italy under their feet. The multi-layered structure of Roman citizenship was designed as an effective device to absorb the shock from the increasing admission of *peregrines*, but at the same time it worked to facilitate and accelerate the admission. Thus it happened that even slaves were manumitted, and ultimately franchised: so rampantly during the late Republic that Augustus had to contrive some inhibiting legislations. Meanwhile, the republican practices of individual grant to the magistrates of the *coloniae*, *municipia*, and allied communities persisted in imperial period. In addition, with the professionalization of Roman army underway in the early Principate, the soldiers of the auxiliary regiments and other non-citizen branches were rewarded with Roman citizenship on completion of 25 years of service.³³ These newly franchised veterans on the whole chose to settle in the neighborhood of the camps where they had served, that is in the *coloniae* and *municipia* scattered like islands across the sea of provincials. As mentioned above, the increasing rate of those settlements hit the ceiling during the Flavian period (late 1st century C.E.). Considering that slaves and free

³¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* I. cf. J. Palm, *Rom, Römertum, und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit*. Lund, 1959, pp.14-15; M. Fox, *Roman Historical Myths: the Regal Period in Augustan Literature*. Oxford, 1996, ch. 3.

³² Cf. N.K. Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks*. Athens, 1974, pp.35-53.

³³ Roughly 5,000 soldiers per year.

provincials of various locality and ethnicity were thus increasingly admitted into Roman citizenship, one should regard the edict of Caracalla in 212 C.E. with no surprise at all: it extended citizenship to all free provincials with minimal exceptions.³⁴

Needless to say, the gradual absorption of *peregrines* into Roman citizenship contributed to extensive acculturation (or cultural fusion) among multifarious ethnics, as well as to promoting Romanization. But before moving onto that subject, another significant consequence ought to be pointed out: the dethronement of the master nation mentioned at the end of the first chapter. Acquisition of Roman citizenship played a role as springboard on which provincial elites could jump to the imperial central government by getting appointed in equestrian or senatorial offices. The statistics shows that since the early 2nd century C.E. the senators of provincial origin began to surpass in number those of Italian origin. Numbers ranged from 50% to 60% between the early 2nd century C.E. and the early 3rd century C.E.³⁵ No surprise is equally the change in native place of emperors: it moved out of Italy to western provinces in the 2nd century C.E. and then to eastern provinces in the next century C.E. There will be no better evidence than this to show that the Roman empire was, at least in outlook, an open and diverse, but unified, civilization. Openness of this nature seems hardly likely to happen in multiethnic America.

Now, let me turn to the question of multiculturalism of Roman world. Again, a simplification seems inevitable here, for a detailed study would take an entire book. There were two main undercurrents flowing beneath the multifarious surface of cultural sea of Roman empire: Hellenization and Romanization. Hellenism had already attained full maturity in the Greek east when Romans arrived, yet the coming of Romans provided it new momentum to expand further into the western Mediterranean and into northern Europe. Nevertheless, in the west, its principal customers were limited to Romans of Italy, Sicily and Southern Gaul, while barbarian natives elsewhere were not likely to appreciate and be attracted to it. Especially, Hellenistic high culture, including philosophy, literature, and arts, were received and consumed mainly by Roman upper

³⁴ Sherwin-White, "Roman Citizenship: A Survey of its Development into a World Franchise", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* I. 2, pp.55-58.

³⁵ Cf. M. Hammond, "Composition of the Senate, A.D. 68-235", *Journal of Roman Studies* 47, 1957, pp.74-81; G. Salmeri, "Dalle Provinze a Roma", in *Storia di Roma*. II. 1: *I Principi e il Mondo*. Torino, 1991, pp.561-562.

classes. On the other hand, Roman legions and the settlements nearby in western and northern provinces could also attract the carriers of Hellenism from the east (slaves, merchants, and priests), for they were relatively big spenders by the then standard. Hellenistic religions as the offshoots of syncretism between oriental and Greek cults did pervade there as well as among the masses of Italian cities and towns. Of course, these religions also had to undergo some acculturation in order to adjust themselves to the expectations of Roman or Romanized populations. The cult of Isis and Sarapis, for example, was often linked to the imperial household (*domus Augusta*) from the Flavian dynasty on.³⁶

Thus, Hellenization under the Roman empire was, we may say, a process of acculturation underway more briskly in the west and to the north of the Mediterranean. Romanization was also a phenomenon whose success was brilliant in the West, for the Greek East, home of Hellenism, had no reason and intention to be Romanized. They were very proud of their language, physical and mental *modus vivendi*, and above all, their traditional way of constructing life space, both private and public. Of course, exception always exists to prove the rule. Gladiatorial combats and Roman style of bathing, the most characteristic elements of Roman culture, were sparsely introduced in the east, mostly as a part of evergetism of Roman big-shots or the richest and most prominent citizens of provincial towns.³⁷ Very rarely, a tiny segment of the native elites even learned Latin, chose Latin nomenclature, and put on *toga* etc. Yet the imperial government itself did not seek to Romanize: official settlement and colonization of Roman citizens, which could have played a role as nuclei of Romanization, were very few; Roman law was applied only in certain aspects of family law.³⁸

Tacitus happens to provide an excellent description of what Romanization was like in the barbarian west: public buildings such as temples, courts of justice,

³⁶ Cf. S.A. Takacs, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World*. E.J. Brill, 1995, *passim*.

³⁷ Cf. G. Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* 40, 1994, pp.126-127.

³⁸ Cf. A.H.M., Jones, "The Greeks under the Roman Empire", in *The Roman Economy*. Oxford, 1974, pp.92-93. When in the 2nd century C.E the Greek orator Aristeides. insinuated in a laudatory speech on the Roman empire (*eis Romanen* 26.102) that they were living under *koinoi nomoi* for all, he merely expressed rhetorically his vision of benefits that the Roman empire would bring in the future. see V. Nutton, "The Beneficial Ideology", in P. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker (eds.), *Imperialism in the Ancient World*. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp.213-214.

dwelling-houses, a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, speaking Latin language, the *toga*, the bath, the elegant banquet etc. (*Agricola* 21). *Coloniae* and *municipia*, isolated spaces of civilization in a sea of barbarism, worked as models of Romanization. Again, when emulation by natives occurred, it was basically of voluntary nature: Rome was not committed to imposing her culture on the provincials in the west either.³⁹ If there were anything like official policy, it aimed chiefly at pacification and tax collection.

One intriguing question arises at once: how was it possible that both Hellenization and Romanization made huge strides largely on a voluntary basis? One may get some insight into the answer from a theorem that sprang to A. Tocqueville's mind in his first encounter with American Indians. It runs: a human group adopts the values of a foreign civilization only on condition that, after its conversion, it should not find itself on the very bottom level of that civilization.⁴⁰ In its light may be illuminated also why in America ethnic multiculturalism chose to resist Americanization, which has been guided by assimilation policy.

Let me recapitulate the discussion so far before moving to the last question: first, Romans had neither racial bigotry nor cultural arrogance; second, Rome's citizenship policy was so open that the master nation who had built the empire was ultimately dethroned; lastly, multiculturalism was characterized by the two different, but interconnected processes of acculturation, namely Hellenization and Romanization, and in the process Roman government did not intervene programmatically. These major points obligate me to pose my last question: what were the secrets of the Roman empire in managing successful and prolonged integration with so much openness and multiculturalism ?

Again, the absence of another modern invention, nationalism, ought to be pointed out first. Given nationalism, let alone the modern resources of mass transportation and communication, it could have been far more effective for the leadership of native revolts to mobilize compatriots massively in deep-rooted and lasting opposition to Roman rule.⁴¹ However, the reported causes of the revolts

³⁹ Cf. E. Salvino, *Città di Frontiera nell'impero Romano: Forme della Romanizzazione da Augusto ai Severi*. Bari, 1999, pp.27-32; L.A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation*. Routledge, 1991, p.191

⁴⁰ *Journey to America* (J. P. Meyer ed.). Yale University Press, 1959, pp.198-201.

⁴¹ Cf. G.B. Giles, *op. cit.*, pp.638-639 and 651; F.W. Walbank, "Nationality as a Factor in Roman History", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 76, 1972, pp.145-168.

were not at all of the nature that could be sufficiently threatening to Roman authorities: private grudges against individual leaders; occasional complaints against the imposition or extortion of taxes; and in the case of the Jews only, religious beliefs.⁴²

That native revolts were not widespread and chronic seems to point to the other side of the coin: native residents lived always in fearful consciousness of the overpowering might of the Roman army. The Jewish historian Josephus in the 1st century C.E. testifies to this grim reality of Roman dominion through the mouth of Herod Agrippa II, when he desperately tried to dissuade his Jewish subjects from revolting against Rome. "Will you shut your eyes to the might of the Roman empire...? Have not our forces been constantly defeated even by the neighboring nations, while theirs have never met with a reverse throughout the whole known world?"⁴³

The Jewish king could have appealed to the brighter side of Roman military power, that is, the benefit of *pax Romana*. In fact, that was the most favorite *topos* in the current beneficial ideology, and its examples abound in the extant Greek and Latin literature of 1st and 2nd centuries C.E. Yet, citation of a provincial view must be in order, and my choice here is a snippet from Plutarch's moral essay: "For observe that of the greatest blessings which States can enjoy, --peace, liberty, plenty, abundance of men, and concord,--so far as peace is concerned the peoples have no need of statesmanship at present; for all war, both Greek and foreign, has been banished from among us."⁴⁴ The Greek moralist continues to elaborate on other blessings Roman peace entailed: material and cultural opportunities and achievements.⁴⁵ Certainly, ideology could be always deceiving, but the prevalence of the beneficial ideology here ought to be interpreted as reflecting realities more or less.

Finally, the solidarity of the Roman empire depended in large measure on a mutually advantageous exchange of power and prestige between imperial capital

⁴² Cf. S.L. Dyson, "Native Revolts in the Roman Empire", *Historia* 20, 1971, pp.239-274; M. Goodman, "Opponents of Rome: Jews and Others", in L. Alexander (ed.), *Images of Empire*. JSOT Press, 1991, pp.222-238.

⁴³ *Bellum Judaicum* II. 361-2. cf. K. Wengst, *Pax Romana: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*. München, 1986, ch. 2.

⁴⁴ *Politika Parangelmata* 824 C. For reference of further examples, see C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Empire*. University of California Press, 2000, ch. 3; Wengst, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wengst, *op. cit.*, ch. 4.

and provincial urban nuclei. In other words, patronage-clientele between emperors and local elites (or aristocracies, if you will) was not only an effective mechanism binding the periphery (provinces) with the center (emperor), but also functioned as a complement for the lack of bureaucracy. According to K. Hopkins, the Roman Empire with a population estimated at 50-60 million people was managed with only about 150 administrators in the 2nd century C.E., while the southern China of 12th century C.E. with a population of a similar size needed 4,000 officials working in the provinces.⁴⁶ What did make up for this under-developed bureaucracy was the centripetal tendency of local elites and their loyalty to the emperor. They competed fiercely among themselves for securing *amicitia (et beneficia) Caesaris*: it was invaluable for maintaining their local prestige and influence, and further in advancing upward to the imperial aristocracy. As F. Millar has brilliantly shown, this patronage and promotion system had worked well enough to integrate the vast empire until far-reaching changes in the 3rd to 4th centuries C.E. began to undermine it.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Cf. K. Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire", *Journal of Roman Studies* 70, 1980, p. 121.

⁴⁷ F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)*. Cornell University Press. 1977.