

MARTIN MILLETT. *The Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation*. xvi + 255 pages, 95 illustrations, 32 tables. 1990. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0-521-36084-6 hardback £30 & \$54.50.

Martin Millett presents a new way of looking at a well treated subject in *The Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation*. In contrast to the rather static approach of the traditional works on Roman Britain, such as Frere's *Britannia* and Salway's *Roman Britain*, Millett discusses the integration of Britain into the Roman Empire in terms of social, political and economic processes. The major themes discussed are the development of the agricultural economy and its productive capacity; regional variations in the settlement pattern and social formation of the province; and the organization of social power. The book is thought-provoking and would be of interest to anyone interested in social processes.

The main method used to evaluate processes is to demonstrate pattern changes in the archaeological material. Millett uses the rich collection of published reports to construct distribution maps and tables which show the presence and quantities of various categories of artefacts in different geographical and chronological situations. The conclusions drawn from these maps and tables demonstrate the wealth of interpretive information available when one looks at changes in regional patterns.

The book is roughly structured chronologically, each chapter focusing on a theme. The first chapter presents a review of the literature on the nature of Roman expansion and imperialism before the conquest of Britain in AD 43. Expansion and imperialism, in this view, were the result of personal power struggles within the élite in Rome and, as a result, the administration of the acquired territories were largely left to the local élite.

In the following chapter Millett presents several views of the late Pre-Roman Iron Age. First he interprets the agricultural economy of the period, based on faunal and floral reports and the results of the Butser experiments. He suggests a largely agricultural economy, especially in the southeast, with various degrees of husbandry. Interpretation of the social-political organization of Pre-Roman Britain is not directly linked to any one source of information. Instead, Millett looks at distribution patterns of various archaeological evidence in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age, such as ceramic styles, coins and settlement types. These patterns are interpreted in conjunction with the historical literature as suggesting developing social hierarchies in the south and east at the same time that a more de-centralized system existed in the rest of the island.

Millett deals in detail with the Roman invasion itself, discussing the strategy and tactics used to

conquer each 'tribe'. Based on the literature and the presence or absence of early Roman forts, some within pre-Roman hillforts, a difference is suggested between the centralized and de-centralized areas. Various models of the economic impact of the army, in terms of pay and agricultural needs, are also evaluated in light of regional differences.

Two chapters are devoted to the development and maturation of the *Civitates*. Architecture is one of the main sources of information used to track their development. The architectural development of the fora at Verulamium, Silchester and Exeter are looked at in detail. A few British fora are also compared with continental examples, such as the forum from Augst. Millett compares the type and distribution of monumental dedicatory inscriptions between Britain and the German and Gallic provinces. Other types of urban settlements are dealt with separately.

The rural settlements, *villae*, are treated as peripheral to the *Civitates*. They are evaluated in terms of their distance to a *Civitas*. Millett also presents graphs of the rank sizes of villa for different periods. Only a brief synopsis is included of villa architecture and the types of material found in them. The reason given is the wide range of material and the bias of the published reports towards the more spectacular sites such as Fishbourne.

The presence of a developing Romano-British culture is demonstrated through the types of reliefs and other architectural ornamentations fusing Roman methods and British motifs, such as the various relief carvings of the three mother goddesses. The industrial activities in towns and the distribution of their products, specifically pottery, are also presented in a series of distribution maps and graphs.

For the Late Roman Empire Millett looks at shifts in settlement patterns, *villa* sizes and locations, pottery production and distribution, coin distribution and other items. Changes in the later Empire are seen as the result of a shift of functions towards the periphery. The shift is interpreted as resulting from changes in taxation and trading practices alluded to in the historical literature. In short, during the 3rd–4th centuries there was an economic shift to the smaller towns with the *Civitates* losing their economic functions while maintaining their socio-administrative ones.

In the epilogue Millett examines the traditionally accepted interpretation of the end of the Roman Empire as a 'decline and fall'. In place of the traditional interpretation, Millett suggests that there was a continual evolution in the socio-administrative system due to development of the periphery. In fact, the trends and patterns he identifies within Britain seem to reflect the larger processes at work within the Empire as a whole.

One of the most interesting points of this book is the demonstration that much of the development tradi-

tionally ascribed to the Roman presence was actually well under way before the Roman occupation. Millett shows how regional differences in this development persisted into the Roman period, pre-determining the course of Romanization for each area. The one major shortcoming of this book is that it might not be as accessible to those who have little or no knowledge of Roman Britain. Although the book is well illustrated, the illustrations are not always well integrated with the texts and there are no basic maps in the earlier sections with which a reader who is not a specialist in Roman Britain can orient himself and locate the various tribal names mentioned. This is unfortunate, as both British and non-British archaeologists would profit from reading this book.

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#### References

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SALWAY, P. 1981. *Roman Britain*. Oxford.

SONIA CHADWICK HAWKES (ed.). *Weapons and warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*. [Oxford University Committee for Archaeology monograph no. 21.] 213 pages, 3 maps, 10 charts, 12 tables, 32 line drawings, 15 black & white plates. 1989. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology; ISBN 0-947816-21-6 hardback £25.

Thanks to the Bayeux Tapestry, we have some idea of what was involved in campaigning in the mid 11th century, but for earlier centuries we have to draw on a wide range of evidence. From the 8th century onwards we have fairly reliable written sources which mention both campaigns and the activities of warbands. There is also the heroic poetry of both British and English origin, the *Goddodin* as well as *Beowulf*. Separating the conventions of their literary forms from what they have to tell us about real events is a skill. Equally, the interpretation of weapons found in graves up to the end of the 7th century or in ritual lake deposits of the Roman Iron Age in north Germany and south Scandinavia requires other skills. The discovery of the Coppergate helmet in a wood-lined pit suggests that ritual deposition was still important in Anglo-Scandinavian York, and finds of Late Anglo-Saxon weapons and stirrups in rivers may represent sacrifices rather than losses in skirmishes at fords or bridges. Depictions of warriors, as on the helmet plates from Sutton Hoo or the Repton stone, are another invaluable source.

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