

Provincial Attitudes toward the Roman Empire
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In the *Agricola* Tacitus describes the process by which his father-in-law set out to Romanize the nobles of Britannia. We see him encouraging and cajoling former chieftains and other magnates to adopt all the sophisticated institutions of servitude. We know that local elites became Roman, but how did they feel about it? What motivated them? Did they appreciate the finer things that Greco-Roman civilization had to offer? Did they do it merely to get ahead while resenting the loss of ancestral customs and languages?

On the basis of the evidence that has come down to us, this is a difficult question to answer. The material evidence shows that provincials adopted Roman cultural markers, but mute stones, even inscribed ones, can say nothing about the attitudes of Romanizing provincials. (Bibliography on Romanization: C. Ando, P. A. Brunt, D. J. Mattingly, R. MacMullen, M. Millett, G. Woolf)

In this paper I shall briefly examine a few texts that might come close to giving an authentic picture of at least a few provincial reactions to Rome. Some have already been applied to this question; one is a new contribution. The first is Aelius Aristides' oration *To Rome* (XXVI), delivered before the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. The speech is often seen as a sickening display of sycophancy, the utter abasement of the Greek spirit and genius. A careful reading, however, uncovers some pointed criticisms of Rome that could not have been lost on Aristides' imperial audience. If not exactly subversive, the speech is anything but subservient. (On Aristides: J. H. Oliver and S. Swain)

The other two texts come from Judaea. One is Josephus' account of the power struggle that broke out upon the death of Herod, wherein many Jewish nobles sought annexation to the Roman province of Syria. Only through subjection to Rome could they hope to safeguard the precious independence wrested from the dead hands of Herod. The second text is a late first-century Jewish text entitled *Second Baruch*, an apocalyptic response to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The author wrestles with the complex emotions following this supreme act of Roman brutality, attempting to shift the national dialogue away from sanguine anticipation of Rome's coming divine chastisement and back onto the necessity of rebuilding a shattered political and social life as Roman subjects. (On Josephus: M. Stern and B. D. Shaw; on *2 Baruch*: F. J. Murphy)

There is a common thread to the three texts, namely that subjects were not overly concerned with abstract notions of imperialism and liberty and placed greater importance on the benefits and disadvantages of Roman rule at the local level.