CENTRAL SPAIN

L. A. CURCHIN: *The Romanization of Central Spain. Complexity, Diversity and Change in a Provincial Hinterland.* Pp. xii + 300, maps, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Cased, £65. ISBN: 0-415-28548-8.

Central Spain, as Leonard Curchin explains in the introduction to his new book, is a neglected area as far as recent writing on Roman history is concerned, and (the work of Spanish scholars apart) he is clearly correct. Despite the appearance of several books on Roman Spain over the past twenty-five years, to which C. himself has made notable contributions, the impact of the Roman presence and the reactions to that presence of the indigenous peoples of the central table-land of the Iberian peninsula has not hitherto been given the same study that other adjacent areas have received. It is the great virtue of this work that it makes a serious attempt to remedy this deficit.

After an introductory chapter (to which I shall return), C. sets out the evidence for the pre-Roman population of the region, whom the Greek and Latin sources called Celtiberians, and who, whatever their ethnic origins, were clearly speakers of a Celtic language, living in pre-state societies which C. reasonably classifies in anthropological terms as 'chiefdoms' and 'complex chiefdoms'. In a series of chapters, he then reviews the evidence, both archaeological and literary, for the relationship of these peoples and the Romans through the second and early first centuries B.C., down to the end of the Sertorian war; for the diffusion of urbanism which followed; and for changes to the countryside, the identity and status of communities and individuals, the control of economic resources and the integration of the region into wider economic patterns in the peninsula and beyond (including an interesting suggestion on the importance of grain from the region in the imperial period, p. 166), the interplay of indigenous and Roman religion, and changes in the use of language. His final chapter looks at the evidence for daily life and for funerary practice. In each case, he concludes these chapters with a brief summation, drawing attention to the patchy and differentiated rates of change, with the more rapid alterations taking place in the eastern parts of the region and among the élite groups in the population.

In all this, C. demonstrates an enviable grasp of his material, using in particular the work of Spanish archaeologists, mostly unknown outside the peninsula, and for this he is to be congratulated. The problems which this book presents, at least for this reviewer, do not consist in either the material he has assembled, nor in his overall account of the emergence of a new and 'Romanized' set of societies in this relatively remote region of the Roman empire. There are, however, two respects in which the contexts in which he places this material and this account cause regret.

The first is the geographical area covered. As he explains in his second chapter, he has limited his coverage to a set of six peoples (the Arevaci, Carpetani, Celtiberi, Pelendones, Turmogi, and Vaccaei). This, as C. himself admits, is a collection of peoples who only occur in this form in the lists given by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century A.D., and 'Celtiberi' in particular seems to be a use by Ptolemy of what was previously a generalized term for several if not all of these peoples, and to cover an area which was previously controlled by three other 'chiefdoms', the Belli, the Titthi, and the Lusones. This in itself need not have been problematic, and (as C. points out, pp. 3–4) there are limits to what can be covered by any one volume. Nonetheless, it is a great pity that C. felt unable, because of his self-imposed geographical constraints, to include in his area of study the communities of the southern central Ebro valley, where

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one urban settlement in particular (Contrebia Belaisca) has produced the longest inscriptions in the Celtiberian language as well as evidence of social, legal, and economic relations with the Romans in the early and mid-first century B.C. (p. 3). The inclusion of this area would have provided a further testing ground (and indeed important evidence) for C.'s picture of gradual and uneven acculturation, and one which has been the subject of significant recent archaeological and linguistic investigation (A. Beltrán and A. Tovar, *Contrebia Belaisca I* [Zaragoza, 1982]; M. A. Díaz Sanz and M. M. Medrano Marqués, *AEA* 66 [1993], 243–8).

The second context which seems to hinder rather than to help C.'s analysis is theoretical. In his first chapter, C. dismisses a series of possible models for 'Romanization' before stating a preference for an 'integration model', which he commends for recognizing a more intimate and bonded relationship between indigenous and Roman cultures than the other models; for recognizing that the result was a culture that was neither 'indigenous' nor 'Roman' but a new product; and for minimizing the 'Roman-versus-indigene' dialectic by seeing both cultures as constituent parts of a unified whole (p. 14). This is all very well as far as it goes; but it ignores discontinuities within and between the cultures termed 'indigene' and 'Roman' in order to emphasize the continuities. In one sense the indigenous population of the area did indeed reckon the Roman way superior to their own: they had been defeated by the Romans in a series of lengthy wars. Further, though other models might be criticized for stressing the importance of the élite in the process of acculturation at the expense of the lower classes, C. himself notes frequently that in many ways it was the élite which took the lead (thus, for example, pp. 129, 136, 143, 147–8, 167). Above all, though the 'integration model', presented as two overlapping circles, suggests that each culture contributed to the 'new product' while retaining elements of its own, it underestimates the obvious difference between the nature of the two: there were an enormous number of Romans outside Celtiberia, but relatively few Celiberians, and while the new Roman–Celtiberian culture might be widespread in Celtiberia, it was not be found in Rome.

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SOUTHERN SPAIN

E. W. HALEY: Baetica felix. *People and Prosperity in Southern Spain from Caesar to Septimius Severus*. Pp. xx + 277, maps, ill. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. Cased, US$45. ISBN: 0-292-73464-6.

The Roman province of Baetica played a key rôle in the history of the Roman empire. This was particularly true of the early empire, when rich individuals from such cities as Italica, Hispalis, and Corduba swelled the ranks of the equestrian and senatorial orders, and Trajan and Hadrian became emperor. The wealth that underpinned this development was rooted in Baetican agriculture. The richness of this was evident in the results of Ponsich's survey of Roman rural settlement in the lower Guadalquivir valley in the 1970s, and in the production and distribution of olive oil and fish sauce from the province across the Roman empire. Many scholars have argued that these developments were largely driven by, and benefited, élites at the level of decurions and above. In this ambitious new book, Evan Haley takes advantage of much new epigraphic and archaeological information to argue that the *pax romana* in Baetica

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