Introduction

The expansion of Rome into the world of the Greeks holds persistent fascination for scholars and students. Reasons are obvious enough. The clash and intermingling of the two peoples eventually created that amalgam which formed the dual culture of classical antiquity. The peculiar mix that resulted grew from complex beginnings, elusive and enigmatic: a repeated inducement to research. The earliest stages of intercourse between Roman West and Hellenic East, the commencement of that long and fertile relationship, retain an abiding attraction.

This book investigates the nature of Roman expansion in the East against the background of Greek society and institutions. The period under scrutiny comprises much of the third and second centuries B.C., the era of Rome's initial movement overseas and of Greek adaptation to the authority of the western power. A broad geographical area falls within our scope: Greece proper, Macedonia, Illyria, Thrace, the Aegean, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt. An attempt is made to see this pivotal time in its own terms, not as prelude or preparation for the future imperial administration of the East. The first steps of Roman infiltration into the Hellenic world had their own dynamic. A principal goal of this study is to understand that process, the setting in which it occurred, and the concepts that guided it.

Origins, motives, and consequences of the expansion have provoked inquirers for over a century, and increasingly so in recent years. Approaches diverge and solutions differ. But one fundamental

question has governed debate from the start: how does one account for Roman subjugation of the Hellenistic world? The question derives from antiquity; Polybius posed it. The Achaean statesman and historian lived through the age of Rome's penetration into the Greek East, witnessed the phenomenon from both sides, and employed the topic to structure his history. A desire to uncover the wellsprings of Roman expansionism, its manifestations, and the reasons for its success impelled Polybius to his project.

One looks to Polybius in vain, however, for definitive answers. Ambiguities and inconsistencies lurk in his pages, leaving unsolved the central puzzles of how Rome achieved her dominion, through what stages, and to what ends. Questions arise also as to how far the process stemmed from deliberation and how far from an innate dynamic. Nor is it clear what mixture of condemnation, approbation, and suspended judgment the historian applies. Experience induced Polybius to modify and revise conclusions over the course of time. But he held firm to his basic conviction: a belief in the aggrandizing character of Rome's expansion and her overriding push toward world dominion.[1]

Polybian analysis stands at the root of all modern discussion. Some find it simplistic and one-sided, the general thesis contradicted by interpretations of particular events, or indeed refuted by the facts recorded by Polybius himself. Some reduce it to a belief in mere aggressive impulses, others see a more subtle recognition of complex motives. Still others embrace the analysis as consistent theory and a genuine understanding of Roman aggrandizement.[2] Caution needs to be applied. Polybius' perspective is invaluable but slanted. As a Greek who both suffered through and benefited from Roman movement into Hellenic lands, he could hardly develop a sense of detachment from the subject. His involvement generated insights—but also partisanship. The judgments of Polybius cannot serve as the starting point for recovering truth. They command respect, yet invite dissent.

The question of Roman "imperialism" is Polybius' question in

1. See the fuller examination below, pp. 343–351.

2. M. Holleaux developed at length the argument that Polybius' view of Rome's imperialist strivings is at variance with his assessment of the reasons for individual wars; *Rome, la Grèce, et les monarchies hellénistiques* (Paris, 1921); reinforced and brought up to date by F. W. Walbank, *JRS* 53 (1963): 1–13. The inconsistency is denied by P. S. Derow, *JRS* 69 (1979): 1–15; W. H. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1979), 107–117. For P. Veyne, *MEFRA* 87 (1975): 790–804, Polybius mistakenly views Roman imperialism as a mere will to power. D. Musti, *Polibio e l'imperialismo romano* (Naples, 1978), 57–64, 88–132, rightly criticizes Veyne's reductionism. He redresses the balance, however, by ascribing to Polybius rather more attention to economics than his text allows.

origin. His circumstances naturally prompted it. And all subsequent investigation has kept that question to the forefront. As a consequence, scholarship on the topic has a troubling, one-sided quality. Studies almost invariably concentrate on the vantage-point of Rome, the object being to explain her actions and intentions, and to outline the spread of her authority over Hellas. That approach inescapably promotes the idea that Rome exported her system and practices within Italy to the East, foisting them upon a submissive or subdued people.

A different line of inquiry is pursued here, with a different perspective. The setting can be as important as the actors. Greek institutions, Greek patterns of behavior, and the presuppositions of Greek international society provide an indispensable backdrop. The principal question takes on a reverse aspect: what were the circumstances that Romans encountered in the East and how did they adjust to them?

Polybius gave the lead. And moderns continue to labor with his aim in mind, to explain Roman "imperialism." The subject has inherent appeal and contemporary implications. Yet its very contemporaneity carries the risk of distortion: the pejorative character of the term "imperialism" beclouds and bedevils analysis.

The term itself is a modern one, unknown to antiquity. Indeed, it is a late-comer even in the modern world. "Imperialism" began to gain currency in the mid-nineteenth century, bearing a negative connotation, and principally with reference to the empires of Napoleon I and Napoleon III. Its meaning, however, had at first a narrow and not particularly informative range. It denoted the aggressive policy of an emperor, hence a usage that combined the notions of "Caesarism" and "militarism"—nearly equivalent, in fact, to "Bonapartism."[3] Not until the later nineteenth century did the term start to acquire a different and more familiar definition, with reference to a policy of expansionism, to embrace extension of national power abroad, regardless of the type of government which implemented it. The colonial holdings of Great Britain provided the impetus for a controversy that swirled about the Disraeli government in the 1870s, aggravated in particular by the campaign to have Queen Victoria declared the "Empress of India." "Imperialism" thus emerged as an anti-Disraeli catchword. Political sloganeering gave it publicity. As late as 1878 Disraeli's

3. Cf. D. Flach, *HZ* 222 (1976): 4–12.

Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, could claim that "imperialism, as such, is a newly coined word to me." Rightly so, in that its usage had hitherto been associated with continental despotism. The broader meaning soon took hold. Liberal critics of the Disraeli government denounced "imperialism," but would not renounce empire. Hence, the terminology received redefinition on both sides of the political fence. "True" and "false imperialism" became bandied about: a moral trusteeship of backward peoples as against mere territorial aggrandizement.[4] The word received its molding in the political debates of late nineteenth century England.

In transition from sloganeering to theorizing a chief stimulus came from the Boer War. It generated one of the most influential and enduring works on the subject, J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study*, published in 1902. Although the ideas had been adumbrated earlier, the war sharpened and articulated them. Hobson's analysis turned attention vigorously upon the economic aspects of overseas expansion. His fierce criticism of British policy traced it to the accumulation of surplus capital in the hands of the few. Domestic "underconsumption" created a demand for foreign markets and overseas investment which brought, in turn, the militarism and aggrandizement characteristic of "imperialism."[5] The emphasis on economic motives and consequences then received a different twist from Lenin. In his celebrated formulation, imperialism constituted the most advanced stage of capitalism. The ascendancy of cartels and monopolies on a worldwide basis intensified the exploitation of workers, but also presaged collapse of the system.[6] Thus, imperialism, which for Hobson was a pernicious prop for capitalism, became in Lenin's hands the manifestation of capitalism's extreme form and the potential agent of its own destruction. On either view, monetary greed and the economic advantages of expansion take central place in the course of imperialism, an association that has weighed heavily on all subsequent speculation.[7]

4. See the thorough treatment of R. Koebner and H. D. Schmidt, *Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1964), 107–165; the statement by Carnarvon in *Fortnightly Review* 24 (1878): 760.

5. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (3rd ed., London, 1938), first published in 1902. The assertion of Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, 221, that this theory "was a clear product of Marxist thought" is inaccurate; see T. Kemp, *Theories of Imperialism* (London, 1967), 30–39.

6. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, 1939), first published in 1917.

7. Kemp, *Theories of Imperialism*, 152–171, correctly argues that Marxist-Leninist thought does not require "annexation" as an indispensable accompaniment of imperialism.

An alternative thesis has wielded comparable influence. Joseph Schumpeter wrote his famed study, *The Sociology of Imperialisms*, shortly after Lenin's work, but independent of it and probably in ignorance of it. Schumpeter, in any case, took an altogether different line. Imperialism, in his conception, stemmed not from calculation of gain or material benefits but from an atavistic drive for power: "imperialism is the objectless disposition on the part of the state to forceful expansion without limit." Psychological factors come into play, nationalistic self-assertion, instinctive belligerency, the "dark powers of the subconscious."[8] In similar fashion, Leninist theory was confronted directly by Raymond Aron, who characterized economic interests as either pretext or secondary consequence of imperial expansion. The root of imperialism rests in a "national will to power"—even when unrecognized by its protagonists.[9]

Debate swings between the two poles. Imperialist strivings can be analyzed either as rational policy, with definable objects, notably material gain, or as inchoate impulses, an urge to extend power and control over others.

Or else one may reject both. Attention centered at an early stage upon the character of Roman expansion as a natural object for scrutiny and comparison. Theodor Mommsen, as so often, set the lines of discussion. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, before the term "imperialism" had come into vogue, Mommsen did not use the neologism but addressed the issue. He vigorously denied Roman aggression, whether rational or impulsive. In his view, the increase of Roman dominions stemmed from a dread of powerful neighbors. Rome's offensive actions had defensive aims. Roman conquests were reluctant and unplanned, constrained by outside pressures rather than willed for purposes of aggrandizement.[10] Mommsenian pronouncements exercised potent influence on later generations, and the line he pursued still retains its force. The thesis gained elaboration in the early twentieth century, when explicit debate on "imperialism" spilled over from the modern to the ancient world. Tenney Frank entitled his work *Roman Imperialism* in 1914, but argued that Rome's policies in the initial decades of involvement with the East were "anti-imperialistic." He analyzed Roman behavior in terms of philhellenic

8. J. Schumpeter, "The Sociology of Imperialism," in *Imperialism and Social Classes*, ed. B. Hoselitz (New York, 1955), 3–98; first published in 1919.

9. R. Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris, 1962), 243–281.

10. T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* I (Berlin, 1903), first published in 1854.

sentiments and an eagerness to receive acceptance among Aegean powers through championing Greek liberty.[11] The tenacious logic of Maurice Holleaux gave the thesis its most compelling formulation. Holleaux expounded at length and with rigorous consistency the view that Rome lacked any serious interest in the Hellenic world until the end of the third century. She entered that world only for reasons of security, fearful of attack and driven to conquest out of groundless alarm. Holleaux rejected categorically the ascription of "imperialism" or "militarism" to Roman motives: an incentive for self-protection rather than a compulsion toward dominance characterized Rome's movement to the East.[12]

Harsher verdicts too gained articulation in the early twentieth century. Guglielmo Ferrero's extensive study located the origins of Roman expansionism in the third century and saw progressive brutality and heedless aggression in the second and first centuries. Rational motives were secondary at best; only the will to power and ascendancy mattered.[13] A parallel judgment issued from the pen of one of the true giants among Roman historians, Gaetano De Sanctis. Writing at almost the same time as Holleaux, he arrived at opposite conclusions. For De Sanctis, Rome's undertaking of wars in the East gravely altered the course of her history. Militarism took over, an insatiable passion for conquest and control that robbed the state of moral authority and presaged its ultimate demise.[14]

In other analyses, calculation rather than mere power lust served to explain Roman expansionism. Debates on modern European history had their repercussions on the question of Rome. The economic element naturally drew attention from the beginning of the twentieth century. Gaston Colin in 1905 postulated the pressures of mercantile and financial enterprises on Roman decisions to move abroad.[15] The mutual effects of overseas expansion, increased emphasis on business interests, and the rise of a commercial class found expression in Rostovtzeff's classic work on Roman social and economic history.[16]

The main lines of interpretation were thus laid down early in this century. Variations on the themes or combinations of them continue to be played. So, for example, the important work of Ernst Badian stresses both Rome's reluctance to occupy and administer for-

11. T. Frank, *Roman Imperialism* (New York, 1914), 138–189.

12. Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce, passim.*

13. G. Ferrero, *Grandezza e decadenza di Roma* I (Milan, 1907).

14. G. De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* IV:1 (Florence, 1969), first published in 1923.

15. G. Colin, *Rome e la Grèce de 200 à 146 avant Jésus Christ* (Paris, 1905).

16. M. I. Rostovtzeff, *A Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1957), 6–23; first edition published in 1926.

eign lands and her determination to dominate them. She achieved this dual purpose through transferring her domestic traditions of patronage and clientage to the stage of international relations, a form of "hegemonial imperialism."[17] The heritage of Mommsen and Holleaux remains pervasive. A long line of scholars has embraced the thesis, in one form or another, of Rome's "accidental" imperialism, an obsession with security that entailed repeated extension of frontiers. British experience provided the analogy of an empire acquired in "a fit of absence of mind."[18] For Paul Veyne, in a recent essay, Roman imperialism was an almost unconscious, machine-like routine, aimed not at conquest but at the security afforded by eliminating all rivals—a species of isolationism.[19] By contrast, deliberate calculation, in particular the calculation of economic benefits, has its champions as well, in increasing numbers. Italian scholars led the way in this generation, at first with concentration upon mercantile influences; more recently they have argued with greater sophistication and on a broader front that Roman imperialism aimed at the enrichment of all social classes through the emoluments of war, tribute, exploitation of resources, and slavery.[20] The latest formulation, that of William Harris, sees a coalescence of various aggressive motives: the belligerency and militarism cultivated by the Roman system, the grasping after material gains that came with conquest and empire, the compulsive drive for expansion and world supremacy, a national habit of resort to arms.[21]

The concept of "imperialism" arose in political circumstances and was appropriated for scholarly debate. Its manipulation has not

17. E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae, 264–70 B.C.* (Oxford, 1958); *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (Oxford, 1968), 1–15; R. Werner, *ANRW*, I:1 (1972), 501–563, in his survey of the subject, goes further along these lines and detects a movement from indirect "hegemony" to a pragmatic "imperialism."

18. The celebrated quip comes from J. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883), 8; cited repeatedly as comparison between the Roman and British imperial acquisitions; e.g. E. T. Salmon, *The Nemesis of Empire* (London, 1974), 1–28. For those who have adopted some variant or another of the Mommsen/Holleaux approach, see the list in Werner, *ANRW* I:1 (1972), 503–504, n. 12.

19. P. Veyne, *MEFRA* 87 (1975):793–855.

20. The mercantile aspect is emphasized to excess by F. Cassola, *I gruppi politici romani nel III^e secolo a. C.* (Trieste, 1962). See now the treatments of L. Perelli, *Imperialismo, capitalismo, e rivoluzione culturale nella prima meta del II^e secolo a. C.* (Turin, 1975); Musti, *Polibio e l'imperialismo romano*; cf. Harris, *AHR* 76 (1971): 1371–1385.

21. Harris, *War and Imperialism, passim*; cf. J. A. North, *JRS* 71 (1981): 1–9. A brief summary of various views now in G. Brizzi, *I sistemi informativi dei Romani* (Wiesbaden, 1982), 151–161.

necessarily brought us closer to the truth. The negative ring of the term can prejudice rather than facilitate understanding. Definitions tend to be arbitrary, and thus unilluminating.

A definition of "imperialism," however, is beside the point. The present study moves along a different path. Roman "imperialism" is not its subject. Rather, it is the Roman experience in Hellas and the Hellenic experience under the impact of Rome. Neither approbation nor condemnation motivates the quest, but an effort at explanation. The Hellenic context of Roman behavior receives emphasis—and the continuities of the Hellenic world that persisted even after the coming of Rome.

This book does not, of course, profess to answer (or even offer answers for) all questions related to so large and complex a topic. Cultural interconnections between Hellenic and Roman societies, for example, demand volumes unto themselves. They can receive but peripheral and scattered treatment here. Rome's experience with the western Greeks, in particular the Hellenic communities of Campania, south Italy, and Sicily, is also touched on only briefly. The importance of that experience in forming impressions on both sides should not be underestimated. But information on it is too sparse and limited to allow anything beyond speculative inference. Roman movement across the Adriatic, the impressions delivered, and the reactions encountered form the subject of this study. Circumstances and implications differed markedly from the process of expansion in Italy. For similar reasons, this study does not explore the juridical relations and administrative arrangements that marked Rome's network of associations with Latin and Italian communities prior to the turn eastward. The testimony is ambiguous, confused, and late, the arrangements do not amount to a discernible system, and Roman concern for Italy always held a place that set it apart from affairs abroad. The focus of this inquiry, with all its omissions and deficiencies, is on the adaptations of the two peoples to the novel situation of Roman presence in the Hellenic East.

This work falls into three parts. Part I analyzes the institutional conventions that helped to shape the political and diplomatic confrontation of East and West. Part II seeks to interpret some of the presuppositions and expectations that Romans and Greeks brought to their encounters and to discern the understandings that arose from them. Part III comprises the narrative portion, organized by regions; it reconstructs the early history of Roman penetration into the Hel-

lenic East in light of the structures and attitudes outlined in Parts I and II.

The five chapters of Part I inspect the principles, practices, and institutions, both formal and informal, that marked interstate associations in the third and second centuries. Chapter 1 examines the role played by formal treaties in defining Roman-Greek relations, the models on which they were based, and the mixture of symbolic and substantive meaning that they carried. The second chapter turns to the diplomatic category of "friendship," traces the development of this Hellenic institution, and tests the proposition that Rome cultivated it as a device to convert "friends" into dependencies. A parallel investigation occurs in the third chapter, which treats the traditional Greek method of resolving disputes by interstate arbitration and the consequences of its adaptation by the Romans. Chapter 4 sets the Roman claim to champion Hellenic "freedom and autonomy" in the context of Hellenistic propaganda conventions. The "patron-client" model receives scrutiny in Chapter 5: that chapter asks to what extent this concept grew out of Roman domestic practice and to what extent it served as a Hellenic means of exploiting Rome's power. Each of these studies challenges the common assumption that Rome molded the Greek world to her own purposes. They underscore instead the Hellenic structures within which the interrelationships developed.

Part II moves from institutions to attitudes and motivation. The sixth chapter ponders the making of "eastern policy" in Rome and questions the idea that it was fashioned by men with specialized knowledge, connections, and commitments to the Hellenic East. Chapter 7 addresses the issue of how far Roman attitudes toward Greek culture translated themselves into national policy toward Hellas. An effort is made in the eighth chapter to ascertain when and for what reasons Rome first began to rationalize overseas expansion, thus to determine the concept's effect as an impetus to empire. The material advantages of empire form the subject of Chapter 9: what role did they play as either stimulus or consequence of "imperialism" in the East? The tenth chapter then explores the broad range of Greek reactions to Roman expansion in order to help define the meaning and intentions of that expansion. These chapters of Part II avoid simple and unilinear answers. Roman attitudes were diverse, shifting, and often inconsistent, a curious mixture of attraction, indifference, and disdain. For the Greeks, no steady image of Rome took hold; rather, a sequence of blurred and changing images emerged, which created a variety of emotions and produced a highly complex relationship between the peoples.

Eight narrative chapters in Part III follow the Roman experience

in different theaters of the Greek world. The examination is ordered geographically, comprising studies of Roman relations with Illyria, Macedonia, Greece proper, Asia Minor, the Seleucid kingdom, and Ptolemaic Egypt. Analyses of events bring certain findings into focus. Rome's attention to the East was unsteady and intermittent. Informal rather than formal relationships predominated. Romans showed themselves adept at Hellenistic posturing, thus readily stepping into the roles of "liberators" and "benefactors." Greeks in turn became skilled at utilizing Roman power and authority, and at enlisting Roman collaboration (or at least reputation) for their own ends.

The age of "Roman imperialism," when surveyed from a Greek vantage-point, discloses a surprising amount of continuity with the Hellenistic past. Traditional rivalries repeated themselves, local and regional concerns prevailed, old patterns recurred. The energy of the Hellenic world survived the coming of Rome.