

SVENSKA INSTITUTEN I ATHEN OCH ROM
INSTITUTUM ATHENIENSE ATQUE INSTITUTUM ROMANUM REGNI SUECIAE

Opuscula

Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome

4
2011

STOCKHOLM

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Prof. Charlotte Scheffer, Stockholm, Chairman
Ms Lisbeth Andersson, Stockholm, Treasurer
Dr Erika Weiberg, Uppsala, Secretary
Prof. Karin Hult, Stockholm
Prof. Arne Jönsson, Lund
Prof. Lars Karlsson, Uppsala
MA Sandra Karlsson, Göteborg
Prof. Anne-Marie Leander Touati, Lund
Dr Arto Penttinen, Athens
Prof. Barbro Santillo Frizell, Rome
Prof. Mårten Snickare, Stockholm
Dr Ingela Wiman, Göteborg

SECRETARY'S ADDRESS:

Department of Archaeology and Ancient History
Box 626
SE-751 26 Uppsala, Sweden
E-mail: secretary@ecsi.se

EDITOR:

Dr Jenni Hjohlman, Stockholm
E-mail: editor@ecsi.se

DISTRIBUTOR:

eddy.se ab
Box 1310
SE-621 24 Visby, Sweden

For general information, see www.ecsi.se

For subscriptions, prices and delivery, see <http://ecsi.bokorder.se>

Published with the aid and of a grant from the Swedish Research Council
The English text was revised by Ms Catherine Parnell, Athens

Contributions to *Opuscula* should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee (address above) before November 1 every year.
Contributors are requested to include an abstract summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their article.
For style of references to be adopted, see www.ecsi.se/authors. All articles are sent to referees for peer review.
Books for review should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee (address above).

ISSN 2000-0898

ISBN 978-91-977798-3-8

© Swedish Institute at Athens and Swedish Institute in Rome

Typeset and printed in Sweden 2011 by eddy.se ab

Cover: see Fischer, this volume, p. 82, *Fig. 15*.

catalogue where shrines attested to in archaeology or literature are collected. Also, the structures of a more uncertain character are included in a special section. The catalogue comprises 48 entries where each entry includes basic measurements and a bibliography, followed by a paragraph discussing the particular shrine. Several interesting discussions are therefore 'hidden' in the catalogue texts, instead of being in Chapter 6.

The investigation shows that there were surprisingly few monumental temples, which Xagorari-Gleissner explains by saying that the metroon was intentionally built in a simple manner because it imitated the earlier *Herdhaus* (house with hearth). In the *Herdhaus* both cultic and profane functions took place and, as she suggests, it is possible that it once also housed the cult of the predecessor of Meter Theon. The Prytaneion later replaced the *Herdhaus*, and it is suggested that its earlier cultic function came to be moved to separate shrines or temples. Although the evidence is lacking, the suggestion has some potential and would help to explain why the Metroa is often located by the agora and also had other functions apart from pure cultic, as it many times housed the city's archive as well. Xagorari-Gleissner wants to see the metroon as a continuation of earlier Mycenaean buildings via the Greek Geometric *Herdhaus*. However, the most relevant parallel; the Phrygian megaron, is not considered in the study. Instead, a comparison is made with the Bronze Age temples at Hattusha, which are quite different, and the much later megaron-styled temples from Larisa. The Early Phrygian (10th-9th centuries BC) megara at Gordion were also centrally located, and at least some of them were surely also used for cultic purposes (although their precise functions are uncertain). A combined function of profane and cultic duties as suggested for the Greek *Herdhaus*, is very probable for these buildings as well (see e.g. Roller 1999, 112; Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 180). We may further note that later Phrygian images (7th and 6th centuries) depict Kybele standing in the porch of such a megaron building. These façades are often part of rock-cut shrines, but they are likewise not considered in this context. Instead, the only Phrygian cult monuments used as comparisons are the rock-cut step monuments. These, Xagorari-Gleissner believes, are dedicated to the Mother Goddess, and as this type of monument cannot be found in Greece, she interprets them as evidence that the Greeks did not have the same conception of the Mother as the Phrygians. Different conceptions are likely, but the step monuments cannot be used as evidence as it is uncertain which deities these were associated with (see Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 158-166).

In Chapter 7 the popularity of the Mother Goddess and the geographical distribution of her cult in Greece are discussed. It is explained that Meter Theon was an important goddess as her shrine was located by the agora, but she never

became as popular as many other female deities such as Demeter.

The Greek sanctuaries of the Mother Goddess are a topic that has hitherto been neglected, so therefore this is a welcome contribution. Xagorari-Gleissner treats several aspects of the cult and her collection of information on and discussion of the Greek Metroa are the most valuable contributions, in addition to her analysis of the cult personal which offers some new and illuminating insights.

SUSANNE BERNDT-ERSÖZ
Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies
Stockholm University
SE-106 91 Stockholm
susanne.bernt.ersoz@antiken.su.se

Ralph W. Mathisen & Danuta Shanzer (eds.), *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World. Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity*, Farnham: Ashgate 2011. 378 pp., 27 ills. ISBN: 978-0-7546-6814-5

The present volume is the published result of the sixth biennial *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity Conference* held at the University of Illinois in 2005. As the title suggests, the conference—and consequently the book—dealt with the integration of barbarians in the period between the early fourth and seventh centuries CE, "one of the most significant transformations of the Roman world" (1). As stated in the Introduction, the inclusion of the phrase "The Transformation of the Roman World" in the title of the conference was a deliberate comment by the organizers. They felt that the vast research project of the same name funded by the European Science Foundation between 1993 and 1998, had failed to present a single or more coherent theme about the transformation of the Late Antique world; rather it produced as many models as there were participants (of which there were 150!). Therefore, the stated aim of the conference was to present such a coherent theme: the role of barbarians.

Apart from the Introduction by the editors, the book contains 25 chapters grouped thematically into four main parts. I will not concern myself with the minutiae of editorial details apart from one little quibble: the volume does not include a bibliography, which lessens its usefulness somewhat. As it is, one has to trawl through the notes to find a particular reference which is unnecessarily annoying. The quality of the chapters is generally good but, as can be expected in a collection of this kind, somewhat uneven with the occasional excellent chapter as well as some of poorer merit. The limited space allowed for this review precludes an assessment of all chapters individually; I will limit myself to discussing some general concerns and points of interest raised by the book and

its individual chapters. Although most of the contributions deserve attention, only those illustrative of the themes I have chosen will be mentioned.

The first point I wish to raise concerns the overall theme of the book. Although the stated aim in the Introduction is to provide a single and more coherent theme about the transformation of the Roman world, the title itself contradicts this: the themes covered by the title, and indeed the chapters of the book, represent such a wide range of subjects so as to lose the desired coherency, at least to a certain extent. It is true that all contributions deal with barbarians in one form or another, but within the term “barbarian” lurks more than the usually imagined uncivilized Germans and Huns. The chapters of the book cover peoples and groups from most of the Empire’s main borders, from Britain and the rivers of the Rhine and the Danube to southern Egypt and the North African deserts and from the Tigris to Spain. On these frontiers the Romans encountered many types of barbarians and each barbarian group had its own relationship with the Roman Empire. To make matters even more complex, some of the contributions do not deal with barbarians living outside the Empire or whose recent origins were considered to be outside the Empire (such as the Goths in the late fourth and fifth centuries), but with groups such as the Jews (De Palma Digeser; Shahar) or the Vascones (de Brestian) who by Late Antiquity had been Romans—in a technical sense as citizens and in many ways also culturally—for centuries. Although all the groups discussed in the book may have been viewed as barbarians to some extent, the variety or gradation of their barbarity differed. It must be said that the inclusion of more than the most stereotypical kind of barbarian is one of the strengths of the book, and one does get a good idea of the sheer number of different Roman-barbarian experiences. However, the variety itself and the different problems it presents for the scholar trying to study the creation of identity in a changing, and in some ways very fluid, Roman Empire by necessity detracts from the coherency of the volume. Perhaps a discussion on this aspect should have been included in the Introduction to better tie the various contributions together.

This problem—if indeed it is a problem—is compounded by the fact that there is little, apart from the terms “barbarians” and “transformation,” to connect some of the chapters to the overall theme of the volume. For instance, Chapter 8 by Yuval Shahar (“Imperial religious unification and its divisive consequences: Diocletian, the Jews, and the Samaritans”) discusses the unforeseen consequences of the persecutions of Christians during the Tetrarchy. By exempting Jews from sacrificing to the Roman state gods, but not the Samaritans, Diocletian increased the divisions between these two groups. Before the persecutions the Jews viewed the Samaritans as being almost like themselves, they were slightly odd Jews. But

this perception changed as a consequence of the Great Persecution. The Tetrarchs’ effort to unite the Empire resulted in the exact opposite: an increased division. Shahar spends some time establishing the Jews as barbarians, citing textual evidence, but in the end one cannot get away from the feeling that he is protesting too much. The fact remains that Jews had been integrated into the Roman world for centuries and their role in the transformation of the Empire in Late Antiquity probably lies closer to how other, long established groups within the Empire—whether defined by religious, cultural, or any other parameters—affected this change or, indeed, were affected by it (cf. de Brestian in the same volume). Although Shahar’s discussion and conclusions are sound in themselves, the chapter has little to do with the role of barbarians in the transformation of the Roman world.

What Shahar does illustrate—and this is an important aspect—is the role of the imperial government in this transformation, a theme that also occurs in Linda Ellis’ contribution (“Elusive places: A Chorological Approach to Identity and territory in Scythia Major (Second-Seventh Centuries”). She argues that the emergence of a Scythian identity in this Danubian province was as much the result of Roman political and administrative control as anything else. The barbarians themselves were transformed but often it was the Empire, not the barbarians, that was the active agent in the transformation. In the debate over the role of the barbarians in the transformation, or decline (or however one wants to phrase it) of the Empire, it is sometimes overlooked that the Roman authorities themselves were promoters of change, and that often this change, as in Shahar’s example, was due to internal concerns/forces, rather than external.

One of the strengths of the book is that several of the contributions allow for a more nuanced view of Roman-barbarian relations and the various aspects that guided them. For instance, Kevin Uhalde’s chapter (“Barbarian Traffic, Demon Oaths, and Christian Scruples (Aug. *Epist.* 46–47)”) demonstrates that religious concerns sometimes outweighed the importance of ethnic or cultural differences in the day-to-day interactions between Romans and barbarians, and also that such relationships were peaceful more often than not. This is further emphasized in several chapters that address the important issue of perception: by whom were barbarians perceived as barbarians, and under what circumstances? For example, Salim Faraji (“Kush and Rome on the Egyptian Southern Frontier: Where Barbarians Worshipped as Romans and Romans Worshipped as Barbarians”) discusses the situation on the Roman-Kushite border in southern Egypt and how Romans participated in Kushite cults and vice versa. As is indicated in Faraji’s paper, originally non-Roman cultural or religious traits were unproblematic for those who identified themselves with the Roman Empire. Also, for the individuals

involved, the idea of participating in cults devoted to specifically Nubian gods was not seen as anti- or even non-Roman.

The sharp division between civilized Romans and barbarians that may (or may not) have existed in earlier times, became less and less of a reality. As Elisabeth Robertson Brown shows in her chapter ("Banditry or Catastrophe?: History, Archaeology, and Barbarian Raids on Roman Greece"), late fourth century writers such as Claudian and Eunapius could no longer maintain a clear distinction between Roman armies and barbarian invaders, although not for a lack of trying. The idea of the strange and dangerous "other" as opposed to the cultured Roman was the view of the intellectual elite, who in their writings could afford to portray barbarians as more similar to animals than rational human beings. In everyday life, especially on the frontiers, such ideas were not very common (cf. Uhalde). It is debatable whether the people in the Roman-Kushite border zone perceived their existence and their relations with each other as a Roman, non-Roman dichotomy, apart from perhaps as a political veneer.

Kimberly Kagan's contribution ("Spies Like Us: Treason and Identity in the Late Roman Empire") emphasizes the difference between one Roman-barbarian interaction from another as she compares the situation on the Persian border with that on the Rhine. The distinction between Roman and non-Roman was much more clearly defined on the Persian border. The complexity and great age of the Persian civilization, as well as Persia's military strength and political rivalry with Rome, meant that the kind of mixed identities that developed on other frontiers did not occur here. As discussed by Kagan, interaction between Rome and Persia was guided by a single state loyalty, and changing one's identity from Roman to Persian (or vice versa) was not undertaken lightly and involved an act perceived—even by those who did it—as fundamentally wrong. If one defected, one changed identity completely—thus preserving the single state loyalty. In the west, on the Rhine frontier, matters were different and more akin to the Kushite frontier with a mingling of identities that were not mutually exclusive. Barbarian rulers often served as Roman commanders while still being kings of their respective peoples. As leaders of client kingdoms they were an integrated part of the Roman system. The point is that it was not necessary to change identity since adopting a Roman identity did not preclude a Germanic one.

Kagan's chapter also points to the reason why the integration of barbarians into the society of the western provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries worked relatively well. Already part of a mixed culture and incorporated into the Roman military system, the groups (mostly Germanic) taking over in the West were not as alien as they are sometimes portrayed. Their identity, whether Roman or barbarian, was a product of Roman perceptions and created within a Roman frame of

reference, thus making them familiar to Roman sensibilities (if only as the proverbial "other"). On the eastern frontier, the society, culture, and thus the identity of the Persians were based on traditions older than the Romans and just as dominant. Thus they were also much more alien to the Roman mind (and therefore perhaps more acceptable as something to admire, cf. McDonough and Drijvers in the same volume). The relative ease, then, with which some Germanic groups coexisted or integrated with the indigenous Roman (Spanish, Gallic, Italian, etc) populations following the end of the fourth century was due to the fact that their identities were already part of a Roman system. This point is further borne out by two chapters dealing with the post-Roman Spanish elite. Schwarcz ("Visigothic Settlement, Hospitalitas, and Army Payment Reconsidered") and García Moreno ("Building an Ethnic Identity for a New Gothic and Roman Nobility: Córdoba, 615 AD") show that the post-Roman elite in Spain, and their landholdings, were not organized along a Gothic-Roman dichotomy as much as it was based on imperial administrative practices (Schwarcz). These practices were themselves the result of increased Roman barbarian interaction in the aftermath of the battle of Adrianople in AD 378—coupled with ideas on Roman senatorial nobility (García Moreno).

There are a wide variety of themes and sub-themes covered by the book and I have only had room to discuss some of them. Apart from a certain lack of focus in the way some contributions relate to the stated theme of the book, the general impression is positive and it is a book well worth reading. All in all, this volume provides the reader with many different perspectives on barbarian and Roman interaction in late antiquity. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of the book is the recognition of the fact that the transformation of the Roman world took place in a Roman political, cultural and geographical context. Even the role of the barbarians was defined within Roman parameters and was dependent upon cultural traits as well as political and religious issues.

HANS LEJDEGÅRD
Department of Archaeology and Ancient History
Box 626
Uppsala University
SE-751 26 UPPSALA
hans.lejdegard@antiken.uu.se