

A. L. F. Rivet, *Gallia Narbonensis: Southern Gaul in Roman Times*. With a chapter on *Alpes Maritimae*. B. T. Batsford Ltd., London 1988. 370 Seiten, 52 Karten, 83 Abbildungen.

"*Gallia Narbonensis*" is the seventh volume to appear in the ambitious series entitled "Provinces of the Roman Empire". The enterprise, alas, has had a chequered history. Its laudable aim, proclaimed in the publishers' 'blurb' on the dust-jackets of the early volumes, was to "deal with the history and archaeology of the Roman provinces on a scale which has not been attempted for many years and for which there is a definite need". SH. FRERE's magisterial "*Britannia*", which launched the series in 1967, was soon followed by WILKES' "*Dalmatia*" (1969), ALFÖLDY's "*Noricum*" (1974) and MOCSY's "*Pannonia and Upper Moesia*"



(also 1974). All quickly established themselves as major reference works, but not alas (Frere's "Britannia" apart) as commercial best-sellers. So Routledge, the series' original publisher, lost faith, although not surprisingly it kept the rights to "Britannia", now in its third edition (1987). BOWERSOCK's "Arabia" found a home with Harvard (1983), but more recently the enterprising firm of B. T. Batsford, who have built up an impressive archaeological list in recent years, have taken the series under their wing, issuing new volumes in a less bulky format, but retaining the series' original scale and scope. E. WIGHTMAN's brilliant "Gallia Belgica" (1985) was the first in the new format, and Rivet's "Narbonensis" is the second; more are on the way. Every scholar who cares about Roman provincial archaeology will be grateful to Batsford for rescuing the series from oblivion.

The emphasis and organization of each volume obviously varies according to the nature of the subject matter and the source material available, the quality and quantity of which fluctuate enormously, of course, from one part of the Empire to another; but all previous books in this series have tried to balance narrative history with chapters on urbanization, economic activity, religious cults, etc. Rivet's book, however, breaks with this traditional framework and tries a different formula. Although technically in three parts (the third on the separate province of *Alpes Maritimae* occupies a mere fourteen pages [pp. 335–349] and might more logically have been termed an Appendix), the meat of the book is divided into two: "The Province" (pp. 3–111), a narrative of military and political events from 219/8 B.C. to A.D. 475, prefaced by a geographical sketch; and "The Civitates" (pp. 113–331), a pioneering treatment of the constituent *civitates* of the province, discussed *civitas* by *civitas*. Does this alternative formula work?

What Rivet's book most usefully provides is a detailed survey of the history and historical geography of Gallia Narbonensis. His control and judicious handling of the sources, both ancient and modern, are admirable, and his constant emphasis on establishing where this town or that road station mentioned in the classical sources and the itineraries was actually situated, and the loving care which Rivet has lavished on the detailed regional maps which accompany chapters on the *civitates*, will come as no surprise to those familiar with his other work: this, after all, is the man who masterminded the splendid 3rd edition of the "Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain" (1956) and the two British sheets of the "Tabula Imperii Romani" (1983 and 1987), as well as the author (with Colin Smith) of the magisterial "Place-names of Roman Britain" (1979). The maps in themselves rank as a major achievement, veritable treasure chests of archaeological data which will be of inestimable value to the compilers of future sheets of the "Tabula Imperii Romani" ("Lugdunum" [1934, 1938] and "Mediolanum" [1966] barely touch Narbonensis), and of the relevant map in Princeton's forthcoming "Atlas of the Greek and Roman World" (scheduled for 1999). Anyone who has tried to compile a map with this degree of archaeological detail will know just how many tedious hours are needed before decisions can be made about whether this or that site should be included (and if so where). Although over-reduction has led to the occasional loss of line (e.g. in the contours) and loss of clarity in the distinction of symbols (between triangles and diamonds, for example), not helped by some overinking from the printer, the usefulness of these maps as an essential *vade-mecum* for the archaeological topography of Gallia Narbonensis is not in doubt. Nor is the usefulness of the accompanying text. That a *civitas* by *civitas* treatment is possible at all is a tribute to the immense industry of generations of dedicated French archaeologists, and Rivet's gigantic task has been to assimilate and distil in succinct and lucid fashion the results of all this multifarious activity. The bibliography and detailed references amply demonstrate the breadth of Rivet's reading, and constitute in their own right a most valuable stimulus to further research.

There is, however, a price to pay for such an overtly geographical approach to the study of a Roman province. The chronological framework which governs the historical narrative of the first part of the book (pp. 3–111) is abandoned in the archaeological surveys of the individual *civitates*: in the latter material from different centuries rubs shoulders indiscriminately, and any notion of development or change over the period of nearly six hundred years when Gallia Narbonensis was part of the Roman Empire is lacking. It is symptomatic of Rivet's approach, for example, that FÉVRIER's important article, "The origin and growth of the cities of southern Gaul to the third century" (*Journal Roman Stud.* 63, 1973, 1–28), is not included in the bibliography (and is only cited twice in passing on minor points in the notes): questions of 'origin' and 'growth', and the pace of Romanization (or 'Romanity' as Rivet quaintly calls it) are rarely considered here. While minutiae of site identification and local topography are obviously of great interest to those familiar with the detailed lie of the land, many readers will turn to Rivet's volume anxious for a grasp of



the broader issues. How widespread was the impact of Greek colonies on the native sites of the hinterland? What was the importance of Gallia Narbonensis in the wider framework of the Empire, and in particular how close were its ties with Italy? What was the province's role in the complex mechanisms of exchange of foodstuffs and manufactured goods with other areas of the Roman world? How quickly did the villa system take root in Narbonensis? Did the really large and luxurious villas appear only in the late Empire, as happened for example in neighbouring Aquitania (cf. my review in *Bonner Jahrb.* 190, 1990, 739–742); if earlier, how do we explain the difference between the provinces? Was there continuing loyalty to Celtic deities (even if with a thin veneer of Romanization), as is so conspicuous in the rest of Gaul, or was Narbonensis more 'Romanized' than the rest and obliterated traces of its Celtic roots? How quickly did Christianity take hold, and how significant is Narbonensis' contribution to our knowledge of paleochristian archaeology? These are the sorts of questions which any student of the Roman Empire, without prior specialized knowledge of Narbonensis, might well hope to find answered when turning to a book of this kind. On all these topics, however, the reader will be sorely disappointed. This is not the book to come to for information on the religious cults of Narbonensis, for example, where the material is sufficiently abundant for the sort of statistical measure of the relative popularity of each divinity over time, as E. WIGHTMAN did with such perception for those of Gallia Belgica in *ANRW II* 18,1 (1986) 542–589. This is not the book to come to for an account of the architectural development of villas or their decoration (of the few villa plans, chosen apparently at random [figs. 9, 10, 16, 20, 25, 39, 49], only one [fig. 39] is labelled, and none indicates phases even where known). This is not the book to come to for economic history, where (to take just one example) no impression is conveyed of the important production of Narbonensian wine amphorae nor of their export, not only all over Gaul but also to Italy, northern Europe and occasionally even further afield (cf. F. LAUBENHEIMER, *La production des amphores en Gaule Narbonnaise* [1985], not cited in the bibliography).

Chapter 1 ("The Background") usefully starts (pp. 1–9) with setting the geographical limits: Gallia Narbonensis comprised the Mediterranean coastline from the Spanish to the Italian borders, the Rhone corridor almost as far north as Lyon, the valley of the Arve up to lake Geneva, and territory westwards from Narbonne over the *Seuil de Narouze* to Toulouse and the upper reaches of the Garonne. A section on "protohistory" (pp. 9–17) deals with Greek colonisation, but the fascinating topic of the interaction of Greek culture with the indigenous tribes centred on hill-forts, while it is touched on (pp. 15–16), is not explored in depth: key sites such as Nages, Ensérune and Pech-Maho are passed over in virtual silence, which makes the inclusion of a detailed bibliography of these and other hill-top excavations (pp. 20–26) puzzlingly otiose. What could have been done with all this material is ably demonstrated by B. CUNLIFFE's treatment in "Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: spheres of interaction", chs. 1–2, published in the same year as Rivet's book.

Chapters 2 to 5 (pp. 27–73) deal with the historical narrative from 219/8 B.C. to the death of Augustus. While there is much that is lucid and fresh here, Rivet's preoccupation with matters geographical is plain – deciding what route Hannibal took in 219/8 B.C. (pp. 28–32), or Munatius Plancus in 43 B.C. (pp. 76–77), for example, or discussions of topographical niceties (seven alternative places are suggested for the Solonium of Dio 37,47–48, six for the same passage's Ventia: p. 62). Some of this material deserved relegation to the footnotes or appendices, for at times it clogs the flow of the narrative. In particular one needs a good French atlas at one's elbow to locate many of the place names mentioned in abundance here, but not even an atlas provides much help in identifying the homelands of the profusion of ancient tribes mentioned on pp. 60–65, only some of which are marked on the map on p. 69 (fig. 4). In general far more detailed maps would have been helpful to the reader throughout the narrative chapters. Nor is this a book for the faint-hearted: much is taken for granted (the difference between *coloniae Latinae* and *coloniae Romanae* is never explained [p. 75; cf. p. 90], to take just one example; there is no glossary to assist the neophyte); and passages of both Latin and Greek (e.g. pp. 19, 49, 50, 59, 61, 64, 65, 69, 70 etc.) are left untranslated.

Similar problems mar Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 84–111); if ever there was material crying out for removal to appendices, it is surely the lists of proconsuls, legates, quaestors and procurators on pp. 87–89, and the discussion of entries in the Verona List and the *Notitia Galliarum* and *Dignitatum* on pp. 97–102. The chapter covering Tiberius to Carus (A.D. 14–283) is particularly sketchy: this was the period of peace and economic prosperity when the Narbonese cities became equipped with the range of amenities that one expects of any self-respecting urban community of the Mediterranean world by the time of the middle Empire, and when



the development of rural settlement was also proceeding apace; but these are not topics which concern Rivet. In this chapter the discussion of architectural development, for example, is limited to a single paragraph (p. 85), listing the province's theatres and amphitheatres; villas are mentioned only in passing, and only two of them are named. Similarly in the chapter on the late Empire little attempt is made to integrate the important gains of recent archaeological research with the bare narrative history provided by the ancient sources. Nor will many agree with Rivet's statement that "as for archaeology, the *main outstanding question* is the dating of the city walls" (p. 102; my italics): the extent to which those late Roman enceintes which enclosed only a fraction of the built-up areas destroyed the fabric of civic life, the survival of public buildings into the late Empire, the fluctuating availability of manufactured goods from elsewhere in the Roman world, in short the whole process of urban survival and the transformation of late Roman towns into early medieval ones, are among other major 'outstanding questions' (explored superficially by Rivet, if at all) on which there is currently lively debate but little consensus among French archaeologists.

The strength and weaknesses of the second part of the book, the *civitas* by *civitas* treatment from Toulouse (Tolosa) to Vienne (Vienna), have already been indicated: it offers a splendid panorama of topographical detail and historical geography, but is much less good at indicating development and change over time. The book closes with a bibliography which is curiously uneven: there are no items here later than 1984 (although publications which appeared in 1985 are included in the notes), but even so there are surprising omissions. There is, for example, no room for earlier treatments of Gaul in English (O. BROGAN, *Roman Gaul* [1953]; P. MACKENDRICK, *Roman France* [1971]; J. F. DRINKWATER, *Roman Gaul* [1983]), and many other works germane to the subject matter of this book are omitted both here and in the notes: they include (and for this short list I pass over in silence the books published in or since 1986, allowing two years for the book to be in the press) J. GASCOU and M. JANON, *Inscriptions latines de Narbonnaise. Gallia Suppl.* 44 (1985); J. P. CLÉBERT, *Provence antique* 2 (1970); F. LAUBENHEIMER, *Recherches sur les lingots de cuivre et de plomb d'époque romaine dans les régions de Languedoc-Roussillon et de Provence* (1973); Y. ROMAN, *De Narbonne à Bordeaux: un axe économique au 1er siècle avant J.-C.* (1983) (for Chs. 4, 8 and 9); B. BOULOUMIÉ, *L'oppidum gaulois à Saint-Blaise* (1984) (for Ch. 1); R. AMBARD, *Aix Romaine: nouvelles observations sur la topographie d'Aquae Sextiae* (1984) (for Ch. 15); A. BLANC, *La cité de Valence à la fin de l'antiquité* (1980) (for Ch. 29); J. PRIEUR, *La Savoie antique: recueil de documents* (1977) (for Ch. 30).

A few comments on points of detail:

- p. 9: Rivet takes the inland Col de Perthus road where the N9 crosses the Pyrenees as the most likely Roman route across the Pyrenees; in fact the *via Domitia* can now be shown to lie 2 km further inland, on the Col de Panissars, since the discovery on that road in 1984 of the imposing remains (under a medieval priory), 31 m by 16 m, of one of the Trophies of Pompey erected after his victorious Spanish campaign in 71 B.C. (PLIN. nat. 3, 18; 7, 96; cf. Rivet p. 60 ["these have not been discovered"] with n. 57 on p. 71). See *Gallia* 43, 1985, 415 (and more recently *Gallia Inf.* 1987–88/1, 271–272).
- p. 13 (cf. 42): St. Blaise is here taken as a Greek settlement from c. 400 B.C., having earlier been a native *oppidum*, but current orthodoxy is to view it as a native site throughout with Greek imports, and the defences (now dated to not earlier than the late second century BC: B. BOULOUMIÉ, *Recherches stratigraphiques sur l'oppidum de Saint-Blaise* [1982] as Greek-style, not Greek).
- p. 49, n. 9: on Entremont add now the splendid and comprehensive volume of D. COUTAGNE et al., *Archéologie d'Entremont au Musée Granet* (1987), which no doubt appeared too late for inclusion.
- p. 79: the term 'senatorial province' should now be avoided, in favour of 'province of the Roman people' (*provincia populi Romani*) (F. MILLAR, "Senatorial" provinces: an institutionalised ghost. *Ancient World* 20, 1989, 93–97).
- p. 79 (and 167): Rivet's refreshing scepticism about the long accepted Agrippan date for the Pont du Gard and the rest of the Nîmes aqueduct has been shown to be wellfounded: cf. now *Comptes Rendus Séances Acad. Inscript.* 1989, 408–426; *Journal Roman Arch.* 4, 1991, 63–88 and G. FABRE, J.-L. FICHES and J.-L. PAILLET, *L'aqueduc de Nîmes et le Pont du Gard* (1991), who date it on archaeological grounds to the mid-first century A.D.
- p. 90: on the Orange arch (? A.D. 21), J. C. ANDERSON's suggestion of a Severan date (which I do not accept) came too late for inclusion here (*Bonner Jahrb.* 187, 1987, 159–192), but cf. also P. GROS, *Gallia* 44, 1986, 191–201, likewise not cited here.
- p. 95, n. 24: Pflaum's suggestion that Nîmes replaced Narbonne as provincial capital on the basis of the number of imperial-cult *flamines* recorded at the former "requires more proof", says Rivet; in fact it is



- perfectly possible for the centre of the provincial cult to be other than at the provincial capital, as the examples of Gorsium (rather than Aquincum) in lower Pannonia, and Ptolemais (rather than Cyrene) in Cyrenaica clearly demonstrate (J. DEININGER, *Die Provinziallandtage der röm. Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis zum Ende des dritten Jhs. n. Chr.* [1965] 440).
- p. 118: for Toulouse we are told the area enclosed by the walls (90 ha.); but Rivet gives the figures for only a few of his *civitates* (Nîmes c. 200 ha., Riaz 15–20 ha.), making direct size comparison difficult: a single illustration showing all the walled circuits drawn to the same scale (as he did most usefully for the Romano-British *civitates* in his: *Town and Country in Roman Britain* [1964] 79–85, figs. 2–5) would have been helpful.
- p. 119: on the amphitheatre 4 km NW of Toulouse, Rivet calls for its excavation and consolidation, unaware that this had in fact commenced in 1984. Cf. *Gallia* 44, 1986, 320–321; C. DOMERGUE et al. in: *Mélanges Labrousse* (1986) 283–302; and, more recently, *Dossiers histoire et archéologie* 116, May 1987, 46–51; *Spectacula I: gladiateurs et amphithéâtres* (1990) 63–76; and *Gallia Inf.* 1989/1, 106–107.
- p. 120: a monumental mausoleum still standing near the village of Luzenac 5 km SW of St. Lizier (personal observation) needs to be added to the map (fig. 7).
- p. 123: Rivet's account of the Chiragan villa, the largest in the province (although he nowhere tells us that), is typical of an allusive writing style which takes too much for granted. At least he gives us a plan (fig. 9), but without accompanying labels it cannot be 'read', especially since in the text he merely refers to the "brilliant" discoveries made here at the turn of the century, without describing them at all (contrast the informative summary, with labelled plan, in MACKENDRICK, *Roman France* 131–134). Rivet never indicates the villa's phases or mentions a date for any of them; he is more interested in listing other known sites in the neighbourhood and speculating on estate size. He also accepts as "highly probable" PERCIVAL's dubious suggestion that its *dominus* moved to a new villa across the road at Martres-Tolosanes in the fourth century (*Roman Villa* [1976] 129–130), but identifying ownership and proving the legal relationship between one supposedly well-defined 'estate' and another is notoriously difficult without supporting epigraphic evidence: you can dig up a villa but you cannot dig up its landtenure system (cf. C. E. STEVENS in: C. THOMAS [ed.], *Rural settlement in Roman Britain* [1966] 108).
- p. 135: "Rescue excavations [at Narbonne] have located houses, some with very fine mosaics" hardly does justice to the importance of the Clos de la Lombarde excavations, where the late first century peristyle house has both pavements and paintings which show particularly close affinity with Italian designs (final report in M. SABRIE/Y. SOLIER, *La maison à portiques du Clos de la Lombarde à Narbonne et ses decorations murales* [Fouilles 1975–83]. *Revue Arch. Narbonnaise Suppl.* 16 [1986], but there were many earlier interim reports).
- p. 142: there are two, not one, Roman forts at L'Ecluse, on opposing heights of a narrow defile through which the *via Domitia* runs on its way to the frontier with Hispania; the still visible structure on the road itself in the defile may well be part of a customs control point, where the 2½% tax (*quadragesima Galliarum*) on imports and exports between Gaul and Spain (mentioned here on pp. 142–143) was actually levied (personal fieldwork).
- p. 155: the villa at "Clavel" in the commune of Puissalicon is a slip for Canet; Clavel is the name of its excavator!
- p. 165: the supposed Nîmes circus adjacent to the city walls on the south is believed by J. HUMPHREY, *Roman Circuses* (1986) 409–410, to be fiction.
- p. 196: on the Barbegal water-driven mills add R. H. J. SELLIN, *History of Technology VIII* for 1983 (1984) 91–109 and P. ROOS, *Revue Arch.* 1986, 327–333.
- p. 204: where maps overlap there is some inconsistency, e.g. the temple on what is now the Presqu'Île de Giens appears as "La Capte" on fig. 26, "Acapte" on fig. 31, and "L'Acapte" on p. 224. Similarly the villa at le Dramont east of Fréjus is only "probable" on fig. 31, but certain on fig. 30.
- p. 213: at Aix-en-Provence the Pasteur car park excavations of houses and mosaics are now accessible through R. BOIRON/C. LANDURE/N. NIN, *Les fouilles de l'aire du chapitre (actuel parking Pasteur)* (1986), and the position of the forum and basilica (not shown on fig. 27) is now known, immediately south of the cathedral: see M. FIXOT/J. GUYON/J. P. PELLETIER/L. RIVET, *Les fouilles de la cour de l'archevêché* (1985).
- p. 223: a lapse of the author (and of the publisher's editor) has led to the repetition of the passage about St. Tropez (Athenopolis), here under Marseilles, in the following chapter (p. 232, under Fréjus), even to the extent of repeating the notes: nn. 29–30 on p. 225 = nn. 43–44 on p. 237. Not duplicated, however,



- is one of the few flashes of humour in the book: in the second passage on St. Tropez Rivet laconically remarks: "Roman remains are some of the few things still to be laid bare in this well known town" (p. 232). The Roman cargo of Carrara marble laid bare on the sea bed here (Riv. Studi Liguri 18, 1952, 240–244), now displayed near the Fréjus amphitheatre (Gallia 27, 1969, 455), is not mentioned by Rivet.
- p. 239: for Antibes Rivet suggests promotion from an *oppidum Latinum* (PLIN. nat. 3,35) to a "full" (i.e. Roman) *municipium*, but the existence of the latter status in the provinces has been questioned since the discovery of the Tabula Siarensis (J. GONZALEZ, Zeitschr. Papyrologie u. Epigr. 55, 1984, 55–100).
- p. 284, n. 7: on the Carpentras arch, add R. TURCAN in: Hommages à Lucien Lerat (1984) 809–819.
- p. 306: *dendrophoroi* at Vienne (cf. p. 341 at Cimiez) are not "industrial" but participants in the cult of Cybele (M. J. VERMASEREN, Cybele and Attis: the myth and the cult [1977] 133).
- pp. 309–10: on the "temple of Cybele" at Vienne, it is only right to point out that no other Cybele sanctuary definitely has a fully-fledged theatre, and that not all scholars accept the identification (e.g. R. TURCAN, Les religions de l'Asie dans la Vallée du Rhône [1972] 70–72).
- p. 310: the circus at Vienne, here dated to the second century, may be as late as the fourth century (HUMPHREY, Circuses 406).
- p. 316, fig. 46: the plan of Geneva is both incomplete and inaccurate: cf. W. DRACK/R. FELLMAN, Die Römer in der Schweiz (1988) 401. Rivet's notion of an extramural forum is a fantasy, and his additional intramural one (if his 'F?' stands for 'Forum?') is marked at the spot occupied by the great complex of double cathedral and baptistery uncovered since 1976, important paleochristian remains of which Rivet seems completely unaware (e.g. on p. 317), cf. *inter alia* C. BONNET, Geneva in early Christian times [1986], and many earlier interim reports).

Rivet's "Gallia Narbonensis" represents the distillation on the part of its author of a quarter of a century's research and reflection (p. IX); it is packed with learning, full of incidental detail, and clearly written. If its title had been "Studies in the topography and historical geography of Narbonensis", there would have been little cause for criticism, for on these topics Rivet is an acknowledged master, and his book makes a significant contribution to knowledge. But for a series on "Provinces of the Roman Empire" the focus needs to be less narrow: however difficult the task, an author has to be an archaeological and historical all-rounder. Despite the considerable merits of Rivet's "Gallia Narbonensis", another book on this province still needs to be written – one with a greater emphasis on the archaeological evidence and its contribution to architectural, economic and social history, one with a surer grasp of the changes that Narbonensis underwent during the five and a half centuries of its existence, and one with a clearer vision of the pace and degree of Romanization in the widely differing constituent parts of this fascinating and important province.