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TRADITION AND POWER IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

*Proceedings of the Fifteenth Workshop
of The International Network Impact of
Empire (Nijmegen, 18–20 May 2022)*

**Edited by
Sven Betjes, Olivier Hekster
and Erika Manders**

**with the assistance of
Marieke Ceelaert**

BRILL

Tradition and Power in the Roman Empire

Impact of Empire

ROMAN EMPIRE, C. 200 B.C.–A.D. 476

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Introduction

By means of new laws brought in under my sponsorship I revived many exemplary ancestral practices which were by then dying out in our generation, and I myself handed down to later generations exemplary practices for them to imitate.

Res Gestae divi Augusti 8.5¹



When at the end of his life, Augustus reflected back on his long political career in his *Res Gestae*. Rome's first *princeps* showed himself very aware of how to phrase his novel position in terms of tradition. The text pays ample attention to how this position was the consequence of a whole set of titles, honours, and prerogatives bestowed upon Augustus by the traditional constituents of the Republican political system, and also goes out of its way to demonstrate that Augustus' actions were never at variance with the powers and prerogatives of these constituents. At the same time, the above passage is only one of four phrases in the *Res Gestae* that emphasize how the *princeps*' policies were informed by ancestral custom (*mos maiorum*).² Besides portraying Augustus himself as respecting tradition, this passage also appears to have anticipated how his precedent would provide future generations with a model to emulate. Thus the new political system of the Principate was established with a keen eye for how it fitted what had been before, and how it would itself become 'what had been before'.

Even if the *Res Gestae* gives us an indispensable insight into Augustus' own appreciation of the impact and implications of imperial rule, it sheds a rather Rome-centered light on the matter. This naturally follows from the circumstances of its composition, but the ancient historian is left with an incomplete image of imperial rule for the Empire as a whole. The imperial superstructure was not just responding to what happened in Rome, but also had to be related to the amalgam of power structures that existed throughout the Empire. The latter only marginally appears from the *Res Gestae*, which is even truer for the

1 *Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tardidi.* Text and translation by A. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: text, translation, and commentary* (Cambridge 2009), 66. Also see in this volume Mitropoulos, p. 188.

2 The other parts being *RG* 6.1, 13, 27.2.

impact of traditions other than the *mos maiorum*, which were similarly plentiful in the Roman *oikumene*. The interface between tradition and the shifting configuration of power structures in the Roman Empire lays at the heart of this volume. It deals with this issue not just for the Augustan Empire, but also for the imperial period over the long haul. As such, this volume will show the configuration of the Empire as a flexible organism that was constantly renegotiated and redefined, with countless of novel practices and actions rooted in tradition that would themselves become the ‘exemplary practices [for later generations] to imitate’.

1 Power Structures and Tradition: a Definition

With the amalgam of power structures, this volume refers to the various power networks that gave the ancient world its political, social, and religious hierarchies. These networks were organized in different ways and according to different traditions, appearing at a central as well as a local level. The combination of overarching imperial structures (the Roman senate, priestly colleges in Rome, imperial mints etc.) and local structures (city councils, (inter)regional cults, local mints etc.) formed the backbone of the Roman Empire; the Empire’s coherence existed in its diversity. These central and local structures were inextricably intertwined and interdependent: the imperial administration could not properly function without local administrations within the Empire, and vice versa.³

These central and local structures thus all exercised, transmitted and negotiated power. But what was the nature of this power? In its most basic form, power may be defined as the ability to control people and events, allowing one to bend their environment to their will. The way power is discussed throughout this volume, however, for the most part concerns far more subtle forms of control, corresponding to the classic definitions of power of Max Weber and Steven Lukes.⁴ In their view, power is not so much about an ability that is constantly wielded publicly, as it is about a far less overt means of control through which beliefs, expectations, and actions are subtly steered towards one’s favour. In the modern world this could be achieved through propaganda and/or marketing strategies, but in the ancient world, too, there were means

3 See for instance D. Slootjes, *The Governor and his Subjects in the Later Roman Empire* (Leiden/Boston 2006).

4 M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen 1922); S. Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (London 1974).

to move people's perceptions. There were more direct forms of doing so, such as through a person's manifestation in the public sphere, but especially representation in its many different forms also gave a more subtle dimension to the exercise of (most notably imperial) power.⁵ The latter fits well with the idea that power was not just about more direct forms of control, and attests to an ancient awareness that for a power structure to properly function the anticipation of any potential resistance by presenting said power structure – and potential changes made to existing power structures – as a matter of course is of key importance.

Whether it be in public action or in representation, tradition was commonly played upon in displays of power. 'Tradition' has seen many different definitions in modern scholarship, yet may in short be defined as those practices, beliefs, and customs that are believed to have been passed down through generations.⁶ The 'believe to' is an important component of this definition, as tradition does not necessarily refer to actual ancient practices and ideas. Indeed, ever since Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger ground-breaking *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), 'invented tradition' has been a frequently recurring term, one that also can be applied to the Roman Empire.⁷ Such an invention had covert forms, but could just as well appear out in the open. The closing phrase of the above-cited passage of *Res Gestae* is a beautiful example of the latter, with Augustus clearly offering his own behaviour as a similar referential framework to posterity as the practices of old.

Both the actual and the invented form of tradition served the same purpose in relation to power: to successfully embed authority within ideas of what society perceives as being customary, so as to give it a sense of legitimacy. Indeed, by properly translating ideas of power in relatable terms, the likelihood that claims of power are accepted significantly increases, and it is from general acceptance that legitimacy emerges.⁸ Although it seems paradoxical, (the call

5 For the emperor's public manifestations, F. Millar's *The emperor in the Roman world* (London 1977) with its famous phrase 'The emperor was what the emperor did' (p. 6) remains a seminal work. See C.F. Noreña, *Imperial ideals in the Roman west: representation, circulation, power* (New York 2011), for the power-related implications of (imperial) representation.

6 For tradition in the ancient world, see e.g. J. Fejfer, M. Moltesen & A. Rathje, eds., *Tradition: transmission of culture in the Ancient World* (Copenhagen 2015).

7 This has been quite recently shown by the volume of D. Boschung, A. Busch, M.J. Versluys, eds., *Reinventing 'the invention of tradition': indigenous pasts and the Roman present* (Paderborn 2015).

8 This was one of the core premises of the NWO-funded research project 'Constraints and Tradition', to which the conference at which the collected contributions were presented was related. O. Hekster, *Caesar rules: the emperor in the changing Roman world (c. 50 BC–AD 565)* (Cambridge 2023) is the synthesis of this project.

for) tradition is often at its most powerful in times of tremendous change. This naturally follows from the rationale that for any innovation to be successfully incorporated into society, it has to take into account – or alternatively, be ‘anchored’ into – current expectations, beliefs, and practices.⁹

Above we saw how Augustus’ particular attention to the *mos maiorum* served as a strategy to present the advent of monarchic rule in Rome in traditional terms. This was just one of the traditional foundations upon which the Augustan Principate came to rest, a number of examples of which are addressed in the following chapters. Further down below, moreover, we will see that Augustus’ words would prove predictive, as the imperial regime would become a new multifaceted tradition into which new developments were commonly anchored. Anyone with a desire for power had to relate to emperorship in one way or another, finding a common source of inspiration in Augustus himself as well as in other inspiring (or less inspiring) figures of imperial standing.¹⁰ In order to properly exercise power, one had to take into account the various traditional practices and forms of expression that previous rulers or ruling bodies had employed in their exercise of power.

In addition, Roman power was not just bluntly projected on the various locales of the Empire in a uniform manner. Expressions of power varied according to region or city, and differences can be seen between Rome and the provinces and between different provinces and cities within the Empire. Next to these local varieties, expressions of power also differed according to the medium that was used for communication; coins, inscriptions and imperial sculpture, for instance, did not necessarily broadcast similar messages or display similar ideological patterns during a specific reign.¹¹ These local and

9 The notion of ‘anchoring innovation’ is central to the ongoing Dutch Anchoring Innovation research program, in which ancient historians, archaeologists and classicists look for ways in which innovations were connected to what society perceived as being familiar. For a discussion of its core premises, see I. Sluiter, ‘Anchoring innovation: a classical research agenda’, *European Review* 25, no. 1 (2017), 20–38. Also see the various volumes within the series of *Euhormos: Greco-Roman Studies in Anchoring Innovation*, published by Brill.

10 For Augustus as an example, see most notably E. Lyasse, *Le principat et son fondateur: l'utilisation de la référence à Auguste de Tibère à Trajan* (Brussels 2008). For how emperors themselves used their predecessors as a point of references, see O. Hekster, *Emperors and ancestors: Roman rulers and the constraints of tradition* (Oxford 2015).

11 See O. Hekster et al., ‘Nero’s ancestry and the construction of imperial ideology in the early Empire. A methodological case study’, *Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology* 1:4 (2014) 7–27; Hekster 2015, op. cit. (n. 10).

medial differences resulted in a multitude of hybrid forms through which power was expressed, all embedded within existing thought and practice.

At the heart of this volume, then, is the way tradition functioned as a means to exercise power as well as to make such wielding of power appear legitimate. As such it is more about how the Empire was impacted by traditions, than the impact of empire on these traditions. With 'empire' being quintessentially a political construct, most contributions will focus on the way political authority was exercised and/or negotiated on both a local level and a global scale. However, we will also encounter various other mutually dependent kinds of power. These are not just those powers intrinsically linked with the imperial position, such as legal power (Cortés Copete; Daalder) and religious authority (Gartrell; Lozano & Muñiz Grijalvo). Social power, too, comes to the surface in this volume through examples of the way women could at times exercise control despite the patriarchal norms of Roman society (Torregaray Pagola & Ñaco del Hoyo; Carruci). Finally, we will also see how local idiom may be said to have exercised a form of power over the way new power structures were communicated (Capponi; España-Chamorro; Betjes; Hahn).

2 Structure of the Book

The contributions in this volume each in their own way shed light on the inter-relationship between power and tradition, thus attesting to the coherence in diversity referred to above. They are grouped chronologically, following the rationale that after the Augustan Principate had been built upon traditional structures of power, it became itself such a point of reference onto which later structures were founded.

Part 1 of the book deals with the substructures that formed the foundation for the construction of the Augustan Empire. Amber Gartrell and Fernando Lozano & Elena Muñiz Grijalvo delve into the Empire's divine underpinnings, and show continuities and novelties in the use of religious affairs in the formulation of power. Gartrell (Chapter 1) does so by discussing how in the early Principate the Republican practice of invoking the gods to legitimize claims of power was continued. Lozano & Muñiz Grijalvo (Chapter 2) instead focus on Hellenistic precedent, as they demonstrate the continuation of bestowing cultic honours upon leading political figures in the Greek world. In both cases, imperial monopolization was the innovative element, which was part of a wider trend that had Augustus exclude potential rivals to establish and consolidate imperial power.

The only ones to be allowed to share in the emperor's power were the members of his family that were to guarantee his lasting legacy. The first two contributions both address the imperial family in passing, yet it is from the chapters of Elena Torregaray Pagola & Toni Ñaco del Hoyo and Florian Groll that we get a more comprehensive understanding of the role tradition played in embedding members of the Augustan household in existing power structures. Torregaray Pagola & Ñaco del Hoyo (Chapter 3) focus on the portrayal of the Sabine women in Augustan literature to demonstrate how Roman mythology was turned into a proper precedent for diplomatic missions of the women of the *domus Augusta*. Groll (Chapter 4), too, finds Republican precedent, as he reveals the ways by which the innovative role of the imperial family in triumphal processions was rendered traditional.

Whereas chapters 3–4 pay ample attention to the way Republican tradition was played upon in the formation of novel power structures, the chapters of Livia Capponi, Sergio España-Chamorro, and Sven Betjes instead highlight the use of traditions in Roman power constellations in other parts of the Empire. Capponi (Chapter 5) evaluates the extent of imperial control in Egypt, as such demonstrating how the imperial superstructure depended on pre-existing power constellations in this part of the Empire. For Roman Hispania, España-Chamorro (Chapter 6) shows how for local toponymy, local tradition could also be ignored as the region became dotted with blunt expressions of Roman control. For practically the same region, Betjes (Chapter 7) shows that the Romans were not entirely unreceptive of traditions bound to local landscapes, as their roads appear to have been embedded in such a discourse.

Parts 2 and 3 subsequently turn to the first to second and third to fourth centuries respectively to address the functioning of the Empire once the Principate was well-established. Part 2 starts with the contribution of Christer Bruun (Chapter 8), whose discussion of the continuing importance of local elections shows that the imperial monopolization of a wide range of powers, honours and prerogatives did not lead to an empire-wide preclusion of local decision-making. Furthering the idea that decision-making was not just the emperor's business is the piece of Margherita Carucci (Chapter 9), who by singling out Plotina shows how empresses could have a significant effect on political affairs, while conforming to prescribed norms in a male-dominated society.

The contributions of Juan Manuel Cortés Copete and Giorgos Mitropoulos bring us to the workings of imperial power in the Greek world, showing the close interdependence between imperial and local power structures. Cortés Copete (Chapter 10) draws our attention to the continuation of ancient local legal traditions in the age of Hadrian, who sought to make these compatible to the imperial system. Mitropoulos (Chapter 11) instead presents the imperial

system itself as a model applied in the Greek East by exploring the practice of *imitatio principis*, implying the various forms by which local elites sought to imitate or emulate the emperor to express their power at a local level.

The first three chapters of Part 3 similarly look at how imperial precedent was utilized, but instead focus their attention on the men at the top of the hierarchy. Elsemieke Daalder (Chapter 12) examines Caracalla's rescript practice to show him as continuing the legal practice of the Antonines, thereby nuancing Dio and Herodian's unfavourable accounts of this emperor. Lukas de Blois (Chapter 13) similarly brings nuances to our literary sources as he focusses on the radical reforms of Gallienus, which instead appear to have been far more traditional than the late-antique sources have us believe. Nikolas Hächler (Chapter 14) deals with Gallienus' contemporaries of the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires, and reveals the strategies that allowed their rulers to present the innovation of being a partition Empire as a traditional and legitimate enterprise. The fourth chapter in this part, that of Johannes Hahn (Chapter 15), also focusses on how a new power structure built upon existing repertoires, as it examines how Christian ascetics did so with regard to traditional practices regarding the mountainous landscape.

The greater majority of the chapters in this volume present to the reader an image of the Roman Empire as it has been characterised above: a patchwork of traditions and power structures that in varying ways depended on one another and that were variously employed in quests for the expression of changing realities. These chapters all show how such applications were strongly determined by the specifics of certain ages and locales. The volume nevertheless ends with Part 4 highlighting the *longue durée* of the political institutions of the Roman Empire. Stéphane Benoist (Chapter 16) does so by examining the political discourse of tradition and innovation from the second century BCE to the fourth century CE. Francesco Bono (Chapter 17) studies Justinian's *Novels* to show how the memory of the Republic still lingered in the sixth century, when traditional institutions were on the threshold of being set aside, ushering in a renovated Empire that would last another millennium.

Taken together, these contributions will show the Roman Empire as a world filled with a wide variety of cultural, political, social and religious traditions. These traditions would allow for the emerging superstructure of the Principate to be properly embedded into existing power structures at both a global and a local level. Once this imperial superstructure was established, tradition would remain a pivotal means by which power was defined, negotiated and transformed. This flexible dealing with tradition was essential in ensuring that the political hierarchy in itself was never questioned, even when the Empire faced numerous internal and external pressures. Only when in the fifth century the influx of tribal confederations impacted the Empire at large, the eventual

result for the West was the disappearance of Roman emperorship to the benefit of Germanic kings. In the East, however, the imperial power structure was to last until in 1453 the Ottomans finally conquered Constantinople.¹²

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¹² On the longevity of imperial rule, see most recently Hekster 2023, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 3.

PART 1

Tradition in the Formation of the Augustan Empire



A Divine Right to Rule? The Gods as Legitimators of Power

Amber Gartrell

1 Introduction

Rome's very first political competition was resolved by calling upon the gods to adjudicate the dispute; the victor then went on to claim the highest position of power in the state. From that moment on, the support of the gods became a way to break into or to climb structures of power and legitimise claims to that power. This first competition was between Romulus and Remus over the foundation of their city: where it should be located, what it should be called, and who should rule over it.¹ When Romulus received a sign of twelve vultures to his brother's six, the city was founded on the Capitoline and named Rome after its first king, whose position of supreme power had thus been legitimised by this display of divine support.² Not all ancient authors accepted this claimed legitimacy at face value, however. Plutarch's account includes a variant in which Romulus lied, claiming the appearance of twelve vultures after Remus announced his six, only to be retroactively proven correct when the twelve vultures then appeared.³ A question of the authenticity of claims for divine support is thus present in accounts of the first use of this technique: should these be understood as genuine expressions of religious belief or cynical political manipulations?

In this paper, I seek to explore how divine support could form a supporting structure for claims of power, and how these developed across the Republic and into the Empire. To do so requires first establishing the political and religious connotations of the strategy, what structures of power it engaged with, and how it did so. It is certainly possible, as shown through Plutarch's inclusion of a sceptical variant, to view claims of divine support as being a manipulation of religion for politics' sake, carried out by canny aristocrats to manipulate the

1 Liv., 1.6.4. All texts and translations, unless otherwise noted, are those of the Loeb Classical Library.

2 Liv., 1.6.4–1.7.1; Plut., *Rom.* 9.4–5.

3 Plut., *Rom.* 9.5.

credulous masses, operating entirely in political terms and not at all in religious ones.⁴ However, in the case of Romulus' alleged initial lie, the target of his false claim was primarily his brother and political rival, and only then the wider population. I would also argue that political manipulation and genuine religious belief do not need to stand in direct opposition to each other, but should rather be seen as two ends of a spectrum; when a claim of divine support was made, some will have seen political manipulations, others a genuine statement of the agency of the gods, most would have fallen somewhere between these two extremes. Even the sceptics, however, may have acknowledged the political merit of such a strategy, despite doubting whether the gods had truly lent their support to a human. Both Livy and Plutarch express such pragmatic views in their accounts of another early use of divine support to bolster an individual's power. The claimant was Romulus' successor, Numa Pompilius, aided by the goddess Egeria, who was said to have advised the king on the construction of his religious programme to ensure Rome's continued success by carrying out rituals which would be most pleasing to the gods.⁵ The authors once more note that there were some who believed that Numa had invented his consultations with the goddess, but continue to suggest that if he had done so, the ends would justify the means and it was a viable political stratagem to secure his position of power. Livy suggests that the lie was motivated by Numa's fear that the contemporary uncivilised Romans would go wild if they did not fear an external threat to check their actions, and Plutarch concludes his discussion with the judgement that, if Numa (or other great men who had adopted the same stratagem) did so, it was because they were necessary: "since they were managing headstrong and captious multitudes, and introducing great innovations in modes of government, they pretended to get a sanction from the god, which sanction was the salvation of the very ones against whom it was contrived".⁶ Thus, even when ancient authors raise the question of the authenticity of the claimed divine support, they nevertheless depict it as a powerful and acceptable political strategy to secure the necessary power to establish a political position or to push through a programme. Furthermore, they offer scepticism as one possible interpretation, but not the only one. Belief was another available explanation.

4 For a recent argument against the manipulation interpretation of augury, instead arguing for the genuine power and belief, see L.G. Driediger-Murphy, *Roman Republican Augury: Freedom and Control* (Oxford 2019).

5 Plut., *Num.* 4.1–8, Liv., 1.19.4–5, Val. Max., 1.2.1.

6 Plut., *Num.* 4.8.

Claims of divine support were not the sole preserve of the regal period, but continued to be made throughout the Republic and beyond.⁷ There are many different degrees of divine support claims, many of which I will not be able to explore here. The commonest such claim would have been that one's family was descended from a deity or hero and thus to have an ancestral connection to that deity, justifying their position of influence and importance through their closer proximity to the god.⁸ In 67 BCE, Julius Caesar delivered the eulogy at his aunt Julia's funeral, boasting of her descent in the maternal line from kings and on the paternal side from Venus. He claims that: "Our stock therefore has at once the sanctity of kings, whose power is supreme among mortal men, and the claim to reverence which attaches to the Gods, who hold sway over kings themselves".⁹ This description of the grandeur of his family in such a public venue, whilst a *quaestor*, was likely intended more to promote himself in future electoral contests than to praise his aunt. Such divine ancestry was seemingly so common that when the emperor Vespasian came to power, a tenuous connection between the *gens Flavia* and a companion of Hercules was hastily discovered.¹⁰ However, the new emperor, choosing to make a virtue of his relative lowly status in comparison to recent holders of the imperial title, rejected the manufactured claim. This is the wider context into which claims of more active and personal connections between humans and gods might be made, in hopes of the claimant gaining entry to or climbing higher on the structures of power.

2 A Historical Example

One of the earliest extant claims of active divine support was made by Scipio Africanus, the victor of the Punic Wars. He, as our sources report, sought to

7 For a complementary argument regarding the use of divine support, particularly that of Jupiter, conveyed by successful auspices to confirm a magistrate's *auctoritas*: F. Van Haepelen, 'Les auspices d'investiture d'Octavien en 43 a.C.: de la légitimation de fonctions de *potestas* par l'*auctoritas* de Jupiter', in: F. Hurlet and J.-M. David, eds., *L'Auctoritas à Rome: Une Notion constitutive de la culture politique* (Bordeaux 2020), 145–153.

8 On this technique, see: T.P. Wiseman, 'Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *Greece and Rome* 21.2 (1974) 153–164; O. Hekster, 'Descendants of Gods: Legendary Genealogies in the Roman Empire', in: L. de Blois, P. Funke, and J. Hahn, eds., *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire* (Leiden 2006) 24–37; K.-J. Hölkesskamp, 'Mythen, Monumente und die Multimedialität der memoria: die ‚corporate identity‘ der gens Fabia', *Klio* 100.3 (2018) 709–764.

9 Suet., *Iul.* 6.1.

10 Suet., *Vesp.* 12.

cultivate the appearance of a close relationship with the gods throughout his life. Since the day he had donned the *toga virilis*, he had adopted the practice of visiting the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus before engaging in any business, giving the impression that he sought counsel directly from Jupiter, which led some to conclude that he was the god's son, contributing to his selection for the command against Hannibal.¹¹ In the uncertain times of the Punic Wars, who wouldn't choose to put their trust in a man who had the ear of the king of the gods? Scipio is said to have often claimed that his actions were guided by oracular dreams or divine inspiration; for instance, when he was leading the campaign in Hispania in 209 BCE, he sought to capture the key city of Carthago Nova. Scipio discovered that the lagoon which lapped the city walls on one side was tidal, and when the sea retreated, this left part of the wall vulnerable. Scipio informed his soldiers of his plan to take advantage of this weakness, claiming that: "it was Neptune who had first suggested this plan to him, appearing to him in his sleep, and promising that when the time for the action came he would render such conspicuous aid that his intervention would be manifest to the whole army".¹² His stratagem worked and the army, trusting Scipio's calculations and heartened by the god's support, followed his daring plan, taking the city.

Polybius, who was closely associated with Scipio and accompanied him on some of his campaigns, objects to the idea that this stratagem was presented to Scipio by the gods, but insists that it was the general's military skills and calculations that won the day.¹³ If similar perceptions to Polybius' were held by other prominent individuals, this might reveal why claims of divine support were not made by every prominent and ambitious politician. Some may have seen doing so as a diminution of their own personal power or abilities, giving credit to the gods rather than themselves.¹⁴ Despite Polybius' disapproval, the fact that he emphatically argues against the claim of divine support suggests that it was a well-known explanation for Scipio's victory. E. Wheeler argues that such claims for divine aid or inspiration could be strategic, used to restore the flagging morale of an army or, conversely, the lack of divine aid could restrain

11 Liv., 26.19.5–7, Polyb., 10.5.5–8, Val. Max., 1.2.2. The connection between his divine support and election for this command is explicitly linked by Cass. Dio., fr.16.39.

12 Polyb., 10.11.7; J.H. Richardson, 'P. Cornelius Scipio and the Capture of New Carthage: the tide, the wind and other fantasies', *Classical Quarterly* 68.2 (2018), 458–474 has expressed scepticism regarding the veracity of this event, particularly concerning the tidal aspect of the lagoon.

13 Polyb., 10.9.2–3.

14 I have elsewhere made a similar argument regarding the motivations behind the choice of military commanders either to or not to claim that the Dioscuri appeared to secure their victory at a pivotal battle: A. Gartrell, *The Cult of Castor and Pollux in Rome: Myth, Ritual and Society* (Cambridge 2021) 109–111.

an army that was too eager to rush into battle before the general was ready.¹⁵ In agreement with Wheeler, I would argue that their strategic benefits do not necessarily mean that they were not believed, rather their credibility is key to their success: if the general's claims were not believed by the majority, the stratagem would not work.

3 Interactions with Structures of Power

These select examples reveal why some may have sought to use claims of divine support as a strategy to either attain or consolidate their power: they gave the claimant an advantage over a political competitor, helped push through a programme of religious development, and set a young man of great promise on the road to military glory. Such claims thus engaged with a range of existing power structures within Roman society, including those connected with politics, religion, and the military. There were a wide variety of concepts of power in Ancient Rome, including the formal and temporary *imperium* or *potestas* of a magistrate or commander, but also the more nebulous personal *auctoritas* and *dignitas*, accrued by an individual over his lifetime because of his accomplishments, character, and others' respect.¹⁶ A claim of divine support on its own would not have been enough to make a nobody consul, but it could form part of a convincing argument for the choice of one candidate over another or to justify an exception being made to an established precedent, for example the selection of the twenty-four year old Scipio as proconsular commander of the war in Hispania.¹⁷

4 Principles of Divine Support

With these potential advantages, it is perhaps surprising that we do not have more examples of claims to divine support. It is likely, owing to the lack of

15 E.L. Wheeler, 'Shock and awe: battles of the gods in Roman Imperial warfare, Part I', in: C. Wolff and Y. Le Bohec, eds., *L'Armée romaine et la religion sous le Haut-Empire Romain* (Paris 2009), 227–228, 231–232.

16 On the concept of *auctoritas*: J.M. David and F. Hurlet, eds., *L'Auctoritas à Rome: Une Notion Constitutive de la Culture Politique* (Bordeaux 2020); Y. Berthelet, *Gouverner avec les Dieux: Autorité, auspices et pouvoir, sous la République romaine et sous Auguste* (Paris 2015); W. Nippel, 'The Roman notion of *auctoritas*', in: P. Pasquino and P. Harris, eds., *The Concept of Authority: a Multidisciplinary Approach, from Epistemology to the Social Sciences* (Rome 2007), 13–34.

17 Liv., 26.19.1–9, Val. Max., 3.7.1a, Cass. Dio., fr.16.39.

contemporary literary sources from the early and mid-Republic, that some claims have been lost. We must also be aware that the claims most likely to have been preserved are the most successful claims made by those men who rose to the highest levels of power and thus left the greatest marks on the historical record. Nevertheless, I would argue it is possible to draw from the examples that we do have some underlying principles which controlled who was most likely to make a successful claim to divine support and thus leverage it to gain or maintain their power. These principles will inevitably be generalisations that will not apply perfectly to all contexts or periods, but will provide an outline for my argument of how this strategy developed and was able to affect and grant access to structures of power.

The proposed principles are as follows:

- 1) The gods pay attention to mortal affairs and will support worthy individuals.
- 2) Divine support helps that individual gain success, which then justifies their position of power.
- 3) The relationship will continue so long as the mortal remains consistently worthy; should they cease to be so; the god's support will cease and legitimacy end.

These three principles create a circular and self-sustaining justification loop: the mortal's claims to divine support were proven by their success; that success proved that their claim to have divine support was correct; thus, so long as they continued to have success, they could claim divine support. However, should their success end, their claim to divine support would be called into question. Whether a single loss in an election or battle would be enough to break the loop is unclear and would probably depend on many other factors, including the significance of the loss, whether it could be rapidly recovered, and the cumulative number of successes they had previously received. Claimants with greater power, allies, and a long run of successes may have found it easier to argue that this was a minor setback and maintain the loop than those with less power and significant enemies.¹⁸ Key to the success of this legitimisation loop is a constant assessment of its credibility; could the audience of this claim find it credible that the claimant would have been supported by the gods? Divine support was not granted automatically or for life; so long as the support was proven by the mortal's run of successes, the loop survives; the moment that credibility is effectively challenged, the loop is at risk of collapse.

¹⁸ For a comparable discussion on the impact of a military loss on a political career: N.S. Rosenstein, *Imperatores Victi: Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic* (Cambridge 1990).

Other principles that underline this strategy are the concept of worthiness and the agency of the gods to choose to whom they offer their support. If there was no element of judgement and the gods selected who to favour at random, without considering whether that person was worthy of their support, then entrusting that person to hold a position of power would be a much riskier proposition: that divine support could be withdrawn as suddenly and as arbitrarily as it had appeared.¹⁹ The connection between worthiness and divinely given success can be seen on a much larger scale in Cicero's boast of the superiority of Roman piety, made in 56 BCE:

who, once convinced that divinity does exist, can fail at the same time to be convinced that it is by its power that this great empire has been created, extended, and sustained? However good be our conceit of ourselves, conscript fathers, we have excelled neither Spain in population, nor Gaul in vigour, nor Carthage in versatility, nor Greece in art, nor indeed Italy and Latium itself in the innate sensibility characteristic of this land and its peoples; but in piety, in devotion to religion, and in that special wisdom which consists in the recognition of the truth that the world is swayed and directed by divine disposal, we have excelled every race and every nation.²⁰

In this passage, Cicero argues that the Romans have consistently met the criteria for worthiness: their piety and care for the gods, and thus the gods have rewarded them with the creation and maintenance of Roman power across the Mediterranean world. The unspoken implication is that, so long as they continue to display the correct degree of piety, Rome will enjoy continued hegemony.²¹ Similar criteria may be applied to the smaller scale personal

19 A useful analogy might be drawn to the views of the more capricious Fortuna, who did not always weigh the merits of those she helped or hindered, as seen in Polyb., 29.21, quoting Demetrius of Phalerum: "Fortune, who never compacts with life, who always defeats our reckoning by some novel stroke; she who ever demonstrates her power by foiling our expectations, now also, as it seems to me, makes it clear to all men, by endowing the Macedonians with the whole wealth of Persia, that she has but lent them these blessings until she decides to deal differently with them". Although compare with Cicero's view of a more discerning Fortuna in Cic., *Leg. Man.* 47. On Fortuna more widely: D. Miano, *Fortuna: Deity and Concept in Archaic and Republican Italy* (Oxford 2018); J. Champeaux, *Fortuna: Recherche sur le culte de la Fortune à Rome et dans le monde romain, des origines à la mort de César* (Rome 1982–1987).

20 Cic., *Har. Resp.* 19.

21 Cicero is not a disinterested party in this speech, the piety he wishes the senate to display is for them to condemn Publius Clodius Pulcher and his impious actions, including the

claims to divine support. The claimant must be able to make a credible case for their worthiness to stand a chance of being successful. Scipio's success made his claim to have Neptune's support credible; a less successful general would have found the claim much harder to sustain or leverage for political prestige.

The second caveat for the credibility of claims to worthiness and thus divine support is that for the divine support to be maintained, so too must the worthiness of the claimant. This would most easily be proven by a consistent run of successes. The gods' support needed to be maintained through continual renegotiation and display of the qualities that led to the first successful claim. A useful parallel might be drawn here to F. Santangelo's argument for the reinterpretation of the concept of *pax deorum* – the state of peace between gods and humans that was the aim of Roman religion to maintain – as not being a stable or default state, but instead one that required constant vigilance and active maintenance, engagement, and negotiation to preserve.²² If it was not maintained, if the signs of the gods were ignored, if the correct rituals were not performed, then Rome would no longer be worthy and accordingly would lose divine support. The consequences if the state were to lose that support would be dramatic: military defeats, loss of territory, and dominance. For an ordinary senator, the scale would be smaller: the end of their successful political or military career, loss of an office or political prestige, and a slide into obscurity. For the most powerful men, who made the greatest claims for divine support, the removal of that support might have a more dire and immediate impact. O. Hekster has identified a phenomenon of 'Reversed Epiphanies', in which the gods appeared to either announce directly or signal their withdrawal of support from a mortal.²³ Perhaps the most dramatic of these divine abandonments was that of Dionysius as he ceased to support Mark Antony, who had been closely associated with the god.²⁴ However, following the defeat of his and Cleopatra's forces at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, when they had retreated to Alexandria and the night before Antony was preparing to meet Octavian in battle outside the city, Plutarch describes:

During this night, it is said, about the middle of it, while the city was quiet and depressed through fear and expectation of what was coming,

attempted consecration of Cicero's house, thus restoring the good relationship between the Romans and the gods.

22 F. Santangelo, 'Pax Deorum and Pontiffs', in: J.H. Richardson and F. Santangelo, eds., *Priests and State in the Roman World*, (Stuttgart 2011), 166.

23 O. Hekster, 'Reversed Epiphanies; Emperors deserted by Gods', *Mnemosyne* 6:3 (2010), 601–615.

24 Plut., *Ant.* 24.3; Hekster 2010, op. cit. (n. 23) 610–611.

suddenly certain harmonious sounds from all sorts of instruments were heard, and the shouting of a throng, accompanied by cries of Bacchic revelry and satyric leavings, as if a troop of revellers, making a great tumult, were going forth from the city; and their course seemed to lie about through the middle of the city toward the outer gate which faced the enemy, at which point the tumult became loudest and then dashed out. Those who sought the meaning of the sign were of the opinion that the god to whom Antony always most likened and attached himself was now deserting him.²⁵

Dionysius had judged Antony's worthiness and found him wanting; perhaps the loss at Actium was his first move in this withdrawal, but this departure was certainly an explicit statement of its completion. In Plutarch's account, Antony is depicted as no longer adhering to Roman values, such as *virtus* but instead hands out Roman dominions to his children with Cleopatra and holds excessively luxurious and debauched parties.²⁶ When even the most luxurious and licentious god Dionysius withdrew his support, the loss of his primacy was inevitable. The legitimacy loop had been broken, Antony was no longer a credible candidate for divine support and thus his navy and cavalry followed the god's example and deserted him.

5 Innovations in Divine Legitimation

Having thus established the underlying principles of how claims to divine legitimation could be used to access structures of power, I will now consider how this technique developed. There is a distinct increase in the number of individuals who cultivated long term claims to divine support as we draw closer to the fall of the Republic, likely owing to this being a period of increased extraordinary commands and concentration of power in smaller numbers of prominent men, as well as the greater prevalence of contemporary evidence. Once this strategy had proven successful for one politician, others would seek to use it for their own ends, and as it became a more common and accepted strategy, the competitive ethos of Republican politics would lead to increasing claims.²⁷ In many of these cases, claims of divine support became refocused, being used

25 Plut., *Ant.* 75.3–4.

26 Plut., *Ant.* 36.2–3.

27 On the growing trend of mortal-divine assimilation in the Late Republic: S. Cole, *Cicero and the Rise of Deification at Rome* (Cambridge 2013), particularly chapters one and two.

less to gain positions of power or to justify a single action, but instead part of a wider and longer running justification of their extraordinary status and powers. The dictator Sulla was among the first to adapt this legitimising strategy as he sought to break into and then rewrite existing structures of power. Following his triumph and assumption of the dictatorship, he styled himself with a pair of epithets which suggested that he possessed unusual fortune and the support of Venus: *Felix* and *Epaphroditus*.²⁸ These claims were made at the peak of his power and the legitimisation was not, therefore, that he should be chosen as dictator, but rather that his usurpation and use of the magistracy and position at the top of the structures of power was justified and sanctified by the goddess.²⁹

The next development of this strategy that we may trace is direct competitive use of rival divine claims. The earlier examples were standalone claims; as far as we are aware, there was no contemporary rival to Scipio who also claimed that Jupiter favoured him, nor did anyone challenge Sulla for Venus' favour. Although there might be many gentilicial claims to descent from a single deity, this does not seem to have become a subject of direct competition between these different families. The claims formed part of the general competition for power amongst the elite, but they were not themselves set against each other, with one family repudiating another's claim. However, this dramatically changed in the period of the civil wars when there were competing claims to a single deity's favour between two political rivals: Pompey and Caesar for Venus. Caesar, as I have already noted, could claim a long-standing ancestral connection with the goddess, which he was drawing on by 67 BCE.³⁰ Pompey, however, had no such reason behind his selection of deity, but had made his rival claim public at least by 55 BCE, when he dedicated a temple of Venus Victrix at the top of the *cavea* of his monumental theatrical complex in the Campus Martius. Caesar responded by making his ancestral claim explicit in the epithet applied to his own new temple of Venus in his eponymous Forum: *Genetrix*, the ancestress. Although the temple was dedicated in 46 BCE, it had been vowed before

28 Plut., *Sull.* 34.2, App., *B. Civ.* 1.451–452. The connection between Venus and Victory was depicted on a series of coins minted between 84 and 83 BCE, which show the goddess' head on the obverse, above Sulla's name and accompanied by Cupid holding a palm branch of victory. The reverse also links religion and victory, showing the priestly symbols of a jug and lituus between a pair of trophies, the legend celebrating Sulla's acclamation of *imperator*: *RRC* 359/1, 359/2.

29 For a recent reappraisal of the reception of Sulla's claim to be *Felix*: A. Eckert, 'Good Fortune and the Public Good; Disputing Sulla's Claim to Be Felix', in: H. van der Blom, C. Gray, and C. Steel, eds., *Institutions and Ideology in Republican Rome: Speech, Audience and Decision* (Cambridge 2018), 283–298.

30 See above, p. 13.

their final battle at Pharsalus two years earlier.³¹ The question naturally arises: why would these two prominent military men seek to claim the favour of this goddess? In part, her connection to Aeneas and thus the foundation of Rome is likely to have played a role, as may have Sulla's choice to single her out. But I would also argue that the goddess was selected by Pompey, whose claim is the later, at least in part to compete with Caesar not only in the political arena, but also in the religious. He sought to defeat Caesar on his own turf: if he could prove the credibility of his claim to Venus' favour was superior to that of her descendant, it would be a severe blow to Caesar's *dignitas* and *auctoritas*. Their rival claims were tested at the Battle of Pharsalus: Plutarch relates a dream of Pompey's, in which he saw himself entering his theatre to great applause and adorning his temple of Venus Victrix with spoils of battle. Upon awakening, he identified two potential interpretations of this dream: that the spoils were those he had won and thus Venus had chosen to support his claim to power; alternatively, that the celebration was because of his defeat, the spoils of war had once belonged to his army, but had been taken by the victorious Caesar.³² Unbeknownst to Pompey, Caesar had made a rival bid for Venus, with the specific epithet called upon by Pompey, using 'Venus Victrix' as the watchword for the same night.³³ Pompey's fear, as described by Plutarch, is framed explicitly in terms of divine support: that Caesar's ancestral claim would surpass his own claim to Venus' aid; a fear which was proven justified.

The competitive use of rival claims to divine support continued to be a tactic used throughout the last years of the Republic. However, in the competition between Octavian and Antony, they did not seek to dispute the specific deity claimed as legitimator, but instead each assembled a team of rival divine claims. Antony, as has previously been noted, called upon Dionysius as well as Hercules, from whom he claimed descent via a son named Anton.³⁴ Octavian, whose power and presence was concentrated in Rome and Italy, claimed Apollo as his main divine support, but also drew upon many other deities. Both of their claims were challenged in regard to worthiness. Mark Antony, as noted above, was judged by Dionysius to no longer be worthy of his support following his defeat at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE.³⁵ However, even before this, the question of whether these were appropriate or worthy deities for a Roman

31 App., *B.Civ.* 2.424.

32 Plut., *Pomp.* 68.2.

33 App., *B.Civ.* 2.319.

34 Plut., *Ant.* 4.1–3; the connection was represented on an aureus minted in Rome by L. Livineius Regulus in 42 BCE, which featured the portrait of Antony on the obverse and a depiction of a seated Hercules on the reverse: *RRC* 494/2a–b.

35 See pp. 18–19.

commander to call upon was debated. Hercules had long been worshipped in Rome, first, it is suggested, as a god connected to trade before gaining more military associations, as shown by the number of temples he possessed that were either paid for by the spoils of war or were given a victory based epithet: *Invictus* or *Victor*.³⁶ These were likely the motivations for Antony's selection of the deities, along with both deities' connections to eastern conquests. However both also possessed a negative side, one connected to loss of control, luxury, and a tendency towards excess: easy elements for Octavian to emphasise in his propaganda, suggesting that it was these negative aspects that Antony shared with the gods, rather than their conquering and civilising ones.³⁷ It was not just Antony's choice of deities that was questioned, however, Octavian too reportedly mis-stepped in the acceptable level and manner of such claims. In the infamous Banquet of the Twelve Gods, reported by Suetonius, Octavian attended a luxurious banquet dressed as Apollo, whilst the people of Rome suffered through a famine.³⁸ Although the question of his worthiness to be compared to Apollo was not raised, the comparison made was not flattering, likening him not to a healing or beneficent aspect of the god, but rather to Apollo *Tortor*, the tormentor. The criticism of Octavian's actions was widespread, included in letters of Antony as well as a widely circulated verse, depicting the gods turning their faces from earth and Jupiter fleeing his golden throne.³⁹ Antony could not be too smug however, for a similar anecdote was applied to a banquet of his own upon his arrival in Ephesus. Although his supporters welcomed him as 'Dionysius Giver of Joys and Beneficent', his opponents cast him as 'Dionysius

36 M. Daniels, 'Heros *invictus* and *pactor orbis*: Hercules as a War God for Roman Emperors', in: M. Dillon and C. Matthews, eds., *Religion and Classical Warfare: The Roman Empire* (Yorkshire 2022), 99.

37 For a discussion of an argued identification of an analogy between Hercules/Antony and Omphale/Cleopatra on an Arrentine bowl, a parallel reported by Plutarch: Plut., *Comp. Dem. Ant.* 3.3, and argued by P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. A. Shapiro (Ann Arbor 1988), 33–77; see O. Hekster, 'Hercules, Omphale and Octavian's "Counter-Propaganda"', *BABESCH – Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology* 19 (2004), 159–166. Antony may also have been attempting to compare himself with Alexander the Great, who was also associated with Herakles, as other Roman generals had also sought to do, including Pompey: K. Erickson, 'Sons of Heracles: Antony and Alexander in the Late Republic', in: K.R. Moore, ed., *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great* (Leiden 2018), 254–274.

38 Suet., *Aug.* 70.1–2.

39 Suet., *Aug.* 70.1. T.S. Luke, *Ushering in a New Republic: Theologies of Arrival at Rome in the First Century BCE* (Ann Arbor 2014), 152–158 argues that this banquet took place in 36 BCE, as a banquet celebrating the anniversary of the defeat of Sextus Pompey at Naulochos, held in the Capitoline Temple itself. The Jupiter fleeing his throne is thus identified as the cult statue itself, in rejection of the impious feast.

Carnivorous and Savage'.⁴⁰ The claim of divine association in these examples were thus seen to be credible, but not in the way that either man hoped, which reveals the potential of the strategy to backfire.

The credibility of Octavian's claim to divine support, and more divine support than any contemporary rival, was proven by the outcome of the Battles of Actium and Alexandria, after which there was no one left who could make a credible case that they were supported by the gods more than he was. Octavian consolidated a wide range of divine support in himself, legitimising his supreme position in the Roman state, despite his youth. This is vividly depicted by Virgil in his description of the shield of Aeneas, in which a wide range of Roman gods: Venus, Apollo, Neptune, Mars, and Minerva fight on his behalf against Anubis and the other gods of Egypt.⁴¹ It is worth highlighting here that the gods ranged against Augustus are all Egyptian, Dionysius and Hercules have disappeared from Antony's ranks of supporters once more. This was the first imperial innovation, to make divine legitimation exclusive to the *princeps*, with a slight expansion later to his family members, but also to multiply the number of deities from whom he could claim support.⁴² Avenues that might have been used by potential rivals to claim a relationship with a divine legitimator were closed off and made the sole preserve of the *princeps* and his family; the last temple attested as being dedicated by someone outside the imperial family was that of Apollo Sosianus, near the theatre of Marcellus, by Gaius Sosius in the late 30s BCE. Similarly, the chances for military proof of divine legitimacy through triumphs became curtailed over time; Lucius Cornelius Balbus was the last general who was not a member of the imperial family to triumph in 19 BCE. Thus, Augustus ensured that he was *primus inter pares* not only in political terms, but also in religious ones. As he boasts in his *Res Gestae*, he accrued an extraordinary number of priesthoods, his name was incorporated in the hymn of the Salii, and he restored eighty-two temples in a single year.⁴³ All of these combined to reveal that Augustus was supported by

40 Plut., *Ant.* 24.4; Luke 2014 op. cit. (n. 39) 158.

41 Virg., *Aen* 8.696–706. To this might be added comparisons drawn between Augustus and the Dioscuri, Hercules, Bacchus and Quirinus, all gods who had been deified owing to their deeds in life: Hor., *Od.* 3.3.9–16.

42 Previous individuals had associated themselves with more than one god, but not on the same scale of Augustus; for example both Pompey and Caesar were also connected to Hercules, although not to the same extent as Venus: see Daniels 2022 op. cit. (n. 36) 101–102. I have argued elsewhere for the use of the Dioscuri as divine parallels to pairs of potential heirs in the early imperial period, to legitimise their current but also potential future positions of power, as well as to reassure the population of Rome that the succession would be peaceful. See Gartrell 2021 op. cit. (n. 14), 145–193.

43 Aug., *RG* 7.3; 10.1; 20.4, trans. A.E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge 2009).

the most gods, more than anyone else could claim, and thus his pre-eminent position at the top of the structures of political, religious, and social power was justified: as he claims: “I excelled everyone in influence (*auctoritate*), but I had no more power (*potestatis*) than the others who were my colleagues in each magistracy”, in part, because he was the only one able to marshal such a legion of divine legitimators.⁴⁴

Not all emperors who followed Augustus drew on this legitimising strategy to the same extent, nor was it universally successful for those who did. Tiberius, who came to power after Augustus’ death in 14 CE, may have felt secure enough not to need to do so to the same extent, or may have felt his relationship with the recently deified *Divus* Augustus was a more immediate justification and legitimisation for his position. Tiberius’ successor, Caligula, however, came to power aged twenty-five with little to recommend him to the position in which he found himself apart from his descent from Augustus. It is not surprising therefore, that he was the next emperor to draw upon divine legitimators to support his claim to power, although unsuccessfully.⁴⁵ He followed in his great-grandfather’s footsteps in two ways when doing so, firstly by associating himself closely with a wide range of deities and, secondly by adorning himself with their insignia and attributes, as Octavian was accused of having done during the Banquet of the Twelve Gods. Philo, who had met the young emperor during the ill-fated embassy of the Alexandrian Jews, describes how Caligula first began to liken himself to Dionysius, Heracles, and the Dioscuri, before moving on to Olympian deities: Hermes, Apollo, and Ares.⁴⁶ Philo describes Caligula’s rationale in doing so, in which he uses an analogy of the power differential between herds of animals and their shepherds, thus, by analogy, he, as emperor, was the shepherd of men and was of a higher status and power than them, therefore, he assumed his own divinity.⁴⁷ Caligula’s misuse of divine legitimators is criticised by Philo explicitly in terms of worthiness and credibility, asking him “And yet what business had you, Gaius, to take the insignia commonly used to adorn the images of the said deities? For you should have emulated their virtues”.⁴⁸ He continues to list Caligula’s failings regarding each

44 Aug., *RG* 34.3.

45 Aspects of this section appear in Gartrell 2021 op. cit (n. 14) and are reprinted with permission from A. Gartrell, *The Cult of Castor and Pollux in Ancient Rome: Myth, Ritual, and Society* (Cambridge 2021).

46 Philo, *Leg.* 78–113, see also Cass. Dio., 59.26.5–8.

47 Philo, *Leg.* 76.

48 Philo, *Leg.* 81.

of the deities: the Dioscuri were devoted brothers, who were willing to die for each other, but Caligula executed his 'brother' Tiberius Gemellus and exiled his sisters; while Apollo brings light and healing to the sick, Caligula prefers the darkness and brings destruction and harm to the healthy.⁴⁹ Whilst we need to acknowledge the explicitly hostile nature of this text against Caligula, the fact that Philo's criticism against Caligula's actions is framed in such a way reveals that it is his unworthiness which renders his claim to truly be one of the gods and thus supported by them to be incredible. The further implication being that if Caligula had lived up to these models, he may not have only reigned for four years, but instead his claim to power would have been supported.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, I have shown one way that the gods could serve as divine legitimators and examined some of the principles that underlay the strategy and its subsequent innovations, key to which were the criteria of worthiness and credibility. Without one or both of these, this strategy would not support claims to access or climb the structures of social, political, or military power. Divine legitimators, as laid out in the Republic, continued to be used in the imperial period, but developed from the claimed pre-eminence of an individual, which suited the individual based political competition of the Republic, to be consolidated in the figure of the *princeps*, who could claim the most divine legitimators of all. The imperial use of the strategy legitimised the extraordinary position of the *princeps* and, in turn, of his successors. Although the structures of power may have changed from Republic to Empire, the principles of this strategy for claiming that power remained consistent and the strategy itself became a traditional way to claim power. The greatest innovation was in the control of that tradition and the restriction of who was allowed to draw upon it. The changes and indeed the strategy itself were rarely spelled out, or at least do not seem to have been in the sources which survive, and perhaps this is one of the reasons behind its longevity and success, that the links between a tradition of divine support and structures of power were not spelled out, but rather left to the implicit understanding of the principles outlined above and the role of religion in the state. Caligula's misuse and failure to successfully integrate himself into even the changed structure of power in the imperial period might serve as a warning against innovating too far and making the supporting

49 Philo, *Leg.* 84–87; 103–110.

structure to his power explicit, allowing his worthiness and the credibility of his claim to be rejected.

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Closing a Highway to Heaven

Discontinuities in the Divinisation of Human Beings in Roman Times

Fernando Lozano and Elena Muñiz Grijalvo

1 Introduction

By the time Octavian defeated his main rival, he was already well known in the Greek East, where he had been accorded divine honours. Similar honours had been offered to other Roman generals of his time, most notably his defeated enemy, Mark Antony. The message emanating from the seat of power depicted the elimination of Octavian's final contender and the end of the civil wars that had dominated the preceding decades as ushering in a new era of prosperity and peace, and there is no reason to doubt that at least some of the emperor's subject populations agreed.¹ The Greek cities quickly grasped the tenor of the new times and echoed it in grandiloquent honorary decrees. In the year 1 BCE, for example, the city of Halicarnassus in Caria referred to the Emperor Augustus as follows:

Immortal nature, after overwhelming benefactions, has bestowed on men the greatest Good of all. She has given us the Emperor Augustus, who is not only the father of his country, Rome, giver of happiness to our lives, but also the Fatherly God and Saviour of all mankind. It is He whose Providence has not only fulfilled but even surpassed the prayers

1 For the reign of Augustus as the beginning of a new era, see recently A. Cooley, 'From the Augustan Principate to the invention of the age of Augustus', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 109 (2019), 71–87, esp. 79–85. Also see K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture. An interpretative introduction* (Princeton 1996), esp. 90–121. For new approaches, see K. Morrell, J. Osgood & K. Welch, eds., *The alternative Augustan age* (Oxford-New York 2019). For the representation of this new era in art, see still the fundamental P. Zanker, *The power of images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988), esp. 167–215 (originally published as *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (Munich 1987)). For the particularities of the development of this idea in the East see: S. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984), 54–57, and U. Laffi, 'Le iscrizioni relative all'introduzione nel 9 A.C. del nuovo calendario della provincia d'Asia', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 16 (1967), 57 and note 86, with bibliography.

of all. For land and sea lie at peace and the cities bloom with the flowers of order, concord and prosperity.²

This is merely one example – chosen for its forceful ideological message and flamboyant language – from among surviving honorary decrees through which many cities in the Greek East first praised Augustus and then the successive emperors thereafter.³ As in this instance, the emperors are often described in these decrees as fatherly gods, saviours of cities and humankind in general and as benefactors whose actions bring all manner of benefits to humanity, including order, concord and prosperity.⁴ In return for their benevolence, the Roman rulers received cultic honours of various kinds: temples, sacrifices, *agones*, processions, hymns and banquets, in a practice with political and religious overtones.⁵ Emperors were, thus, incorporated into the by then centuries-old Hellenistic tradition whereby communities offered cultic honours to eminent figures – male and female – and in particular to kings, but also to local benefactors and Roman magistrates and generals.

Here, we shall concentrate on a very specific facet of the much broader subject of awarding divine cultic honours to individuals in Greek cities in the Hellenistic period and during the Principate. On the one hand, we shall

2 *GIBM* 894, ll. 2–10 (trans. Hopkins): [ἐ]πεὶ ἡ αἰώνιος καὶ ἀθάνατος τοῦ παντὸς φύσις τὸ [μέγ]ιστον ἀγαθὸν πρὸς ὑπερβαλλούσας εὐεργεσίας ἀνθρ[ώ]ποις ἔχαρίσατο, Καίσαρα τὸν Σεβαστὸν ἐνευ[χ]αμένη [τ]ὴ ὁ[ν] τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς εὐδαίμονι βίῳ πατέρα μὲν τῆς [έ]αυ[τοῦ] πατρ[ο]ῦ θεᾶς Πώμης, Δία δὲ πατρῶων καὶ σωτήρα τοῦ κο[ιν]οῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους, οὐ ἡ πρόνοια τὰς πάντων [ἐ]πι[δ]ας οὐκ ἐπλήρωσε μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπερῆρεν· εἰρηνεύο[υ]σι μὲν γὰρ γῆ καὶ θάλαττα, πόλεις δὲ ἀνοοῦσιν εὐνομία[ι] ὁμοιοίαι τε καὶ εὐετηρίαίαι.

3 On the importance of the message of the honorary decrees dedicated to the emperors, the words of Hopkins are still illuminating, see K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge 1978), 217 n. 27 and 218.

4 This message was spread by many means, not only through the publication of inscriptions but also in words of art and coins. In this sense, it is also closely related to the information communicated by imperial virtues. On this message, see the recent reassessment in G. Mitropoulos, 'The Imperial qualities in Roman Greece (31 BC–AD 235): The evidence and a first assessment', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 66 (2020), 173–201. A complex narrative of the Roman Empire – to a great extent centrally inspired, but also drawing from the communities subject to Rome – was being created. For this process see F. Lozano, J.M. Cortés Copete & E. Muñoz Grijalvo, eds., *Narratives of Empire: Words and Rituals that shaped the Roman Empire* (Berlin-Boston forthcoming).

5 The ample and heterogeneous set of rituals and beliefs labelled as “imperial cult(s)” has been the subject of countless works. For a recent historiographic overview of scholarship, see T. Gnoli & F. Muccioli, 'Introduzione', in: T. Gnoli & F. Muccioli, eds., *Divinizzazione, culto del sovrano e apoteosi. Tra Antichità e Medioevo* (Bologna 2014), 11–27; and C. Alarcón Hernández 'Una revisión historiográfica sobre el culto a la *domus imperatoria*: siglos XX y XXI', *Revista de Historiografía* 31 (2019), 181–205.

illustrate how this tradition was modified to better suit the objective of the new Roman imperial power, focusing on the elimination of cultic honours for people who did not belong to the imperial family. This seems to us to be an important issue, because, with some exceptions, the reign of Augustus meant the closure of this highway to heaven. In our view, this constituted a dramatic change because of its impact on the number of people who were thus honoured and because of the short period of time over which it was put into practice. Furthermore, this change represents a clear case of reworking a pre-existing tradition with the primary purpose of endorsing a new structure of power (that of the emperor) and forestalling competition. On the other hand, we shall show how this reworking of tradition – a reworking that benefitted from the widespread practices of the previous period, but substantially modified them – implies the involvement and religious agency of the emperors themselves, which will enable us to offer some insights as to how the emperors organised and devised their own cults.

2 Closing a Highway to Heaven: the Imperial Monopoly on Divine Cultic Honours

Many different ways of awarding cultic honours to individuals existed simultaneously in the Hellenistic period. Of these, the main one was the divine cult of monarchs, which was highly diverse and took various regional and dynastic forms, ranging from the numerous civic cults of living sovereigns to cults created by the monarchies themselves for living or dead members of the royal families.⁶ The prolific cult of benefactors in the Hellenistic period has also been the subject of several fundamental studies.⁷ The relative vigour of recent

6 On these cults, the studies by Habicht, Price, Chaniotis and more recently Caneva are particularly relevant to this paper: C. Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte* (Munich 1970, 2nd ed.); Price 1984, op. cit. (n. 1); A. Chaniotis, 'The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers', in: A. Erskine, ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003), 431–445; 'La divinité mortelle d'Antiochos III à Téos', *Kernos* 80 (2007), 151–173; A. Chaniotis 'The Ithyphallic Hymn for Demetrios Poliorketes and Hellenistic Religious Mentality', in P.P. Iossif, A.S. Chankowski, and C.C. Lorber, eds., *More Than Men, Less Than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship* (Leuven 2011), 157–195; S.G. Caneva, 'Queens and Ruler Cults in Early Hellenism: Festivals, Administration, and Ideology', *Kernos* 25 (2012), 75–101; Caneva, *From Alexander to the Theoi Adelphoi: Foundation and Legitimation of a Dynasty* (Leuven 2016).

7 See P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris 1976); Ph. Gauthier, *Les cites grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Paris 1985); J.-L. Ferrary, 'De l'évergétisme hellénistique à l'évergétisme romain', in: *Actes du X^e Congrès International d'épigraphie grecque et latine (Nîmes, 4–9 octobre 1992)* (Paris 1997), 199–225; G. Thériault, 'Remarques

research into cultic honours in Hellenistic cities and during the Principate is, we think, a happy circumstance derived in large part from the renewed interest in the last decades in two broader issues: on the one hand, the cult of rulers in the ancient Mediterranean in general, the appeal of which seems never to wane over time; and on the other, the study of changes and continuities in a characteristic intrinsic to the Greek cities, namely euergetism and public munificence.⁸

An overall review of recent research shows that, far from diminishing over time, cultic honours became more frequent throughout the second century BCE, and witnessed an evident surge in the first century BCE, when the traditional cults of sovereigns, Roman magistrates and benefactors were joined by the institution of cultic honours rendered to the Roman generals who contended for pre-eminence in Rome, such as Pompey, Julius Caesar and, of course, Mark Antony and Octavian themselves. It is therefore particularly important to note that the elimination of competitors which marked Augustus' reign had major consequences for this rich and varied panorama, as it brought an end to the thriving appearance of new cults of this type.

This early suppression is clearly apparent in the case of governors, and according to G. Bowersock, it was related to the legislation approved by Augustus and aimed at forcing out corruption and forestalling competition from this elite group of Romans.⁹ G. Bowersock has identified three cases of cultic honours during the reign of Augustus, namely for M. Vinicius (consul 19 BCE), Paullus Fabius Maximus (consul 11 BCE) and C. Marcius Censorinus (consul 8 BCE), but found only one subsequent example, that of Cn. Vergilius Capito, prefect of Egypt, during the reign of Claudius, whom he believed had

sur le culte des magistrats romains en Orient', in: P. Senay, ed., *Mélanges Pierre Rodrigue Brind'Amour* vol. II, (Trois-Rivieres 2001), 85–95, and J.H.M. Strubbe, 'Cultic honours for benefactors in the cities of Asia Minor', in: L. De Ligt, E.A. Hemelrijk & H.W. Singor, eds., *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives. IMEM 4* (Leiden 2004), 315–330. For the Romans who were included in this cultic system, see G. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965), 118–121 and appendix I. H. Seyrig, 'Inscriptions de Gythion', *Revue Archéologique* 29 (1929), 95 n. 4.

- 8 A. Heller & O. van Nijf, *The Politics of Honour in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire* (Leiden 2017); M. Domingo Gygas & A. Zuiderhoek, *Benefactors and the Polis: The Public Gift in the Greek Cities from the Homeric World to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 2021); A. Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire. Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 2009).
- 9 Bowersock 1965, op. cit. (n. 7), 119. See the useful remarks on the continuity of remembrance of past magistrates in Asia Minor in A.-V. Pont, 'Rituels civiques (*Apantèsis* et acclamations) et gouverneurs à l'Époque romaine en Asie Mineure', in: O. Hekster, S. Schmidt-Hofner & C. Witschel, *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire. IMEM 9* (Leiden-Boston 2009), esp. 206–210.

received cult in the province of Asia.¹⁰ These are the only known cases, from which J.-L. Ferrary subsequently eliminated Paullus Fabius Maximus and Vergilius Capito in his review of the subject, arguing that, in both cases, the testimonies refer to cultic honours offered to local benefactors rather than to governors.¹¹ In Ferrary's opinion, therefore, the last governor accorded cultic honours was C. Marcius Censorinus, who held the post of pro-consul of Asia between 8–7 and 3–2 BCE.¹² Meanwhile, G. Thériault has suggested that the last case was C. Vibius Postumus on the basis of an altar with bucrania where he is described as ἥρωι εὐεργέτη. This aristocrat also held the post of pro-consul of Asia in 12–13 CE or 15–16 CE.¹³ In spite of proposing Vibius Postumus as the last governor to receive cultic honours, G. Thériault has also argued, echoing G. Bowersock, that it was Augustus' legislation that was responsible for the

10 Bowersock 1965, op. cit. (n. 7), 119 and appendix I, 150–151.

11 Ferrary 1997, op. cit. (n. 7), n. 43. In the case of Paullus Fabius Maximus, Ferrary followed Robert who related the second or third century CE *Smintheia Pauleia* from Alexandrie de Troade to a later local *evergetes* and not to the proconsul: L. Robert, 'Inscriptions grecques d'Asie Mineure', *Anatolian Studies presented to W.H. Buckler* (Manchester 1939), 227–248 = *Opera Minora Selecta* I (Amsterdam 1969), 611–632, esp. 629–630. *Contra* D. Erkelenz, 'Keine Konkurrenz zum Kaiser. Zur Verleihung der Titel *Κτίστη* und *Σωτήρ* in der römischen Kaiserzeit', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002), 61–77, in particular 77 no. 28. In the instance of Vergilius Capito, there was a festival *Capitoneia* in Miletos c.200 CE (*I.Didyma* 84 and 278) and a calendar, dated to 195 or 215 CE (*SEG* 34, 1176), in which the birthday of a Vergilius Capitus was celebrated on August the 6th. It is a matter of debate if the Capito celebrated in the second and third centuries CE is the Claudian pro-magistrate or his second-century CE relative with the same name, mentioned in *I.Milet* I 2, 20, probably his grandchild. J. and L. Robert suggested the *Capitoneia* were consecrated to the Claudian Vergilius Capito because he helped to reconstruct the city after an earthquake: J. Robert & L. Robert, *Fouilles d'Amyzon en Carie* (Paris 1983), 267. Ferrary is of the same opinion, arguing that Vergilius Capito falls in the category of "des grands évergètes citoyens, plutôt que des magistrats romains à qui furent décernés des honneurs culturels": Ferrary 1997, op. cit. (n. 7), n. 43. As to when the festivals started, J. and L. Robert suggested 47 CE, after Capito's post in Asia and before his departure to Egypt, where he was prefect. This reconstruction is accepted in M. Riel & S. Akat, 'A new honorary inscription for Cn. Vergilius Capito from Miletos', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 40 (2007), 29–32. However, Kuhn argued that he received "at the most heroic honours posthumously, or the games were merely named after their founder": A.B. Kuhn, 'Honouring Senators and Equestrians in the Graeco-Roman East', in: Heller & van Nijf 2017, op. cit. (n. 8), 317–338, quote 327 n. 45. She compared these honours with the well-known case of Tiberius Claudius Balbillus at Ephesos: *IEphesos* 1122 and Dio Cass., 65.9.2 (a prerogative granted by Vespasian to the Ephesians).

12 Ferrary 1997, op. cit. (n. 7), appendice 2, n. 19.

13 Thériault 2001, op. cit. (n. 7), 92 and n. 60. For Ferrary "ἥρωι εὐεργέτη" in *IG* XII 6, 365 "peut n'avoir que le sens de 'défunt évergète'": Ferrary 1997, op. cit. (n. 7), n. 43. Against this consideration of "hero", see C.P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity. From Achilles to Antinoos* (Cambridge-London 2010), 66–74. Even if the existence of cultic honours is accepted, these were posthumous, see n. 17.

disappearance of cultic honours for Roman magistrates and for the emperor's subsequent monopoly on this type of practice.¹⁴

An analogous decline in divine cultic honours can be traced with respect to local benefactors. In the case of Asia, J. Strubbe has shown that this ancient practice died out during the reign of Augustus. In his view, the last instance was that of the Italic Lucius Vaccius Labeo from Kyme in Aeolis, which occurred between 2 BCE and 14 CE.¹⁵ This example, to which we shall return later, is particularly important because Labeo rejected the honours that had been bestowed on him as he considered them excessive. Beyond Asia, J. Strubbe indicated that the practice ended around the same time.¹⁶ His conclusion is solid and valid: "We must infer that the practice of conferring cultic honours on citizen-benefactors, which existed in Asia Minor since the beginning of the second century BCE, came to an end under the influence of the cult of the Emperor and the political situation. We clearly detect here the impact of Empire".¹⁷

14 Thériault 2001, op. cit. (n. 7), 92.

15 *I.Kyme* 19 (= *IGR* IV, 1302).

16 He stated that the last award of cultic honours to a civic benefactor concerned one Barkaios. In any case, he was accorded posthumous honours in Kyrene in 16–15 BCE: Strubbe 2004, op. cit. (n. 7), 329 n. 61. As stated before, later possible instances are also Vergilius Capito (following Ferrary, see n. 12), Tiberius Claudius Balbillus at Ephesos (see n. 11), and Vibius Postumus (see n. 13). The study of posthumous heroic cults would go beyond the scope of this paper. However, we would like to make two observations on the subject. A recent article has highlighted the first one: "There was of course nothing new in presenting deceased relatives as heroes, but the concerted interest in specifying heroic status on *public* honorific inscriptions, all deriving from the reign of Augustus, arguably represents an anxiety over articulating distinctions between divine, ἱερόθεοι, honours for the emperor, and 'heroic' ones for lesser benefactors, both Roman and citizen"; M. Chin, 'Roman power and the memorial Turn in civic honourability in Western Asia Minor, ca 85 BCE–14 CE', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* Supplément 26 (2023), 201–224, quote on 213. This reasoning is in line with the conclusion we draw here. The second one is that heroic cults are not unimportant formalities, as a seminal study has recently shown: Jones 2010, op. cit. (n. 13). However, the honours we study in this paper – the divine honours consecrated to the emperors – are the highest, as Price masterfully pointed out: Price 1984, op. cit. (n. 1), 32–36.

17 Strubbe 2004, op. cit. (n. 7), 329. It is interesting to note that the titles of *ktistes* and *soter* remained in use, albeit also restricted mainly to the imperial family. Furthermore, in her recent and thought-provoking article, Kuhn has observed that on the few occasions when such honours were granted to individuals beyond the emperor's family circle, said recipients were dignitaries of senatorial or equestrian rank: C.T. Kuhn, 'The Refusal of the Highest Honours by Members of the Urban Elite in Roman Asia Minor', in Heller & van Nijf 2017, op. cit. (n. 8), 328.

3 Augustus' Religious Agency. How the Imperial Monopoly on Cultic Honours Was Accomplished

Our brief review of the testimonies shows that during the reign of Augustus, public cultic honours became an imperial monopoly. This observation obviously requires an explanation. How did such a transformation take place and what was the nature of the emperors' involvement and religious agency in this regard, especially considering the widespread theory that the imperial cult in the East was generated from the bottom up, spontaneously, by the Greeks, whereas central power merely made modifications and adjustments?¹⁸ This view is linked to another cornerstone of modern scholarship, which is the idea that Augustus was loathe to accept cult.¹⁹ It would go beyond the limits of this chapter to illustrate how the alleged hesitancy and refusal of Augustus has been wrongly constructed using epigraphical and papyrological sources corresponding to the reign of Tiberius and Claudius and problematic and contended passages from Cassius Dio and Suetonius.²⁰ Suffice it to say here

18 See, for example: Bowersock 1965, op. cit. (n. 7), 121. This image of the emperor is related to the influential model put forward by Millar, especially in his seminal: F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC–AD 337)* (London 1977); and also in: F. Millar, 'L'empereur romain comme décideur', in C. Nicolet, ed., *Du pouvoir dans l'antiquité. Mots et réalités* (Geneva 1990), 207–220. An exposition of the different reactions that have been offered to Millar's work would exceed the limits of this article. See, for convenience, the lucid analysis by J. Edmondson, 'The Roman emperor and the local communities of the Roman Empire', in: J.-L. Ferrary & J. Scheid, eds., *Il princeps romano: autocrate o magistrato? Fattori giuridici e fattori sociali del potere imperiale da Augusto a Commodo* (Pavia 2015), 701–729, and G. Woolf, 'Fragments of an emperor's religious policy: The case of Hadrian', *ARYS. Antiquedad: Religiones y Sociedades* 16 (2019), 55–58.

19 On Augustus' alleged hesitancy see the classical paper of M.P. Charlesworth, 'The Refusal of Divine Honours: An augustan formula', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 15 (1939), 1–10, which is the standar work on the subject.

20 The sources mentioned above are well known. The inscriptions and papyri are: *SEG* 11, 922 = J.H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* (Philadelphia 1989), no. 15II (Letter of Tiberius to the Gytheates); P. Lond. 1912 = Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 19 (Letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians), and Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 17 (Proclamation of Germanicus at Alexandria). An additional inscription, in this case pertaining to a particular, is *IKyme* 19 (= *IGR* IV, 1302) (Labeo's refusal of cultic honours in Kyme) dated between 2 BCE and 14 CE. We will return to these last two inscriptions in this paper. The literary sources are: Suet., *Aug.* 52 (Augustus' policy regarding emperor worship), and Dio Cass., 51.20.6–8 (the inauguration of provincial cult in Asia). Additionally, see: Tac., *Ann.* 4. 37–38 (Tiberius's hesitancy to accept cultic honours). A critical assessment of these sources in F. Lozano, *La religión del poder: el culto imperial en Atenas en época de Augusto y los emperadores Julio-claudios* (Oxford 2002), 27–28, and J.M. Madsen, 'Who Introduced the Imperial Cult in Asia and Bithynia? The Koinon's Role in the Early Worship of Augustus' in: A. Kolb and M. Vitale, eds., *Kaiserkult*

that this image of passivity and hesitancy seems to us to be at odds with the kind of change described above, which was rapid, profound and widespread. Such a transformation rather suggests that the central power was involved in regulating these honours, at least in the specific aspect we are discussing here, which is the limitation of the granting of cultic honours for people who did not form part of the imperial family. This is not to say, however, that it was the emperor alone who was responsible for the emergence of a new system of honours, nor that this system was devised in Rome as a universally applicable mandate. As we have argued elsewhere, in the spectrum between imposition from Rome and Greek spontaneity there are explanations that better capture the nuances and richness of this fruitful and fluid process of change.²¹

To limit honours for the Roman oligarchy, and more specifically, for the provincial governors, specific rules were created. According to G. Bowersock and G. Thériault, this was the trigger for suppressing the cult of governors.²² The main testimony is Cassius Dio's account of Augustus' prohibition in 11 CE: "He also issued a proclamation to the subject nations forbidding them to bestow any honours upon a person assigned to govern them either during his term of office or within sixty days after his departure". The motive Cassius Dio attributes to this measure is that the governors "by arranging beforehand for testimonials and eulogies from their subjects were causing much mischief".²³ Concern about the honours that provincials granted to governors persisted, as evidenced by the fact that, according to Tacitus, laws were again enacted in 62 CE, in this case probably by a *senatus consultum*.²⁴ On this occasion, the law prohibited proposals for honouring governors in the senate or the dispatch of

in den Provinzen des Römischen Reiches. Organisation, Kommunikation und Repräsentation (Berlin/Boston 2016), 21–35. On the refusal of divine honours see also: C.P. Jones, 'Roman emperors and the acceptance of divine honors', in: A. Heller, C. Müller and A. Suspène, eds., *Philorhōmaios kai Philhellèn. Hommage à Jean-Louis Ferrary* (Genève 2019), 467–480.

- 21 On the shortcomings of this explanation, see: F. Lozano, 'The creation of Imperial gods: Not only imposition versus spontaneity' in: P.P. Iossif, A.S. Chankowski & C.C. Lorber, eds., *More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship* (Leuven 2011), 475–519.
- 22 Bowersock 1965, op. cit. (n. 7), 119, and Thériault 2001, op. cit. (n. 7).
- 23 Dio Cass., 56.25.6 (trans. Cary): οὐ μὴν ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνό τε ἀπέειπε, καὶ τῷ ὑπηκόῳ προσπαρήγγειλε μηδενὶ τῶν προστασσομένων αὐτοῖς ἀρχόντων μήτε ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀρχῆς χρόνῳ μήτε ἐν τὸς ἐξήκοντα ἡμερῶν μετὰ τὸ ἀπαλλαγῆναι σφας τιμῆν τινα διδόναι, ὅτι τινὲς μαρτυρίας παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπαίνους προπαρασκευαζόμενοι.
- 24 Tac., *Ann.* 15.20–22. For an interpretation of this passage, see: C.P. Jones, 'A decree of Thyatira in Lydia', *Chiron* 29 (1999), 16–21, who provides an interesting epigraphic analysis.

envoys for this purpose.²⁵ Again, the motive was said to have been to control the governors: “For as the dread of a charge of extortion has been a check to rapacity, so, by prohibiting the vote of thanks, will the pursuit of popularity be restrained”.²⁶

However, it is important to note that awarding cultic honours is not explicitly forbidden in either of the two fragments. Consequently, we believe that alongside this kind of legislative activity there must have been other, more informal procedures which were applied without exception to both Romans and Greeks, whereby Augustus and his entourage suggested that if cultic honours were to be bestowed, they should be conferred only on himself, his father and other members of the imperial family, and that it would be inappropriate for any others to be awarded this highest honour. Such procedures tending more towards persuasion and example-setting make more sense in the political and religious context of the Roman Empire during the Principate, in which cities retained a certain degree of freedom of action, especially in the arena of civic religion.²⁷

On some occasions, the emperor expressed himself directly via replies to envoys asking him about the honours he had been awarded. Such a response was, of course, taken into account, although the testimonies demonstrate that this did not mean his wishes were always followed to the letter. There are several well-known cases of emperors’ responses to envoys regarding awarding honours, cultic or otherwise, to members of the imperial family or to the emperor himself. Such replies sometimes concerned the acceptance or rejection of the honours granted and at other times dwelt on an appraisal of the manner in which the honours would be carried out. For example, Augustus met in Rome with envoys from the city of Sardis and accepted the honours that the city had bestowed on Gaius Caesar on the occasion of his assumption of the *toga virilis*, including the consecration of Gaius’ statue to be erected in the temple of his father, namely Augustus himself, in Sardis.²⁸ The emperor’s letter of reply to the city’s inhabitants, preserved in the dossier of the local dignitary Menogenes, records his approval of the honours bestowed on the

25 Tac., *Ann.* 15.22.

26 Tac., *Ann.* 15.21 (trans. Church and Brodribb): *Nam ut metu repetundarum infracta avaritia est, ita vetita gratiarum actione ambitio cohibe[bi]tur.*

27 On this question, see more recently: F. Lozano, ‘Unlikely imperial gods. A reflection on some unexpected results of the integration of emperors into local greek panthea’, in: E. Muñiz Grijalvo & R. Moreno Soldevila, eds., *Understanding integration in the Roman World* (Leiden 2023, 193–211).

28 *Sardis* 7.1, no. 8, ll. 7–15.

imperial family as a token of gratitude for the benefits that the city had received from Augustus.²⁹

Another, more complex case, occurred in the time of Tiberius, when the city of Gythium informed the new emperor at the outset of his reign of its intention to offer cult to Augustus together with Tiberius and Livia. This very well-known episode testifies to the often informal nature of the emergence of the cult of the Roman emperors in the Greek East, and to the capacity for action that the cities retained. Tiberius informed the inhabitants of Gythium that he did not want to receive cultic honours, because he was content “with the more moderate honours which are proper for men” (αὐτὸς δὲ ἀρκοῦμαι ταῖς μετριωτέραις τε καὶ ἀνθρωπείοις).³⁰ However, he did not pronounce on the honours granted to his mother, stating that “she herself will reply to you when she hears from you what decision you have reached concerning the honours in her case” (ἡ μέντοι ἐμὴ μήτηρ τόθ’ ὑμῖν ἀποκρινεῖται, ὅταν αἰσθηταὶ παρ’ ὑμῶν ἦν ἔχετε περὶ τῶν εἰς αὐτὴν τιμῶν κρίσιν).³¹ We do not know if and, if so, what the empress replied. It can be argued, however, that any response of her would not be have been decisive either, for despite Tiberius’ response – or perhaps one could say precisely because of it, but that is a different question altogether – the sacred law which was published together with the emperor’s letter inaugurated divine rituals in his name and consecrated the second day of festivities to him as father of the fatherland. The first day was consecrated to Augustus as Soter Eleutherius and the third to Livia as Fortuna of the League (of the Eleutherolaconians) and the city.³²

At other times, governors themselves intervened in the matter of divine honours. This was a highly influential approach that was frequently and assiduously adopted in the time of Augustus and the early Julio-Claudian emperors. The cases are well known and have been written about extensively. For instance, the province of Achaëa provides the example of P. Cornelius Scipio, who, during the reign of Augustus, presided over the Caesarean Games in Messene and was even involved in details of their design. A later example, very

29 *Sardis* 7.1, no. 8, ll. 23–27.

30 *SEG* 11, 922, l. 20 = Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 15II (trans. Oliver). On the ambiguity of Tiberius’ response, see: M. Rostovtzeff, ‘L’empereur Tibère et le culte impérial’, *Revue historique* 163 (1930), 20–24.

31 *SEG* 11, 922, ll. 20–22 = Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 15II (trans. Oliver).

32 *SEG* 11, 923, ll. 7–10 = Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 15I. On the imperial family members worshiped at Gythium, see recently G. Mitropoulos, ‘Some notes on Gytheion’s “Lex Sacra” and Germanicus’s Nike’, *ZPE* 219 (2021), 88–94.

well studied by A. Spawforth, is that of Memmius Regulus, who played a leading role in the spread of the imperial cult in the same province.³³

Perhaps the clearest episode, however, is the intervention in Asia by Paullus Fabius Maximus, the governor of the province, who in c.9 BCE won a curious competition to choose the best idea to honour Augustus.³⁴ His proposal was to make the beginning of the year in all the cities belonging to the League of Asia coincide with the emperor's birthday. The inscription through which we know of this sheds light on many relevant aspects. For example, as far as the emperor's religious agency is concerned, the measures taken cannot be seen to reflect the spontaneous will of the provincials, as has often been claimed.³⁵ No doubt many of the local dignitaries would have been enthusiastic, but their enthusiasm would have been mediated by the governor, who was a close collaborator and friend of Augustus. The Decree of the League of Asia approving the proposal of the governor, together with the letter of Fabius Maximus, was to be published in the temple of Rome and Augustus, as well as in the temples of Augustus erected in the main cities of the League.³⁶ The emperor must have known and agreed with the actions of his collaborator. Besides, we believe it is relevant to note that Fabius Maximus was also involved in the expansion of the imperial cult in the most remote regions of the province – modern Galicia and Northern Portugal –, when he was governor of Hispania Tarraconensis during 4–1 BCE, as attested by the erection of several altars to the emperor Augustus. Some, interestingly, on the occasion of his birthday.³⁷

In our view, this mediation revolved around two ideas that were rooted in earlier Hellenistic traditions but reworked for the benefit of Augustus, with his complete acquiescence, and most likely also with his own participation. The first of these ideas is the notion that the emperor's reign had ushered in a new age of universal benevolence. This powerful message is conveyed in the text with which we began this paper, but perhaps finds its maximum expression in

33 On P. Cornelius Scipio, see: R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (Oxford 1986), 59 and 252. He conducted the Caesarea of Messene: *SEG* 23, 206; A.J.S. Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge 2012), 212–213. On Regullus, see: E. Groag, *Die römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia bis auf Diokletian* (Vienna-Leipzig 1939), 26–30. For his involvement in the promotion of imperial cult rituals, see: A.J.S. Spawforth, 'Corinth, Argos, and the Imperial Cult: Pseudo-Julian, *Letters* 198', *Hesperia* 63 (1994), 211–32.

34 For the epigraphical record of this episode, see: Laffi 1967, *op. cit.* (n. 1). On P. Fabius Maximus, see for convenience: E. Groag, *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I, II, III. Editio altera, Pars III* (Berlin 1943), 103–105, no. F 47.

35 Price 1984, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 54–56.

36 *OGIS* 458, ll. 63–67.

37 F. Marco Simón, 'Los inicios del culto imperial en la Hispania augustea', *Gerión* 35 (2017), 773–789, esp. 777–778 and 784–785.

the words of Fabius Maximus himself, for whom the birth of Augustus could be considered:

equal to the beginning of all things. If not exact from the point of view of the natural order of things, at least from the point of view of the useful, if there is nothing which has fallen to pieces and to an unfortunate condition has been changed which he has not restored, he has given to the whole world a different appearance, (a world) which would have met its ruin with the greatest pleasure, if as the common good fortune of everyone Caesar had not been born. Therefore (perhaps) each person would justly consider that this (event) has been for himself the beginning of life and of living, which is the limit and end of regret at having been born.³⁸

This view of Augustus' reign was repeated in the league decrees that accompanied the governor's letter. It also occurred in inscriptions from other parts of the Empire, such as the one on the Narbo altar, where the emperor's birthday is called the "date of happiness on which he was produced as the world's ruler" (*die eum saeculi felicitas orbi terrarum rectorem edidit*).³⁹

The second notion builds on one of the seminal ideas of the euergetic system, namely that rulers and benefactors were honoured and even worshipped for their munificence and their capacity to do good.⁴⁰ In the case of Augustus, this capacity was accentuated because he was considered not only to have surpassed those benefactors who had lived before, but even, as is stated in the same decree, to have left no "hope [of surpassing him] for those who are to come in the future" (ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς ἐσομένοις ἐλπίδα τῆς συνκρίσεως ἀπολείπων).⁴¹ Augustus was thus presented as the ultimate universal and everlasting benefactor, a potent image that underpinned the imperial monopoly on cultic honours. But he did not rule and (allegedly) benefit humankind alone. Members of the imperial house (the *domus Augusta* or *Divina*) helped and accompanied him. Thus, the awarding of divine cultic honours to members of the imperial family partakes in the semantics of the cult granted to the emperor. Moreover, one of its members would inherit power, adding to

38 OGIS 458, ll. 5–11 (Trans. Sher): ἦν τῆι τῶν πάντων ἀρχῆι ἴσηι δικαίως ἂν εἶναι ὑπ[ολά]βοιμεν, καὶ εἰ μὴ τῆι φύσει, τῶι γε χρησίμωι, εἰ γε οὐδέ[ν ο] ὑχί διαπειπτον καὶ εἰς ἀτυχῆς μεταβεβηκός σχῆμα ἀνῶρθωσεν, ἐτέραν τε ἔδωκεν πάντι τῶι κόσμωι ὕψιν, ἥδιστα ἂν δεξαμένωι φθοράν, εἰ μὴ τὸ κοινὸν πάντων εὐτύχημα ἐπεγεννήθηι Καίσαρ. διὸ ἂν τις δικαίως ὑπολάβοι τοῦτο ἀτῶι ἀρχῆν τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ζωῆς γεγενῆσθαι, ὃ ἔστιν πέρασ καὶ ὄρος τοῦ μεταμέλεσθαι, ὅτι γεγέννηται.

39 CIL XII, 4333^a, ll. 14–16. See also n. 2 above.

40 See for convenience the examples in Lozano 2011, op. cit. (n. 21), 502–506.

41 OGIS 458, l. 39.

the idea of stability and eternal duration of the emperor(s)' power – consanguinity in our modern sense was not necessarily an issue. However, just as the end of the civil war meant a significant reduction in the struggle for power within the Roman elite, the creation of a dynasty represented the emergence of new dangers for the ruler within the imperial family itself. Unsurprisingly, the establishment of cultic honours for members of the *domus Augusta* was often communicated to the emperor so he could approve, deny or modify the proposal, as in the case of the envoys from Sardis discussed above.⁴² Members of the imperial family should also be wary of accepting cultic honours on their own accord. Without consent from the *princeps*, it could be interpreted as an assault on power. However, it would be wrong to undervalue the significance and the sometimes independent rise of cults to important members of the imperial family, who were locally worshipped for different reasons.⁴³

At this point, we would like to draw attention to an exceptional document, which dates between 2 BCE and 14 CE, that illustrates how these informal procedures affected Greek cities. It concerns Lucius Vaccius Labeo's rejection of the cultic honours conferred on him by the city of Kyme.⁴⁴ The polis had offered to dedicate a temple in the gymnasium to Labeo, with statues of the oligarch, and to confer on him the titles of *ktistes* and *evergetes*. In addition, he would receive gold statues, a public funeral and the honour of being buried in the gymnasium. Labeo rejected the temple dedication and the title of founder because he felt they were excessive and only appropriate for gods and god-like men (καὶ θεοῖσι καὶ τοῖς ἰσοθεοῖσι). Ferrary has interpreted Labeo's refusal of these honours as a sign that he was emulating Augustus' moderation and the example set by the emperor himself.⁴⁵ Along the same lines, J. Strubbe has

42 See pp. 35–36.

43 Examples of cults of members of the imperial family that acquired extraordinary significance in cities of the Empire are numerous. See, for instance, the case of Drusus the Elder and Germanicus in Athens in F. Camia, 'A note on the Athenian *hierus* of Drusus Hypatos', *Tekmeria* 11 (2013), 37–50 (the priesthood of Drusus continued from the end of the first century BCE until the beginning of the second CE) and Lozano 2011, op. cit. (n. 21), 41 (the festival consecrated to Germanicus in the city was the imperial religious ceremony that lasted longer, from the first to the third century CE). As Boatwright has recently stressed, dynastic emphasis, and thus the imperial family, took center stage in the Empire: M.T. Boatwright, *The imperial women of Rome: power, gender, context* (New York 2021). She also highlights the difficulty women of the imperial household experienced in gaining visibility within an ideological model center on the dynastic group and the family (see esp. chapter 3). On the dynastic emphasis, see also recently Cooley 2019, op. cit. (n. 1), 76–79.

44 *IKyme* 19 (= *IGR* IV, 1302). City's proposal: ll. 3–11; Labeo's response: ll. 12–20.

45 Ferrary 1997, op. cit. (n. 7), para. 11.

observed that, being Italian, Labeo “may have been especially sensitive to the official policy of Augustus, who declined divine honour during his lifetime, and whose words are echoed by Labeo”.⁴⁶ Kuhn goes a step further by arguing that “if an emperor rejected cultic honours, how, then, could a local Roman benefactor dare to accept them?”. In the case of Labeo, the acceptance of these honours would have amounted to challenging Roman imperial power. It would have been both an inappropriate and extremely risky undertaking. Labeo was, therefore, “wise enough to heed the Augustan precedent”.⁴⁷

In our opinion, however, what Labeo is actually saying is that divine honours are suitable for gods and god-like men, i.e. Augustus himself. The rest of mortal men should refuse them. In this respect, the text is reminiscent of Germanicus’ proclamation to the Alexandrians in which he, a member of the imperial family, vehemently declined the “invidious divine acclamations” offered to him on the grounds that “they are suitable to him alone who is really the savior and benefactor of the whole human race, namely my father and his mother, who is my grand-mother”.⁴⁸ In short, Labeo’s rejection of divine honours was not prompted by a supposed Augustus’ moderation and rejection of divine honours, but rather, in our opinion, by quite the opposite. It demonstrates that the emperor was acting to ensure that these cultic honours were reserved exclusively for his family and himself.

An additional argument suggesting the existence of these directives from Rome, for which Augustus himself had been responsible, is precisely the fact that the reduction in cultic honours occurred relatively quickly, and moreover, throughout the East, whereas in other aspects pertaining to the imperial cult – such as the type of festivals, the days on which they were celebrated, the way in which the community participated and the very definition of the new imperial gods – the communities retained considerable freedom and room for manoeuvre. Their capacity for autonomous action defines the diverse nature of the honours paid to emperors and members of the imperial family in the Greek world, and even led some communities to approve the creation of imperial gods and rituals that were far removed from the ideological messages

46 Strubbe 2004, op. cit. (n. 7), 329.

47 Kuhn 2017, op. cit. (n. 17), 204.

48 Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 20) no. 17, ll. 27–41 (trans. Oliver): την μεν ευνοιαν υμών ἦν αἰεὶ ἐπιδείκνυσθε, ὅταν με εἰ δητε, αποδέχομαιτάς δε ἐπιφθόνου[ς] ἔμοι και Ἰσοθέους εκφωνήσεις υμών ἐξ [α]παντός παραιτούμαι. πρέπουσι γαρ μόμφ τῷ σωτήρι δντως και ευεργέτη του σύνπαντος τών ανθρώπων γένους, τω ἔμω πατρι και τη μητρι αυτού, ἐμή δι μάμμη. τα δε ημέτερα ἐν <λόγω> ἔστιν τῆς εκείνων θειότητος, ὡς εἰάν μοι μή πεισθήτε, ἀναγκατέ με μη πολλάκις ὑμεῖν ἐνφανίζεσθαι.

emanating from Rome.⁴⁹ Some striking results of this process, which gave rise to what we have termed elsewhere “unlikely imperial gods”, include the association between Augustus and Zeus Lycaeus and the inclusion of the emperors in the Sanctuary of Despoina in Achaëa.⁵⁰ It seems, therefore, that the ample room for action available to Greek communities in terms of creating new imperial gods and rituals did not extend to the approval of cultic honours for dignitaries outside the ruling family, which we believe can only be interpreted as a centrally orchestrated manoeuvre.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of awarding divine cultic honours to humans in the period under study takes the form of an inverted pyramid or funnel, as the greater possibility of receiving such cultic honours in Hellenistic times was subsequently restricted almost exclusively to the emperors and their relatives. This restriction, which could be more formally termed the “imperial monopoly on access to divinity”, clearly demonstrates the symbolic and social power invested in granting divine cultic honours and the political consequences that ensued.⁵¹ To paraphrase the famous fictional debate between Maecenas and Agrippa in Cassius Dio, the sovereign had no need of foreign gods, let alone men with divine status.⁵² The abrupt reduction in the award of honours suggests an underlying message, namely that rendering cult to men should be reserved exclusively for the emperors and their families, since it was they who were the most powerful figures and the most beneficial to humanity.

In addition, the rapid end – within a matter of decades – of cults for people other than the emperor or his family also suggests that Augustus was not a passive emperor hesitant to accept divine honours. Rather, the surviving testimonies seem to suggest that this change was spearheaded from Rome and that the emperor himself was directly involved in the creation of a new system of honours. As in so many other areas of political and religious life, Augustus

49 On the heterogeneous nature of the imperial cult: E. Bickerman, ‘Consecratio’, in: W. Den Boer, ed., *Le culte des souverains dans l’Empire romain* (Genève 1973) 1–37, esp. 9 and 26.

50 See more recently: Lozano 2023, op. cit. (n. 27).

51 It was described as a monopoly in Thériault 2001, op. cit. (n. 7), and F. Lozano, *Un dios entre los hombre. La adoración a los emperadores romanos en Grecia* (Barcelona 2010), 82.

52 Dio Cass., 52.36. On the debate see: U. Espinosa Ruiz, *Debate Agrippa-Mecenas en Dion Cassio. Respuesta senatorial a la crisis del Imperio Romano en época severiana* (Madrid 1982), and E. Adler, ‘Cassius Dio’s Agrippa-Maecenas debate: An operational code analysis’, *American Journal of Philology* 133 (2012), 477–520.

closed the door to his potential competitors. In doing so, an image was created – a model of reality – that much better reflected the distribution of power during the Principate, while at the same time establishing a model for the communities subject to Rome that was much more appropriate and beneficial for the rulers. Built on the solid foundations laid by more than three centuries of uninterrupted practice, the new form of access to divine honours entailed a profound reworking of the preceding tradition and the emergence of new and successful forms that would endure for several centuries.

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Women's Mediation and Peace Diplomacy

Augustan Women through the Looking Glass

Elena Torregaray Pagola and Toni Ñaco del Hoyo

After ten books that were primarily devoted to narrating the Hannibalic War in detail, at the very end of his thirtieth book Livy gives an account of Scipio Africanus and the return voyage of his victorious armies to Italy in 201 BCE. In the aftermath of Carthage's defeat at Zama and its eventual surrender, peace in Africa was established by land and sea – *terra marique* – as Livy specifically underlines. In order to prepare the logistics of their grand arrival at home, Scipio and his legions first landed in Sicily, where the general and his armies took different routes towards Italy. In his account of this episode, Livy insists on the exultation that was widely savoured by people in Italy when peace was finally secured, which was even greater than after Rome's victory over the Punic enemy itself. After Scipio had been acclaimed by crowds who wished to share their joy with the successful general, he finally headed to the celebration of his distinguished triumph in the city. Since it is implied here that Italy deserved to enjoy peace on all fronts after defeating Carthage in a global conflict, it is hardly surprising that Livy quotes a leitmotiv (*terra marique*) that directly relates to the peace ideology behind the Principate of Augustus, during which his *History of Rome* was written. Yet, it does not need to be stated here that the difficulties surrounding the civil wars urged for a lasting peace among Romans. Such a true emotion was conveniently fuelled by Augustus and particularly by his extraordinary propaganda machine.¹

Livy's sources were probably accurate in recording the hard facts of Scipio's return voyage and his magnificent triumph. However, there were two interconnected phenomena at play in his narrative which one needs to bear in mind.

1 Liv., 30.45.1–2 (trans. and ed. Loeb Classical Library, Yardley 2018): *per laetam pace non minus quam victoria Italiam*. J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War. A military history of the Second Punic War* (Oxford 2007, repr. 1978), 232; M.R. Pelikan Pittenger, *Contested Triumphs. Politics, Pageantry, and Performance in Livy's Republican Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2008), 166–167; A. Kubler, *La mémoire Culturelle de la deuxième guerre punique. Approche historique d'une construction mémorielle à travers les textes de l'Antiquité romaine* (Basel 2018), 67–70; H. Cornwell, *Pax and the Politics of Peace. Republic to Principate* (Oxford 2017), 81–120, and esp. 87–90.

Firstly, the judgement of a historian from the Augustan Age such as Livy was clouded by projecting – on to the remote past – a cliché of what a general state of peace on all fronts (*terra marique*) symbolised in his own time.² When an almost two-hundred-year-old atmosphere of exulted peace was to be significantly depicted in a history book, a re-creative narrative that echoed both the writer and the present-day reality of its readers – based upon Augustus' reborn conception of peace – seemed to be far more effective in literary terms. Secondly, at the beginning of the Principate there was no living soul at Rome who had personally experienced another life than the brutality of civil strife and the fight for hegemony among dynasts and triumvirs during the last decades of the old Republic. Although Livy was thus portraying a certain narrative of peace from Scipio's time, the historian could hardly evoke any direct memory of peace from his own recent past, or from any of the Romans of his time. Such a memory – now conveniently disguised as an 'invented tradition' – ought to be eventually reconstructed from its building blocks and then projected back to the distant past. As a result, tradition and memory were both recreated in such history books on purpose with the common goal of legitimising the new imperial regime.

In this chapter we shall explore more deeply a single feature of the newly recreated Augustan peace ideology which allows us to better understand how exactly the use and abuse of Rome's tradition and memory from the remote past – both mythical and historical – was sometimes unofficially conducted. In particular, we shall tackle how the memories of peace were eventually recreated through the history of the foundation of the *urbs* in the Augustan Age. Then, the role of Roman women in peacebuilding will also be addressed, together with their mythical role models as mediators. Finally, we shall focus on the unconventional forms of conflict mediation and diplomacy that were carried out by certain Augustan women of unquestionable repute and real political influence. This chapter intends to argue that it was the involvement of such women in Rome's most traditional perceptions of peace that not only

2 Augustus' ritual closing of the doors of the Janus temple, as the third and ultimate occasion when peace over land and sea was brought about in Rome's history, is reported with identical terminology (*terra marique*) in Livy's first book (Liv., 1.19.3) and also in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, II. 13, in the same context. P.G. Walsh, *Livy. His historical aims & methods* (Cambridge 1961, repr. 1989); T.J. Luce, *Livy. The Composition of His History* (Princeton 1976, repr. 2019), 288; B. Mineo, 'Introduction: Livy', in: B. Mineo, ed., *A Companion to Livy* (Malden & Oxford 2015), xxxiv.

vindicated the roots of Roman power and their memories, but also ultimately helped the Augustan peace ideology to become entrenched in Roman society.³

1 Peace-Making, but What Sort of Peace?

Many ancient voices, both contemporary and from later periods, including Augustus' own views through his *Res Gestae*, spoke about his extraordinary goals and achievements. In his monumental political testament, Augustus himself provided a detailed account of his efforts to restore the *res publica*.⁴ This task was huge, as the civil wars in the first century BCE had turned Roman society upside down. The last period of the Republic was undoubtedly highly traumatic in terms of social stress and overexposure to violence, and it affected several generations. The very idea of restoration – *res publica restituta* – reinforced the perception that the Romans had lost both oral and visual memories of relatively recent historical events from the past, which were clouded by the bloody struggles of the more recent civil wars.⁵ Therefore, Augustus' entourage had to renew or even recreate such memories in order to build up his regime. However, the memory loss suffered by Roman society was not limited to the last decades of the Republic. In the Augustan Age, there was no reliable memory left to support an accurate historical narrative for most events from earlier Roman history. The surviving accounts about the remote past, which were preserved by ancient authors and especially by poets, were distinctly

3 R. Vial Valdés, 'Pax y mos maiorum en la primera péntada de AUC', *Livio Ad Urbem Condendam. Riletture del passato in età augustea* (Bologna 2021), 167–203; P. Keegan, *Livy's women. Crisis, Revolution, and the Female in Rome's Foundation History* (London & New York 2021).

4 C.H. Lange, 'Civil War in the Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Conquering the World and Fighting a War at Home', in: E. Bragg, L.I. Hau and E. Macaulay-Lewis, eds., *Beyond the Battlefields: New Perspectives on Warfare and Society in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge 2008), 185–204; N. Rosenstein, 'War and peace, Fear and Reconciliation at Rome', in: K.A. Raaflaub, ed., *War and Peace in the Ancient World* (Oxford 2007), 226–244.

5 F. Hurlet, B. Mineo, 'Res publica restituta. Les pouvoirs et ses représentations à Rome sous le principat d'Auguste', in: F. Hurlet, B. Mineo, eds., *Le principat d'Auguste: Réalités et représentations du pouvoir. Autour de la Res publica restituta* (Rennes 2009), 9–22; P. Desideri, 'Il principato di Augusto come restaurazione della res publica', in *XXXVI Colloquio del GIREA, Lo viejo y lo nuevo en las sociedades antiguas* (Besançon 2018), 95–102. See also for Livy: G.B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstruction of early Rome* (Cornell 1995), 8–74.

idealised and scarcely focused on the emotional expressions of memory but rather on its exemplary and notably epic perspectives.⁶

In the Augustan Age, it was often publicly stated that permanent peace was a completely new construct that Augustus himself gave to the Romans. Accordingly, Rome had never enjoyed proper peace before, although increasing Roman involvement in wars in Italy and overseas during the third and second centuries BCE managed to keep actual violence away from the City.⁷ Rome's success at war was celebrated in triumphal ceremonies as well as through the waves of foreign captives who gradually poured into Italy. However, apart from the fallen on the battlefield and the difficulties of soldiers to return to civilian life after such long and continuous military campaigns, the actual experience of war for Rome's non-combatants was either physically distant or almost non-existent. Moreover, Plautus' comedies from the early second century BCE depict ridiculous and conceited soldiers whom society could mock, because they were always engaged in distant and exotic military ventures that they never stopped boasting about.⁸ Apart from a few significant examples such as the Sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 BCE, the first military defeats against Hannibal in 218–216 BCE and the Cimbrian advance into Italy in 102–101 BCE, external military threats to Rome became less frequent during the Middle and Late Republican periods. Instead, it was political dissent which raised civil strife and extreme violence to unheralded levels from the Gracchan crisis onwards.⁹ The experience of long periods of peace, tranquillity and prosperity had been erased from the memories of Romans during the

6 I. Lana, *La concezione romana della pace nel mondo antico. Antologia di testi greci e latini* (Torino 1967), 47–103; G. Woolf, 'Roman Peace', in: J. Rich & G. Shipley, ed., *War and Society in the Roman World* (London & New York 1993), 171–194, esp. 172–178; G. Sumi, 'Civil War, "Women and Spectacle in the Triumviral Period"', *Ancient World* 35 (2004), 196–199; H. Cornwell, 'Negotiating ideas of peace in the civil conflicts of the late Republic', in: P. Moloney, M.S. Williams, eds., *Peace and Reconciliation in the Classical World* (London and New York 2017), 86–101, esp. 92 ff.; J. Fletcher, 'Representations of Peace', in: S.L. Ager, ed., *A Cultural history of Peace in Antiquity* (London 2020), 89–105 and 169, esp. 99–104.

7 A. Gowing, *Empire and Memory. The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (Cambridge 2004), 132–150; K.J. Hölkenskamp, 'History and Collective Memory in the Middle Republic', in: N. Rosenstein, R. Morstein-Marx, eds., *A Companion to the Roman Republic* (London 2006), 478–495.

8 P. Cagniat, 'Le soldat et l'armée dans le théâtre de Plaute L'antimilitarisme de Plaute', *Latomus* 58, 4 (1999), 756–760; P.J. Burton, 'Warfare and Imperialism in and around Plautus', in: G.F. Franko, D. Dutsch, eds., *A companion to Plautus* (London 2020), 301–316.

9 A.W. Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome* (Oxford 1968), 175–203; F. Hinard, 'La terreur comme mode de gouvernement aux cours des Guerres Civiles du I^{er} siècle a.C.', in: G. Urso, ed., *Terror et pavor. Violenza, intimidazione e clandestinità nel mondo antico* (Pisa 2005), 247–264; N. Barrandon, *Les massacres de la République romaine*, (Paris 2018), esp. 218–224.

troubled times of the Civil Wars. As war and violence were so common in Italy for decades, the ideal of peace simply vanished.¹⁰ No one still remembered what it meant to live in peace for a long period. Gone, too, was the memory of who had been responsible for peacekeeping and restoring Rome's urban fabric, institutions, society, customs, finance, and foreign affairs. Augustus was in charge of promoting a new culture of peace, or rather of recreating it. Although a peace scenario had been formally achieved when the Civil War was finally over in 31 BCE, peacekeeping needed some more time to culturally settle in Roman society.¹¹

The Romans who lived in the last century of the Republic had no direct memories of peace, as their families had been torn apart by betrayal and proscriptions during the civil wars. Accordingly, through the perception of Augustus' political machinery the peace and quiet which was finally achieved reminded the Romans of an old time. According to the history books, in such a remote period Romans managed to survive and even to enjoy life despite the serious threats posed by their powerful neighbours. Augustus' public role as a re-founder of Rome and his use of Roman history served this very purpose. Moreover, the Augustan peace was not only related to peacekeeping in general terms but also to reconciliation. The new regime faced the challenge of reconciling a profoundly divided society through an inclusive narrative which also included peace. Augustus' main goal was thus to create an acceptable narrative of peace and reconciliation that was suitable for those who were willing to embrace a new era of social integration and change. This entire ideology was based upon the idea that tranquillity and harmony would be enduring if associated with the *princeps* and his idea of Empire.¹²

Ideally, Rome and particularly its leaders would have emerged united and strengthened from a crisis that was without precedent in history. Augustus

10 C. Walde, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*: A Specimen of a Roman "Literature of Trauma"', in: P. Asso, ed., *Brill's Companion to Lucan* (Leiden 2011), 281–302; J. Osgood, 'Ending Civil War at Rome: Rhetoric and Reality, 88 B.C.E.–197 C.E.', *American Historical Review* 120:5 (2015), 1683–1692; C. Ando, 'Law, violence of trauma in the triumviral period', in: F. Pina, ed., *The Triumviral Period: Civil War, Political Crisis and Socioeconomic Transformations* (Zaragoza 2020), 477–481.

11 Cornell, T.J., 'The end of Roman imperial expansion', in: J. Rich & G. Shipley, ed., *War and Society in the Roman World* (London & New York 1993), 139–170, esp. 160–168; J. Rich, 'Augustus, war and peace' in: L. de Blois et al. eds., *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power. Third Workshop Impact of the Roman Empire* (Amsterdam 2003), 329–357, esp. 329–342.

12 P.-M. Martin, 'La mémoire du triumvirat: entre censure, autocensure et devoir d'oubli', in: A. Coppolani, Ch.-Ph. David, J.-F. Thomas, eds., *La fabrique de la paix. Acteurs, processus, mémoires* (Université Laval 2015), 3–14.

was surrounded by politicians, historians, poets, and all sorts of writers and artists who devoted their works to constructing such a peace narrative. It was no easy task to look back through Roman history for periods of tranquillity that could include national reconciliation. For instance, the first century BCE hardly provided clear examples of consensus, since the aftermath of the Social War was often understood as a prelude to the violent conflicts that followed it. At this point, in the absence of any direct memories the narrative turned to historical *exempla* such as prominent figures who according to Roman tradition had decisively sought peace in order to keep Rome safe since foundation. It is also noteworthy that Augustus embraced the main landmarks of Rome's history and used them in a visual recreation of the tradition in the porticoes of the temple of Mars Ultor in his own forum, where the statues of the *Summi viri* were placed.¹³ According to recent archaeological research, these porticoes were larger than previously thought. The monument is believed to have consisted of over one-hundred statues, from Aeneas to Drusus, yet most of it has been lost. Only a few fragments of the inscriptions still survive.¹⁴

To a certain extent, the statues of the *summi viri* illustrated a review of Rome's history, as they were apparently displayed in chronological order from the city's foundation up to 9 BCE. As the name suggests, the selection of the most outstanding contributors to Roman history consisted entirely of men. Therefore, according to the choice of statues, those who had made Rome great through wars and battles were exclusively male.¹⁵ Both classical literature and modern scholarship, however, emphasise how involved aristocratic

13 M.B. Flory, 'Livia and the History of Public Honorific Statues for Women in Rome', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123 (1993), 287–308; T. Itgenshorst, 'Augustus und der republikanische Triumph: Triumphalfasten und summi viri-Galerie als Instrumente der imperialen Machtsicherung', *Hermes* 132:4 (2004), 436–458; A. Valentini, 'Novam in femina virtutem novo genere honoris: le statue femminili a Roma nelle strategie propagandistiche di Augusto', in: C. Antonetti, G. Masaro, A. Pistellato, *Linguaggio e comunicazione* (Padova 2011), 191–201; T. Stevenson, 'The Forum of Augustus. Reshaping collective memory about war and the state', in: M. De Marre, R.K. Bhola, eds., *Making and Unmaking ancient Memory* (London 2022), 73–94.

14 P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988), 211–215; see also, more recently J. Shaya, 'The Public Life of Monuments: the *Summi Viri* of the Forum of Augustus', *American Journal of Archaeology* 117, 1 (2013), 83–110, esp. 84–95; D. Hinz, 'Eroberung, Expansion, Erinnerung. Neue Überlegungen zu den *summi viri* des Augustusforum', *Hermes* 150:3 (2022), 307–350.

15 R.G. Cluett, 'Roman women and triumviral politics 43–37 BC', *Échos du monde classique* 42.17.1 (1998), 67–84; J.-M. Paillier, 'Des femmes dans leurs rôles: pour une relecture des guerres civiles à Rome', *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 5 (1997); F. Rohr Vio, 'Dux femina: Fulvia in armi nella polemica politica dell'età triumvirale', in: T.M. Lucchelli, F. Rohr Vio, *VIRI MILITARES. Rappresentazione e propaganda tra Repubblica e Principato*

women – *matronae* – were in mediation, seeking conciliation and concord between opponents. This task – traditionally attributed to women – became essential for reaching the consensus that was needed to understand the Principate as a new beginning. Even so, women's agency in mediation was never considered by Augustan ideology as sufficient for them to share in that same glory with men, although the former had certainly contributed to keeping the *res publica* in one piece and ultimately to the enjoyment of peace.¹⁶

It is generally agreed upon that the lack of recognition of relevant women in the Augustan forum has to do with the positions of such matrons in Roman political life as much as with the unofficial nature of their activities. The legal relegation of aristocratic women from public office meant that they also lacked any official capacity. This does not mean, however, that such women were politically inactive, but on the contrary, there is evidence to prove that they were sometimes entitled to conduct sensible assignments under the radar.¹⁷ Since Rome's early days, some women had been progressively empowered by its rulers and by Roman society itself to negotiate on their behalf, particularly when there was no alternative. Mediation was thus understood as a middle road taken to resolve conflicts with a non-confrontational approach. As a result, aristocratic women became aware of their political relevance from the Middle Republic onwards. Although matrons began to openly disagree with policies that affected wealthy women's interests such as the *Lex Oppia*, non-confrontational strategies were still followed, leading to the restoration of public concord and a widespread desire for an enduring peace. Such women were empowered to contribute to the common good by bringing about peace and reconciliation among Romans.¹⁸

Alongside the Augustan reforms that recreated an era of peace, women from the imperial household performed very similar roles in mediation as the aristocratic female agents from the monarchical and the early Republican

(Trieste 2015), 61–89; C.E. Schultz, *Fubia: playing for power at the end of Roman Republic* (Oxford 2021).

16 L. Webb, 'Female Interventions in Politics in the *libera res publica*: Structures and Practices', in: R.M. Frolov and Ch. Burden-Strevens, eds., *Leadership and Initiative in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome* (Leiden/Boston 2022), 151–188, esp. 167–174 (women's intercession).

17 P. Pavón, "*Feminae ab omnibus officiis civilibus ver publicis remotae sunt*" (D. 50.17.2, Ulp. 1 "Sab."): Ulpiano y la tradición de las mujeres', in: P. Pavón, ed., *Marginación y mujer en el imperio romano* (Roma 2018), 33–62.

18 E. Pyy, 'Sabine Successors. The failure of feminine Mediation', in *Women and war in Roman Epic* (Leiden 2020), 235–260; L. Lizazategui, 'La controverse sur l'inclusion des femmes dans le système fiscal romain pendant la République (195 av. n. è.–39 av. n. è.)', *Studia Historica. Historia antiqua* 20 (2022), 176–178.

periods.¹⁹ Their new positions and legitimation were reinforced by the exemplary historical narratives taken from the ancient literature. As there was no public exhibition of important women in Rome, historians, poets, and scholars in Augustus' inner circle recreated a gallery of women who had embraced mediation in their quest for reconciliation and peace in the past. Such narratives embellished the prominent women from the past in an epic way, providing a credible background that was based on tradition.²⁰ As a result, these women were entitled to act as non-institutional sponsors of Rome's concord, peace, and stability.²¹

2 Models of Mediation within Roman Tradition: Hersilia and the Sabine Women

As established, since peace was absent from the living memory of the Romans in the Principate, the Augustan entourage fabricated a framework of enduring peace, the model for which was taken from the history books, going back to the very origins of Rome. Such a peace model needed a narrative of consensus that was recreated from the participation of women, both those close to power and others from its outer circle. For instance, the recreation of a myth such as the rape of the Sabine women as a model of conciliation has a twofold perception. Firstly, the myth highlights the role played by Hersilia, the wife of Romulus. Secondly, she was surrounded by other women from the Roman elite, often understood as matrons who act together with the same goals despite not belonging to the inner circle of power. Furthermore, there is no indication that the female characters in the entire myth were of humble origins. In Livy's narrative, for instance, the Sabines who came to Rome on the invitation of Romulus were lodged privately, suggesting that they were wealthy women. Cicero agrees, stating that the Sabines belonged to the local

19 L. Brännstedt, *Femina princeps. Livia's position in the Roman state* (Lund 2016) 24–32; E. Hemelrijk, 'Masculinity and femininity in the *Laudatio Turiae*', *Classical Quarterly* 54:1 (2004), 81–97; J. Osgood, *Turia, A Roman woman's Civil War* (Oxford 2014), 135–150.

20 Ph. Akar, 'La Concordia dans les récits de fondation de la fin de la République romaine', *Politica antica* 1 (2014), 30–32; A.M. Keith, *Engendering Rome, Women in Roman Epic* (Cambridge 2000), 65–101; D. Morelli, 'Gli usi liviani di concordia: dall'età augustea alla Repubblica', in: A. Roncaglio, ed., *Livio Ad Urbem Condendam. Riletture del passato in età augustea* (Roma 2021), 123–133; C. Martinez, C. Ruiz, 'Entre pax y Concordia. Las mujeres y las virtudes de paz ligadas al poder en la Roma Antigua', *Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 12 (2022), 72–75.

21 The famous bronzes of Caligula portrayed his three sisters as two of these ideals (*Concordia, Securitas, and Fortuna*): *RIC* 1² Gaius/Caligula 33.

aristocracy. Moreover, the ancient sources always insist on their extraordinary beauty which ultimately would lead them to the best houses in Rome after their abduction. In fact, in Livy's *exempla* beauty was often a feature that was directly associated with women of high birth.²²

Moreover, the Sabines were suitable as an *exemplum* for both internal and external reasons. On the one hand, it was a question of seeking historical parallels to the conciliatory role that women had played since the Middle Republic, but particularly in the Triumviral era. The mere evocation of such examples served the purpose of justifying a similar position for the women from the Augustan household. On the other hand, since the beginning of the Augustan Principate the legend of the Sabine women and their role in the founding of Rome had been progressively connected with the myth of the Amazons and their role in the founding of Athens. Their association mainly came about through the iconography and visual dissemination of both episodes across Roman tradition, from the Republic and up to Late Antiquity.²³

The imagery of the Sabines in public spaces is directly related to the episode of their abduction and rape. Since this was a recurring motif in Roman *ludi*, a similar origin for both Rome and its games is generally presumed. Similarly, the iconographic dissemination of the Amazon myth turned out to be deeply rooted in Roman visual culture. The battles of the Amazons – Amazonomachy – also became a recurring motif in any kind of media, as was the abduction and rape of the Sabines.²⁴ Such motifs represented groups of captured women who suffered extreme violence and were subdued. They eventually became popular both in the decoration of the buildings where the games took place and in the shows performed in a theatrical form. Women were conceptualized as war trophies, but also as the building block of any community and ultimately of permanent peacekeeping. Moreover, in the Amazonian myth, the marriage between Theseus and the Queen of the Amazons contributed to strengthening Athens' identity, just as the marriage between Sabines and Romans encouraged the foundation of Rome. In Livy, for instance, the Sabines are depicted as an "army of women."²⁵ Therefore, the stereotypes that are often conveyed by

22 Liv., 1.9.9–11; Cic., *Rep.* 2.7. P. Keegan, *Livy's Women. Crisis, Resolution, and the Female in Rome's Foundation History* (London & New York 2021), 71–80.

23 F.C. Albertson, 'The Basilica Aemilia Frieze: Religion and Politics in Later Republican Rome', *Latomus* 49 (1990), 801–815; A. Holden, 'The Abduction of the Sabine Women in Context: The Iconography on Late Antique Contorniate Medallions', *American Journal of Archaeology* 112.1 (2008), 121–122.

24 G. Miles, 'The first Roman marriage and the theft of the Sabine women', in: R. Hexter, D. Selden, eds., *Innovations of Antiquity* (London 1992), 181–189.

25 Liv., 1.13.

the classical sources regarding men as exclusively devoted to war and women as mediators of concord do not always work.

The rape of the Sabines is most extensively reported by historians such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy.²⁶ In their narratives, women from early Rome played active roles beyond their traditional duties as mere guarantors of peace through marriage.²⁷ For the first time, Sabine women could exercise a different and active role in diplomacy, becoming mediators and ambassadors. One still wonders, however, how both historians managed to turn the literary roles that were usually conferred on the Sabines into a presence on the Roman political stage, since women only occasionally held official positions such as in embassies.²⁸ Indeed, it has not perhaps been sufficiently emphasised that unlike in magistracies there was no legal barrier that prevented women from taking part in *legationes*. According to Polybius, for instance, when Romans received foreign representatives in the senate during second century BCE, women were sometimes present among them, although nothing seems to suggest that they played leading roles, either within the embassies or during the talks.²⁹

As stated above, in Livy and Dionysius, women's positions and their role in diplomacy and peacekeeping were often connected to marriage.³⁰ However, as far as the Sabine episode is concerned, the particular case of their arrival in Rome brings us to a slightly different scenario. The repeated attempts to recover the women who had been captured by the Romans progressively increased war stress within the region. This episode of extreme violence that took place during the reign of Romulus might perhaps evoke the turmoil that was experienced by Romans during the Civil Wars, when their brutality was still fresh. As a result, Rome's mythical past served the purpose of evoking already forgotten memories of peace-making strategies. For instance, the Sabine women requested that Romulus' wife Hersilia should be their representative when

26 B. Poletti, 'The enemy's brides. Dionysius of Halicarnassus on the abduction of the Sabine women', *Histos* 15 (2021), 214–219.

27 Ph. Akar, 'Les Romains avaient-ils besoin des femmes pour établir la concorde entre eux?', in: V. Sébillotte, A. Ernout, eds., *Problèmes du genre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 2007), 250–253.

28 S.E. Smethurst, 'Women in Livy's history', *Greece & Rome*, 19:56 (1950), 83–84; R. Brown, 'Livy's Sabine Women and the Ideal of Concordia', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 125 (1995), 291–292.

29 Plb., 33.18.

30 D.H., 2.30–47, Liv., 1.1–29. Other sources: Cic., *Rep.* 2.7; 2.12–13, Ov., *Ars.* 1.34; *Fast.* 3.167–258; Plu., *Rom.* 14–20, Varro L., 6.20, Val. Max., 2.4.4, Gel., 13.23.13, Just., 43.3.2, D.C., 1.5.4–7.

they presented their case to the king, resulting in a woman at the head of a diplomatic mission for the first time in Rome's history.³¹

This peace initiative not only reveals their discomfort with such a prolonged period of war but also discloses how the Sabine women were embodied with enough legitimacy to act as mediators, although they were not allowed any official capacity.³² In particular, they claimed to be legitimate wives and mothers of many Romans through marriage. Moreover, in order to conduct their mission properly and be heard by the king, the Sabine women embraced diplomacy as their political language, which was open to female participation. In practical terms, this means that their discourse about peace and reconciliation intended to meet halfway not only those in favour of unconditional surrender but also those facing total war between the Sabines and Rome. In other words, through mediation the Sabine women also claimed their right to negotiate about controversial issues such as the integration of non-Romans in Rome, without ever questioning the legitimacy of its political system. The extreme novelty of this argument relies on the re-creation conducted by the Augustan historians of a rhetoric about peace and reconciliation whose mythical origins owed much to the unofficial position of women in diplomacy.³³

In fact, there is evidence for arguing that attributing such an almost official role to the Sabines in an exclusively female delegation reinforced the goals of their peacekeeping mission. Both Hersilia and the initially abducted Sabine women would eventually be considered as matrons who took part in the embassy. As Hersilia was Romulus' wife, her role was that of its natural leader since every delegation had to have a *princeps legationis*. As was the case with her male counterparts, she was chosen for her position, her experience, and probably for her age. In this passage there is no room for doubt that both Hersilia and her Livian character were very familiar with Roman diplomatic practices. For instance, her actions took place *precibus raptarum fatigata*, that is after exhaustingly hearing the abducted women's pleas. Livy's use of a verb such as *fatigare* is revealing since this is often the case when embassies are reported in his work. On this basis, pleas, pursuits, and supplications were common practices for foreign delegates who were willing to engage with Roman magistrates.

31 Liv., 1.11. See, R.M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy. Books I–V* (Oxford 1965), 73–75.

32 K. Mustakallio, 'Legendary women and Female Group in Livy', in: L. Savunen, P. Setälä, eds., *Female Networks and the Public Sphere in Roman Society* (Helsinki 1999), 55–58.

33 Brown 1995, op. cit. (n. 28), 306–310; L. Landolfi, '*Consilium vobis forte piumque* (Ov. Fast. III 21.2). Ersilia, le Sabine e le risorse della diplomazia femminile', *Hormos. Ricerche di Storia Antica* 1 (2008/2009), 157–162.

Hersilia's speech draws particular attention to a pardon that was requested for the Sabines' relatives and to the concord that was the ultimate goal for any delegation.³⁴ Pleading for *clementia* from the Romans also turned out to be usual procedure for foreign embassies that aimed at talking to their counterparts. As might be expected, showing mercy was the main feature that was attributed to any Roman *imperator*, and needless to say to Romulus as well, while Hersilia pleaded for concord. More illuminating is the fact that according to Dionysius it was Hersilia herself who dispatched the Sabine women as members of a diplomatic mission on behalf of their husbands, acknowledging both the position and activities of Romulus' wife.³⁵ While the Sabine women are specifically called *presbeutai* (= ambassadors), Hersilia's leading role within the delegation is particularly emphasised in Dionysius' narrative when she was made the main person responsible for achieving reconciliation.³⁶

When the delegation of Sabine women was created, selecting the right moment to put forward their claim was Hersilia's own choice, as she was its natural leader. Since this was normal procedure for all embassies that arrived in Rome later than February every year, Hersilia chose a date that coincided with her husband's celebration of a double victory. In the narrative of this episode, the rest of the delegation adopted a typically supplicant gesture, a commonplace in the ancient sources when foreign ambassadors sought Rome's allegiance and protection, or they simply exhibited their loyalty before Roman officials. When foreign embassies were summoned before the Roman senate, a formal speech full of diplomatic rhetoric was often delivered.³⁷ Similarly, in the Sabine delegation, the speech focused on soliciting pardon for the enemies and granting them citizenship with the aim of achieving reconciliation.

34 Liv., 1.11.2–3: "They were therefore routed at the first charge and shout, and their town was taken. As Romulus was exulting in his double victory, his wife Hersilia, beset with entreaties by the captive women (*precibus raptarum fatigata*), begged him to forgive their parents and receive them into the state; which would, in that case, gain in strength by harmony. He readily granted her request". (transl. Loeb Classical Library, Forster 1919).

35 T.P. Wiseman, 'The wife and children of Romulus', *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983), 445–452.

36 D. H., 3.1. Brown 1995, op. cit. (n. 28) 300–303; Poletti 2021, op. cit. (n. 26) 224–228.

37 M. Bonnefond-Coudry, 'La loi Gabinia sur les ambassades', in: C. Nicolet, *Des ordres à Rome* (Paris 1982), 61–92; J.-L. Ferrary, 'Les ambassadeurs grec au Sénat romain', in: M. Sot, eds., *L'audience: rituels et cadres spatiaux dans l'Antiquité et le Haut Moyen Âge* (Paris 2007) 113–122; F. Battistoni, 'Une diplomatie informelle ? Quelques remarques sur les affaires des ambassadeurs grecs à Rome', in: B. Grass, Gh. Stouder, eds., *La diplomatie romaine sous la République: réflexions sur une pratique. Actes des rencontres de Paris (21–22 juin 2013) et Genève (31 octobre–1^{er} novembre 2013)* (Besançon 2015), 176–184; J.F. Claudon, 'Les ambassadeurs des cités d'Asie mineure envoyés à Rome', in: B. Grass, Gh. Stouder, eds., 127–138.

Later versions of this episode which are preserved in sources from the second century CE onwards portray Hersilia as a supplicant, emphasizing that her plea was an ultimate plea for peace.³⁸ As a result, according to both Livy and Dionysius, the diplomatic rhetoric of the Sabine women in front of men from their families was eventually successful.

The setting for this *legatio* was the battlefield itself, where the Sabines physically intervened between the armies of the two contenders. This was a literary recreation of the usual presentation of embassies before the Roman senate, placing the Sabine women in the political heart of the City. Their initiative was finally rewarded, as it resulted in a treaty (*foedus*), which led to peace, concord and reconciliation between the Sabines and the Romans. From that moment onwards, the peace-making mission led by the Sabine women remained in Rome's social memory as an integral part of its legendary foundation myths. Hence, the Augustan Age's recreation of an ideal state of peacekeeping from early Rome necessarily pointed to the Sabine episode.³⁹

3 Women's Peace

As seen above, the historical account of the Sabines reinforced the idea that women's role as mediators had been essential to achieving peace in early Rome and throughout its long history. Mediation thus became one of the traditional avenues for their unofficial participation in Roman politics as shown by women from the *domus Augusta*. The historical reasoning behind their efforts in securing *concordia* and the survival of the Empire was widely displayed in the visual imagery of the City in the Augustan Age. The *Ara Pacis* was a monument dedicated to worshipping peace in Rome but showed a genuinely distinct approach to celebrating peace.⁴⁰ In the visual narrative of the *Ara Pacis*, peace was not associated with men alone, but with the imperial family as a whole. Obviously, the political and military leadership of the Empire continued to be men's jobs, although women played an essential role in perpetuating

38 Gel., II.

39 D.H., 2.45.1–46.1, Liv., 1.13.1–2.

40 A. Momigliano, 'The Peace of the *Ara Pacis*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5:1 (1942), 228; S. Weinstock, 'Pax and the *Ara Pacis*', *Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960), 44–58; R. Billows, 'The Religious Procession of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*: Augustus *supplicatio* in 13 BC', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 6 (1993), 80–92; D.T. Ionescu, 'The *Ara Pacis Augustae* and the *Campus Martius*: Peace and War, Antinomic or Complementary Realities in the Roman World', in: K. Ulanowski, ed., *The Religious Aspects of War in the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome* (Leiden 2016), 305–357, esp. 350–355.

the dynasty. They also contributed to the renewed representation of power in Rome which was based on an empowered single family. In this 'domestic' agenda, which was majestically portrayed in the altar of peace, women of the imperial household acquired central roles when their traditional management function of the *domus* was extended to their public presence alongside the *princeps*.⁴¹ Accordingly, it was not only Augustus but also his entire family who ruled the new Roman Empire and who guaranteed perpetual peace to everyone.⁴²

The iconography of the *Ara Pacis* was linked to the new visual language displayed in most public monuments from the Augustan Age. Such imagery conveyed an ulterior message: men and women from the imperial household were closely associated with the narrative of the Augustan peace. To be more precise, by depicting the procession of the imperial family on the reliefs of the altar, the active involvement of Augustus' own family in achieving that same peace is implied.⁴³ In monumental terms, moreover, this message was displayed in the Roman public space, and particularly in the Temple of Concordia, which was now politically attributed to and represented by the imperial family itself.⁴⁴ Worshipping Concordia as an extension of the imperial household even impacted foreign policy, since it was not uncommon for diplomatic relations to be established through the females of the Augustan family, particularly with their counterparts from the Eastern Hellenistic dynasties. We know, for instance, that Queen Dynamis of Bosphorus was on friendly terms with both Augustus and Livia Drusilla. Dynamis, a true client queen, raised statues to Augustus at Panticapeum and Phanagoria,⁴⁵ where he also dedicated a statue

41 M. Corbier, 'Poder e parentesco: a familia Julio-Cláudia', *Revista Classica* (1992/1993), 167-203; L. Foubert, 'The Palatine dwelling of the *mater familias*: houses as symbolic space in the Julio-Claudian period', *Klio* 92,1 (2010), 69-73; A. Tamanini, 'Domus Liviae: familia, gênero e identidade na gens imperial', *Ágora. Estudos Clássicos em Debate* 17 (2015) 215-228; H. Fertik, *The Ruler's House. Contesting Power and Privacy in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Baltimore 2019), 39-59; R. Cortés, 'Espacios de poder de las mujeres en Roma', in: J.M. Nieto, ed., *Estudios sobre la mujer en la cultura griega y latina [XVIII Jornadas de Filología Clásica de Castilla y León]* (Valladolid 2005), 198-199.

42 Zanker 1988, op. cit. (n. 14), 172-179; M.J. Hidalgo de la Vega, 'Esposas, hijas y madres imperiales: el poder de la legitimidad dinástica', *Latomus* 62 (2003), 47-72; F. Cenerini, 'Il ruolo delle donne nell'linguaggio del potere di Augusto', *Paideia* 68 (2013), 105-129.

43 The *Ara Pacis*, Augustus' altar to peace, was dedicated on Livia's birthday - the actual date of her birth, January 30th.

44 M. Boudreau Flory, 'Sic exempla parantur: Livia's shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae', *Historia* 33 (1984), 309-30.

45 *IGRom* 1.902. *IGRom* 901; 1.875. A. Coskun, G. Stern, 'Queen Dynamis and Prince Aspurgos in Rome? Revisiting the South-Frieze of the Ara Pacis Augustae (139 BC)', in: A. Coskun, ed, *Ethnic Constructs, Royal Dynasties and Historical Geography around the Black Sea*

to his wife in 9–8 BCE. The latter was kept in the Temple of Aphrodite, and its inscription specifically describes Livia as a benefactor. This probably indicates that she was acknowledged as someone who was worth talking to.⁴⁶

The primary function originally attributed to women in Roman diplomacy was their involvement in arranged marriages. The women of the Augustan household were no exception in this regard. As an illustration, the marriage between Cleopatra Selene – the daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII, and raised by Octavia herself – and King Juba of Mauretania was primarily aimed to forge an alliance with a client king, and as such bring about regional stability. Such actions showed the new positions that were reached by women close to power which clearly surpassed the roles played by the wives of Roman magistrates during the Middle Republic. For the latter, it was sufficient to project the fame and pride of their families through the achievements and opulence of their most distinguished family members and especially through the public display of their riches and their best clothing, which was similar to that regularly worn by senators and the male ruling classes.⁴⁷

Paradoxically, women became representatives of their family's triumphs and dignity which they were associated with, despite having not directly performed in any of the military or political actions that were celebrated. However, this conferred very symbolic roles on women from the highest social echelons, in addition to political capital for either legitimising or sanctioning male members of their family, if need be. This growing political capital undoubtedly helped to create an area of influence for women that was close to official representation. Accordingly, these women contributed to creating negotiation and mediation channels. Although they did not ever question the legitimacy of the (male) official political system, proposing alternatives and promoting mediation in social conflicts and internal power struggles were now feasible options.⁴⁸

Littoral (Memmingen 2021), 216–225; J. Wilker, 'Sociae et amicae populi Romani: Women and the Institution of Client Kingship', in: H. Cornwell, G. Woolf, eds., *Gendering Roman Imperialism* (Leiden 2022), 165–184.

46 *IGR* I, 875, 901, 902 Λιουίαν τήν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ γυναίκα | [[β]ασίλισσα] Δύναμις φιλορώμαιος | [τήν ἑαυ]τήσ εὐεργέτην Livia, the wife of the August, | Queen Dynamis philoromaïos | to her benefactress.

47 D.W. Roller, *Cleopatra's Daughter and other Royal Women of the Augustan Era* (Oxford 2018), 33–44; A.C. Harders, 'An imperial family man: Augustus as surrogate father to Marcus Antonius' children', in: S. Hübner, D.M. Ratzan, eds., *Growing up Fatherless in Antiquity* (Cambridge 2009), 217–240, esp. 231–235.

48 M. White Singer, 'Octavia's Mediation at Tarentum', *The Classical Journal* 43, 3 (Dec. 1947), 173–178; J. Dangel, 'Les femmes et la violence dans le *Bellum Civile* de Lucain: Écriture symbolique des deviances de l'histoire', in: Deviller & Franchet d'Espèrey, eds., *Lucain en débat*

In order to secure its legitimacy, the narrative of the Augustan Age needed to be associated with Rome's collective mind. This was often accomplished when remarkable historical figures and role models were identified and vindicated. As an illustration, the leading women from the Augustan household were re-enacting actions that had been attributed to any women close to power since the foundation of Rome itself. In these accounts, for instance in Livy's first pentad, top women had already promoted peace and reconciliation as the mothers, wives, and daughters of those men who were currently in office or in command of the armies.⁴⁹ The message was clear: such women encouraged reconciliation through the legitimacy that was conferred on them by their role as wives and mothers, but they had no clear institutional status. In fact, some of the issues that were raised by Augustus' own constitutional position also extended to the women from his family. Securing concord and peace among the Roman aristocracy had been the rule to follow for women from the ruling classes in Roman history. Although this goal remained unchanged under the Julio-Claudians, a progressive 'institutionalisation' of such top women's roles was underway. Since they could not hold public office, women's contributions to the common good and to the management of the Empire needed to take place unofficially.⁵⁰ To channel such unofficial messages in favour of peace and concord, the most appropriate approach was probably to make use of institutional wording that was already in use in regular diplomatic channels. Women could be thus heard politically. Their opinions about issues such as the management of the Empire carried some weight, but they did not always agree with their male counterparts, particularly when peacekeeping was at risk.

The recreation of the history of Rome with the aim of contributing to the idea of its re-foundation was always present in historians and writers from the Augustan Age onwards. Both Virgil's *Aeneid* and Livy's *History* give names to a large number of women who were involved in the foundation of the city. In the *Aeneid*, for instance, they are first introduced in a war context as the archetype of the female warrior represented by Camilla the Amazon. Secondly, in diplomacy women serve the purpose of securing agreements between polities.

(Bordeaux 2010), 91–104; G.A. Vivas, 'Mucia Tercia: Matróna romana, mediadora política. Un estado de la cuestión', *Fortunatae* 29 (2019), 169–171.

49 Liv., 1.13.

50 L. Foubert, *Women going Public: ideals and Conflicts in the representation of Julio-Claudian women* (Nijmegen, 2010), 72–96; M. Corbier, 'Male power and legitimacy through women: the domus Augusta under the Julio-Claudians', in: B. Levick, R. Hawley, eds., *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (London & New York 1995), 178–193; F. Cenerini, 'Julio-Claudian imperial Women', in: E.D. Carney, S. Müller, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Women and Monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (London 2020), 399–410.

As a result, women were understood as symbols of peace by promoting unity and progeny. That is at least Lavinia's goal in this poem, as she was King Latium's daughter. Although all such women were clichés at the service of the classical literature, it cannot be denied that they probably reflect daily practices in several periods of Roman history as well.⁵¹

In Livy's historical narrative, women are not particularly associated with the military scenario but with diplomacy. In addition to their traditional functions as guarantors of peace through marriage alliances, women also play a relevant role here in mediation, as they aim to achieve reconciliation and concord.⁵² According to Livy's account of Rome's foundation, individuals are committed to responding collectively to their challenges in order to create a united community, choosing concord over initiatives of discord. For instance, Livy's first book fully discusses how to address concord and reconciliation with the aim of achieving a peaceful community. Perhaps not surprisingly, when in Livy's narrative mediators are needed to reach reconciliation, such roles are mainly played by female characters.⁵³

4 Conclusion

No one will deny that the Principate meant an overall rearrangement of the Roman traditional power structures, particularly for the political and social actors who needed to relate themselves to the new regime after surviving the bloodshed of the civil wars. Through tradition and custom, some wealthy women deserved social appreciation for their discreet involvement in certain activities which also contributed to the stability and survival of Rome. The new political and diplomatic visibility shown by the women from the

51 A. Keith, 'Women's Networks in Vergil's *Aeneid*', *Dyctinna* 3 (2006) 1–14; A. Sharrock, 'Warrior women in Roman epic', in: J. Fabre-Serris, A. Keith, eds., *Women and war in Antiquity* (Baltimore 2015), 150–173; K.R. De Boer, 'Arms and the Woman: Discourses of Militancy and Motherhood in Vergil's *Aeneid*', *Arethusa* 52:2 (2019), 132–134.

52 Poletti 2021, op. cit. (n. 26), 214–218; D. Arya, 'Il ratto delle Sabine e la guerra romano-sabina', in: A. Carandini, R. Cappelli, eds., *Roma: Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città* (Milano 2000), 302–306.

53 T.J. Luce, 'The dating of Livy's first decade', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), 209–240; L.J. Piper, 'Livy's portrayal of early Roman women', *The Classical Bulletin* 48 (1971), 26–28; D. Konstan, 'Ideology and narrative in Livy. Book I', *Classical Antiquity* 5 (1986), 197–215; J.M. Claassen, 'The familiar other: the pivotal role of Women in Livy's narrative of political development in early Rome', *Acta Classica* 41 (1998), 83–85; T. Stevenson, 'Women of early Rome as *Exempla* in Livy, *Ab Urbe condita*, Book I', *The Classical World* 104:2 (2011), 177–179.

Augustan household somehow echoed the position progressively acquired by the *matronae* since the beginning of Rome's history. Although female mediation became a new resource at the disposal of such influential women who successfully used it, this was hardly an invention from the Augustan Age, but a reinvention mostly based upon tradition.

Behind Livy's and Dionysius' historical recreation of one of Rome's founding myths – the abduction of the Sabine women – lay historical legitimacy on the new role performed by top women from the Augustan household. Since attributing any institutional role to the Sabine women was not appropriate, their "official" position as mediators resembled regular diplomatic practice. Such influential women were able to position themselves in politics as representatives of an alternative to either confrontation or submission. Such a third party called for negotiation in order to achieve reconciliation. When the *exemplum* of the Sabines was successfully recreated through history books and the iconography from the Augustan Age, women from the imperial household stood up for the rhetoric of peace and concord in Rome. Interestingly, their discourse supplemented but never questioned the official *Pax Augusta*, advocating instead non-confrontational approaches, whenever it was applicable.

Republican Traditions, Imperial Innovations

The Representation of the Military Prowess of Augustus' Family

Florian Groll

1 Introduction

There is no doubt that the age of Augustus was a time of major political and cultural changes for the Roman world, ultimately bringing about a new order which we now refer to as the Principate. However, it is difficult to assess to what extent Augustus adhered to Republican traditions, practices, and values in this transformational process. Some researchers argue that the *princeps* was fluid in this respect, such as A. Wallace-Hadrill who claims that Augustus' ability to present "radical change as 'return to tradition' was enormous"¹ or F. Hickson, who interprets Augustus' triumphal policy as a "manipulation" of this ancient ritual.² Against such conceptions, O. Hekster pointed out the limitations that inherited practices and norms imposed on Augustus' policies and self-representation, for example concerning his *cognomen* for which the name Romulus seems to have been forbidden by Republican tradition.³ Similarly, K. Galinsky stresses that Republican tradition set a relatively narrow framework for the *princeps*, who transformed the old political system only gradually, as Augustus' reorganization of Rome's corn supply suggests.⁴

This paper aims to contribute to this ongoing discussion by analysing an aspect of Augustan culture that has been neglected in this context, so far: the public representation of Augustus' family. During the Republic, Roman

¹ A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's cultural revolution* (Cambridge 2008), 239.

² F.V. Hickson, 'Augustus triumphator: Manipulation of the triumphal theme in the political program of Augustus', *Latomus* 50:4 (1991), 124–138; for this line of argumentation which concedes Augustus a significant ability to change or use existing traditions for his purposes, see also G. Alföldy, 'Augustus und die Inschriften: Tradition und Innovation. Die Geburt der imperialen Epigraphik', *Gymnasium* 98 (1991), 289–324. For a critical overview of the research, see O. Hekster, 'Identifying tradition. Augustus and the constraint of formulating sole rule', *Politica Antica* 7 (2017), 47–60 (here: 49f.).

³ Hekster 2017, op. cit. (no. 2).

⁴ K. Galinsky, *Augustan culture. An interpretive introduction* (Princeton/Chichester 1996), 363–370; see also W. Eder, 'Augustus and the power of tradition', in: K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2005), 13–33.

aristocratic families had developed several modes to emphasize their achievements for the *res publica*, especially their victories on the battlefield, across different media. On the one hand, such strategies of familial self-advertisement were one way to compete in the inner-aristocratic power struggle. On the other hand (and perhaps more importantly), they also helped to justify the Roman elite's pre-eminence towards the wider public, thus contributing to the maintenance of the traditional Republican structure of power.⁵ Before and especially after Augustus' victory at Actium in 31 BCE, his family's military prowess was advertised across different media: a strategy that facilitated the continuation of the Principate within the *domus Augusta*.⁶ But did Augustus use the same means of representation as the Republican *gentes* to stabilize his power or did the fundamental change that Caesar's heir brought to Rome also necessitate new strategies to present familial victory? In the following analysis, I aim to answer these questions arguing that while Octavian/Augustus predominantly followed Republican strategies to advertise his family's military prowess, the later Augustan age from around 10 BCE on witnessed two important innovations in this field, which allow an interesting glimpse into the changing power structures of this period. The analysis of the sources is therefore divided into two sub-chapters, the first one taking into account Octavian's self-representation during the civil wars and the first half of his Principate, the second one focusing solely on the late-Augustan age. To contextualize the public image of Augustus' family, it is, however, first necessary to give an overview of the means employed by Republican *gentes* to celebrate their military glory.

2 Representing (Familial) Victory in the Republic

Recent scholarship has identified several modes through which the Republican *gentes* propagated their military exploits. One important strategy was edificial continuity. By this term, I refer to the phenomenon in which some Roman

5 On the self-representation of the great Republican *gentes* and its importance for the stability of Rome's political and social structure, see K.-J. Hölkeskamp, *Rekonstruktionen einer Republik. Die politische Kultur des antiken Rom und die Forschung der letzten Jahrzehnte* (Munich 2004), 97–103; U. Walter, *Memoria und res publica. Zur Geschichtskultur im republikanischen Rom* (Frankfurt am Main 2004), 84–130; H. Beck, 'Die Rolle des Adelligen. Prominenz und aristokratische Herrschaft in der römischen Republik', in: H. Beck et al., ed., *Die Macht der Wenigen. Aristokratische Herrschaftspraxis, Kommunikation und ‚edler‘ Lebensstil in Antike und Früher Neuzeit* (Munich 2008), 101–123 (here: 111–113).

6 See F. Groll, *Sieg und Familie im frühen Prinzipat. Eine Studie zur militärischen Repräsentation der Verwandten des Augustus* (forthcoming).

aristocrats conducted building projects in places that already commemorated the military success of one of their ancestors. In doing so, these descendants put themselves in the tradition of their victorious ancestors, implying that they inherited and continued their family's military prowess.⁷ A good example of this phenomenon is the *fornix Fabianus*. Q. Fabius Maximus erected this arch on the *Forum Romanum* to commemorate his victory against the Allobroges, for which he had also celebrated a triumph in 120 BCE. Several decades later, in 57 BCE, his grandson and namesake Q. Fabius Maximus renovated the arch during his aedileship. Interestingly, Fabius Maximus did not only establish a link to his grandfather through this measure but also to P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus and L. Aemilius Paullus, two remote relatives of his, who received inscriptions mentioning their triumphs.⁸ Another example of edificial continuity is the temple of Honos and Virtus near the *Porta Capena*. Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the conqueror of Syracuse, renovated this monument and exhibited many works of art from the defeated city there. Later, his grandson of the same name put up statues of himself, his father, and his grandfather in the building. This younger Marcellus also left an inscription there which celebrated the fact that, cumulatively, the three relatives had held nine consulships. By erecting this statuary monument, Marcellus created the impression of a successful family tradition that manifested itself both in military deeds, such as his grandfather's victory over Syracuse, and in important political achievements like the three men's nine consulships.⁹

Another important way of advertising familial victory can be found in the numismatic evidence. Many young aristocrats held the office of *tresvir monetalis*. The *tresviri monetales*, the moneyers in Republican Rome, were responsible for the emission and design of Roman coins. In our context, the moneyers are interesting because they often used their office to advertise their family's military achievements.¹⁰ The best-known examples of this phenomenon are the coins minted by several Caecilii Metelli in the second and first century BCE to commemorate their ancestor L. Caecilius Metellus. This man had celebrated

7 See e.g. H.I. Flower, *Ancestor masks and aristocratic power in Roman culture* (Oxford 1996), 71–76; T. Itgenshorst, *Tota illa pompa. Der Triumph in der römischen Republik* (Göttingen 2005), 126–132 who distinguishes between edificial continuity in one place (“Kontinuität am Ort”; e.g. the Capitolium) and one building (e.g. the *fornix Fabianus*).

8 On the *fornix Fabianus*, see Itgenshorst 2005, op. cit. (n. 7), 130–132; K.-J. Hölkeskamp, ‘Mythen, Monumente und die Multimedialität der memoria: die “corporate identity” der gens Fabia’, *Klio* 100:3 (2018), 731–733.

9 Flower 1996, op. cit. (n. 7), 71f.; K.-J. Hölkeskamp, *Roman Republican reflections. Studies in politics, power, and pageantry* (Stuttgart 2020), 106–108.

10 On the phenomenon of Republican ancestral coins, see Flower 1996, op. cit. (n. 7), 79–86 and Itgenshorst 2005, op. cit. (n. 7), 133–142.

a triumph over the Carthaginians in 250 BCE during which he had probably shown captured elephants. The elephants became a symbol of this victory, and Metellus' descendants used them in numerous emissions. T. Itgenshorst even spoke of the elephant as a "family crest" of the Caecilii Metelli.¹¹

Furthermore, two important Roman rituals could also serve to advertise a family's victories. The first one was the *pompa funebris* in which actors would wear face masks representing the deceased's ancestors. If an ancestor had celebrated a triumph, the actor impersonating him could be dressed in triumphal garb which made him a visual reminder of the family's military record.¹² Another possibility to represent a family's victoriousness during funerals was offered by the *laudationes* which praised the achievements of the deceased's ancestors.¹³ The importance of military glory in these speeches can be inferred from Cicero's complaint in his *Brutus* that the *laudationes* often contained *falsi triumphi* which were likely intended to bolster a family's prestige artificially.¹⁴

The triumph itself was also used for familial purposes. There are a few passages in Appian, Livy, and others that suggest that Roman triumphators could display their children or other young relatives during the procession.¹⁵ Livy is particularly illuminating here because he reports that Lucius Aemilius Paullus' young sons could not take part in his triumph in 167 BCE and were therefore not able to set themselves the goal to celebrate a triumph on their own.¹⁶ According to Livy, the participation in their older relative's triumph was supposed to spurn the younger aristocrats to accumulate comparable military glory.¹⁷

11 Itgenshorst 2005, op. cit. (n. 7), 133–135: "Familienwappen".

12 Pol., 6.53.7; see E. Flaig, 'Die Pompa Funebris. Adlige Konkurrenz und annalistische Erinnerung in der Römischen Republik', in: O.G. Oexle, ed., *Memoria und Kultur* (Göttingen 1995), 115–148; Flower 1996, op. cit. (n. 7), 91–127; K.-J. Hölkeskamp, 'Hierarchie und Konsens. Pompae in der politischen Kultur der römischen Republik', in: A.H. Arweiler, B.M. Gauly, ed., *Machtfragen. Zur kulturellen Repräsentation und Konstruktion von Macht in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Stuttgart 2008), 79–126 (here: 104–107).

13 Flower 1996, op. cit. (n. 7), 128–150; Hölkeskamp 2008, op. cit. (n. 12), 105f.

14 Cic., *Brut.* 62; see R.T. Ridley, 'Falsi triumphi, plures consulatus', *Latomus* 42:2 (1983), 372–382; Flaig 1995, op. cit. (n. 12), 135f.; Walter 2004, op. cit. (n. 5), 105f.

15 See the following list compiled by M.B. Flory, 'The integration of women into the Roman triumph', *Historia* 47:4 (1998), 489–494; App., *Lib.* 66; Liv., 45.40.4; 45.40.7–8, Val. Max., 5.7.1, Cic., *Mur.* 5, *FGrH* 90 F 127.8; on the participation of a general's younger relatives in his triumph, see also M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge/London 2007), 224f.

16 Liv., 45.40.7–8.

17 Beard 2007, op. cit. (n. 15), 224.

Despite this last example, we can conclude that Republican aristocrats mainly used their ancestors' achievements to advertise their family's prowess. They put themselves in the tradition of their victorious older relatives to indicate that comparable successes could be expected from themselves as well. In addition, triumphs offered a chance to propagate younger family members as prospective military leaders, but this aspect seems rather marginal compared to the clear emphasis on the ancestors in our sources.

3 The Representation of the Victories of Augustus' Family until the Late Augustan Period (ca. 10 BC)

In the first half of Augustus' political career, up to around 10 BCE, he mainly seems to have used conventional strategies to advertise his family's prowess. For example, in the 30s and 20s BCE, Octavian contributed to two victory monuments that had been initiated by ancestors of his. The first monument, the *Forum Iulium*, commemorated the military prowess of Julius Caesar, Octavian/Augustus' adoptive father.¹⁸ After the dictator's death, Octavian continued building there¹⁹ and in connection with his triple triumph of 29 BCE, he dedicated a golden statue depicting Cleopatra from his Egyptian spoils in the temple, thus linking his own victory to his adoptive father's military glory.²⁰ Caesar aside, Octavian also made use of a second ancestor, Cnaeus Octavius, who had achieved a naval victory against king Perseus in 168 BCE. In commemoration of this success, Cnaeus Octavius had the *Porticus Octavia* erected

18 See R. Westall, 'The Forum Iulium as representation of Imperator Caesar', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 103 (1996), 83–118 (here: 87f.) and Groll (forthcoming), op. cit. (no. 6).

19 A. Delfino, *Forum Iulium. L'area del Foro di Cesare alla luce delle campagne di scavo 2005–2008. Le fasi arcaica, repubblicana e cesariano-augustea* (Oxford 2014), 5 and 183–225.

20 Cass. Dio, 51.22.3, cf. App., *Civ.* 2.102.10–12 who is probably wrong when he attributes the dedication to Iulius Caesar and not, as Dio implies, to Octavianus. It is hard to see how the statue of Cleopatra could have survived the last years of the Roman civil wars when the conflict between Octavian on the one side and Marc Antony and the Egyptian queen on the other reached its climax. See S. Pfeiffer, 'Octavian-Augustus und Ägypten', in: A. Coşkun et al., ed., *Repräsentation von Identität und Zugehörigkeit im Osten der griechisch-römischen Welt. Aspekte ihrer Repräsentation in Städten, Provinzen und Reichen* (Frankfurt am Main 2010), 55–79 (here: 63); for more arguments supporting the thesis that Octavian and not Iulius Caesar set up the statue, see Westall 1996, op. cit. (no. 18), 106f.

in the *Circus Flaminius*.²¹ Appian reports that in 33 BCE Octavian set up lost Roman military standards which he had recovered during his Illyrian campaigns (35/34 BCE) in his ancestor's *porticus*.²² Similar to Claudius Marcellus and his dedication in the temple of Honos and Virtus, Octavian used the addition of the military standards to the *Porticus Octavia* to establish himself in the direct lineage of his victorious ancestor.

Compared to these monuments, the numismatic evidence is less clear. There seems to be no coin that makes a clear reference to a victory of one of Augustus' ancestors, just as the coins of the Claudii Metelli advertised their ancestor's victory. The only coin making a slight reference to the military prowess of Augustus' family is a denarius, which dates to the time between circa 32 and 29 BCE.²³ On the reverse, the coin shows the goddess Venus with military equipment and the legend CAESAR DIVI F referring to Octavian's descentance from Julius Caesar. The coin implies that Venus, the *gens Iulia's* mythical ancestress, supported her descendant Octavian just as much as she had supported his deified adoptive father,²⁴ who had celebrated the goddess as a guarantor of his victories in the *Forum Iulium*.²⁵ Apart from Octavian's claim to divine ancestry, the coin also evokes his adoptive uncle's military prowess implying that his heir inherited the same quality and Venus' divine support in his military undertakings.

Furthermore, Octavian also advertised his family in his triple triumph of the year 29 BCE. In his biography of Tiberius, Suetonius reports that Augustus' triumphal *quadriga* was accompanied by his nephew Marcellus and his stepson Tiberius, the future *princeps*.²⁶ As we have seen earlier, the participation of younger family members in a triumph had already been practiced in Republican triumphs. During his triumphal procession, Octavian thus followed Republican precedents for advertising family members, which are also never perceived as transgressional in our sources.²⁷ Right after the parade,

21 On this monument, see L. Richardson, 'The evolution of the Porticus Octaviae', *American Journal of Archaeology* 80:1 (1976), 57–64; A. Viscogliosi, s.v. 'Porticus Octavia', in: E.M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon topographicum Urbis Romae. Volume Quarto* (Rome 1999), 139–141; J. Albers, *Campus Martius. Die urbane Entwicklung des Marsfeldes von der Republik bis zur mittleren Kaiserzeit* (Wiesbaden 2013), 261f.

22 App., *Ill.* 28.

23 *RIC I² Augustus*, 250a, 250b.

24 P. Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (Munich 1987), 61.

25 C. Meier, *Caesar* (Munich 2018), 526 and Groll (forthcoming), op. cit. (no. 6).

26 Suet., *Tib.* 6.4.

27 *Contra* H. Brandt, 'Marcellus «successioni praeparatus»? Augustus, Marcellus und die Jahre 29–23 v. Chr.', in: *Chiron* 25 (1995), 1–17 (here: 6).

however, Octavian's stepson Tiberius appeared in a new, unconventional role, as Suetonius continues to inform us:

Praesedit et asticis ludis et Troiam circensibus lusit ductor turmae puerorum maiorum.

He [Tiberius, F.G.] presided, too, at the city festival, and took part in the game of Troy during the performances in the circus, leading the band of older boys.²⁸

I am not aware of any source claiming that a triumphator's relative took part in games and other performances in conjunction with the celebration, before Octavian's triumph of 29 BCE. It appears that Tiberius' participation in the city festival and especially his leading role in the game of Troy, which offered young Roman nobles an opportunity to demonstrate their equestrian skills,²⁹ were good possibilities to present Octavian's stepson in a military setting, possibly for the first time in his life.

In this context, it is interesting to note that Cassius Dio mentions that around the time of his triple triumph, Octavian distributed money to the Roman children "because of his nephew Marcellus" (διὰ τὸν Μάρκελλον τὸν ἀδελφιδοῦν).³⁰ Again, while donations of money are frequently attested for Republican triumphators,³¹ the sources do not report a single occasion in which the coins were distributed in the name of a triumphator's relative. Hence, two different sources, Suetonius and Cassius Dio, indicate that Tiberius and Marcellus played a role in connection with Octavian's triple triumph of 29 BCE which went beyond Republican practice. Considering that Octavian was not necessarily obligated to integrate Tiberius and Marcellus, who were not even his biological sons, into his self-representation, it appears likely that he had the clear intention to give his victories a special familial quality. The public of Rome

28 Suet., *Tib.* 6.4. All quotations and translations of Suetonius' biographical work used in this paper are based on J.C. Rolfe, ed./trans.: *Suetonius*. 2 vol. (Cambridge/London 1913/1914).

29 On the game of Troy, see G. Pfister, *Die Erneuerung der römischen iuventus durch Augustus* (Bochum 1977), 24–32 and S. Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-claudiens* (Rome 1988), 247–250.

30 Cass. Dio, 51.21.3. All quotations and translations of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* used in this paper are based on C. Earnest, ed./trans.: *Dio's Roman History*. 9 vol. (Cambridge/London 1914–1927).

31 L. Kainz, 'Sonderzahlungen in der Antike von Alexander bis Maximinus Thrax', in: H. Müller, ed., *1000 & 1 Talente. Visualisierung antiker Kriegskosten. Begleitband zu einer studentischen Ausstellung* (Gutenberg 2009), 49–72 (here: 57–62).

could see that Octavian had two promising relatives who might achieve successes like those of the new most powerful man of the Empire.

4 The Late Augustan Period

In comparison with the time before Actium and the early years of Augustus' Principate, the first thing that stands out when looking at the last 20–30 years of the *princeps'* life is that there is less evidence for references to Iulius Caesar and any other of Augustus' ancestors.³² This does not necessarily mean that the *princeps'* ancestors had ceased playing a role in the advertisement of his family's prowess. For example, it is well known that Augustus set up statues of his ancestors and other nobles of the Roman past in the porticoes on the long sides of the *Forum Augustum*, some of which wore the triumphal garb, according to Suetonius.³³ Moreover, we can also assume that the ancestors of the *domus Augusta* were habitually commemorated during the funeral processions of Drusus maior, Lucius Caesar, and Gaius Caesar. The evidence for these occasions is scarce, but at least Tacitus explicitly mentions that *imagines* of Claudian and even Julian ancestors were displayed during Drusus maior's funeral.³⁴

While the evidence for traditional references to ancestors remains meagre in the second half of Augustus' Principate, there were two interesting innovations in three of his family's victory celebrations in this period. In what follows, I analyse these new elements and show how they might be related to the special political circumstances of the later Augustan age. Before this, it is, however, important to point out that each of the three late Augustan victory celebrations to be analysed here is preserved in only one account. Two of them – Tiberius' *ovatio* of 9 BCE and his triumph of 7 BCE – are recounted by Cassius Dio,³⁵ whereas Suetonius is our sole source for the events at Tiberius'

32 See O. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors. Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford 2015), 45f.

33 Suet., *Aug.* 31.5; see M. Spannagel, *Exemplaria principis. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Ausstattung des Augustusforums* (Heidelberg 1999), 256–358; see Groll (forthcoming), op. cit. (no. 6) for a re-examination of the evidence for the statues of Augustus' family members and ancestors in the forum.

34 Tac., *Ann.* 3.5.1. B. Severy, *Augustus and the family at the birth of the Roman Empire* (New York/London 2003), 162 is likely correct when she interprets the presence of Julian ancestor masks at the funeral of the Claudian Drusus as a sign that Augustus' stepson should be regarded as part of the *princeps'* *domus* which comprised both Julian and Claudian family members.

35 Cass. Dio, 55.2.4; 55.8.1–2.

triumph of 12 CE.³⁶ Since there are no parallel sources for these three celebrations, it is very difficult to assess the accuracy of the accounts Cassius Dio and Suetonius wrote many years later.³⁷ Nonetheless, it seems likely for two reasons that both authors give us reliable reflections of true events and developments in the last years of Augustus' Principate. First, none of the accounts by Suetonius and Dio contradicts anything in their own works or any other source on the Augustan age I am aware of. Second, and more importantly, there is other source material, some of it contemporary, which points to the same innovations in the representation of Augustus' family as Suetonius and Dio, thus adding to the credibility of their reconstructions of events.

Cassius Dio provides the earliest evidence for one of the two innovations in the *domus Augusta's* representation to be discussed here. In his account of an *ovatio* Tiberius celebrated in 9 BCE, he reports:

Ὁ δὲ δὴ Τιβέριος τῶν τε Δελματῶν καὶ τῶν Παννονίων ὑποκινησάντων τι αὔθις ζῶντος ἔτι αὐτοῦ κρατήσας, τὰ τε ἐπὶ τοῦ κέλητος ἐπινίκια ἔπεμψε, καὶ τοῦ δήμου τοὺς μὲν ἐν τῷ Καπιτωλίῳ τοὺς δ' ἄλλοθι πολλαχόθι ἐδείπνισε. κὰν τούτῳ καὶ ἡ Λιουία μετὰ τῆς Ἰουλίας τὰς γυναίκας εἰστίασε.

Tiberius, while Drusus was yet alive, had overcome the Dalmatians and Pannonians, who had once more begun a rebellion, and he had celebrated the equestrian triumph, and had feasted the people, some on the Capitol and the rest in many other places. At the same time Livia, also, with Julia, had given a dinner to the women.³⁸

The women's dinner is an entirely new element in Roman victory celebrations. There is no evidence that would suggest that Roman generals' female family members were actively involved in triumphs (or *ovationes*) in the Republic.³⁹

36 Suet., *Tib.* 20.

37 On the question of Suetonius' and Dio's reliability and the methods to assess it, see, for example, A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius* (London 1995, 2nd ed.), 175–177 and P. Swan, *The Augustan succession: An historical commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History books 55–56 (9 B.C.–A.D. 14)* (Oxford 2004).

38 Cass. Dio, 55.2.4.

39 Flory 1998, op. cit. (no. 15), 490. Recently, Brännstedt and Webb put forward arguments for a closer relationship between women and the triumph (L. Webb, L. Brännstedt, 'Gendering the Roman triumph: Elite women and the triumph in the Republic and Early Empire', in: H. Cornwell, G. Woolf, eds., *Gendering Roman imperialism* (Leiden, Boston 2023), 58–95). However, even this re-examination of the source material could only find some indications for the presence of a triumphator's daughters who could accompany their father in his chariot; whereas, there seems to be no evidence to suggest that adult women had

Here, in Tiberius' *ovatio* on the other hand, the women are responsible for a banquet, thus demonstrating their *liberalitas*.

Of course one much later passage is a fragile basis for an argument, but this passage in Dio's narrative is not the only evidence of the involvement of Augustus' female family members in a victory celebration. Only two years later, Tiberius paraded through Rome in his first triumph. Once again, Cassius Dio provides the most comprehensive account of this event:

Τιβέριος δὲ ἐν τῇ νομηνίᾳ ἐν ἧ ὑπατεύειν μετὰ Γναίου Πίσωνος ἤρξατο ἕς τε τὸ Ὀκταουίειον τὴν βουλὴν ἤθροισε διὰ τὸ ἕξω τοῦ πωμηρίου αὐτὸ εἶναι, καὶ τὸ Ὀμονόειον αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἐπισκευάσαι προστάξας, ὅπως τό τε ἴδιον καὶ τὸ τοῦ Δρούσου ὄνομα αὐτῷ ἐπιγράψῃ, τὰ τε νικητήρια ἤγαγε καὶ τὸ τεμένισμα τὸ Λίουιον ὠνομασμένον καθιέρωσε μετὰ τῆς μητρός· καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν τὴν γερουσίαν ἐν τῷ Καπιτωλίῳ, ἐκείνη δὲ τὰς γυναῖκας ἰδίᾳ που εἰστίασε.

Tiberius on the first day of the year in which he was consul with Gnaeus Piso convened the senate in the Curia Octaviae, because it was outside the pomerium. After assigning to himself the duty of repairing the temple of Concord, in order that he might inscribe upon it his own name and that of Drusus, he celebrated his triumph, and in company with his mother dedicated the precinct called the precinct of Livia. He gave a banquet to the senate on the Capitol, and she gave one on her own account to the women somewhere or other.⁴⁰

Although it seems unlikely that all the events mentioned in this passage, took place on the very same day,⁴¹ Dio's narrative still suggests that they were at least closely linked to Tiberius' triumph. Once again, Livia organized a dinner for the Roman women demonstrating her munificence. Moreover, she and her son even dedicated a precinct named after her, possibly the *porticus Liviae* on the *Oppius Mons* attested elsewhere.⁴² Livia's dedication of a monument in the context of her son's triumph is significant because it must have called to mind

ever played an active role in the context of a victory celebration, just as Livia and Julia did according to Dio's testimony.

40 Cass. Dio, 55.8.1–2. Apart from Dio's historiographical work, Tiberius' triumph of 7 BCE is only marginally mentioned by Ov., *Fast.* 1.645–648, Vell. 2.87.4, Suet., *Tib.* 9.2; see Swan 2004, op. cit. (no. 37), 73.

41 See Swan 2004, op. cit. (no. 37), 71.

42 Ov., *Fast.* 6.637–648, Suet. *Aug.* 29.4, Cass. Dio 54.32.5–6; see C. Panella, s.v. 'Porticus Liviae', in: E.M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon topographicum Urbis Romae. Volume Quarto* (Rome 1999), 127–129 and Swan 2004, op. cit. (no. 37), 74.

the victory monuments which had been erected by successful Republican generals.⁴³ Thus, Tiberius' military glory offered a possibility for Livia to emphasize her own status towards the Roman public.

Dio's historical work is not alone in suggesting that imperial women were closely aligned to the triumphal sphere in the late Augustan period. Ovid's exile poetry also does so. In three poems of this corpus, the author imagines victory celebrations of the *domus Augusta* in which the family's women took part as well.⁴⁴ Although Ovid as a relegated poet cannot be regarded as a reliable source for a reconstruction of the real triumphs that were celebrated in Rome, the fact that he refers to the women's role in these events three times suggests that it was nothing unusual for him to see the women of the *domus Augusta* on these occasions. In one text, he even mentions Livia's task of decorating the triumphal *quadriga*,⁴⁵ thus giving us a further clue on how Augustus' wife might have been involved in her relatives' victory celebrations.⁴⁶

These examples suggest that the women of the imperial family, especially Livia, played a certain role in Roman triumphal culture towards the end of the Augustan age. The sources do not offer a clear reason for this unprecedented phenomenon. Nevertheless, we can assume that the effect of the women's triumphal engagement (and probably its purpose) was that it demonstrated that the military undertakings of the *domus Augusta* were not only a task of the (male) family members who served as active generals but also and especially a collective responsibility of the entire *domus Augusta*. Considering the *princeps'* advanced age at the time the events discussed here took place, it is likely that the emphasis on the collective military responsibility of the *domus Augusta* was a way to point out that even after Augustus' passing his successor and his entire *domus* would still be able to conduct successful campaigns and guarantee the future and security of the Empire.

Whereas the women's presence was a recurring element in the representation of the *domus Augusta's* victories, the second innovation in late-Augustan

43 See N. Purcell, 'Livia and the womanhood of Rome', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 32 (1986), 78–105 (here: 89), although he seems to overrate Livia's role a little by claiming that Augustus' wife "could almost consider herself a *triumphator* by proxy in the putting up of *monumenta*".

44 See Flory 1998, op. cit. (no. 15), 491; S. Thakur, *Ovid and the language of succession* (Ann Arbor 2008), 146–148 and 154f.; Groll (forthcoming), op. cit. (no. 6). Ov., *Trist.* 4.2; *Epist.* 3.3; 3.4.

45 Ov., *Epist.* 3.4.95f.: *quid cessas curram pompamque parare triumphis, | Livia? dant nullas iam tibi bella moras.*

46 See Flory 1998, op. cit. (no. 15), 491, who adds that the anonymous *Consolatio ad Liviam* imagines Livia decorating the chariot for her son Drusus' triumph, which his early death in 9 BCE prevented (*Epiced. Drusi* 25f.).

triumphal culture to be analysed here is only a single action by Tiberius, which does not seem to have inspired any followers. However, this action reveals at least as much about the Principate and its new unique character as the previously discussed examples of a stronger female involvement in Augustan triumphal culture. Our only source for this action is Suetonius' account of Tiberius' second triumph on 23rd October 12 CE:

A Germania in urbem post biennium regressus triumphum (...). Ac prius quam in Capitolium flecteret, descendit e curru seque praesidenti patri ad genua summisit.

After two years he [Tiberius, F.G.] returned to the city from Germany and celebrated the triumph (...). And before turning to enter the Capitol, he dismounted from his chariot and fell at the knees of his father, who was presiding over the ceremonies.⁴⁷

Suetonius preserves the memory of a remarkable act here: while celebrating his second triumph, the designated *princeps* Tiberius kneeled down in front of his adoptive father Augustus. This was a radical and unprecedented breach of Republican tradition, according to which other officeholders had to rise from their seats for the triumphator.⁴⁸ A genuflection, however, was a clear sign of submission and nothing that would seem fitting for a triumphator,⁴⁹ who was traditionally regarded as the highest-ranking man of Rome on the day of the parade.⁵⁰

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Tiberius' genuflection of the year 12 CE has found widespread scholarly attention and led to different interpretations. For example, the action has been interpreted as an act of *pietas* for Augustus,⁵¹ a recognition of the *princeps*' superiority,⁵² and as a "gesture of

47 Suet., *Tib.* 20.

48 E. Künzl, 'Der Kniefall des Tiberius. Zu den beiden Kaiserbechern von Boscoreale', *Acta archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 41 (1989), 73–79 (here: 77).

49 R.F. Newbold, 'Non-verbal communication in Suetonius and the Historia Augusta: power, posture and proxemics', *Acta Classica* 43 (2000), 101–118 (here: 106).

50 T. Itgenshorst, 'Die Transformation des Triumphes in augusteischer Zeit', in: F. Goldbeck, J. Wienand, eds., *Der römische Triumph in Prinzipat und Spätantike* (Berlin/Boston 2017), 59–81 (here: 71).

51 C. Barini, *Triumphalia. Imprese ed onori militari durante l'imperio Romano* (Turin 1952), 39f.; E. Kornemann, *Tiberius* (Stuttgart 1980), 50; Newbold 2000, op. cit. (no. 49), 107; J.E. Thorburn, 'Suetonius' Tiberius: a proxemic approach', *Classical Philology* 103:4 (2008), 435–448 (here: 443); Itgenshorst 2017, op. cit. (no. 50), 71f.

52 See, for example, J. Gagé, 'La théologie de la victoire impériale', *Revue Historique* 171:1 (1933), 1–43 (here: 8); Künzl 1989, op. cit. (no. 48), 77; Severy 2003, op. cit. (no. 34), 203;

reconciliation”.⁵³ Although all these interpretations describe correctly what Tiberius’ genuflection, if true, expressed on a symbolic level, it is remarkable that they mainly only focus on the advantages Augustus would have from his stepson’s move. However, it remains unclear in these approaches, why Tiberius – after all, the highest-ranking general of the Empire and Augustus’ presumptive heir – was ready for such a radical sign of subordination. Or was the genuflection maybe simply a way for Augustus to humiliate his stepson, as E. Künzl suggested?⁵⁴

Of course, it is impossible to reach definitive certainty about Tiberius’ thinking and all the reasons that might have provoked his genuflection. Nonetheless, a look at the political circumstances of 12 CE and the way the relationship between *princeps* and Roman generals would be represented during the first years of Tiberius’ own reign provide arguments for what might have reasonably motivated Tiberius to kneel down in front of his adoptive father. One crucial aspect to understand this gesture is time. Augustus was already at a very old age in 12 CE, and one of his biggest concerns must have been to secure the new order he created beyond his impending death. Therefore, it seems highly likely that the *princeps* (just like Tiberius himself) could have had no reasonable interest in humiliating his presumptive heir and successor. In this context, the fact that the genuflection demonstrated according to some researchers Tiberius’ *pietas* – a virtue that had always been important in Augustus’ own self-representation – underlined his aptitude for his future role as *princeps*.⁵⁵

However, as mentioned above, the genuflection did not only visualize *pietas* but also the real hierarchy between the *princeps* and his subordinate general Tiberius. In the longer run, this aspect was presumably much more important for Tiberius than appearing as a pious *filius*. As future *princeps*, it would be essential for his survival that all his commanders – and especially those from his own family like the very popular Germanicus – would unconditionally recognize his pre-eminence.⁵⁶ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Tiberius’ superiority over all his generals was frequently highlighted during his own Principate, for example in the famous ‘Sword of Tiberius’, an inscription on a

W. Havener, *Imperator Augustus. Die diskursive Konstituierung der militärischen persona des ersten römischen princeps* (Stuttgart 2016), 358–360; H. Flower, ‘Augustus, Tiberius, and the end of the Roman triumph’, *Classical Antiquity* 39:1 (2020), 1–28 (here: 20).

53 J. Bleicken, *Augustus. Eine Biographie* (Hamburg 2010), 660: “Versöhnungsgestus”.

54 Künzl 1989, op. cit. (no. 48), 78.

55 Itgenshorst 2017, op. cit. (no. 50), 71f.

56 See Cass. Dio, 56.24.7 who gives an account of Germanicus’ popularity towards the end of Augustus’ Principate. It is also important to note here that by the time of Tiberius’ second triumph his adoptive son had already received some distinctions for his military service, such as the *ornamenta triumphalia* and the privilege to vote right after the *consulares*; (Cass. Dio, 56.17.2).

victory memorial in Germany erected by Germanicus, and the arch for Tiberius and Germanicus on the *Forum Romanum*.⁵⁷ Considering these examples, all of which were created only a few years after the triumph of 12 CE, it seems likely that Tiberius' genuflection was also intended to exemplify what the relationship between a *princeps* and his generals should look like both in the present and – perhaps even more importantly – in the time after Augustus' death. From this perspective, the triumph of 12 with Tiberius' genuflection was not only the successful end of Augustan triumphal history⁵⁸ but also an important step to secure the coming Tiberian Principate. Thus, it was the unique character of the Principate and the special challenges it posed to its leaders that motivated and maybe even necessitated Tiberius' unconventional and tradition-breaking act during his second triumph.

5 Conclusion

This paper has investigated the role Republican traditions and practices played in the presentation of the victories of Augustus' family. The analysis has shown that Augustus followed Republican paradigms, especially in the first half of his political career when he dedicated artifacts to his adoptive father Julius Caesar's temple and his ancestor Cnaeus Octavius' *porticus*. The participation of his younger family members Tiberius and Marcellus in the triple triumph of 29 also followed Republican practice. Nevertheless, the two young men seem to have played a more active role than usual in Augustus' triumphal self-representation around that time, since a *donativum* was distributed in the name of Marcellus while Tiberius took a leading role in the Game of Troy. As for the late Augustan period, it seems likely that the Republican focus on the ancestors lived on in the *Forum Augustum* and the funeral processions for several members of the *domus Augusta*.

However, the second half of Augustus' Principate also saw two remarkable innovations. The first one, the involvement of women, especially Livia, in the victory celebrations organized for the family's generals can be interpreted as a way to illustrate the collective military responsibility of Rome's new first family which would guarantee the security of the Empire even beyond Augustus' lifespan. Tiberius' genuflection in the triumph of 12 CE, stood in stark contrast

57 On these and other examples of the representation of Tiberius' status as supreme commander, see J. Gagé, 'La Victoria Augusti et les auspices de Tibère', *Revue Archéologique* 32 (1930), 1–35.

58 Havener 2016, op. cit. (no. 52), 359f.

to the traditional elevated status of Roman triumphators. I have argued that this transgressional move should not only be seen from Augustus' perspective or even be regarded as some form of humiliation of the *princeps*' stepson. Instead, a stronger focus on Tiberius' situation at that time as well as later Tiberian sources suggests that he intended to demonstrate how the hierarchy between a *princeps* and his generals ought to function – not only for the time being but most of all in his own Principate. Therefore, the two innovations analysed here can be linked to two major characteristic aspects of the late Augustan Principate: firstly, the emergence of a ruling family and, secondly, the hierarchy between the *princeps* and his generals which had to be propagated and reinforced again and again to ensure a *princeps*' or (as Tiberius' genuflection shows) a future *princeps*' survival.

Augustus and Traditional Structures in Egypt

Grand Policies or Ad Hoc Measures?

Livia Capponi

1 Augustus and Egypt

Cassius Dio's account of the Roman conquest of Egypt is undoubtedly unsympathetic: he opens the passage by clarifying that "Egypt was enslaved" and then depicts a clash of gods, a weeping Apis deprecating the entrance of Octavian in Egypt. Octavian himself is shown while refusing to pay homage to the Apis bull, and claiming that he was accustomed to worshipping gods, not cattle; the *princeps* is portrayed in the act of deliberately bypassing the mausoleum of the Ptolemies, whom he despised as "dead men", while obviously paying homage to the mummified body of Alexander the Great, whose nose he accidentally broke.¹ Two hieroglyphic inscriptions inform us that Augustus replaced the high priest of Ptah Padibastet IV-Imhotep, who died two days before Augustus captured Alexandria, with the young Psenamun, who in 28/7 BCE received the new title 'prophet of Caesar'. The dynasty of the high priests died out in 23 BCE, when Padibastet-Imhotep was finally buried.²

The Augustan attitude towards Egyptian temples seems less consistent: on the one hand, the *princeps* built traditional temples (Dendur, Kalabsha) in the early part of his reign; on the other, there are numerous hints to confiscations of temple land and priests complaining about new taxes after 4 BCE.³ This twofold attitude has been recently studied by A. Connor's book, significantly

1 Refusal to see Apis: Suet., *Div. Aug.* 93 and Cass. Dio, 51.16.5 in contrast to Alexander, who had sacrificed to the Apis bull of Memphis (Arr., *Anab.* 3.1–2) and thereby claimed acceptance among the Egyptians. Among the portents that accompanied the conquest of Egypt Dio lists the weeping Apis (51.17.4), which suggests a conflict with the high priests of Memphis.

2 *BM 184* and *BM 188*; on these inscriptions, see F. Herklotz, *Prinzeps und Pharao: der Kult des Augustus in Ägypten. Oikoumene* (Frankfurt am Main 2007), 294–298; N. Marković, 'Death in the Temple of Ptah: The Roman Conquest of Egypt and Conflict at Memphis', *Journal of Egyptian History* 8 (2015), 37–48 purports that the failed burial of the high priest was due to internal dynastic struggles among the priests of Memphis, not to Roman intervention.

3 For Augustus' confiscation of some temple resources, not as an act of opposition to Egyptian religion, on his building of traditional Egyptian temples as an act of conciliation with the native population, and on his pragmatic reception of some Pharaonic conceptions of

subtitled ‘Confiscation or Coexistence’, which, in W. Clarysse’s words on the website of the book launch, “will definitely put an end to the idea that the Romans took away the land of the Temples”. Certainly, as A.L. Boozer put it, “the ‘confiscation narrative’ does not accurately represent the Roman imperial relationship with Egyptian temples”.⁴

As for Augustus’ treatment of the Jews of Egypt, an ancient and populous community, little is known before 4 BCE. In *Res Gestae* 27 Augustus mentions the conquest of Egypt (*Aegyptum imperio populi romani adiecti*), but never hints to Judaea, a sign perhaps that he regarded that region as a kingdom under the Herodians rather than a part of the Empire.⁵ What we know about Augustus’ policy towards the Jews of Egypt comes from Greek sources, mainly of Jewish origin; both Josephus and Philo talk of Augustus in positive terms. There were certainly Alexandrian Jews in Augustus’ circle: *BGU* 4.1129 (13 BCE) talks of an otherwise unknown Simon, slave or freedman “of Caesar”, and of his slave the Alexandrian Jew Tryphon, and several papyri document Jews in Augustan Alexandria.⁶ In the *Legatio ad Gaium*, Philo gives voice to the most striking encomium preserved down to us, calling the emperor *alexikakos*, “averted of evil”, and *irenophylax*, “guardian of peace”.⁷ Philo delivered his speech before Caligula in 39. Certainly, this must be read as the apologetic plead of the Alexandrian Jewish community in a dangerous situation.⁸ Philo’s ties with Augustus were personal; his brother C. Julius Alexander, the ‘Alabarch’, had an important role in the financial life of the new province. Philo’s father Alexander may have supported Julius Caesar during the Alexandrian War.⁹ Josephus talks

kingship, without embracing the role of king or god, G.S. Dundas, ‘Augustus and the Kingship of Egypt’, *Historia* 51 (2002), 433–448 esp. 440–2; 446–7.

4 See https://www.press.umich.edu/12220891/confiscation_or_coexistence. A. Connor, *Confiscation or Coexistence. Egyptian Temples in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 2022), 36, reports: “the priests negotiated and participated in a system introduced by the administration at some point after 30 BCE. While this tighter control over circumcision and priestly enrolment has been interpreted as part of a program of Roman hostility toward the temples, the temples’ complicity in the process has received less attention”. I thank Andrew Connor for sending me a copy of his book.

5 A survey of the sources on Augustus and the Jews may be found in E. Tagliaferro, ‘Augusto e gli Ebrei’, *Quaderni di Vicino Oriente* 10 (2015), 125–138.

6 See e.g. *BGU* 4.1134 (10 BCE), and *BGU* 4.1136 (11/10 BCE).

7 Philo, *Leg.* 144–147.

8 L. Troiani, ‘Augusto e l’elogio di Filone Alessandrino’, in: G. Negri, A. Valvo, eds., *Studi su Augusto. In occasione del XX centenario della morte* (Torino 2016), 129–137.

9 On the family of Philo, J. Schwarz, ‘Note sur la famille de Philo d’Alexandrie’, *Mélanges Isidore Lévy* (Paris 1953), 591–602; K.G. Evans, ‘Alexander the Alabarch: Roman and Jew’, in: E.H. Lovering Jr., ed., *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta 1995), 576–594; D.R. Schwartz, ‘Philo, his family, and his times’, in: A. Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion*

about the edicts issued by Julius Caesar and then by Augustus, which permitted the Jews throughout the Empire to respect their cult and send money to the Temple of Jerusalem. These edicts are cited word for word in Book 14 of the *Jewish Antiquities* and have been deemed authentic.¹⁰

In this paper, I will try to look at the Augustan attitude towards Egyptian temples and the Jews of Egypt, and will investigate whether we can detect grand policies which may have affected the traditional structures of these two communities. Did Augustus create or maintain a loyal relationship between the Roman state and Egyptian temples such as the temple of Ptah in Memphis, by allowing temple and priests substantial autonomy, as did the Ptolemaic kings? Did he treat the Jewish community in Egypt as a privileged group, which enjoyed full trust on the part of the state and served faithfully in the army, as was the case under the Ptolemies? And finally, did he align his Jewish policy in Egypt with his larger Jewish policies elsewhere in the Mediterranean, and in Judaea?

2 Augustus' Edict to the Jews and the Death of Herod

The main piece of evidence on Augustus' favourable policy towards the Jews is a famous edict to the Jews of Asia, which confirmed their right to follow their own customs in accordance with the law of their fathers. The decree allowed the observation of the Sabbath and of the day of preparation for it, and issued specific penalties for those who stole Jewish sacred books or money – this last point seems the issue at stake on most occasions. The text is reported word-by-word by Josephus in:¹¹

Caesar Augustus, *Pontifex Maximus* with tribunician power, proclaims. Since the Jewish people has been found well-disposed to the Roman people not only at the present time but also in the time past, and especially in the time of my father *imperator* Caesar, as has their high priest Hyrcanus, it has been decided by me and my council under oath, with the consent of the Roman people, that the Jews may follow their own customs in accordance with the law of their fathers, just as they followed

to *Philo* (Cambridge 2009), 9–31; M.R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria. An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven-London 2018), 29–30. On Julius Caesar's Jewish policy, E. Polyviou, 'Caesar's Jewish Policy according to Flavius Josephus', *Anistoriton Journal* 14 (2014–2015), 1–11.

10 M. Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World. The Greek and Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius* (Tübingen 1998).

11 Ed. Niese (Berlin 1892).

them in the time of Hyrcanus, high priest of the Most High God, and that their sacred monies shall be inviolable and may be sent up to Jerusalem and delivered to the treasures in Jerusalem, and that they need not give bond on the Sabbath or on the day of preparation for it (Sabbath Eve) after the ninth hour. And if anyone is caught stealing their sacred books or their sacred monies from a synagogue or a meeting room, he shall be regarded as sacrilegious, and his property shall be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans. As for the resolution which was offered by them in my honour concerning the piety which I show to all men, and on behalf of Gaius Marcius Censorinus, I order that it and the present edict be set up in the most conspicuous (part of the temple) assigned to me by the *Koinon* of Asia with plainly visible lettering. If anyone transgresses any of the above ordinances, he shall suffer severe punishment.¹²

This edict was dated to 12 BCE on the basis of a numeral *XI* present in the margin of the Latin version, erroneously intended to be the number of the *tribunitia potestas* of Augustus. Following an earlier hypothesis by R. Syme, C. Eilers suggested that the mention of C. Marcius Censorinus' proconsulship brings the date of the edict down to 3 BCE or shortly before; the new dating is more convincing, as it links the edict to Augustus' settlement of Jewish affairs after Herod's death.¹³ This new context deserves further investigation. According to Josephus, on the death of Herod in 4 BCE his sons Antipas and Archelaus sent letters to Augustus, who then "called together his friends to give their opinions. Among them he gave first place at his side to Gaius, the son of Agrippa and of his daughter Julia, whom he had adopted".¹⁴ Salome's son Antipater spoke against Archelaus, and Nicolaus spoke in favour; Augustus broke up the council and postponed the decision. Then a revolt broke out in Judaea after Archelaus set off to Rome. The cities in Judaea rose after procurator Sabinus garrisoned the province to guard the million sesterces promised to Augustus; Sabinus engaged in a battle at Pentecost, around the end of May 4 BCE, and the porticoes of the temple were set on fire. After a series of battles, and the appearance of various pretenders, Varus managed to quell the sedition with two additional

12 *AJ* 16.162–165. Translation adapted from Pucci Ben Zeev 1998, op. cit. (n. 10), 235–257.

13 C. Eilers, 'The Date of the Augustus' Edict on the Jews (Jos. AJ 16.162–165) and the Career of C. Marcius Censorinus', *Phoenix* 58 (2004), 86–95. He expands on an earlier hypothesis by R. Syme, published posthumously in *Anatolica. Studies in Strabo*, ed. by A.R. Birley (Oxford 1995), 304–306. Cfr. R. Syme, 'The Titulus Tiburtinus', *Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik, Münche n 1972, Vestigia* 17 (1973), 585–601 = *Roman Papers* III (Oxford 1979–91), 872–873.

14 Jos., *AJ* 17.228–230.

legions and numerous auxiliaries. A delegation of fifty Jews reached Augustus in Rome to ask to be put under the province of Syria; Josephus narrates that the Jewish delegates were supported by 8,000 Jewish residents in Rome, a figure which may be regarded as too high, but certainly shows the substantial agreement between Jerusalem and the diaspora communities.¹⁵

Augustus summoned again his *consilium* in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, and gave audience to the opposing delegations.¹⁶ Josephus reports the speeches of the Jews and of Nicolaus of Damascus respectively against and in favour of Archelaus. After these audiences, Augustus dismissed the council and appointed Archelaus as ethnarch of half of the territory that had been subject to Herod. Nicolaus, a protagonist of the events and the source of Josephus, specifies that Archelaus' territory yielded an annual tribute of 600 talents per year.¹⁷ Josephus then lists the other decisions of Augustus. First, Herod Antipas received Peraea and Galilee, with an annual tribute of 200 talents. Second, Philip got Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and a territory called "the domain of Zenodorus", bringing an income of 100 talents. Finally, Judaea and Samaria got a discount of one third of the tribute by Augustus. As F. Millar pointed out, the revenues from the ethnarchy of Archelaus and the tetrarchies of Herod Antipas and Philip in the settlement of 4 BCE were equivalent to 3.6 million, 1.2 million, and 600,000 *denarii*, in total 900 talents or 5.4 million *denarii* at the exchange rate of 6,000 *drachmai* (equivalent to *denarii*) per talent, a very high revenue. It is noticeable that the overall annual revenues from Judaea and adjacent territories were more or less the equivalent of the fines imposed on Antiochus III of Syria after the battle of Magnesia in 189 BCE (15,000 talents over a period of twelve years); a very high income which Nicolaus of Damascus duly reported in his account.¹⁸

Augustus then detached the Greek cities in Archelaus' territory, such as Gaza, Gadara, and Hippos, from the ethnarchy and added them to the province of Syria, thus joining the provincial enclave of the Decapolis.¹⁹ This move created an important commercial area that conveyed to Rome the taxation raised from the import of luxury merchandise from Arabia Felix.²⁰ It is likely that the office of *alabarches* or *arabarches*, in charge of customs-dues on

15 Jos., *AJ* 17.300.

16 Jos., *AJ* 17.301.

17 Jos., *AJ* 17.317. Cfr. *BJ* 2.96. F. Millar, *The Roman Near East. 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge 1994, 2nd ed.), 51.

18 Millar 1994 op. cit. (n. 17), 51 n. 30. On the war indemnity imposed to Antiochus, Polyb., 21.40, Liv., 38.37; cf. P. Kay, *Rome's Economic Revolution* (Oxford 2014), esp. Ch. 2.

19 Jos., *AJ* 17.318–320.

20 Millar 1994 op. cit. (n. 17), 43.

long-distance trade imports from the East into Egypt and thence to Italy, gained further importance.

Josephus says that in 4/3 BCE Augustus made these decisions along with a council of friends and of the most prominent Romans, one of the first appearances of the *consilium principis*. The text of the edict (*AJ* 16.163), too, uses the Greek term συμβουλίω, a 'technical' translation of *consilium*, while the account of the hearings on the death of Herod in 4 BCE in *AJ* 17.301 and 17.317, taken from Nicolaus, describes the council as a συνέδριον, in Jewish terms. The prominent role of Gaius Caesar in this *consilium* shows that the settlement of the Herodian kingdom, along with the money and royal favours gained by Rome in this transaction, was vital for the preparation of the expedition to the East. Significantly, magnificent *ludi* were held in Rome in 2 BCE, when 260 lions were slaughtered in the Circus Maximus, 36 crocodiles in the Circus Flaminius, and a gigantic *naumachia* represented the battle of the Athenians versus the Persians.²¹ In the same year, the temple of Mars Ultor was dedicated, symbolising the programmatic Roman revenge against Parthia. Consistent with this picture, the members of the *consilium* deciding on the fate of Judaea overlapped with the men who accompanied Gaius in the East: among them, Marcus Lollius, Sulpicius Quirinius, Marcus Censorinus, Velleius Paternulus, Juba II of Mauretania, and a young Sejanus.²²

3 The Aim of the *epikrisis* in Egypt: Granting Privileges or Extending Taxation?

A recently published census declaration from the Fayum proves the existence of a provincial census in Egypt in the year 27 (3 BCE) of Augustus, ordered by the prefect Gaius Turranius.²³ This confirms that a seven-year cycle of censuses was taken in 10 BCE (year 20), 3 BCE (year 27), 4/5 CE (year 34), 12 CE (year 41), and every 14 years from 19 CE on.²⁴ Documents show that the census of 3 BCE

21 Cass. Dio, 55.10.7–8.

22 The great journey of Gaius in the East is described as instructional by Cass. Dio, 55.10.17 and Vell. Pat., 2.101.1. The staff included M. Lollius as *comes et rector* (Suet., *Tib.* 12.2); L. Licinius (*CIL* 6.1442), otherwise unknown; L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (cf. Suet., *Nero* 5.1); P. Sulpicius Quirinius (Tac., *Ann.* 3.48); and probably Juba II of Mauretania as historian (cf. Pliny, *NH* 6.141). Aelius Sejanus (Tac., *Ann.* 4.1) was too young to have been a regular *comes* of Gaius although he could have served under him.

23 W.G. Claytor, R.S. Bagnall, 'The Beginnings of the Roman Provincial Census: A New Declaration from 3 BCE', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 55 (2015), 637–653.

24 *SB* 20.14440; R.S. Bagnall, B.W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 1994), 2–4. For D.W. Rathbone, 'Egypt, Augustus and Roman taxation', *Cahiers du Centre Gustave*

was preceded by operations of *epikrisis*, that is, preliminary exams of the privileged status of specific classes, such as Alexandrians, Jews, and Egyptian priests, aiming to extend the levy of the so-called *laographia* (the yearly poll tax in cash) to a larger public.

Obviously, in 4/3 BCE the revenues from Egypt were especially vital for supplying the Roman army on its way to Parthia. It is even possible, although it remains speculative, that the *epikrisis* that preceded the census of 3 BCE implied the recruitment of some auxiliary forces for the expedition.²⁵ We know that under Augustus the population of the province of Egypt was divided up into a minority of Roman citizens, exempt from *laographia*, Alexandrian citizens, exempt as well, and the mass of Graeco-Egyptians, who paid the full rate. Some Greeks were styled *metropolitai* as they were the inhabitants of the district capitals, some “from the gymnasium”, as they could access gymnasia in the Egyptian *chora*. In addition, there were the “6475 Hellenic *katoikoi* of the Arsinoite nome”, a closed number of Greek soldiers of Ptolemaic origin, who had to pay a reduced rate for *laographia*. Apart from the gymnasial class, documented from 4/5 CE at Oxyrhynchus, we do not know when these groups were first registered.²⁶

BGU 4.1199 of 4 June 4 BCE is a copy of an official letter by which Turranius ordered an *epikrisis* of the personnel of Egyptian temples from top to lower ranks, most probably for fiscal purposes.²⁷ In *BGU* 4.1198 four priests petition Turranius against *laographia* claiming that they had been left alone since the

Glötz 4 (1993), 81–112 at 90, in 10 BCE Augustus decided to take a census to improve registration for the poll-tax.

- 25 P. Sängler, ‘In conclusion, Rome did not disarm Egypt’: Some Critical Notes on Livia Capponi’s Depiction of Roman Military Policy in late Ptolemaic and Augustan Egypt’, in C. Wolff, P. Faure, eds., *Les auxiliaires de l’armée romaine. Des alliés aux fédérés* (Paris 2016), 97–106.
- 26 On the creation of the so-called ‘metropole orders’ under Augustus, Y. Broux, ‘Creating a New Local Elite. The Establishment of the Metropolitan Orders of Roman Egypt’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 59 (2013), 143–153. See also D. Canducci, ‘I 6475 cateci greci dell’Arsinoite’, *Aegyptus* 70 (1990), 211–255 and 71 (1991), 121–216; this class is first attested on *SB* 12.11012 of 55; O. Montevecchi, ‘L’*epikrisis* dei Greco-Egizi’, *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrology, Oxford, 24–31 July 1974* (London 1975), 227–232 believed that it was created under Tiberius. A.K. Bowman, D.W. Rathbone, ‘Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt’, *JRS* 82 (1992), 107–127 at 121 refer to *metropolitai* as a creation of the Roman government; G. Ruffini, ‘Genealogy and the Gymnasium’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 43 (2006), 71–99 refers to the gymnasial class at Oxyrhynchus as a body of around 4000 people registered from 4/5 CE. On the humbler social standing of gymnasials in Upper Egypt, see S. Bussi, *Le élites locali nella provincia d’Egitto di prima età imperiale* (Milan 2008), 17–19.
- 27 For Connor 2022 op. cit. (n. 4), 36 n. 19, “the exact process by which the restrictions were introduced remains unclear” and notices that the prefectural edict preserved in *BGU* 4.1199 [not 1099] “is likely an important part, but probably not the only one”.

times of the queen, Cleopatra VII, up to the twenty-sixth year of Augustus (4 BCE), when they were asked to pay the poll tax with arrears from 9 BCE. Analogously, in *BGU* 4.1140 (4/3 BCE) Helenos son of Tryphon, an Alexandrian Jew, complains that he was deprived of his *patris* (i.e. Alexandria), despite the fact that he received *paideia* in the gymnasium, and that he was forced to pay *laographia* including arrears from 9 BCE. Famously, the first line where Helenos defined himself 'Alexandrian' was erased and the scribe wrote on top "a Jew from Alexandria". Finally, *BGU* 4.1200 is a complaint to the prefect Octavius in 2/1 BCE about taxation over priests and temple land.²⁸

This evidence shows that the *epikrisis* of 4/3 BCE downgraded some Alexandrian Jews to the rank of Egyptians, under the same tax category as *peregrini*, "foreigners", and that Augustus imposed a stricter financial control over some Egyptian temples and priests, most probably to raise funds for the Parthian expedition of Gaius Caesar. These operations did not aim to damage this or that "privileged class", and had nothing to do with the religious policy of Augustus, but were dictated by pragmatic financial and fiscal considerations. One could even argue that the imposition of the provincial census in Egypt in 10 BCE was justified by the need to raise more regular revenues from Egypt, after the *regia gaza*,²⁹ brought to Rome in 30 BCE, had been gradually exhausted. To search temples for silver and gold in times of need was no novelty: Antiochus III attempted to pillage the temple of Bel at Elymais in his own territory in search of precious metals to pay off the Roman war indemnity, and the story of the relationships between Syrian kings (and Roman leaders and emperors) and the temple of Jerusalem is too well-known to be repeated here.³⁰ Substantially, Augustus' occasional extraction of funds from the traditional temples of Egypt as well as his use of local manpower for military purposes was not much different from the attitude of the Hellenistic kings and Roman predecessors of Republican times.

4 Gaius Caesar, the Jerusalem Temple and a Revolt in Egypt

A passage in Suetonius reports that Augustus "also praised his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers in Jerusalem as he passed by Judaea".³¹ Orosius adds that Gaius touched Egypt before his arrival in Syria, which is unparalleled

28 Rathbone 1993 op. cit. (n. 24), 90. Prefecture of P. Octavius: D. Faoro, *I prefetti d'Egitto da Augusto a Commodo* (Bologna 2016), 23–24.

29 Suet., *Aug.* 41.

30 Antiochus III and the temple of Bel at Elymais in Kūzestān (Susiana, southwestern Persia): Diod., 28.3; 29.15.

31 Suet., *Aug.* 93: *Gaium nepotem, quod Iudaeam praetervehens apud Hierosolyma non supplicasset, conlaudavit.*

in other sources.³² He also adds that Gaius' disrespect for the temple was believed (by the Jews) to be the cause of a disastrous famine in the year 48 of Augustus, that is, in 18/19 CE: a date when we know of a famine in Egypt and Rome, and when Tiberius expelled Jews and Egyptians from Rome, sending 4,000 Jews to fight brigands in Sardinia.³³ Apart from the obvious historical inaccuracy, Orosius shows that Gaius' offensive behaviour in 4 BCE towards the Jerusalem Temple was believed by some, perhaps not only Jews, to have been so sacrilegious that it could be deemed responsible for successive grain crises. E. Smallwood hypothesized that Augustus' praise of Gaius' decision not to pay homage to the Temple reflected a deliberate move against Archelaus, a punishment for the political unrest that took place on the death of Herod.³⁴ Conversely, E. Gruen thought that the infamous "praise" was just a private view of Augustus expressed in a letter, only in apparent contradiction with his public favourable attitude to the Jerusalem temple.³⁵ In my opinion, Augustus was certainly aware that his correspondence would be read by all, and was just trying to save Gaius from an unforgivable *gaffe* from which the young man clearly emerged as unfit to rule.

Other less known aspects of Gaius' expedition might cast light on this complex time in Augustus' Principate. A neglected passage of Dio reports that during this expedition there was a revolt in Egypt, which was suppressed by a tribune of the praetorian guard after prolonged fighting.

ἑτέρους ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐπιστρατεύσαντάς σφισιν ἀπέώσαντο, οὐ πρότερόν τε ἐνέδοσαν πρὶν χιλίαρχόν τινα ἐκ τοῦ δορυφορικοῦ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς πεμφθῆναι. καὶ ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἐν χρόνῳ τὰς καταδρομὰς αὐτῶν ἐπέσχευεν, ὥστε ἐπὶ πολὺ μῆδένα βουλευτὴν τῶν ταύτη πόλεων ἄρξαι.

They (*sc.* Gaius' troops) ejected other soldiers who attacked them from Egypt, and did not give up until a tribune of the praetorian guard was

32 Oros., 7.3.5: *Gaium nepotem suum Caesar Augustus ad ordinandas Aegypti Syriaeque provincias misit. Qui praeteriens ab Aegypto fines Palaestinae, apud Hierosolymam in templo dei tunc sancto et celebri adorare contempsit, sicut Suetonius Tranquillus refert. Quod Augustus ubi per eum conperit, pravo usus iudicio prudenter fecisse laudavit.*

33 On the expulsion of Jews and Egyptians of 19 CE, L.V. Rutgers, 'Roman policy towards the Jews. Expulsions from the City of Rome During the First Century CE', *Classical Antiquity* 13 (1994), 56–74. On the military service of Jews in 19 CE, S. Rocca, 'Josephus, Suetonius, and Tacitus on Military Services of the Jews of Rome: Discrimination or Norm', *Italia* 20 (2010), 7–29.

34 E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden 1976), 89, n. 99 and 117.

35 Augustan acts of official piety towards Judaism are mentioned (e.g. by Philo, *Leg.* 157, 317, *Jos.*, *BJ* 5.562, *Jos.*, *AJ* 5.562–3). Cf. E.S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge Mass. 2002), 266 n. 85.

sent to them. And he resisted to the raids of those at length, to the point that for a long time no councillor governed the cities here (*sc.* in Egypt).³⁶

This passage clearly states that the *boulai*, that is the city councils, of the Egyptian *poleis* (Naucratis, Ptolemais Euergetis, perhaps even Alexandria) were abolished as punishment for their participation in the revolt. The information that the tribune of the praetorian guard quelled this revolt may link to the evidence that in 3 CE Augustus appointed as prefect of Egypt Publius Ostorius Scapula, a brother or a relative of Q. Ostorius Scapula, who was appointed *praefectus praetorii* in 2 BCE.³⁷ We do not know the causes of this Egyptian revolt, but the fiscal pressure to supply the Roman army, as well as the political instability of the Near East due to the weakness of Gaius must have played a role. The consequence of the repression was the abolition of city councils in Egypt. This was a dramatic decision, with little echo in the sources; we do not know whether it was at this stage that Augustus suppressed the Alexandrian council, although I think that it was probably suppressed in 30 BCE.³⁸

Dio places the Egyptian revolt around 2 CE, but the exact chronology is unclear. Gaius Caesar was granted his powers for a mission to the East in 2 BCE and left Rome on 29th January 1 BCE.³⁹ There were great expectations that he could be successful against the Parthians, and that he could present himself as a new Alexander. During his consulship in 1 CE he led an 'Arabian expedition'⁴⁰ in Nabatea and in 2 CE he concluded a treaty with King Phraates V of Parthia on an island in the Euphrates, entertaining him with a lavish banquet; he then assigned the Armenian kingdom to Ariobarzanes II

36 Cass. Dio, 55.10a.1 (my translation).

37 Q. Ostorius Scapula: *PIR*² O 167. P. Ostorius Scapula *praef. Aegypti post* 3 and *ante* 10/11 CE. The *praenomen* Publius is confirmed by *SB* 16.12713 (5 CE); Faoro 2016 *op. cit.* (n. 28), 25–26.

38 The debate over the Ptolemaic or Augustan suppression of the Alexandrian *boule* has produced an immense bibliography; H.I. Bell, 'The problem of the Alexandrian senate', *Aegyptus* 12 (1932), 173–184 thought that Ptolemy Evergetes II Physcon abolished the *boule* at the end of the II century BCE; P.A. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972), vol. I, 95; vol. II, 797–798 argued that Physcon abolished the *ekklesia*, not the *boule*. For a review of the literature, see G. Geraci, *Genesi della provincia romana d'Egitto* (Bologna 1983), 180–183. I discussed this problem in a paper at the International Congress of Papyrology in Paris, August 2022 and am preparing a written version.

39 On the expedition of Gaius Caesar, see P. Herz, 'Der Aufbruch des Gaius Caesar in den Osten', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 39 (1980) 285–290; F.E. Romer, 'Gaius Caesar's Military Diplomacy in the East', *Transaction of the American Philological Association* 109 (1979), 199–214. On the repercussions of the downfall of Gaius Caesar on Tiberian historiography, A. Pistellato, 'Gaius Caesar or the Ideal Non-Princeps: A Tiberian Issue', *Arctos* 47 (2013) 199–217, esp. 201–202.

40 *CIL* 11.1420.

of Atropatene.⁴¹ A revolt took place soon hereafter – perhaps the occasion of a more general uprising – and in another meeting, this time in Artagira, Gaius was wounded.⁴² Soon after his brother Lucius died at Massilia in August 2 CE, in 3 CE Gaius became very ill and wrote to Augustus from Lycia that he wanted to give up politics. He died in February 4 CE in Lycia, and on 26 June of the same year Augustus adopted Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus. The failed expedition and premature death of Gaius constituted a political turning point and marked the beginning of a time of important reforms and of a more monarchical phase of the Augustan Principate.⁴³

5 The Deposition of Archelaus, the Census in Egypt and in Judaea, and the *aerarium militare*

Another important turning point was the deposition of Archelaus and the confiscation of his property. In the ninth year of Archelaus' ethnarchy, 4/5 CE according to *BJ* 2.167, or in the tenth year, 5/6 CE according to *AJ* 17.342, Jewish and Samaritan envoys came to see Augustus to ask for autonomy. Augustus exiled Archelaus to Vienne in Gaul and confiscated his property.⁴⁴ Archelaus' ethnarchy was added to the province of Syria, and Sulpicius Quirinius was sent to take a census in Judaea and sell the estate of Archelaus.⁴⁵ It was the famous census mentioned in Luke in the nativity story, which gave rise to riots under the leadership of Judas the Galilean in 6 CE. In Egypt there was a census, too, around 5 CE (hence, perhaps, Luke's idea that "all the world had to register"). The gymnasial class of Oxyrhynchus was registered for the first time in an *epikrisis* in 4/5, just before the census. We do not know whether the so-called "6,475 Greek *katoikoi* of the Arsinoite nome" or the *metropolitai* were registered in 4/5 as well, or, as Rowlandson thought, at a different time.⁴⁶ These census-like registrations may be compared with the contemporary Augustan

41 Cass. Dio, 55.10.19.

42 Vell., 2.102.2, Flor., 2.32 and Cass. Dio, 55.10a.6; further literature in Pistellato 2013 op. cit. (n. 39), 202.

43 A. Dalla Rosa, 'Gli anni 4–9 d.C.: riforme e crisi alla fine dell'epoca augustea', in S. Segenni, ed., *Augusto dopo il bimilenario. Un bilancio* (Firenze 2018), 84–100.

44 Jos., *AJ* 17.342; 344, 355. See Strabo, 16.2.46, Cass. Dio, 55.27. On the deposition of Archelaus as the most important turning point, see Millar 1994 op. cit. (n. 17), 44, 48.

45 Jos., *AJ* 17.355; cf. *BJ* 2.117; 2.167–168 mentions the procurator Coponius. On the census of Quirinius, Jos., *AJ* 18.1f, Luke, 2.2; *Acts* 5.37.

46 J. Rowlandson, 'Dissing the Egyptians: Legal, Ethnic, and Cultural Identities in Roman Egypt', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement 120, Creating Ethnicities in the Roman World* (2013), 213–247.

legislation at Rome imposing new marriage laws which aimed to increase demography in order to reinforce the army.⁴⁷

In 6 CE, after a widespread rebellion in the Empire, a military and a grain crisis, Augustus created the *aerarium militare* to fund the stipend of legionary soldiers, by injecting 170 million *sestertii* out of his own patrimony.⁴⁸ From Cassius Dio we learn that he obtained funds “from kings and peoples”, and that, in order to make the income more regular, he decided to introduce new taxes, the *vicesima hereditatium*, the *centesima rerum venalium* and the *vicesima libertatis*, levied on Roman citizens.⁴⁹ It is possible that among the money that Augustus allegedly took from unnamed ‘kings’ there was the former property of the Herodians. In 6 CE the annexation of the Herodian kingdom certainly brought to Rome a high revenue: from Josephus we learn that under king Agrippa I, between 41 and 44 CE, Judaea yielded an annual revenue of 12 million *drachmai* or *denarii* (48 million *sestertii*); and this was after Rome had already plundered the Herodian treasure.⁵⁰

The aforementioned gymnasials of Egypt registered in 4/5 CE may have been urged to contribute to the new military treasury, perhaps in the form of tickets paid to obtain access to the gymnasium. It is also possible that, by regulating the access to the gymnasium, Augustus was trying to stabilize the situation in Egypt after the revolt by granting this privilege to a constricted and controlled number of Graeco-Egyptians, who could help to prevent potential revolts.

The failure of Gaius Caesar’s expedition against Parthia, the end of the Herodian dynasty, and the subsequent annexation of Judaea as a Roman province had a strong impact on the situation of the Jews of Egypt. Strabo, quoted by Josephus, states that:

47 Cf. the municipal law of Troesmis, containing a *commentarius ex quo lex Papia Poppaea lata est*, dated 28th June 5 CE: W. Eck, ‘Die *Lex Troesmensium*: ein Stadtgesetz für ein *Municipium Civium Romanorum*. Publikation der erhaltenen Kapitel und Kommentar’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 200 (2016), 565–606; here Augustus anticipated the marriage provisions adopted in 9 CE; the Augustan attention to demography, as Dalla Rosa 2018, op. cit. (n. 43), 87–88 notes, was linked to a need to increase legionary recruitment. Cass. Dio, 56.3.6–7 reports a speech pronounced by Augustus in 9 CE, where the emperor states that it was a social duty to produce children in order to defend the Roman world hegemony; cfr. I. Mastrorosa, ‘I prodromi della *Lex Papia Poppaea*: la propaganda demografica di Augusto in Cassio Dione LVI, 2–9’, in P. Desideri, ed., *Antidoron. Studi in onore di Barbara Scardigli Forster* (Pisa 2007), 281–304.

48 RG 17.2.

49 Cass. Dio, 55.25. Cfr. Suet., *Aug.* 49.1–5, Cass. Dio, 52.28.1–6; 55.25.5–6; 56.40.2. For a detailed overview of the reactions to these provisions and of the following crisis lasting until 9 CE, cf. Dalla Rosa 2018 op. cit. (n. 43), 96–97.

50 Jos., *AJ* 19.352.

Territory has been set apart for a Jewish settlement, and in Alexandria a great part of the city has been allocated to this nation. And an ethnarch of their own has been installed, who governs the people and adjudicates suits and supervises contracts and ordinances, just as if he were the head of a sovereign state.⁵¹

The passage must refer to the situation before 10/11 CE, when we learn from Philo and Josephus that the last *ethnarches* died without heirs, under the prefect Aquila.⁵² Augustus did not appoint another one, but replaced him with a Jewish *gerousia* in the first year of the prefect Magius Maximus, that is, before 14/15 CE.⁵³ Josephus and Philo do not criticise this move. Josephus claims that Augustus did not prevent a new ethnarch from succeeding the old one.⁵⁴ However, this cancellation of a 'traditional structure' may be read as a cautionary measure after the revolts in the last decades of Herodian rule and the major revolts after the census of Quirinius, especially the rise of the *sicarii* of Judas the Galilean. Augustus probably tried to maintain firmer control over the Jews of Egypt in a time of crisis. After the end of the ethnarch, the most powerful post given to a Jew in Egypt became the *alabarch*: the family of Gaius Julius Alexander the alabarch, the brother of Philo and the father of Tiberius Julius Alexander, future procurator of Judaea, prefect of Egypt and praetorian prefect, *de facto* became one of the most important families in the late-Augustan and Tiberian administration of the province.

51 Strabo, *FGrHist* II, A91 F7 = Jos., *AJ* 14.117. Trans. R. Marcus, adapted. On Jewish *politeumata* in Egypt, S. Honigman, 'Politeumata and ethnicity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt', *Ancient Society* 33 (2003), 61–102. Cf. also P. Sängler, *Die ptolemäische Organisationsform politeuma. Ein Herrschaftsinstrument zugunsten jüdischer und anderer hellenischer Gemeinschaften, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* 178 (Tübingen 2019).

52 Jos., *AJ* 14.117 and 19.283 mention the ethnarch, Philo, *Flacc.* 74 calls him *genarches*.

53 Philo, *Flacc.* 74. H. Box, *Philonis Alexandrini In Flaccum* (London 1939), 102 proposed that in 11/12 the ethnarch became the president of the *gerousia*, but this must be rejected as the passage shows clearly that the ethnarch ceased to exist under Aquila in 10/11 CE – the replacement with the *gerousia* must have followed immediately after the death of the ethnarch. On Magius Maximus as prefect in 14/15 CE, but probably from 12/13, Faoro 2016 op. cit. (n. 28), 28–29. On the ethnarch, Honigman 2003 op. cit. (n. 51), 71–76 and S. Honigman, 'Ethnic Minority Groups', in K. Vandorpe, ed., *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt* (Hoboken 2019), 315–325 at 320–321.

54 Jos., *AJ* 19.280–285.

6 Conclusion

To sum up, in the later part of his reign, and especially on the death of king Herod in 4 BCE and when preparing the Eastern campaign of Gaius Caesar, Augustus introduced stricter control over the Herodian treasuries, as well as on Egyptian temple finances, which were periodically used to cover Rome's military expenses.

The settlement of 4/3 BCE, the edict of tolerance towards the Jews, the *epikrisis* and census of 4/3 BCE were directed to prepare Gaius' expedition to the East and probably also to recruit auxiliary units from among the 'Greeks' of Egypt. This settlement opened Near Eastern trade routes to Egypt through Gaza, and at the same time placed more importance on the office of the alabarch as the link between the East, the world of the Herodians, Alexandria and Italy. The petition of the Alexandrian Jew Helenos to Turranius shows that the *epikrisis* of 4/3 BCE generated frictions concerning the status of some Alexandrian Jews and their relationship with the city gymnasium.

An important landmark in the transition from an economy of war and war booty to an age of a more regular provincial taxation was the deposition of Archelaus in 4/5, followed by the provincialisation of Judaea and the census of Quirinius in 5/6; this brought about a stricter fiscal control over the Jews, both in Judaea and in the Egyptian diaspora. In 4/5 CE the gymnasia of Oxyrhynchus were registered as a privileged class; we have little information on the closed number of the 6475 Greek *katoikoi* of the Arsinoite, but they may have been registered in one of these late Augustan *epikriseis* too. Around 10/11 the ethnarchs of Egypt became extinct and were replaced by the Jewish *gerousia*. Alexandrian Jews like Philo accepted this turning point, as Augustus gave them some power to control trade routes, and guaranteed protection to the Jewish community from the attacks of their Greek neighbours.

Like the Jews, the traditional Egyptian clergy may have accepted a stricter control on the part of Rome, as a way to legitimise their survival and role in the province. The late-Augustan settlement, in sum, on the one hand tolerated the 'traditional structures', on the other reinforced the internal divisions of the provincial population into Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews, by bringing these groups and their internal administration under firm Roman control. It emerges that, behind Rome's grant of 'tolerance' and 'privileges' to Jews, Graeco-Egyptians or Egyptian temples and priests, there were interests of a military and fiscal nature, such as the consolidation of imperial revenues and the reinforcement of Rome's dominion in the Near East.

Between Tradition and Innovation

Place Names and the Geography of Power in Late Republican and Early Imperial Hispania

Sergio España-Chamorro

1 Introduction: Toponymy, Agency, and its Use in Roman Hispania

It is not feasible to live in a disordered space. That is why psychological mechanisms are created to control it and to insert order into the experienced space.¹ The creation of models to represent and interpret the environment is directly linked to the cultural parameters and socio-economic complexity of a society. All these factors are crucial for building the image of the world both metonymically and metaphorically.² Bearing this in mind, the anguish caused by the fear of the unknown leads us to extrapolate parameters of what is already known in order to calm the anxiety caused by uncontrolled environments and situations. Toponymy plays an important role in the mental and cultural creation of a space. Giving it a name means endowing space with characteristics that generate the idea of a hypothetical imagined domain. These mechanisms of translation of associated ideas can be engendered by identifying places that remind one of other lived and experienced places. Naming places was used by ancient societies to associate certain characteristics and particularities retained in the communal memory and enhance their continuity as a society.³ This is the reason why the world order envisioned first by the Greeks and later by the Romans needed to create axes of symmetry at the extremes of the *oikoumene*, which occasionally led them to confuse the reality of space.⁴

1 A. Hernando, *Arqueología de la identidad* (Barcelona 2002), 49–110; P. Ciprés, ‘Celtiberia: la creación geográfica de un espacio provincial’, *Ktema* 19 (1993), 271–272.

2 D.R. Olson, *El mundo sobre el papel: el impacto de la escritura y la lectura del conocimiento*, (Barcelona 1999).

3 H. Jiménez Vialás, *Carteia y Traducta. Ciudades y territorio en la orilla norte del Estrecho de Gibraltar* (Barcelona 2019), 95. About memory in Rome, see A. Rodríguez Mayorgas, ‘La memoria cultural de Roma: el recuerdo oral de los orígenes’, *Gerión* 25.2, (2007), 105–124, and also from a general vision the main works of P. Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge-New York 1986), and P. Connerton, *How modernity forget* (Cambridge-New York 2009).

4 Of interest here are comparisons between different regions such as Iberia and Hiberia or Ethiopia and India (P. Schneider, *L’Ethiopie et L’Inde. Interférences et confusions aux extrémités*

One of the main signs of the appropriation of space is the naming of places. In colonial processes it can be a very useful weapon of symbolic and ideological domination to promote political and social change. For example, in 1664, the English took over New Amsterdam and renamed it New York after the Duke of York.⁵ The town never recovered its former place name. In contrast, on 27th May 1703 Tsar Peter the Great founded a new town on the site of a captured Swedish fortress. Saint Petersburg was named after the apostle Saint Peter and also linked to the Tsar himself. A Russianisation process transformed its name into Petrograd in 1914, which ten years later, following Lenin's death, changed to Leningrad.⁶ The city regained its original name (Saint Petersburg) in 1991, on the wishes of the local inhabitants. These two examples reveal significant characteristics of toponyms:

1. The importance of a place name as propaganda
2. The temporal factor of place names as historical landmarks
3. Their fragility during periods of political change

While we should remain wary of the historical distance and the varying contexts, the same characteristics may be found for ancient toponyms. Toponymy reveals the world view of a society with multiple cultural nuances and connotations. It speaks about language, links with other places, the natural environment, juridical categories, political implications, and so on.⁷ All this is comprised in a simple name that, in fact, is an abbreviated description of a place. This is part of the established practices of rule for each society. Romans were already aware of the political implications of place names as a strong element of maintaining power structures. Preserving place names ensured a notion of tradition in a smooth transition to a new governmental structure and administration for allies. But it was also used as a punishment for defeated enemies and created tension between local and new Roman power structures.

Renaming a place could be regarded as a rather disruptive act that severed the link between the local population and the territory, destroying personal and historical sensibilities. It meant a change of identity because it destroyed the main reference to the place and its chronological link with the past. This

du Monde Antique Rome 2004, 222), or between Colchis and Egypt (*vid.* D. Braun, *Georgia in Antiquity. A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia 550 BC–AD 562*, (Oxford 1994), 17, in which he shows the similarities between both regions as described by Herodotus).

5 H.L. Schoolcraft, 'The Capture of New Amsterdam', *The English Historical Review* 22, no. 88 (1907), 674–693.

6 J. David, 'Commemorative Place Names. Their Specificity and Problems', *Names* 59, no. 4 (2011), 214–228.

7 S. España-Chamorro, *Unde incipit Baetica. Los límites de la Baetica y su integración territorial (s. I–III)*, (Rome 2021), see especially 233–240.

situation creates even more profound changes in a society when a new language is imposed. In the case of Hispania, the pre-Roman societies had very different languages and the Roman conquest imposed Latin as the new language of power and administration.⁸ This also required a transformation of the place name, seeking new etymological links, either by translating it or transforming it tangentially or totally.⁹ There were several ways of renaming a toponym: from a simple readaptation to a new language to a complete change leaving no traces of the former name.

Place names have two main practical purposes: identification and orientation. However, the *Τόπος- νόμος* is more than that. It is a name: the name of a place, the name of a geographical point. The name is revealing in numerous respects. It refers to its place in the world; the society that inhabits that space; the language that society speaks; the political implications in which the place name was created; the links with other *topoi*; the orogenic characteristics to which it refers; the legal and juridical category of the town, etc. All of this is fixed in a single name. It is, in short, an abbreviated description of a place.

An important part of a place name is its chronology. Knowing the date of creation allows us to understand other information linked to the name, such as migrations, conquests, language changes, etc. The conquest of new provincial lands of the Iberian Peninsula resulted in a process in which fresh administrative structures were developed and new towns were founded. However, it was during the Republic and Early Empire that toponymy would be recognized by Rome as a potent expression of power. In this time, we can distinguish at least four different categories concerning town naming in Hispania:

1. Maintenance of the original Latinised pre-Roman toponym was the standard procedure for most of the *civitates peregrinae* and was widely used throughout the whole Empire. This is important to us because it preserved the sociolinguistic information of the original name.
2. Maintenance of the Latinised pre-Roman toponym with the addition of a new part (a *cognomen*). This system was also widely used, especially during the Empire, with the addition of *cognomina* that indicated a juridical promotion in a very specific period of time such as Iulia, Augusta, Claudia, Flavia, Ulpia, Antonina, etc.

8 See the compendium of J. De Hoz, *Historia lingüística de la Península Ibérica en la Antigüedad. I. Prolegómenos y mundo meridional prerromano* (Madrid 2010).

9 Toponymy in pre-Roman Hispania is a well-studied topic. The latest substantial synthesis is J. Untermann et. al., eds., *Die vorrömische einheimische Toponymie des antiken Hispanien. Monumenta Linguarum Hispanicarum. Band VI* (Wiesbaden 2018).

3. Original Roman names given to a new foundation were also a very common phenomenon. In this category we can point to the commemorative names linked to the town's *deductores*, mainly generals of the Republic or emperors.
4. Replacement of the original name. This was not very common, but we can see several examples on the Iberian Peninsula that appeared in different scenarios and for various reasons.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the two last categories in order to see the impact of the conquest and the Latinisation of the province of Hispania by alternating tradition and innovation. In this way, place names were an important part of the traditional structures of powers, authority and ideology. However, in a colonial situation and in periods of political changes, these structures were altered and adapted to the new regime. On some occasions, they were just incorporated into the new 'state landscape', but on others they were completely changed as part of a new policy designed to create a new geography of power. This chapter focuses particularly on the creation of commemorative place names that broke with the ancient indigenous structures to create a new structure of empire. They were established in different contexts: military situations commemorating victories and triumphs; re-foundations providing a new juridical category (sometimes as a gift, sometimes as a punishment); a process of administrative changes, etc. In this chapter, the process of (re)naming have been subdivided into three different phases (Republic, transition, and early empire) in order to show its development over time.

A question that still has to be addressed beforehand is who created these place names. Generals (*imperatores*) would have been the main actors in such decisions, but they would also have been approved by the Roman senate. This innovative action is part of the agency process of each individual. They are usually impelled to act by the situation, but the final decision is part of the deliberate choice of each. Individual agency goes together with a progressive development of the individualisation of some social classes of Roman society. It is quite remarkable that this process was not really common during the Republic, especially in the Late Republic, when political competition and private propaganda was developed in many different ways. A. Dreizehnter defined the process of naming a town with a personal name as 'unthinkable', but F. Pina Polo has already remarked that his analysis did not take into account all the cases and evidence and his conclusions failed to provide a general statement.¹⁰ Agency and the development of individualism in the upper

¹⁰ A. Dreizehnter, 'Pompeius als Städtegründer', *Chiron* 5 (1975), 234; F. Pina Polo, 'Foundations of Provincial Towns as Memorials of imperatores: the Case of Hispania', in:



FIGURE 6.1 Toponyms mentioned in chapter 6

political and aristocratic classes during the Republic was the origin of this process. However, founding a town not only represented an individual honour and propaganda, but could also be extended to the whole family. That is why, even though the decision may have been taken by a single *imperator*, it must not be understood as a simple individual action, because it was determined by the genealogy and family networks in the political system during the Republic.

2 Commemorative Town Names in Roman Hispania

In order for a toponym to be considered a fully functional name, all four of the following criteria must be fulfilled: naming, identification, differentiation, and localisation.¹¹ As far as commemorative names are concerned, the primary function is naming, while the remaining functions are of secondary importance.

A. Díaz Fernández, ed., *Provinces and Provincial Command in Republican Rome: Genesis, Development and Governance* (Sevilla – Zaragoza 2021), 146.

¹¹ David 2011, op. cit. (n. 6), 217.

Italica is probably the first exonym used by the Romans on the Iberian Peninsula. According to Appian, this first permanent Roman settlement in southern Iberia was founded by Scipio Africanus and settled with injured soldiers from his legions.¹² Its symbolism lies in the fact that it was the first completely new foundation settled with Italian soldiers, although archaeology has revealed a prior pre-Roman settlement.¹³ The name Italica was coined from the name *Italia*.¹⁴ It does not refer to a single important person but even this could be considered to be the first commemorative name.

“Naming is often elevated to a highly important, even sacred status”.¹⁵ The main purpose of this is to create a new reality in which the inhabitants can be identified. With this action, the Romans were making the locals aware of the new power structures. The indigenous population can be aware of the new system with the use of exonyms or a readaptation of the original names.

This naming process, which began in the third century BCE, was a common practice that gained strength in the late Republic as a way of usurping the indigenous landscape and creating a new ‘state landscape’. However, it appears to have been focused on the Iberian Peninsula and was less common in other areas. As J. David points out, this new townscape “must be created as soon as a political change occurs”.¹⁶ In Hispania some early foundations, such as Valentia (138 BCE) or Pollentia (123 BCE), bear the name of Italian archaic divinities.¹⁷ They also have connotations of power: Valentia means courage,

12 App., *Iber* 7.38: καὶ αὐτοῖς ὁ Σκιπίων ὀλίγην στρατιάν ὡς ἐπὶ εἰρήνῃ καταλιπών, συνώκισε τοὺς τραυματίας ἐς πόλιν, ἦν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας Ἰταλικὴν ἐκάλεσε: καὶ πατρίς ἐστὶ Τραϊανοῦ τε καὶ Ἀδριανοῦ τῶν ὕστερον Ῥωμαίοις ἀρξάντων τὴν αὐτοκράτορα ἀρχήν. Translation (by Loeb Classical Library): Scipio left them a small force suitable for a peace establishment, and settled his sick and wounded soldiers in a town which he named Italica after Italy, and this was the native place of Trajan and Hadrian, who afterwards became emperors of Rome.

13 J.M. Luzón Nogué, *Excavaciones en Itálica: Estratigrafía en el Pajar de Artillo. (Campaña 1970)* (Madrid 1973); O. Rodríguez-Gutiérrez and F.J. García-Fernández, ‘Itálica: la fundación de Publio Cornelio Escipión Africano en el corazón de la Hispania púnica’, in: M. Bendala Galán, ed., *Los Escipiones: Roma conquista Hispania* (Madrid 2016), 223–243; J. Beltrán Torres, ‘Itálica antes de Roma’, in: J. Beltrán y J.L. Escacena, eds., *Itálica. Investigaciones arqueológicas en la Vetus Urbs* (Sevilla 2022) 281–316.

14 Rodríguez-Gutiérrez and García-Fernández, 2016, op. cit. (n. 13), 228–9.

15 David 2011, op. cit. (n. 6), 217.

16 David 2011, op. cit. (n. 6), 217–8: “One more function should be mentioned with regard to the act of naming: the function of mythicization. Political power uses commemorative names in an attempt to usurp the landscape. A new landscape created through names is often described as a ‘state/political landscape’”.

17 For Valentia, see Liv., *Per.* 55. For Pollentia, see Str., 3.5.1. Valentia was founded by Decimus Junius Brutus Callaicus (see S. España-Chamorro, “Los esquivos oppida de Brutobriga y

Pollentia could mean superiority.¹⁸ The town of Pollentia was founded along with Palma by Quintus Caecilius Metellus following the latter's victory over Balearic pirates.¹⁹ The commemoration of military virtue and victory was central to the foundation of Pollentia and Palma as much as of Valentia. This is strongly reflected in their names. Palma is linked to the *palma triumphalis*, the palm branches that symbolised victory and triumph.

The examples of Pollentia, Valentia, and Palma are part of a wider phenomenon of commemorative place names during the Republic and the early Roman Empire. Along these lines, we can find new foundations that bear the toponymy of personal names of generals in honour of their victories and military campaigns in Hispania (discussed below):

- Gracchuris (179 BCE) – Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus
- Caepio/Caepiana (150 BCE) – Quintus Servilius Caepio
- Brutobriga (ca. 138–133 BCE) – Decimus Junius Brutus Callaicus
- Valeria (93–92 BCE) – Caius Valerius Gracchus
- Metellinum (79 BCE) – Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius
- Pompaelo (75–74 BCE) – Cneus Pompeius Magnus
- Celsa Lepida (44 BCE) – Marcus Aemilius Lepidus
- Norba Caesarina (34 BCE) – Caius Norbanus Flaccus

There are also several *mansiones* or *castra* that follow the same line:

- Semproniana (179 BCE?) – Probably Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus
- Castra Aelia (170 BCE?) – Probably Aelius Patus²⁰
- Castra Servilia (140–139 BCE) – Quintus Servilius Caepionis²¹
- Castra Caecilia, Vicus Caecilius and Caeciliana (79–76 BCE) – Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius²²
- Castra Postumiana²³

Turobriga: una propuesta sobre su ubicación y su relación con las deportaciones célticas”, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 123, no. 1 (2021), 137–170).

18 Liv., 39.7.8 speaks about a statue of the goddess Pollentia; Valentia was a divinity worshiped in Ocrinum (see *CIL* XI, 4082 “ex visu deae Valentiae”, and also Tert., *Apol.* c.24). For a linguistic discussion of those place names, see: M.J. Pena, ‘La tribu Velina en Mallorca y los nombres de Palma y Pollentia’, *Faventia* 26, no. 2 (2004), 70–1.

19 For the place names see Pena 2004, op. cit. (n. 18), 70–1. For the foundation of Palma, see Str., 3.5.1.

20 Mentioned by Liv., *fr.* 1.91.3. It is difficult to trace the origin of this name. F. Pina Polo and J. Pérez Casas, ‘El oppidum Castra Aelia y las campañas de Sertorius en los años 77–76 a.C.’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 11 (1998), 245–264 proposed attributing it to Quintus Aelius Paetus as governor of Hispania in 170 BCE. Even though we do not know for sure whether he was governor of this province, it seems feasible to propose him as governor and founder of this military camp.

21 Plin., *NH* 4.117.

22 Castra Caecilia: Plin., *NH* 4.117, Ptol., 2.5.8, *It. Ant.* 433.4.

23 *BHisp.* 8.6.

All these toponyms played a part in the creation of the Iberian provinces and the establishment of this new reality. It is a commemorative topography described as impersonal, cold and onymically sterile, being unrelated to the past and culture of the region.²⁴ Instead, this new situation is a mythical construction that helps the political power create a new myth and adapt history to suit its ideological interpretation. Commemorative town names express a new form of control and a particular political power. The evolution of these names can be divided into three phases that explain how the phenomenon evolved.

3 First Phase: the Conquest of Hispania during the Republic

The first stage of the developing process of commemorative names began with Gracchuris. Inspired by Hellenistic models of naming, such as Philippi, Philippopolis or the multiple Alexandria, several governors named towns after themselves as a form of commemoration and self-representation. It was a social process in which generals developed a special individualisation, but also with the permission of the senate.

Gracchuris was founded on the site of a pre-Roman town. Festus tells us the previous name was Ilurcis. Gracchuris seems to be the first commemorative place name of its type and is also very controversial in linguistic terms. The suffix *-is* undoubtedly expresses a pre-Roman origin.²⁵ It is difficult to determine whether the linguistic origin of Ilurcis is the Vasconic or Iberian language.²⁶ However, the name Gracchurris undoubtedly uses the Vasconic toponymic suffix *-urri*, which signifies 'town'. F. Pina Polo rightly points out that this kind of commemorative town was populated by defeated people transferred by order of the founder to the new *civitas peregrina*.²⁷ He also proposed that the people transferred to Gracchurris were probably Celtiberians. However, this town was in Vasconian territory and F. Villar reminds us that the Iberian stratum of the first toponym was erased.²⁸ A possible readaptation would be Iligracco or something similar (*ili-* means town in Iberian). The sense of using *-urri* instead of *ili-* probably means that the defeated population transferred there spoke a

24 David 2011, op. cit. (n. 6), 218.

25 Paul. Fest., 97M: *Gracchuris urbs Hiberiae regiones, dicta a Graccho Sempronio, quae antea Ilurcis nominabatur*.

26 See F. Villar Liébana, *Indoeuropeos y no indoeuropeos en la Hispania prerromana* (Salamanca 2000), 259–262, 282–284, 287–289, 314, 383–384, 392, 405; J.L. García Alonso, *La península ibérica en la Geografía de Claudio Ptolomeo* (Vitoria 2003), 124; J.A. Correa Rodríguez, *Toponimia Antigua de Andalucía* (Sevilla 2016), 392–393.

27 Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10), 147 and 153.

28 Villar Liébana, 2000, op. cit. (n. 26), 194–5.

Vasconic and not an Iberian (or Celtiberian) language. Another possibility is that both populations were resettled in this Vasconic area after the war, as punishment in the case of the Celtiberians (as defeated enemies) and as reward for the Vascones (as allies). In his *Periochae*, Livy tells us that Gracchuris was founded as a symbol of victory after the war and as a monument to his triumph.²⁹ Its naming set in motion the process of commemoration by creating town names. Generals adapted their personal names, sometimes with palaeo-Hispanic suffixes and prefixes to demonstrate to the local population that settlements were not merely ephemeral, but actual towns. The use of palaeo-Hispanic suffixes and prefixes was also a means of reappropriating the language, the place and the indigenous culture.

Caepio has been associated with Quintus Servilius Caepius.³⁰ There is neither epigraphic evidence nor any classical sources that tell us where it was. It has been linked to the Caepiana mentioned by Ptolemy that was located between the Rivers Tagus and Sado, not far from the ocean, although there is no consistent proof of its location.³¹ Ptolemy described the town in the list of *Celtici* living in Lusitania, although its name is not Celtic, but Latin.³² In Latin a personal name and the suffix *-ana(s)* refers to possession and there is another example with Calpurniana. For Caepio, however, there is no reason to believe that Caepius had possessions in Lusitania at this early time. L. Silva Reneses, following F. Cadiou, rejected A. Schulten's theory of a military origin like Castra Caepiana, because such *castra* as a rule took the general's *nomen* rather than his *cognomen*.³³ Possibly, Caepio/Caepiana was a Latin foundation of a settlement in the Celti territory in Lusitania, which may have been linked to another process of deportation of defeated populations.³⁴

29 Liv., *Per.* 40.50.

30 App., *Hisp.* 75, Diod., *Sic.* 33.1.4.

31 Ptol., 2.5.5; with L. Silva Reneses, 'Embajadas, rendiciones y tratados: los traslados de ligures apuanos y lusitanos (s. II a. C.); *Ktèma* 41 (2016), 196; A. Guerra, 'Caepiana: uma reavaliação crítica do problema da sua localização e enquadramento histórico', *Revista Portuguesa do Arqueologia* 7 (2004), 217–235 proposed to place it in Chibanes (PT).

32 García Alonso 2003, op. cit. (n. 26), 46, 96, 444.

33 A. Schulten, 'Las guerras de 154–72 a. C.', in: *Fontes Hispaniae antiquae* vol. 4 (Barcelona 1937) Barcelona, 123; F. Cadiou, *Hibera in terra miles: les armées romaines et la conquête de l'Hispanie sous la République (218–45 av. J.-C.)* (Madrid 2008), 284–286.

34 R. Knapp, *Aspects of the Roman Experience in Iberia, 206–100 B.C.* (Valladolid 1977), 148; F. Pina Polo, 'Deportaciones como castigo e instrumento de colonización durante la República romana: el caso de Hispania', in: J. Remesal Rodríguez et al., eds., *Vivir en tierra extraña: emigración e integración cultural en el mundo antiguo: actas de la reunión realizada en Zaragoza los días 2 y 3 de junio de 2003* (Barcelona 2004), 230; F. Pina Polo, 'Deportación of indigenous population as a strategy for Roman dominion in Hispania', in: *Limes XX. XX*

According to Appian and Diodorus, the town of Brutobriga was founded by Brutus to settle the remnants of the defeated troops of Viriathus and Tautamus at the end of the Lusitanian Wars.³⁵ The message of its foundation was one of conquest and one of tolerance: its commemorative name reminded the new inhabitants of the general who had defeated them; the bestowal of lands expressed *clementia*. Again, the indigenous suffix *-briga* was taken from the Celtic or Celtiberian language and is an indication of a *civitas peregrina*. Much like Gracchuris, it may also have been a nod to the pre-Roman origin of the population. We do not know the exact location of the town.³⁶

Valeria was founded after Flaccus' victory and suppression of the Celtiberian revolt.³⁷ Archaeology has revealed that a Celtiberian settlement was there before 90 BCE and there is proof that this *oppidum* would have borne an indigenous name.³⁸ Some researchers have associated it with Althaea, the capital of the Olcades (a Celtiberian people), yet definitive evidence is lacking.³⁹ Nevertheless, we are probably witnessing a replacement of the previous name with a commemorative Latin toponym, again after a victory over the Celtiberians. In this case the name is purely Latin, without any palaeo-Hispanic addition.

Metellinum is another case of an indigenous settlement obliterated by a new Roman town with a Latin name. Archaeology and numismatics have revealed that Conisturgis was the ancient name of the oppidum where Metellus founded Metellinum, the suffix *-urgis* definitely pointing to a Turdetanian origin.⁴⁰ Metellinum and the other military *castra* were founded as a line of defence against attacks during the Lusitanian war, but only Metellinum became a town. The refoundation deliberately used the Latin form without an indigenous suffix (e.g. Metellinurgis) as in the case of Valeria.

Congreso Internacional de Estudios sobre la Frontera Romana I (Madrid 2009), 282; Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10), 152.

35 App., *Iber.* 44 = *Hist. Rom.* VI, Diod., 33.1.4. Also see Steph. Byz., *Ethnika*, B187.1.

36 My proposal in *España-Chamorro* 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 137–170.

37 Plin., *NH* 3.25. Knapp 1977, op. cit. (n. 34), 20, proposed that Flaccus could have become the patron of Valeria and that this is why the inhabitants named the town after him. Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10), 160 disagrees: "Is it realistic to assume that the local people who had been defeated and transplanted to another place were willing to honour the man who had crushed them? Is it not more plausible to think that the triumphator wished to enhance his glory and renown by linking his victory to a city bearing his name?"

38 E. Gozalbes Cravioto, 'Una introducción: entre Valeria y Valeria', in: E. Gozalbes Cravioto, ed., *La ciudad romana de Valeria (Cuenca)* (Cuenca 2009), 13–36.

39 G. Carrasco Serrano, *Los pueblos prerromanos en Castilla-La Mancha* (Cuenca 2007), 96.

40 M. Almagro Gorbea, 'Medellín-Conisturgis. Reinterpretación geográfica del Suroeste de Iberia', *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* 126 (2008), 84–115; See Villar Liébana, 2000, op. cit. (n. 26), 259–262, 282–284, 287–289, 314, 383–384, 392, 405; García Alonso 2003, op. cit. (n. 26), 124; Correa Rodríguez 2016, op. cit. (n. 26), 392–393.

Pompaelo was founded by Pompey the Great after the Sertorian Wars as a way of reinforcing the power of the *optimates*.⁴¹ The town was important as a mid-point between the Ebro Valley and Aquitania.⁴² There is no information in the literary sources about a previous name or any archaeological proof of a pre-Pompeian settlement on the site. However, it is considered the most important town of the Vascones.⁴³ The linguistic interpretation is not conclusive. As a Latin name it appears unnatural, and it can be hypothesised that the final part of the word (*-elo*) derives from *-ili*, an ancient form of the Vasconic suffix *-iri/-uri* (= town).⁴⁴ This town was part of a major project in the Pyrenees, together with Gerunda (Girona, Spain) and Lugdunum Convenarum (Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, France) in Aquitania. However, Pompaelo was the only town that took the name of the *deductor*. This could mean that it was the most important element in the Pompeian plan, a new foundation, which is why he decided to give it his own name. The town also symbolised control of the Pyrenees, for which Pompey also built a trophy monument on the summit of the mountain.⁴⁵ It is no coincidence that, at the beginning of the Empire, Augustus reappropriated the symbolic control of the mountains and built his own trophy monument at Lugdunum Convenarum.⁴⁶

For all of the towns mentioned so far, F. Pina Polo has demonstrated they were founded after a victory over a people and that all of them were partly settled with *populi* deported from other places:⁴⁷

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- 41 Str., 3.4.10. appears to state this, calling the city Pompeiopolis instead. Most authors, except A.M. Canto, 'La tierra del toro. Ensayo de identificación de ciudades vasconas', *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 70 (1997), 31–70, agree with this interpretation. About the name, see Plut., *Sert.* 21.8.
- 42 F. Beltrán Lloris and F. Pina Polo, 'Roma y los Pirineos: la formación de una frontera', *Chiron* 24 (1994), 103–133.
- 43 Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10), 157 based on Str., 3.4.10.
- 44 García Alonso 2003, op. cit. (n. 26), 288.
- 45 Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo 1994, op. cit. (n. 42), 113–5; J. Arce, 'Los trofeos de Pompeyo «In Pyrenaei Iugis»', *Archivo Español De Arqueología* 67 (1994), 261–268.
- 46 J.-L. Schenck-David, 'Le trophée de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges: nouvelles hypothèses sur son agencement et sa place dans la ville antique', *Mémoires de marbre et d'airain, monuments et monnaies antiques* (Perpignan 2004), 41–50. See also E.S. Ramage, 'Augustus' Propaganda in Gaul', *Klio* 79, no. 1 (1997) 117–60. For Roman symbolic expressions of control in the landscape in the age of Augustus, also see Betjes in this volume.
- 47 Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10). Although based on data from this work (amongst others), the table is my own.

Town	Origin	Deported populi
Gracchuris	Iberians (?)	Celtiberians/Vascones (?)
Caepio	Celts (?)	Lusitani (?)
Brutobriga	Celts or Celtiberians	Lusitani/Callaeci (?)
Valeria	Celtiberians	Celtiberians
Metellinum	Turdetani	Lusitani (?)
Pompaelo	Vascones	Vettones/Celtiberians (?)

In fact, commemorative names were a way of punishing the deported inhabitants by depriving them of an indigenous identity linked to their landscape and language. With the destruction of the indigenous communities' political memory, they were no longer inhabitants of Ilurcis, Conisturgis or other towns, but of a restructured society belonging to the Roman Republic. Gracchuris, Caepio, and Brutobriga were the first, almost anecdotic, commemorative foundations, together with other towns founded to mark a victory but with other kinds of place names such as Valentia, Palma and Pollentia. During the first century BCE, the number of commemorative foundations increased significantly. It is very difficult to determine why some generals used palaeo-Hispanic suffixes and prefixes, while others did not. Perhaps it was a personal choice of each general, as part of his human agency. But it is also linked to the ultimate purpose of the political programme, which envisioned the future plan for the region. It probably had to do with the creation of a link between the indigenous populations that lived in the towns or the erasure of their ethnic past.

Regarding *castra*, these would receive commemorative names from the mid-second century BCE onwards. These were not commemorative towns as such, but a sort of commemorative military camp taking the name of an important general. The difference is that most of these *castra* had a short life, which does not allow for a real propaganda plan with these place names. For example, we have several examples in the Iberian peninsula such as Castra Caecilia, Castra Aelia, Castra Servilia and Castra Postumiana.⁴⁸

48 Following Pina Polo 2021, op. cit. (n. 10), 146 n. 4, Castra Caecilia (Plin., *NH* 4.117, Ptol., 2.5.8, *It. Ant.* 433.4); Castra Aelia (Liv., *fr.* 91.3); Castra Servilia (Plin., *NH* 4.117); and Castra Postumiana (*BHisp.* 8).

4 Second Phase: Preparing for the Empire?

A new model of commemorative names arose during the Late Republic. This is first of all attested by the case of Celsa Lepida. This was a very important Iberian town called *Kelse* that had ensured Pompey's dominance of the valley during the civil wars. Lepidus, twice governor of Hispania Citerior (48–47 BCE and 44–42 BCE), already knew the topography of this region. That is why he founded a colony here to punish the inhabitants for their support of Pompey. It was given the name of *colonia Iulia Victrix Lepida*, which erased the indigenous name. This is another example of a commemorative name for a town founded after a war (probably in 48–47 BCE when Caesar was still alive and some months after the Battle of Ilerda, during the civil wars). Here we can observe a different procedure: the indigenous name was erased, but the commemorative names were added as *cognomina*. It was also the first town in Hispania to bear *cognomina* of two different people. In fact, the *deductor* was Lepidus, who gave his name as the main name of the town while the *cognomina* *Victrix* and *Iulia* referred to the Battle of Ilerda and Caesar respectively.⁴⁹ When Lepidus lost his triumphal powers in 36 BCE, the indigenous name was recovered and it became the *colonia Iulia Victrix Celsa*. These particularities would have been related to a specific moment of political change, the new Roman administrative policy on the Iberian Peninsula and the town's juridical category as a Roman colony of veterans.

Then there is Norba Caesarina, founded in 33 BCE by Norbanus Flaccus as a commemoration of his triumph *ex Hispaniae* in 34 BCE.⁵⁰ Archaeology has not provided any proof of a pre-Roman settlement at this place and the name does not reveal any aspect of a previous origin.⁵¹ It may therefore be assumed that this Roman colony was founded *ex novo*. The use of Caesarina is peculiar because other *coloniae* or *municipia* founded by Caesar or Augustus frequently bore the *cognomen* *Iulia* with the single exception of Asido Caesarina, in Baetica. This has been understood as a previously unfinished project of Caesar

49 M.P. García-Bellido, 'La historia de la colonia Lepida-Celsa según sus documentos numismáticos: su ceca imperial', *Archivo Español De Arqueología* 76 (187–188) (2013), 275–6. Plin., *NH* 3.24, quotes the people of Celsa as a Roman colony.

50 Old theories suggested that the name came originally from the veterans (the colony of Norba, in Italy), but there is no proof of this. See the historical discussion in A. García y Bellido, 'Del carácter militar activo de las colonias romanas de la Lusitania y regiones inmediatas', *Trabalhos De Antropologia E Etnologia* 17 (1959), 299–304.

51 It has only been supposed a *contributio* with castra Caecilia and castra Servilia (following Plin., *NH* 4.17).

that was materialised by Augustus.⁵² The name Norba is on the same line as Celsa: the *nomen* was taken from the *deductor* but the *cognomen* referred to Caesar. In this case, no palaeo-Hispanic element can be identified in the name. Norba and Celsa began a new process in the use of commemorative names. This can be considered as a period of transition for this model in which the *deductor* was included in the name together with other cognomina. There is not only the name of the emperor who founded the town, but also Roman generals acting in the name of the great men of the Late Republic, in fact Julius Caesar, added a cognomen referring to him. The agency of this act was still present in the naming action, but the subordination to the *triumviri* motivated the addition of the *cognomen*.

Under Caesar, and later Augustus, the use of personal names changed drastically due to the political evolution of the Iberian Peninsula.⁵³ The beginning of a new model of administration with radical changes in the provincial structures and the juridical categories of towns led to various scenarios regarding toponymy.⁵⁴ For example, the pattern that we saw for Gracchurris or Brutobriga also appeared for some Caesarean or Augustan *civitates peregrinae*, e.g. Augustobriga, Caesarobriga or Iuliobriga. Again, these commemorative toponyms have the indigenous suffix *-briga*. In a previous article I have proposed that Augustobriga and Caesarobriga renamed former towns, such as the already known Brutobriga and Turobriga, which would have continued the process of erasing and replacing the former names.⁵⁵

The general plan for the juridical promotion of towns began with Caesar and continued under Augustus.⁵⁶ When the towns were founded or re-founded as Roman colonies during this period, they did not use this system of personal names as the main name, but they added a particular *cognomen*. This was also a commemorative act not only of a military triumph in some cases, but also as a mark of their promotion. This is perfectly visible in the names of *coloniae* and *municipia* bearing the *cognomina* Iulia or Augusta. We can only note two specific cases in which the part of the name was not a simple *cognomen*, but the main *nomen*:

52 This theory, already proposed by García y Bellido 1959, op. cit. (n. 50), was later revisited, but no other conclusions were reached.

53 E.S. Ramage, 'Augustus' propaganda in Spain', *Klio* 80 (1998), 434–490, 440.

54 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 7).

55 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 137–170.

56 Ramage 1998, op. cit. (n. 53), 440; González and J.C. Saquete, eds., *Colonias de César y Augusto en la Andalucía romana* (Rome 2011).

- Caesaraugusta did not reuse any aspect of its indigenous name Salduvie, which has been recorded by Pliny.⁵⁷ The change occurred when Augustus decided to establish this colony and to give it his name.⁵⁸ P. Le Roux has recently pointed out that the original name should be used instead of Caesarea Augusta.⁵⁹
- It is unclear if a previous settlement underlay Augusta Emerita, yet we know that the colony took over some parts of the territories of Dipo and Metellinum.⁶⁰ Emerita was a foundation that commemorated the victory in the Cantabrian Wars at some time between 16 and 13 BCE, at the time of Augustus' third journey to the Iberian Peninsula, reminding us of similar commemorative place names of the Republic.⁶¹ P. Le Roux also indicated that, in the absence of a local name such as Ammaedara or Auenticum, Emerita became the main name, like Caesaraugusta.⁶²

After Caesar and Augustus we can find very few cases of toponyms related to emperors on the Iberian Peninsula. Even though they are outside the period studied in this paper, it is worth mentioning them briefly. From the time of Claudius we have the cases of Baelo Claudia and Claudionerium, from that of Galba the promotion of Clunia to *colonia* Sulpicia, some towns in the north, such as Flaviobriga and Flavionavia under the Flavian dynasty, and finally, under Hadrian we have *colonia* Iulia Aelia Italica.

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- 57 Plin., *NH* 3.24. There is little evidence of the pre-Roman settlement (M. Beltrán Lloris, 'Topografía y evolución urbana', in: F. Beltrán Lloris, ed., *Zaragoza. Colonia Caesar Augusta, Ciudades romanas de Hispania. Las capitales provinciales* (Rome 2007), 29–31.). This has allowed P. Le Roux, 'Colonia Caesaraugusta (CCA). Construire un nom', *PRO MERITO LABORVM. Miscellanea epigrafica per Gianfranco Paci* (Tivoli 2021), 341–56, to affirm that there is no evidence of the pre-Roman town on the same site as Caesaraugusta. Regarding the evolution from one to the other, see F. Pina Polo, 'De la ciudad indígena Salduie-Salduvia a la colonia romana Caesar Augusta', *Gerión* 35 (2017), 541–550.
- 58 F. Beltrán Lloris, 'Caesar Augusta, ciudad de Augusto', *Caesaraugusta* 69 (1992), 31–44.
- 59 Le Roux 2021 op. cit. (n. 57), 341–56.
- 60 M. Almagro-Gorbea et al., 'Dipo: ciudad "tartésico-turdetana" en el valle del Guadiana', *Conimbriga* 48 (2009), 17; F.G. Rodríguez Martín, 'Reflexiones en torno a la elección del solar de Augusta Emerita: Diacronía en la vertebración del territorio', in: J.G. Gorges and T. Nogales Basarre, eds., *Origen de la Lusitania Romana (s. I a.C.–Id.C.): VII Mesa Redonda Internacional sobre la Lusitania Romana* (Mérida 2010), 128 ff.
- 61 This theory has been widely accepted by most scholars. It was proposed by P. Le Roux, *L'armée romaine et l'organisation des provinces ibériques d'Auguste à l'invasion de 409* (Paris 1982), 54–57, 75 n. 316. See also J.M. Abascal Palazón, 'Los tres viajes de Augusto a Hispania y su relación con la promoción jurídica de ciudades', *Iberia* 9 (2006), 63–78.
- 62 P. Le Roux, 'Colonia Emerita', *Anas* 25–26 (2012–2013), 297–304.

5 Third Phase: Replacing Names with No Commemoration

5.1 *Citerior*

There are also several ‘strange’ cases of name coexistence that cannot be connected to commemorative names. We have evidence from literary sources, coins and inscriptions from other towns that allows us to see a twin name for these places. This particularity appears to be concentrated in Hispania Citerior, with most of the cases in the north-eastern part of the province:

- Arse = Saguntum
- Cesse = Tarraco
- Untikesken = Emporiae
- Hibera Ilercavonia = Dertosa
- Beibum = Salacia
- Bolskan = Osca
- Paemeiobirga = Interamnium Flavium

Why did all these towns change such an important element of identity as the main name? In the case of Arse(sken)/Saguntum, it appears to have been a dual name as both are documented in sources from the fifth–fourth century BCE.⁶³ The first toponym is reflected in the palaeo-Hispanic script on the coin legends from the fourth to the first centuries BCE and Ptolemy appears to be the only classical author who cites it as “Ἀρσι”.⁶⁴ The form Saguntum is mentioned on the famous lead from Ampurias dated to the fifth century BCE as Σαιγάνθη, which may be the first indication of such a name.⁶⁵ Mentions in a similar form are not found until the second century BCE, when variations of Saguntum appear in other epigraphic and literary sources (from Polybius onwards).⁶⁶ Arse was linked with the town and Saguntum with the port, which was better known on the trade networks. The predominance and perpetuation of Saguntum was probably motivated by the Romanophile part of the population and the fact that this name was better known than that of Arse.⁶⁷

63 See the recent approach by M.J. Estarán Tolosa, ‘Arse-Saguntum, la ciudad de los dos nombres’, *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* 27, no. 1 (2021), 109–132.

64 Ptol., 2.6.62.

65 R.A. Santiago, ‘En torno a los nombres antiguos de Sagunto’, *Saguntum* 23 (1990), 123–140; R.A. Santiago, ‘Enigmas en torno a Saguntum y Roda’, *Faventia* 16/2 (1994), 51–64; M.P. De Hoz, *Inscripciones griegas de España y Portugal* (Madrid 2014), 129.

66 Such as Ζάκανθα, Ζάκυνθος, Σάγουντον, Σάγουντον. See all the sources in Estarán Tolosa 2021, op. cit. (n. 63).

67 Estarán Tolosa 2021, op. cit. (n. 63), 126–7.

The same seems to be true of the names Cesse/Tarraco. Both are documented in Livy and on the coins dated before 211 BCE.⁶⁸ Pliny defined Tarraco as *Scipionum opus* and its non-Latin name reveals an indigenous origin confirmed by archaeology. The name Cesse disappeared at the end of the Republic.⁶⁹ Again, we are dealing with the problem of a double indigenous name that has been linked to a *dipolis*. Maybe, this was a similar case as Saguntum: the name Tarraco turned out to be more famous and popular than Cesse, thus leading to the latter's disappearance.

Coinage allows us to see the twin name of Emporiae and Untikesken. The latter has been identified with the indigenous Indigetan town Indika.⁷⁰ This ethnic name has an Iberian origin and appeared between the first half of the second century BCE until the time of Augustus.⁷¹ This double name seems to have been the differentiation of a *dipolis* like Tarraco and disappeared with the foundation of the Roman colony.

In all these double name processes, we can see that this affects to two different groups of pre-Roman names on coins: those with a town name (Cesse and Salduie) and those with an ethnic name (Untikesken and Arsesken).⁷²

The importance of these three towns in Iberian times due to their geographical situation is undeniable. They actively helped the Romans in their conquest, which makes it unlikely that the name was changed as a form of punishment. There are doubts and hypotheses about the acquisition of their new toponyms that have alluded to different reasons. They include the creation of *dipoleis* with different legal statuses (one Iberian, one Roman), a name change linked to a legal promotion, or an unchangeable use of both names as the official toponymy. This contrasts with an apparent absence of toponymic changes in Italy, but corresponds to similar processes in Gaul and Africa.⁷³

68 Cesse/Cissa/Kissa: Liv., 21.60. Tarrakon/Tarraco: Liv., 22.22, 26.5. L. Villaronga, 'Uso de la ceca de Emporion por los romanos para cubrir sus necesidades financieras en la Península Ibérica durante la Segunda Guerra Púnica', *Studi per Laura Breglia, Suppl. Bolletino di Numismatica* 4 (1984), 209–214; J. Ruiz de Arbulo, 'Kesse/Tarrákon/Tarraco. En torno a los orígenes de una ciudad portuaria', in: L. Mercuri et al., eds., *Implantations humaines en milieu littoral méditerranéen: facteurs d'installation et processus d'appropriation de l'espace* (Antibes 2014), 166.

69 Plin., *NH* 3.21. Also see «Tarraco» (s.v.), in: M.P. García-Bellido and C. Blázquez Cerrato, *Diccionario de las cecas y pueblos hispánicos (DCyPH)* (Madrid 2001, vol. 2), 361–2.

70 Steph. Byz., 146.

71 «U.n.ti.ke.s.ke.n» (s.v.), *DCyPH*, 387.

72 P.P. Ripollès, 'Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces: Spain', in: C. Howgego et al., eds., *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces* (Oxford 2005), 82.

73 Liv., 23.26–28; Ramage 1997, op. cit. (n. 46); E.S. Ramage, 'Augustus' propaganda in Africa', *Klio* 82, no. 1 (2000), 171–207.

There are other difficult cases with double names in Hispania Citerior. Hibera is also known as *municipium* Hibera Iulia Ilercavonia judging by the coins from the end of the Augustan period.⁷⁴ However, the coins from the Tiberian era added the third *nomen* Dertosa, which also appears in our literary sources and inscriptions.⁷⁵ Hibera, Ilercavonia, and Dertosa are each palaeo-Hispanic names, which makes it difficult to make sense of this. One solution that has been proposed is the theory of a twin town (*dipolis*) on each bank of the river, although there is no archaeological proof of this.⁷⁶ Another hypothesis is a transferred population that brought with them the name of their place of origin, as in the case of Arucci-Turobriga.

More obscure is the case of Salacia Imperatoria.⁷⁷ In the first bilingual coin emissions, it appears to express the indigenous place name Bevibum, but the complexity of its reading (in an unknown script and language) has led to different name proposals (+betovibon, +cantnipo, ++vibum(n) and the most accepted +bevibum).⁷⁸ The circumstances concerning the abrupt change and origin of this toponym are entirely unknown to us.

In the case of Paemeiobriga, the name appears to mean “between the rivers”, which is why it has been connected to Interamnium Flavium, which is a literal translation of its name. No sources refer to this change and it appears to be the only literal translation of a place name from a palaeo-Hispanic language into Latin.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, we have no evidence on the causes or purposes.⁸⁰

5.2 *Ulterior*

The most exceptional case is that of Corduba: the capital of the province of Hispania Ulterior during the Republic, and the capital of Baetica after the subdivision. Its placename with the suffix in *-uba*, as well as the archaeological

74 *RPC* i, 205–6.

75 Literary sources: Plin., *NH* 3.23, Str., 3.4.6, Mela, 2.90, *It. Ant.* 304.2, 342.9. Epigraphy: *CIL* II, 4062.

76 J. Diloli, ‘Hibera Iulia Ilercavonia-Dertosa: l’assentament ibèric i la implantació de la ciutat romana’, *Butlletí Arqueològic, època V*, 18 (1996), 60–61; R. Járrega Domínguez, ‘Tarraco Scipionum Opus. ¿Escipión Emiliano fundador de Tarraco?’, *Butlletí Arqueològic* 26 (2004), 26.

77 Plin., *NH* 4.116.

78 «Salacia» (s.v.), *DCyPH*, 333.

79 We can see another example of a literal translation from Punic to Latin: Qart Hadasht = Carthago Nova. Le Roux 2021, op. cit. (n. 57), 347 n. 20.

80 This place name identified in the area that the *tessera Paemeiobrigensis* (*HEp* 7, 1997, 378 = *HEp* 2013, 285) was found (see the edition of Ptolemy by K. Müller 1883–1900 and also A. Schulten, ‘Interamnium Flavium’, *RE* IX, 1603) due to the description of the Antonine Itinerary (429.3; 431.2).

evidence at the site of Colina de los Quemados, confirms a Turdetanian origin.⁸¹ Corduba was one of the most important of Pompey's towns during the civil war. It was re-founded as *colonia* Patricia probably with Marcellus expunging the pre-Roman name at the beginning of the Empire, as we can see on its Augustan-period coins.⁸² Again, it seems to be another commemorative name celebrating a victory after the Civil War. However, we have to consider the actual impact of this name change. We have some documents, such as a bronze tablet (*tabula hospitii*) from Cañete de las Torres dated to 34 CE that quotes a *collegium Patriciensium Cordubensium*, and an inscription from Narbo of the first century CE that refers to a *mercator [Cor]dubensis*, that speak of Corduba and not (only) Patricia.⁸³

We can also see a diverse use of toponymy on the coinage and epigraphy of the towns of Hispania Ulterior. The colonies of Urso and Ucubi, as well as Hispalis and Astigi, were re-founded as Roman colonies under Caesar or Augustus and *nomina* or *cognomina* were added to all of them.⁸⁴

One of the most exceptional cases on the Iberian Peninsula can also be seen in the south. A *tabula aenea* tells us that an unknown town (probably in Baetica) changed its name voluntarily: *Martienses qui antea Ugienses* ("the town of Martia, which was formerly known as Ugia").⁸⁵ This *hapax* shows the re-territorialisation process by which a town, whose original name is clearly Turdetanian, decides to change it, and therefore its historical identity, in favour of a Latin name possibly linked to the god Mars. The reasons for this change are unknown, although it has been linked to a promotion in its legal status.⁸⁶

81 Correa Rodríguez 2016, op. cit. (n. 26), 285–287; J.M. Luzón Nogué and D. Ruiz Mata, *Las raíces de Córdoba. Estratigrafía de la Colina de los Quemados* (Córdoba 1973).

82 *RPC* i 127–131; A, Canto 'Algo más sobre Marcelo, Corduba y las Colonias Romanas del año 45 a.C.', *Gerión* 15 (1997), 253–282.

83 *Tabula hospitii CIL* II² 7,187; Inscription from Narbo, *AE* 1916,41.

84 This was also studied by Ramage 1998, op. cit. (n. 53), 444–5. He proposed that: "By combining the Julian, Caesarian, and Augustan names with native places and tribes the emperor was in a sense promoting and perhaps even announcing an alliance between Roman and Spaniard rather than complete defeat for the natives at the hands of a foreign invader".

85 *ERAE* 94 = *AE* 1952, 49 = *HAE* 546 = *EJER* 18.

86 B. Díaz Ariño, 'Pactos entre ciudades, un rasgo peculiar del Hospitium hispánico', in: F. Beltrán Lloris, ed., *Antiqua iuniora: en torno al Mediterráneo en la antigüedad* (Zaragoza 2004), 101–102.

6 Conclusions

A place name is undoubtedly a process of self-identity. As a general rule, names evoke the characteristics referring to that place. This chapter has focussed on renaming places as part of the Roman re-territorialisation of the Iberian Peninsula. The phenomenon of renaming meant to 're-construct' a town, 're-adapting' it to the new situation and 're-orienting' it to new purposes. The de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation processes favour this break with such a long-lasting element of the landscape as toponyms were. Renaming processes can be considered as creating a frontier between a selected past and a desired future by destroying referential self-identification of the indigenous community who lived in that town. We can affirm that toponymy was a very powerful ideological weapon for de-territorialising the population of the Iberian Peninsula during the conquest which led to the destruction of the indigenous communities' political memory and traditional structures and created a new topography of power.

The agents of these names were the *imperatores* with the approval of the Roman senate. However, as I said in the introduction, a real agency of these actions must be rethought. Even if these was an action from an individual, in fact, these actions were part of a political process that included Roman aristocratic families in the competition for ruling.

We have seen that these renaming processes were influenced in some cases by a pre-existing indigenous terminology and its adaptation to Latin. In other cases, a name was completely expunged as a new one was created for political purposes. All these changes definitely had an impact on the historical and cultural identity of these pre-Roman societies and, in most cases, on the reformulation of traditional power structures.

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Paving the Route of Hercules

The Via Augusta and the Via Iulia Augusta and the Appropriation of Roadbound Traditions in the Augustan Age

Sven Betjes

1 Introduction

Among the many developments of the Augustan age that led to what we now call the Principate, few were as impactful for increasing the coherence of the Roman Empire as the immense expansion of the road network. By profoundly reorganizing the *cura viarum* and simultaneously instituting the Roman postal service (*cursus publicus*), Augustus took a clear interest in the state of the roads and their potential to enhance communications all around the Empire.¹ Additionally, his name could be frequently read on the milestones that, in far greater quantities than before, emerged along the roads that were constructed, restored, upgraded or extended in the Italian Peninsula and the provinces alike.² In road toponymy, too, we find Augustus' name being applied to a few provincial stretches of road. In Asia Minor this was the *via Sebaste*, while the *via Iulia Augusta* and the *via Augusta* crossed southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula respectively. Whereas for Republican Italy, roads named after individuals are regularly attested, this is far less the case for provincial roads, which

1 For the *cura viarum*, see W. Eck, 'Augustus' administrative Reformen: Pragmatismus oder systematisches Planen?', *Acta Classica* 29 (1986), 105–120, 109–110; W. Eck, 'Cura viarum und cura operum publicorum als kollegiale Ämter im frühen Prinzipat', *Klio* 74 (1992), 237–245, esp. 243–244; A. Nünnerich-Asmus, 'Strassen, Brücken und Bögen als Zeichen römischen Herrschaftsanspruchs', in: W. Trillmich, T. Hauschild, M. Blech, and A. Nünnerich-Asmus, eds., *Denkmäler der Römerzeit* (Mainz 1993), 121–57, 128–130; M. Rathmann, *Untersuchungen zu den Reichsstraßen in den westlichen Provinzen des Imperium Romanum* (Mainz 2003), 56–58. For the *cursus publicus*, see Suet., *Aug.* 49.3; with P. Sillières, 'La vehiculatio (ou cursus publicus) et les militares viae. Le contrôle politique et administratif de l'empire par Auguste', *Studia Historica Historia Antiqua* 32 (2014), 123–141; A. Kolb, 'Mansiones and cursus publicus in the Roman Empire', in: P. Basso and E. Zanini, eds., *Statio amoena: sostare e vivere lungo le strade romane* (Oxford 2016), 3–8.

2 G. Alföldy, 'Augustus und die Inschriften. Tradition und Innovation. Die Geburt der imperialen Epigraphik', *Gymnasium* 98 (1991), 289–324, 299–302.

appear to have often remained unnamed.³ This makes the *via Sebaste*, the *via Iulia Augusta* and the *via Augusta* quite exceptional. The atypical naming of the latter two of these provincial roads becomes all the more striking in the light of the fact that they happened to be on a route that in various traditions was associated with the tenth labour of Hercules, which saw the hero take the cattle of Geryon from Gades (modern Cádiz) to Argos.

This chapter delves into the correspondence between this mythical tradition and the named stretches of road in southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula, which was part of a process of monumentalizing these landscapes. It pays particular attention to the fact that this monumentalization and the Herculean myth both particularly focused on (expressing) control over the landscape. Because in name and image Augustus was an emphatic part of the Roman monumentalization, the *princeps* gained a Herculean aura almost by default. By means of examining this association, this chapter aims to demonstrate the importance of landscape-bound traditions in the ideological impact of road-building projects, a much underemphasized aspect of the study of Roman infrastructure. This focus offers us glimpses into how such traditions gave the emerging Augustan Principate ample opportunity to assert changing power relations at both a local and a supralocal level. It will be shown that this process involved a degree of negotiation, with local actors also having a share in shaping the discourse. Before the Augustan developments of these roads and their Herculean connotations are discussed respectively, let us first briefly address how in Roman thought roads were strongly associated with an idea of taming the landscape.⁴

3 Cf. Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 62. For a detailed discussion of road toponomy, see J. Sánchez Sánchez, L. Benítez de Lugo Enrich, J. Rodríguez Morales, and J.L. Fernández Montoro, 'Nomenclatura viaria antiqua. La Vía de los Vasos de Vicarello: una vía augusta de Hispania', *El Nuevo Miliario: boletín sobre vías romanas, historia de los caminos y otros temas de geografía histórica* 15 (2013), 3–21. Although they justly argue against the common use of neologisms in the scholarship of Roman roads, their argument against regarding the name '*via Augusta*' as a reference to Augustus is less convincing, all the more so because the *via Iulia Augusta* has been left out of the analysis. The same applies to R. Járrega Domínguez, 'La Vía Augusta no es un topónimo. Aproximación a la organización territorial del Este de Hispania en época de Augusto', *Quaderns de Prehistòria i Arqueologia de Castelló* 37 (2019), 143–168, although it does contain an *addendum* that shows an awareness of the southern Gallic road.

4 The term 'roadscape' is used in this chapter to signify "the portion of the landscape – material and ideological, experienced and imagined – made up by roads", as defined by J. Demenge, 'Development, regional politics and the unfolding of the "roadscape" in Ladakh, North India', *Journal of Infrastructure Development* 7, no. 1 (2015), 1–18, 2. The most significant monuments, roads, towns, and waters mentioned in this chapter are visualised in Figure 1.

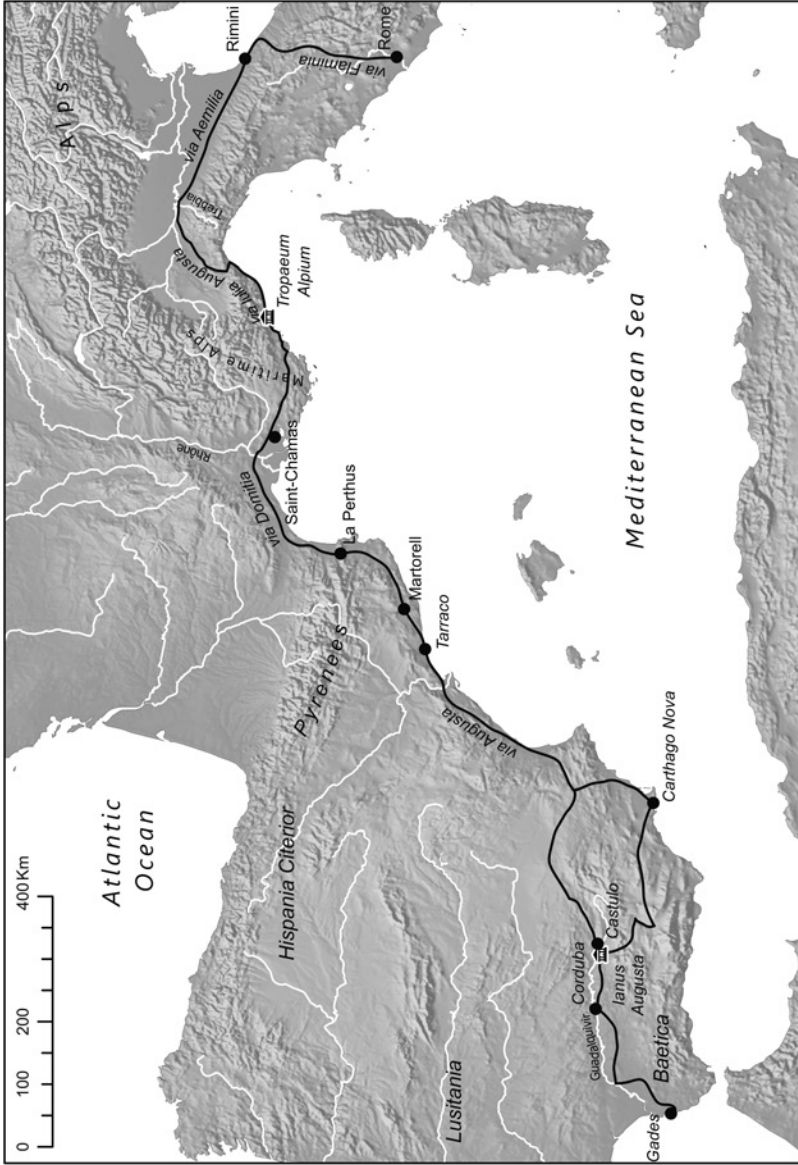


FIGURE 7.1 The roads that made up the route from Rome to Gades. Ancient names of monuments, towns, and roads are italicized, modern names are not

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2 Roman Roads and Controlling the Landscape

In our modern world of (digitized) maps, it is all too easy to overestimate the ancient perception of geography. As K. Brodersen set out in detail, the Romans hardly thought in terms of maps, instead relying on landmarks and routes to conceptualize larger tracts of territory.⁵ In this perception, the empire was made up of peoples and natural boundaries such as mountain ridges and rivers, with networks of roads giving this empire a cohesive structure. The extent of empire was gauged in a quite literal sense by means of a meticulous measurement of the number of miles on certain stretches of roads. This was already common practice in the Republic. Polybius, for instance, related that in his time milestones marked the measured stretch between Narbo and the Rhône – the later *via Domitia*.⁶ To be able to measure the landscape was an emphatic expression of control. Roads, then, did not only serve a practical purpose, but were also made into an instrument for conceptualizing empire. Roads were not the sole means to this end. For Gallia Cisalpina, for example, N. Purcell has demonstrated that road-building went hand-in-hand with centuriation as an assertion of Roman power.⁷ Roman land, in that sense, was measured land.⁸

The Augustan age was a next step in this conception of ‘control through measurement’. In Rome this found public expression in the erection of the *milliarium aureum* – a point of reference for the roads of Italy – as well as in the setting up of the marble map of Agrippa in the *porticus Vipsania*.⁹ As far as the Augustan conception of the western part of the Empire is concerned, it

5 K. Brodersen, *Terra Cognita: Studien zur römischen Raumerfassung* (Hildesheim/New York 1995). For a similar approach to the Roman sense of landscapes, see P. Janni, *La mappa e il periplo: cartografia antica e spazio odologico* (Rome 1984).

6 Polyb., 3.39.8. Also see N. Purcell, ‘The creation of provincial landscape. The Roman impact on Cisalpine Gaul’, in: T.F.C. Blagg and M. Millett, eds., *The Early Roman Empire in the West* (Oxford 1990), 7–29.

7 Purcell 1990, op. cit. (n. 6).

8 For a more elaborate discussion on this subject, see A. Kolb, ‘The Romans and the world’s measure’, in: S. Bianchetti, M.R. Cataudella, and H.-J. Gehrke, eds., *Brill’s companion to ancient geography* (Leiden/Boston 2016), 223–28. Also see the various contributions in the third part of M. Horster and N. Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire* (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019) (Leiden/Boston 2021).

9 *Milliarium aureum*: Plin., *NH* 3.66, Cass. Dio, 54.8.4; with Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 56–57; R.J.A. Talbert, ‘Roads not featured: a Roman failure to communicate?’, in: S.E. Alcock, J.P. Bodel, and R.J.A. Talbert, eds., *Highways, byways, and road systems in the pre-modern world* (Malden 2012), 235–54, 241. Map of Agrippa: Brodersen 1995, op. cit. (n. 5), 268–287; P. Arnaud, ‘Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa and his geographical work’, in: S. Bianchetti, M.R. Cataudella, and H.J. Gehrke, eds., *Brill’s companion to ancient geography: the inhabited world in Greek and Roman tradition* (Leiden/Boston 2016), 205–22.

is especially the *Res Gestae divi Augusti* that stands as a remarkable witness. As C. Nicolet has demonstrated, the document is both in its contents and its original placement at the Mausoleum – hence in alignment with the *Ara Pacis* – emphatically about pacifying the world.¹⁰ Few parts are as revealing about what this pacification entailed as *Res Gestae* 26. In Augustus' own words:

I extended the territory of all those provinces of the Roman people which had neighbouring peoples who were not subject to our authority. I pacified the Gallic and Spanish provinces, and similarly Germany, where Ocean forms a boundary from Cádiz to the mouth of River Elbe. I brought the Alps under control from the region which is nearest to the Adriatic Sea as far as the Tyrrhenian Sea, but attacked no people unjustly. My fleet navigated through Ocean from the mouth of the Rhine to the region of the rising sun as far as the territory of the Cimbri; no Roman before this time has ever approached this area by either land or sea.¹¹

The text is illustrative of how Romans made sense of geography, with the extent of empire being phrased in peoples and natural boundaries. The passage clearly shows that the pacification of (the western part of) the Mediterranean was as much about exploration as it was about conquest. It presents this part of the Augustan empire as having reached the edge of the world, with the Ocean as a clear marker of the world's end.¹²

The immense project that was the laying out of the road network in this area is notably absent from this passage, which fits the overall tendency of leaving out road-building in the *Res Gestae* – the restoration of the *via Flaminia* being the exception.¹³ It is nevertheless remarkable that when considering (the monuments alongside) the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta*, we find an

10 C. Nicolet, *Space, geography, and politics in the early Roman empire* (Ann Arbor 1991), 15–27.

11 *RG* 26.1–4: 1. *Omnium provinc[iarum populi Romani,] quibus finitimae fuerunt gentes quae non p[ar]erent imperio nos[]tro, fines auxi.* 2. *Gallias et Hispanias provincias, i[tem Germaniam, qua inclu]dit Oceanus a Gadibus ad ostium Albis flumin[is], pacavi.* 3. *Alpes a re]gione e aquae proxima est Hadriano mari [ad Tuscum pacari fec]i nulli genti bello per iniuriam inlato.* 4. *cla[ssis m]ea p[er Oceanum] ab ostio Rheni ad solis orientis regionem usque ad fi[nes Cimbroru]m navigavit, quo neque terra neque mari quisquam Romanus ante id tempus adit [...].* Text and translation (with minor changes) from A.E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: text, translation, and commentary* (Cambridge 2009), 90.

12 Nicolet 1991, op. cit. (n. 10), 21–24. For the reflection of this rhetoric in contemporary literary accounts, see V. Fabrizi, 'Hannibal's march and Roman imperial space in Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, book 21', *Philologus* 159, no. 1 (2015), 118–155, 134–135.

13 *RG* 20.5. For the absence of road-building in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, also see Talbert 2012, op. cit. (n. 9), 243.

emphasis on the same landmarks as in *Res Gestae* 26, with the Ocean and Alps figuring prominently.¹⁴ This correspondence alone suggests that, at the very least, the roads were the physical attestation of Roman control over these natural boundaries. We now turn to both roadscaapes to gauge the extent to which Augustan monumentalization of both roadscaapes gave expression to such ideas of territorial control. By discussing the *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta* respectively, we find that southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula witnessed an impressive systematization of expressing Roman dominance over the landscape during the Augustan age. This, in turn, provided a proper foundation upon which ideological frameworks of the new regime would be constructed, to which we will turn afterwards.

3 Monumentalizing the Iberian and Southern Gallic Landscape

3.1 Via Augusta

Leading straight through much of what is part of modern Spain, the *via Augusta* has been much studied, especially through Spanish scholarship.¹⁵ Because itineraries and the spatial distribution of milestones do not always correspond, the exact route of the *via Augusta* has been much debated. In recent scholarship it has been increasingly questioned whether we could actually speak of the *via Augusta* as a single route. R. Járrega Domínguez suggested in a recent contribution to rather speak of the *viae Augustae* as a network of roads.¹⁶ The creation of this network is roughly contemporary to other changes to the Iberian landscape, the centres of which were thoroughly reshuffled through the foundation of colonies and the promotion of existing cities.¹⁷ The roads connected these

14 See below, p. 121.

15 The bibliography is immense; some of the most recent contributions – in which much of the debate has been summarized – are Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3); C. Campedelli, ‘The impact of Roman roads and milestones on the landscape of the Iberian Peninsula’, in: M. Horster and N. Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019)* (Leiden/Boston 2021), 111–130, 115–122; M. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, M.Á. Lechuga Chica, M.I. Moreno Padilla, and J.P. Bellón Ruiz, ‘Microstratigraphic analysis of the main Roman road in Hispania: the Via Augusta where it passes through the Ianus Augustus (Mengíbar, Spain)’, *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 14, no. 8 (2022): 142–173.

16 Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), building upon J. Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia tarraconense* (Zaragoza 1992); P. Hermann, *Itinéraire des voies romaines. De l'antiquité au Moyen Âge* (Paris 2007), 72; Sánchez Sánchez et al. 2013, op. cit. (n. 3).

17 Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 156–161. On the roads as being part of a larger territorial reorganization of Hispania, see most recently S. España-Chamorro, ‘Engaging landscapes, connecting provinces: milestones and the construction of Hispania at the

centres with each other as well as with the Roman road network as a whole, and were integrated into the recently established postal service, thus receiving road stops at regular intervals.¹⁸

The roads into the interior branched off from a main artery that connected some of the major cities of Augustan Hispania. It passed through Tarraco, Carthago Nova, Castulo, Corduba and ended at Gades.¹⁹ This stretch of the road is what has traditionally been called the *via Augusta*, and it received minute attention under Augustus. As recent excavations have shown, it consisted of *ex novo* sections as well as (re-)paved sections overlaying pre-existing paths.²⁰ The major natural boundaries along the road also received ample attention through the erection of monuments. Part of their function was to serve as territorial markers: the abovementioned Augustan territorial reorganization included the subdivision of Hispania into Hispania Ulterior Baetica, Hispania Ulterior Lusitania, and Hispania Citerior Tarraconensis.²¹ Within this new territorial structure, the *via Augusta* stood as a connecting link between Tarraconensis and Baetica, with separate *capita viarum* often at major natural landmarks.

For the *via Augusta* in Hispania Citerior, the road's *caput viae* appears to have been the *Summus Pyrenaeus* at modern Le Perthus.²² Here the *via Domitia* met the *via Augusta*. This made it a dividing point between Gaul and Hispania. This

beginning of the Empire', in: Marietta Horster and Nikolas Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019)* (Leiden/Boston 2021), 92–110. For an overview of the many cities either founded or named after Augustus in Hispania, see E.S. Ramage, 'Augustus' propaganda in Spain', *Klio* 80 (1998), 434–490. For centuriation as part of the territorial reorganization, see P. Sillières, *Les voies de communication de l'Hispanie méridionale* (Paris 1990), 817–818; J.M. Gurt and I. Rodà, 'El Pont del Diable. El monumento romano dentro de la política territorial augustea', *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 78 (2005), 147–165.

18 Suet., *Aug.* 49.3; with Sillières 2014, op. cit. (n. 1); Kolb 2016, op. cit. (n. 1).

19 For a recent reconstruction of its route – based on milestones and ancient itineraries – see Campedelli 2021, op. cit. (n. 15), 115–122.

20 J.P. Bellón Ruiz, M.Á. Lechuga Chica, M.I. Moreno Padilla, and M. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 'Ianus Augustus, Caput Viae (Mengíbar, Spain): an interprovincial monumental border in Roman Hispania', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 34, no. 1 (2021), 3–29, esp. 9–10. For a technical discussion of the *via Augusta* section at the *Ianus Augustus* – arguing against the common misconception that roads were as a rule stone-paved – see recently Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al. 2022, op. cit. (n. 15).

21 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 97–103.

22 P. Ulloa Chamorro, 'Nuevo miliario de la vía Augusta hallado en Castellón', *Quaderns de Prehistòria i Arqueologia de Castelló* 20 (1999), 209–220; C. Campedelli, 'Viae publicae als Mittel der Vermessung, Erfassung und Wahrnehmung von Räumen: das Beispiel der Provinz Hispania citerior Tarraconensis (CIL XVII/1, 1)', in: W. Eck, P. Funke, and M. Dohnicht, eds., *Öffentlichkeit – Monument – Text: XIV Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae 27.–31. Augusti MMXII: Akten* (Berlin/Boston 2014), 608–610, 608.

division became formalized in the Augustan age, but owed much to the activity of Pompey the Great.²³ Most conspicuous was the trophy Pompey had set up at Le Perthus, by means of which he made a strong case for Roman dominion over the Pyrenees.²⁴ According to Strabo, it was this trophy that marked ‘the boundary between Iberia and Celtica’.²⁵ With such a recent monumental expression of Roman power over the landscape already in place, there was little need for an Augustan replacement to emphasize this natural boundary. Still, Augustus’ campaigns in the Cantabrian Wars prompted another Roman trophy elsewhere in the Pyrenees – at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges – so that Augustus could boast of his own share in subduing this mountain ridge.²⁶

Further south, the river Baetis (the modern Guadalquivir) formed the *caput viae* of the *via Augusta* in Baetica. Here, too, a monument was set up that emphasized this natural boundary: the *Ianus Augustus*.²⁷ This arch’s precise location along the river has long been a matter of debate, yet recent archaeological surveys at modern Mengíbar have unearthed its foundations, thus providing a conclusive answer.²⁸ The same survey has shown that this monument was an impressive territorial arch and part of a larger monumental structure. More emphatically so than in the Pyrenees, the monumentalized landscape around the *Ianus Augustus* became a focal point of Roman Hispania. In fact, just how important these landmarks were for the Baetican part of the *via Augusta* may be read from the milestones. From Augustus onwards these (in a number of variants) specified the route of the road as *a Baete et Iano Augusto ad Oceanum* (‘from the Baetis and *Ianus Augustus* to the Ocean’).²⁹ The formula neatly

23 F. Beltrán Lloris and F. Pina Polo, ‘Roma y los Pirineos: la formación de una frontera’, *Chiron. Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 24 (1994), 103–133.

24 G. Castellvi, J.M. Nolla, and I. Rodà, ‘La identificación de los trofeos de Pompeyo en el Pirineo’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 8 (1995), 5–18; L. Amela Valverde, ‘Los trofeos de Pompeyo’, *Habis. Filología clásica, historia antigua, arqueología clásica* 32 (2001), 185–202.

25 Str., 4.1.3: τὰ Πομπηίου τρόπαια ὄριον Ἰβηρίας ἀποφαίνουσι καὶ τῆς Κελτικῆς, cf. Plin., *NH* 3.4.

26 A.S. Esmonde Cleary, *Rome in the Pyrenees: Lugdunum and the Convenae from the first century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.* (London/New York 2008), 31–34.

27 *Ianus* here primarily signifies this monument as an arch – Domitianic inscriptions would later refer to the same structure as *arcus* (*CIL* II, 4721). There was nevertheless an associative connection with the eponymous god, whose traditional relation to waterways has been discussed by L.A. Holland, *Janus and the bridge* (Rome 1961), who also discusses the *Ianus Augustus* at pp. 294–295.

28 Bellón Ruiz et al. 2021, op. cit. (n. 20). Earlier studies on the *Ianus Augustus* include P. Sillières, ‘A propos d’un nouveau milliaire de la via Augusta, une via militaris en Bétique’, *Revue des études anciennes* 83 (1981), 255–271; M.G. Schmidt, ‘Ab Iano Augusto ad Oceanum: methodologische Überlegungen zur Erforschung der viae publicae in der Baetica’, in: I. Czeguhn, et al., eds., *Wasser – Wege – Wissen auf der iberischen Halbinsel: eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung im Verlauf der Geschichte* (Baden-Baden 2018), 35–53.

29 Augustan milestones: *CIL* II, 4701–4711.

illustrates how natural boundaries defined territorial space as well as the roads traversing it, and the latter part corresponds to the limit of Augustus' empire at Gades as drawn in *Res Gestae* 26. Whether a monument also marked the road's *terminus* in the way that the *Ianus Augustus* marked the Baetis is unknown, although *ad Oceanum* has sometimes been interpreted to refer to a statue of the Titan Oceanus, rather than to the ocean as a geographical boundary.³⁰ Alternatively, we may think of the Pillars of Hercules, which according to Strabo some thought to have been represented in bronze at the temple of Hercules at Gades, as a plausible Gaditan counterpart to Pompey's trophy and the *Ianus Augustus*.³¹ Even without such a counterpart, however, the *Ianus Augustus* would have done the job of welcoming the traveller into the territory furthest west in the known world. For this part of the world at least, the monumentalized landscape showed Roman dominion as having no boundaries but natural ones.

Not just the extremities of the *via Augusta* in Baetica and Tarraconensis received monumental treatment to imprint messages of dominance into the landscape. On a smaller yet quite numerous scale, the milestones – whose numbers also increased in Hispania during the Augustan age – were also potent expressions of Roman power. First of all, they were an indication of control through measurement, as represented by distances from the *capita viarum* being measured in Roman miles. At the same time, the appearance of the emperor's formula on the same object indicated the emperor's (ultimate) responsibility for the road's construction and, by extension, for taming the lands it traversed.³² As S. España-Chamorro has recently argued, such ideological considerations may even have been these milestones' main purpose, given that a certain clustering of milestones – as opposed to an even distribution – made a more practical use, such as facilitating coordination, improbable.³³

Monumentalizing the Iberian roadscapes also happened on a larger scale, which is especially noticeable close to some of the many bridges that were constructed during the Augustan age.³⁴ The *Ianus Augustus* overlooked a

30 W. Kubitschek, 'Ianus Augustus', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Band S VI* (Stuttgart 1935), 119–26.123–124; Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 64. On the basis of the Vicarello Cups, it has also been suggested that there was a Gaditan counterpart to the *miliarium aureum*, but see convincingly M.G. Schmidt, 'A Gadibus Romam: myth and reality of an ancient route', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 54 (2011), 71–86, 77–79.

31 Str., 3.5.5.

32 On which also see Alföldy 1991, op. cit. (n. 2), 301.

33 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 96–97. For this clustering of milestones as a possible indication of various degrees of agency in their erection, see Lostal Pros 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 17; Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 108. Cf. Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 151.

34 For a discussion of the bridges of Augustan Hispania, see Nünnerich-Asmus 1993, op. cit. (n. 1) 139–143. For the Corduba region in particular, see more recently I. Ostos-López,

bridge that crossed the Baetis. Quite similar in this respect is a bridge at modern Martorell, close to Barcelona. The bridge was in close vicinity to the *mansio* at *ad Fines*, and at its head stood a monumental arch.³⁵ Crossing Llobregat river, it may be compared to the Le Perthus trophy and the *Ianus Augustus*, in that it highlighted a natural boundary at a point that also had an administrative purpose (i.e. the *mansio*).³⁶ Since the locations of both the *Ianus Augustus* and the bridge at Martorell have been suggested as important junctions of the *via Augusta*, perhaps an additional function was to mark these points for coordination purposes.³⁷ Consequently, the monumental structures mentioned up to this point could at times combine expressions of Roman imperial control over the reorganized landscape with more practical considerations.

3.2 Via Iulia Augusta

The picture sketched above may *mutatis mutandis* also be drawn for the *via Iulia Augusta*. Its exact route is harder to ascertain, yet it is generally believed to have led from the river Trebbia to the Rhône.³⁸ Much as with the *via Augusta* in Hispania, the *via Iulia Augusta* was part of a broader project of the Augustan age that turned the landscape around the Maritime Alps into a Roman (imperial) landscape by means of widespread monumentalization. Part of this were again the milestones, which allow us to date the construction of the road to 13/12 BCE.³⁹ As happened contemporarily in Hispania, paving (parts) of the road seems to have coincided with the erection of bridges.⁴⁰ Some of these

¹ 'Puentes romanos: Los puentes romanos del término municipal de Córdoba', *Anahgramas* 1 (2014), 3–107.

35 Gurt and Rodà 2005, op. cit. (n. 17).

36 Gurt and Rodà 2005, op. cit. (n. 17), esp. 159–165.

37 Campedelli 2021, op. cit. (n. 15), 117, 120, 125. For Martorell/*ad Fines* as an important junction, also see Lostal Pros 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 269; *contra* Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 153.

38 The only certain evidence for *via Iulia Augusta's caput viae* are Hadrianic milestones (*CIL* V, 8102–8103; *CIL* V, 8106) found at modern La Turbie that state Hadrian restored the *viam Iuliam aug(ustam) a flumine Trebia* ('from the river Trebbia'). The latter part corresponds to an Augustan milestone found along the restored *via Aemilia* (*CIL* XI, 8103), which specifies this road led from Rimini to the river Trebbia (*ab Arimino ad flumen Trebiam*). Perhaps this suggests that the newly constructed *via Iulia Augusta* already had the Trebbia as its starting point in the Augustan age. As for the road's route from La Turbie onwards, it is often suggested that it led all the way to the Rhône (where it met the *via Domitia*), based on the route of the Via Aurelia – as the road was called in the Antonine itinerary (*It. Ant.* 289.3). Definite proof for this is lacking, however.

39 *CIL* V, 8098; *CIL* V, 8100–101.

40 Some of these appear to have been made of wood only to be replaced by stone structures in the Hadrianic age, probably as part of the same renovation works as those mentioned in footnote 38. See for example F. Bulgarelli, 'Ponti romani della Val Quazzola e del Finalese lungo la via Iulia Augusta', in: L. Quilici and S. Quilici Gigli, eds., *Strade romane: ponti e viadotti* (Rome 1996), 231–250, 233 n. 12, for the still surviving bridges in the Ponci Valley.

bridges also appear to have been more monumental: if indeed the *via Iulia Augusta* ran all the way to the Rhône, the so-called Pont Flavien, a monumentalized bridge at modern Saint-Chamas with arches on either side, can be linked to the road.⁴¹ The inscription of this bridge still survives and ascribes the construction of the bridge to a Gallic nobleman and *flamen Romae et Augusti*.⁴² Such an ostentatious form of self-promotion – Augustus' name was notably lacking – shows that the creation of a 'Roman' landscape was very much a process in which various agents were involved.⁴³

The same idea of the monumentalization of the Roman Empire under Augustus as a shared discourse rather than one-sided propaganda can be gleaned from the far more conspicuous *tropaeum Alpium* at La Turbie. This monument was dedicated by the senate and people of Rome in 7/6 BCE to the *princeps*, with a dedicatory formula that is typical to the monuments made in Augustus' honour.⁴⁴ In this specific instance, it celebrated Augustus' subjugation of the Alpine tribes, as clearly delineated in the inscription that has survived through Pliny the Elder:

To Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of the deified one, pontifex maximus, imperator for the fourteenth time, the seventeenth year of his tribunician power, the senate and people of Rome [dedicate this monument], because under his command and auspices all the Alpine tribes extending

41 A. Küpper-Böhm, *Die römischen Bogenmonumente der Gallia Narbonensis in ihrem urbanen Kontext* (Espelkamp 1996), 5–11.

42 *CIL* XII, 647.

43 A similar case of local self-promotion is provided by the roughly coeval construction of a road and an arch under king Cottius in modern Susa, for which see H. Cornwell, 'The king who would be prefect: authority and identity in the Cottian Alps', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 105 (2015), 41–72; K. Iannantuono, 'La monumentalizzazione del potere nelle Alpi Cozie all'indomani della conquista romana. Una "descrizione densa" dell'arco di Susa', *Segusium* 58 (2020), 11–48.

44 On this honorific language, see A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Roman arches and Greek honours: the language of power at Rome', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 216 (1990), 143–81, who in the context of Roman triumphal arches recognized the Greek origins of this language and thought of it as a means of coming to terms with the realities of the Principate. It is uncertain whether the 7/6 BCE date that derives from the inscription refers to the Senate's decision or to the monument's dedication or inauguration, on which see S. Binninger, 'Le "Tropaeum Alpium" et l'Héraclès Monoikos: mémoire et célébration de la victoire dans la propagande augustéenne à la Turbie', in: M. Navarro Caballero and J.-M. Roddaz, eds., *La transmission de l'idéologie impériale dans les provinces de l'Occident romain: actes du 128ème colloque CTHS, Bastia, 15–16 avril 2003* (Bordeaux 2006), 179–203, 184–185.

from the Upper [= Adriatic] Sea to the Lower [= Tyrrhenian] Sea were brought under the rule of the Roman people.⁴⁵

In the remainder of the inscription, the conquered tribes are each listed respectively. Whereas the *via Iulia Augusta* symbolized bringing order to the natural landscape, lists such as these were a powerful expression of the ordering of the peoples who inhabited this landscape.⁴⁶ The taming of the Alps and its peoples we have seen before in *Res Gestae* 26, and the language that indicated the extent of this conquest – from the Adriatic Sea to the Tyrrhenian Sea – was quite similar, phrasing it as overcoming natural barriers.⁴⁷

For the Alpine trophy, the connection between the mountains and the sea was as much expressed by words as it was by the monument's location. In fact, it gave a physical manifestation of the inscription's western extremity of the Alpine conquest by overlooking the coasts of Liguria and southern Gaul at a point where the Maritime Alps reached the Mediterranean. This symbolic location of the trophy was further pronounced by its placement on a platform at one of the highest points of the *via Iulia Augusta*.⁴⁸ Similar to the discussed monumental structures on the Iberian Peninsula was the significance of the *tropaeum Alpium* as more than a monument that stressed the honour and glory of Augustus and the Roman Empire. As a clear landmark in southern Gaul, it seems to have served as marking the southeastern boundary of the newly established prefecture of Alpes Maritimae.⁴⁹ In addition, as attested by the chorographic testimony of Pliny and by the mention of *Alpe Summa* in the Antonine Itinerary, it appears to have been a point of recognition for travellers taking the *via Iulia Augusta*.⁵⁰ For the *tropaeum Alpium* at least, then, we find that its ostentatious

45 CIL V, 7818: *Imperatori Caesari divi filio Augusto / pont(ifici) max(imo) imp(eratori) XIII trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVII / senatus populusque Romanus / quod eius ductu auspiciisque gentes Alpinae omnes quae a mari supero ad inferum pertinebant sub imperium p(opuli) R(omani) sunt redactae [...]*; with Plin., *NH* 3,136–137; J. Formigé, 'La dédicace du Trophée des Alpes (La Turbie)', *Gallia. Archéologie de la France antique* 13, no. 1 (1955), 101–02; S. Carey, *Pliny's catalogue of culture: art and empire in the Natural History* (Oxford 2003), 47.

46 Carey 2003, op. cit. (n. 45), 43–61.

47 *RG* 26.

48 For the significance and emphasis of the *tropaeum Alpium*'s location, see J. Formigé, *Le Trophée des Alpes (La Turbie)* (Paris 1949), 43; H. Cornwell, 'Routes of resistance to integration: Alpine reactions to Roman power', in R. Varga and V. Rusu-Bolindel, eds., *Official power and local elites in the Roman provinces* (London/New York 2016), 52–76, 57–58; cf. Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44), 186–188.

49 S. Morabito, 'Entre Narbonnaise et Italie: le territoire de la province des Alpes Maritimae pendant l'Antiquité romaine (I^{er} s. av. J.-C.–V^e s. apr. J.-C.)', *Gallia. Archéologie de la France antique* 67, no. 2 (2010), 99–124, 104.

50 *It. Ant.* 296.3.

visibility effected the same combination of ideological and practical considerations as for the monuments found along the *via Augusta*. This made the strength and control of the Roman Empire a constant message for anyone moving into these monuments' vicinity.

3.3 *The Route of Augustus?*

The above-listed survey has shown how at roughly the same time the road-scapes of the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta* were treated in a similar fashion. Long stretches of road meant to connect key points in their respective landscapes, while monuments of various sizes and functions were erected along these roads, typically in the vicinity of natural landmarks. In a world practically devoid of maps, the monuments marking (the often overlapping) natural and administrative borders gave travellers of these roads clear points of recognition. Consequently, many of the mentioned monuments – or at least their locations – feature alongside key towns on ancient itineraries, also because these kind of places served as road-stops.

Dotting southern Gaul and Hispania with monumental landmarks was the ultimate expression of control. Roads and bridges gave a sense of regulation to the landscapes characterized by rugged mountains and wild rivers, an achievement that was underlined by the trophies, arches, and milestones which were built alongside these symbols of order. In word and image, this taming of the landscape (and its peoples) was phrased as the result of Roman power. More specifically, the inscriptions found on most of the milestones and roadside monuments made abundantly clear that this power was embodied by the man on top of the social pyramid, Augustus.

Augustus was also associated – albeit not in their toponymy – with the stretches of roads that connected the *via Iulia Augusta* and *via Augusta* with each other and with Rome. In Gallia Narbonensis the *via Domitia* connected the *via Augusta* and (probably) the *via Iulia Augusta* – as it stretched from the Pyrenees to the Rhône. From the river Trebbia one could, moreover, reach Rome by travelling the *via Aemilia* and *via Flaminia* respectively. Each of these roads witnessed restorations works under Augustus. For the *via Aemilia* and *via Domitia*, milestones subsequently recorded this feat, thus binding the *princeps'* name to these roads.⁵¹ More emphatically remembered was Augustus' restoration of the *via Flaminia*, which was recorded in our literary evidence, celebrated through the Arch of Augustus in Rimini, and reminisced in Augustus' *Res*

51 *Via Domitia*: e.g. *CIL* XVII.2, 291. *Via Aemilia*: *CIL* XI, 8103. Like the milestones at La Turbie, the Augustan milestones along the *via Domitia* take the distance to Rome instead of the distance to the nearest *caput viae* as their Republican precedents had done, for which see Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 64. The 'Arc du Rhône' in Arles, which Küpper-Böhm (1996, op. cit. (n. 41), 14–24) dates to the Augustan period, may be regarded as a more monumental means by which Augustus was related to the *via Domitia*.

Gestae.⁵² Taking everything together, then, what we have is a connected series of named and measured road stretches from Rome all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, with each of these stretches associated with the name of Augustus in one way or another. This route was not without significance, as in the opposite direction it was the route that in a century-old mythical tradition had been associated with Hercules. And in this myth, too, territorial control played a remarkable role.

4 Conquering the West: Hercules the Civilizing Wanderer

The myth of Hercules' tenth labor was already centuries old by the Augustan age, and long recognized across practically the entire Mediterranean. It was rooted in Greek tradition, having been part of Hesiod's *Theogonia* and at the core of Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* in the sixth century BCE.⁵³ Although various versions are known, the core narrative had the wandering hero defeat the monster Geryon in Erytheia in order to collect this monster's cattle, which he subsequently brought back to Argos. Already in early Greek literary traditions, Erytheia was located in what is now Spain, and some authors identified it with the Phoenician colony of Gadir (which would become Roman Gades).⁵⁴ The identification of legendary places with actual places did not just occur for the sake of making sense of mythical geography, but belonged to attempts on the part of the (western) Greek literary tradition to legitimize their claims over the western Mediterranean.⁵⁵ Particularly in this political use of the myth, the theme of conquering and subsequently controlling landscapes came to fruition.

It was commonplace to ascribe to Hercules – or his Greek equivalent Herakles – a civilizing mission as he completed his labours. Accordingly, greater focus in the narrative of Hercules' tenth labour came to be on his return

52 Literary sources: Suet., *Aug.* 30, Cass. Dio, 53.22.1. *Res Gestae*: RG 20.5; with Cooley 2009, op. cit. (n. 11), 195–196. Arch at Rimini: R. Laurence, *The roads of Roman Italy: mobility and cultural change* (London 1999), 42–45. It has been suggested on the basis of Cass. Dio, 53.22.2 that at the start of the *via Flaminia* – at the Milvian bridge in Rome – there was another arch honouring Augustus for the same feat: H. Kähler, 'Triumphbogen', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Band VII A,I* (Stuttgart 1939), 373–493, 381, 411; S. De Maria, *Gli archi onorari di Roma e dell'Italia romana* (Rome 1988), 260–262 no. 48, 269 no. 58.

53 On the early history of Hercules' tenth labour, see L. Pearson, *The Greek historians of the West: Timaeus and his predecessors* (Atlanta 1987), 59–60; F. Budelmann, *Greek lyric: a selection* (Cambridge 2018), 154; P.J. Finglass, 'Labor X: The cattle of Geryon and the return from Tartessus', in D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 135–148, 135–141.

54 Apollod., *Bibl.* 2.5.10, Plin., *NH* 4.120.

55 R.C. Knapp, 'La *via Heraclea* en el Occidente. Mito, arqueología, propaganda, historia', *Emerita* 54 (1986), 103–122, 103–106; Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 141–145.

to Argos, with various authors adding details to this journey by showing the wandering hero both taming the landscape and subduing its various peoples along the way. Early accounts had focused on Hercules' presence in Magna Graecia and especially Sicily, where his activity reflected Greek concerns with Phoenician spheres of interest.⁵⁶ His domain expanded westward as knowledge of the lands of Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula increased. Especially noteworthy for our purposes is Diodorus' euhemeristic take on the journey of Hercules, which among other regions led him through Gaul and the Alps.⁵⁷ As he marched at the head of an army with the cattle of Geryon, he brought order to these lands by various means. In Gaul, Hercules ended the 'lawlessness' (παράνομία) and 'murder of strangers' (ξενοκτονία), while also founding the city of Alesia.⁵⁸ The Alps were also subjected to Hercules's will, as he made them surmountable by a road.⁵⁹ Especially with regard to the inclusion of Alesia into this account, it is not hard to see it as a reflection of the Gallic campaigns of Diodorus' contemporary Julius Caesar that culminated in this city's siege.⁶⁰

Diodorus' narrative is illustrative of how military activity could be framed as a repetition of Hercules' journey. One of the earliest examples of such framing is Hannibal's march over the Alps, which at least in later tradition was presented as an emulation of Hercules, who had in Melqart a Carthaginian equivalent.⁶¹ For the Romans, too, Hercules' return with Geryon's cattle was of particular significance, not in the least because the origins of Rome were related to the hero's encounter with Cacus at the site of the future city.⁶² Consequently, as the interest of the Romans in the western Mediterranean grew, so did the inclination of projecting Hercules' journey onto their own activities, probably in part

56 Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 141–144.

57 Diod. Sic., 4.17.1–4.25.1.

58 Diod. Sic., 4.19.1.

59 Diod. Sic., 4.19.4.

60 Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 112; J.-C. Carrière, 'Héraclès de la Méditerranée à l'Océan: mythe, conquête et acculturation', in: M. Clavel-Lévêque and R. Plana Mallart, eds., *Cité et territoire: colloque européen (Béziers 14–16 octobre 1994)* (Paris 1995), 67–87, 68, 70–71; Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 144.

61 D. Briquel, 'Hannibal sur les pas d'Héraklès: le voyage mythologique et son utilisation dans l'histoire', in: H. Duchêne, ed., *Voyageurs et antiquité classique* (Dijon 2003), 51–60; D. Briquel, 'L'utilisation de la figure d'Héraklès par Hannibal: remarques sur les fragments de Silènos de Kaléaktè', in: J.-M. André, ed., *Hispanité et romanité* (Madrid 2004), 29–37; R. Miles, 'Hannibal and propaganda', in: B. Dexter Hoyos, ed., *A Companion to the Punic Wars* (Malden 2011), 260–279, 264–268. Whether Hannibal's march was already phrased in Herculean terms in its own time has been questioned by B.D. Hoyos, *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at war* (Oxford 2015), 102.

62 See most recently C. Siwicki, 'The Roman cult of Hercules', in D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 489–506, 490–491.

to justify Roman interference.⁶³ In their campaigns in Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula, Roman generals would be cast – and regularly cast themselves – as the successors or embodiments of the hero, and Diodorus' Hercules as an allusion to Caesarian activity was not the first of these. Hercules was commonly evoked by generals of the Republic.⁶⁴ Upon his successful campaigns against the Gauls, Quintus Fabius Maximus Aemilianus, for example, erected a trophy as well as altars to Mars and Hercules, the latter being the proclaimed ancestor of the Fabii.⁶⁵ More geared towards the Herculean feats in the west themselves were the associations with Hercules that followed Pompey's successes – as was likewise reminisced locally, by the trophy at Le Perthus.⁶⁶

As a precursor of Augustan activity, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus' impact on the landscape of southern Gaul is especially worth noting. Much like Fabius Maximus and Pompey, Domitius seems to have provided the area with an expression of the glory of Rome by erecting a trophy at the Rhône.⁶⁷ In this case, however, the message was further strengthened by the coeval construction of the road that went by his name, the *via Domitia*.⁶⁸ The connection between Domitius and Hercules is rather one by association. In fact, ancient accounts such as that of Diodorus have regularly ascribed road-building activities to Hercules as he marched back with Geryon's cattle.⁶⁹ It has therefore been variously held in modern scholarship that the entire route that led from Gades to Rome should be understood as a Road of Hercules.⁷⁰ In such an interpretation, the *via Domitia* could be said to be the paved actualization of a mythical route, making it a forceful expression of Roman power.

There are, however, a number of problems with this supposed route of Hercules, especially when understood as a pre-imperial phenomenon. Our key evidence for an ancient perception of the route from Gades to Rome as a single connected route are the Vicarello Cups, which present an itinerary with the

63 C. Jourdain-Annequin, *Héraclès aux portes du soir: mythe et histoire* (Paris 1989), 629–640.

64 For an enumeration, see L.H. Lenaghan, 'Hercules-Melqart on a coin of Faustus Sulla', *Museum Notes* (*American Numismatic Society*) 11 (1964), 131–149, 138.

65 Str., 4.1.11.

66 Plin., *NH* 26.95; with Knapp 1986, *op. cit.* (n. 55), 120; Carrière 1995, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 77; Amela Valverde 2001, *op. cit.* (n. 24), 197. For Pompey's association with Hercules, also see B. Rawson, 'Pompey and Hercules', *Antichthon* 4 (1970), 30–37.

67 Carrière 1995, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 77.

68 The road's name is one of the few names of roads outside Italy that have been recorded by our literary sources: Cic., *Font.* 8.18.

69 Other accounts include Str., 4.1.7, Ps.-Arist., *Mirab.* 85, Amm. Marc., 15.10.9.

70 See e.g. N.J. DeWitt, 'Rome and the "Road of Hercules"', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 72 (1941), 59–69; Knapp 1986, *op. cit.* (n. 55).



FIGURE 7.2 The Vicarello Cups. Visible here are some of the road-stops in Hispania, including Hispalis (modern Sevilla) and Corduba (modern Córdoba)

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major settlements and stations a traveller would find along the way (Figure 2).⁷¹ These goblets are dated to the imperial period, however, and may perhaps even be dated to Late Antiquity.⁷² For the pre-imperial connected route there is neither archaeological evidence nor are there mythical allusions.⁷³ As a matter of fact, the literary evidence only mentions Herculean road-building activity in the southern part of Gaul. Moreover, the sections of road predating the Roman ones in the Iberian Peninsula and southern Gaul may often have been called *via Herculea/Heraklea* in modern discussions, yet no ancient evidence suggests it was known by that name in antiquity.⁷⁴ To put it briefly, there may have been a vague conception of a mythical *route* of Hercules that the hero provided with *sections* of roads as he tamed the landscape, yet one could hardly speak of a connected *via Herculea*.⁷⁵

71 For a discussion, see Schmidt 2011, op. cit. (n. 30).

72 Schmidt 2011, op. cit. (n. 30). Another Late Antique source attesting to the idea of a connected route between Gades and Rome is a riddle of Metrodorus, *Anth. Pal.* 16.121.

73 Cf. Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), esp. 116.

74 Cf. Sánchez Sánchez et al. 2013, op. cit. (n. 3), 16.

75 See similarly G. Barraol, *Les peuples préromains du Sud-Est de la Gaule: Étude de géographie historique* (Paris 1969), 62–64, 102; Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 116; M. Salomon, 'De la via Heraclea à la via Domitia', *Archéologie en Languedoc* 20, no. 2 (1996), 99–108, 100.

In spite of this lack of clear route or road of Hercules, it is undeniable that the hero's march through Iberian and Gallic lands had left a legacy into which the Romans could place themselves. As suggested by the example of Hannibal, the Romans were not alone in this respect. The fact that Hercules was recognized throughout the western Mediterranean in various guises had made sure the hero had already been bound to the landscape well before the Romans came. The abovementioned temple at Gades was but one of more such places related to the syncretic figure of Hercules-Herakles-Melqart. Another example we find for the *via Augusta* in Silius Italicus, who thought that Saguntum was founded by Hercules.⁷⁶ The associations were not just part of the area near the *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta*, as along the *via Domitia* Nemausus (modern Nîmes) claimed similar origins.⁷⁷ Origin myths such as these were endemic at the closing decades of the first century BCE and the opening decade of the next, and appear to have been a common strategy on behalf of local elites to forge connections with Rome.⁷⁸ The Herculean myth, in brief, appears to have been part of a discourse from which both Romans and local elites could borrow elements so as to propagate and legitimize their self-interests. This multivalence would prove useful in the Augustan Empire, providing an ideological framework for the territorial reorganization discussed above.

5 An Augustan Route in a Herculean Landscape

To recapitulate briefly, taming the landscape and pacifying its peoples was a central theme in both the Augustan road-building activities in southern Gaul and Hispania and the way Hercules was mythically associated with these areas. What is more, under Augustus the route from Rome to Gades was systematized into a connected series of roads, the monumentalization of which properly embedded the emperor's name into the roadscapes – with some of the roads even receiving this name in exceptional fashion. As such, it seems almost inescapable to associate Augustus' pacification of these landscapes to Herculean precedent.

When regarding such an association in the light of imperial ideology, such an association between the *princeps* and Hercules may seem somewhat odd, as the hero is a rather marginal figure in the ideological expressions which are

76 Sil., *Pun.* 1.171–287; but see Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 109–110.

77 Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 112; Carrière 1995, op. cit. (n. 60), 74.

78 Also see, for example, N. Roymans, 'Hercules and the construction of a Batavian identity in the context of the Roman empire', in: N. Roymans and T. Derks, eds., *Ethnic constructs in antiquity. The role of power and tradition* (Amsterdam 2009), 219–38.

generally seen as steered from the centre. On coins struck for Augustus, for example, Hercules hardly appears and his temples do not appear among those the *princeps* is said to have restored in his *Res Gestae*.⁷⁹ This general lack of Hercules in Augustan ideology has sometimes been linked to Mark Antony's claims to be of Herculean descent.⁸⁰ This may well have been among the reasons for Augustus picking Apollo as his patron. In some monuments we may even recognize the enmity between Octavian and Antony as being equaled to Apollo and Hercules' rivalry.⁸¹

In spite of the tendency to equate Hercules with Antony, Hercules is not entirely absent from sources with a certain intimacy to the imperial court of Augustus. It is notable that the few times that the wandering hero *does* appear in association with Augustus, it is precisely in the context of the enterprises of the two in the western Mediterranean. In a most explicit form, we find the association in one of Horace's *Odes* upon Augustus' return to Rome from the Cantabrian Wars in 24 BCE:

*Herculis ritu modo dictus, o plebs,
morte venalem petiisse laurum
Caesar Hispana repetit penatis
victor ab ora.*

In the manner of Hercules, o plebs, Caesar, said recently to have sought the crown at the expense of his own life, returns as a victor from the shores of Hispania to his household gods.⁸²

79 Only a single coin type of Augustus showed Hercules, struck in the context of the Parthian settlement: *RIC* i² Augustus 314. For the restoration of temples, see *RG* 19.

80 O. Hekster, 'The constraints of tradition: depictions of Hercules in Augustus' reign', in: L. Ruscu, C. Ciogradi, R. Ardevan, C. Roman, and C. Gazdac, eds., *Orbis antiquus: studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis* (Cluj-Napoca 2004), 235–241; O. Hekster, 'Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's "Counter-Propaganda"', *BABesch* 79 (2004), 159–166; M.P. Loar, 'Hercules, Caesar, and the Roman emperors', in: D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 507–521; E.M. Moormann and C. Stocks, 'Identifying demigods: Augustus, Domitian, and Hercules', in: R. Marks and M. Mogetta, eds., *Domitian's Rome and the Augustan legacy* (Ann Arbor 2021), 79–101. For a discussion of Antony's association with Hercules, see U. Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', in: C. Schubert and K. Brodersen, eds., *Rom und der Griechische Osten. Festschrift für Hatto H. Schmitt, zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 1995), 103–112.

81 D.E.E. Kleiner, 'Semblance and storytelling in Augustan Rome', in: K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2005), 197–233, 220–221.

82 Hor., *Od.* 3.14.1–4. Date and translation – with minor changes – from Loar 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 510.

The comparison between Hercules and Augustus – reinforced by their names at the start of the first and the third line – goes beyond the mere fact that both returned victorious from the Iberian Peninsula. Rather, Augustus returned *Herculis ritu*, hence implying that this victory came with the taming of the landscapes from whence he just returned.

Horace's ode predated the territorial reorganization to which these lands were to be subjected, but Augustus is already presented as being on equal footing with Hercules. It may thence come as no surprise that the *princeps* would soon come to outshine the hero. This we see, for example, in Anchises' prophecy in Vergil, in which Augustus' wanderlust is said to exceed that of Hercules and Bacchus.⁸³ At the end of Augustus' life, in the eulogy put in the mouth of Tiberius by Cassius Dio, another comparison between the *princeps* and Hercules was made that favoured the former.⁸⁴ Whereas Hercules reluctantly tamed beasts upon being ordered to do so, Augustus, in his successor's words, voluntarily pacified the world of men. Whether these were Tiberius' actual words or not, their timing could not be more fitting, as it would have anticipated the *princeps'* deification. After all, outshining the son of a god, whose deeds earned him his apotheosis, certainly gave that other *divi filius* the proper credentials to be posthumously rewarded in similar fashion.⁸⁵ Furthermore, if any associations between Hercules and Antony still echoed by this time, a secondary effect of Tiberius' words would have been to harness the decisive triumph of Apollo-Augustus.

If we now look for associations between Augustus and Hercules along the Herculean route, we find that here, too, these are essentially about the emperor *surpassing* the hero. In quite a visualized sense, we see this in *tropaeum Alpium* (Figure 3). Towering high above the bay of Monaco, the trophy looked out over the ancient cult place of Herakles Monoikos.⁸⁶ This cult, the *via Iulia Augusta*, and the trophy are brought in an implicit relation by Ammianus Marcellinus, as he discusses Hercules' presumed road-building in the Alps.⁸⁷ As we saw in the example of Diodorus, the connection between Hercules and the Alps was already made well before the fourth century. Indeed, with Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy we have two further authors of the first century BCE

83 Verg., *Aen.* 6.791–803; with Moormann and Stocks 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 95.

84 Cass. Dio, 56.36.4–5.

85 On the prospect of apotheosis as a motivation to associate Augustus with Hercules, see most recently Loar 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 508–513.

86 For a detailed discussion of the association between the *tropaeum Alpium* and the cult of Herakles Monoikos, see Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44).

87 Amm. Marc., 15.10.9.



FIGURE 7.3 The *tropaeum Alpium* at modern La Turbie
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to reflect on Hercules' Alpine exploits.⁸⁸ Dated before the Alpine campaigns of Augustus, these authors are nevertheless an attestation of an increased Roman interest in this region.⁸⁹ Associating the Alps' subjugation with no one less than Hercules gave their eventual conquest divine proportions. In this sense, the *tropaeum Alpium* gains even more symbolic significance. That Hercules is outdone rather than equalled follows from the trophy's location: its place high above a famous cult place quite literally placed Augustus above Hercules, bringing even more fame to the former's Alpine conquest.

A similar sense of rivalling Hercules we get from the end of the *via Augusta* at Gades. It may be recalled for this city that it was associated with the story of Hercules and Geryon and that it was also regarded as the end of the world. Accordingly, in some of the accounts of the Geryon myth, Hercules is described as having erected his famous Pillars to mark reaching the edge of the world.⁹⁰ As we have seen in Strabo's suggestion above, Gades may have held a symbolic

88 Dion. Hal., 1.41–42, Liv., 21.21–38. Whereas Dionysius' account is on Hercules himself, Livy's Hercules instead appears in the context of Hannibal's march through the Alps, on which see Fabrizi 2015 op. cit. (n. 12).

89 Jourdain-Annequin 1989 op. cit. (n. 63), 636–639; Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44), 194.

90 Apollod., *Bibl.* 2.5.10, Diod. Sic., 4.18.2–4.

representation of these Pillars in its famous *Herculeum*.⁹¹ To have the *via Augusta* reach this end of the world – with the milestones even including it in the formula *a Baete et Iano Augusto ad Oceanum* – was a feat that had Hercules written all over it. But Augustus' empire did not just extend to one edge of the known world; his *Res Gestae* also tells us that in the north it reached the mouth of the Elbe.⁹² From Tacitus we learn of the rumours that Hercules placed a counterpart to the Gaditan Pillars here.⁹³ Coined in the context of the Germanic campaigns of Drusus, it may well be suggested that the rumours were at least fuelled by Augustan propagation of the Empire's extent. As Drusus supposedly set up trophies at the end of the Elbe, one may see a northern parallel of the Herculean associations of the Alpine trophy.⁹⁴

That certain parts along the route from Gades to Rome somehow related Augustus to Hercules' tenth labour may by now be clear, but what then of the route from Gades to Rome as a whole? For this we should recall the systematisation of this route under Augustus. Even if in the sailing season sea travel would still have been the preferred mode of reaching the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula for most travellers, this systematization allowed one to travel from Rome to Gades over land, using a direct route with settlements and road stations at set intervals. It therefore hardly comes as a surprise that our key evidence for Hercules' route from Gades to Rome as a single route, the *Vicarello Cups*, showed it in the form of itineraries based on the system of settlements and *mansiones* as systematized under Augustus. The Herculean journey had been full of episodes that saw the hero bring order to the lands he crossed by subduing peoples, overcoming natural obstacles, and founding cities. Augustus' campaigns and his subsequent reorganization of the Iberian and Gallic territories did pretty much the same, as was duly recorded by the various monuments that filled these lands. His road-system, contrastingly, went one step further by ordering the landscape it traversed into a coherent Roman landscape. For the first time in history, the route of Hercules had become an actual *via*, where possible named after the one who had been responsible. One could hardly think of a better way of outdoing Hercules than by paving the route with which he was associated. This, exactly, was done in the name of Augustus. Nevertheless, the route would never lose its Herculean associations,

91 Str., 3.5.5.

92 *RG* 26.

93 Tac., *Germ.* 34.

94 For these trophies, see Flor., 4.12.23, Cass. Dio, 55.1.3.

most notably witnessed in the ninth-century chronicles of Al-Razi, in which the *via Augusta* is referred to as the ‘road built by Hercules.’⁹⁵

6 Conclusion

The *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta* were part of the Augustan monumentalization of southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula in an ideologically charged project of conceptualizing the Roman Empire. As the Vicarello Cups neatly show, this route became thoroughly systematized and thought of in terms of miles and road-stops. Paved, measured, and monumentalized, the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta* properly turned the landscapes they traversed into a Roman environment. An important part of this project overlaid an already existing framework through which a similar sense of taming the landscape has been understood before, in that it overlapped with the mythical route of Hercules. Consequently, together with the restoration of roads of greater antiquity, these roads and their monuments actualized a route that had since long belonged to the realm of mythology. By integrating such expressions of Roman power in a Herculean tradition, moreover, these roads gave a ‘larger than life’ dimension to the man on top of the recently instituted monarchical hierarchy. The relative lack of attention to Hercules in ‘central’ ideology as well as the involvement of a variety of local actors in the establishment of the road network and its adjacent monuments show that the construction of empire and associated ideologies were much more than top-down processes and expressions of power steered from the centre. Rather, the loose association between Hercules and Augustus appears to have been a way to come to terms to the changing environment, in a political as much as in a cultural sense. In this respect, the wandering hero – recognized in various guises throughout the ancient Mediterranean – formed the glue that further strengthened the cohesive force of Rome’s roads.

95 These chronicles have survived through a Castilian translation from the fifteenth century called *Crónica del moro Rasis*, the citation being this author’s English translation of a fragment from Chapter 33 of this manuscript (= D. Catalan and M. Soledad de Andres, eds., *Crónica del moro Rasis: versión del Ajbar muluk al-Andalus de Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Musà al-Razí, 889–955: romanizada para el rey don Dionís de Portugal hacia 1300 por Mahomad, Alarife, y Gil Pérez, clérigo de don Perianes Porcel* (Madrid 1975), 98). See A. Christys, ‘Did all roads lead to Córdoba under the Umayyads?’, in: M.J. Kelly and M. Burrows, eds., *Urban Interactions* (New York 2020), 109–146, 129, for this chapter being a reference to the *via Augusta*.

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PART 2

*Tradition and Power in the First
and Second Century CE*



Municipal Elections in the Roman West during the Principate

The Strength of Tradition

Christer Bruun

1 Introduction

The election of magistrates has an obvious role to play when it comes to establishing structures of power in Roman towns. During the late Republic, this practice took hold, with many local variations, as Roman towns to a varying degree followed the model of the mother city Rome.

There is undoubtedly a general notion that participation in political events decreased overall after the Principate was introduced. In Rome, what mattered was the wish of the princeps, not the vote in the *comitia*, and no one could have a political career who was not aligned with the emperor. In the local context, we have positive evidence for electioneering almost only from Pompeii, and this only until 79 CE,¹ and it is often said that municipal elections in the West ceased to be held more or less at that time or soon after. The change is explained by pointing to the example represented by Rome, and by arguing that the local elites closed ranks and/or it became ever more difficult to find candidates, as the economic conditions of the upper classes deteriorated during the second century CE.

In reality, however, the hold that tradition had over this aspect of local political life was strong. The sources at our disposal show that as far as local elections are concerned, there was less of a transformation and change than is often assumed during the period from Caesar's murder to the end of the Severan dynasty. This is of course not to deny that the social and political structures of Roman towns were impacted in many other respects during this centuries-long period. One may consider, for instance, the rise of the *Augustales*, the effects of

1 I am not sure what to make of the report in the *Guida d'Italia: Emilia e Romagna* (ed. Touring Club Italiano), Milan 1957, 101, of a “grande blocco con resti d'iscrizione dipinta (programma elettorale)” from Bononia (Bologna). For one election poster from Herculaneum, see *AE* 1987, 262. A. Wallace-Hadrill, “The Monumental Centre of Herculaneum: In Search of the Identities of Public Buildings”, *JRA* 24 (2011), 137–138 showed that the inscription *AE* 1989, 181b from Herculaneum does not belong to an election context.

private benefactions, and the increasing oversight of the imperial government through the *curatores rei publicae*; all matters which lie outside the scope of the present study.

When discussing municipal elections in the Roman world during the Principate, there are, in the western part, five important contexts and sources/groups of sources that deserve attention, and they will be discussed in the order given below.

1. The election posters (*programmata*) from Pompeii, which all have a *terminus ante quem* of 79 CE.
2. The Album from Canusium, a *colonia civium Romanorum* in southern Italy, dating to 223 CE.
3. The passages about local elections in the so-called Flavian municipal charter, of which incomplete copies have been found in Spain in several Roman towns with Latin rights. Most famous is the *Lex Irnitana*, which was published in 1986.
4. The exceptionally rich evidence from Ostia, Rome's harbour town, which sheds light on the processes which were in place for the appointment of local political leaders.
5. The newly discovered chapters concerning elections in the *Lex Troesmensium*, the municipal charter of a small *colonia civium Romanorum* close to the Black Sea in Moesia Inferior, modern Romania. The official first edition appeared only in 2016.

2 The Engagement of the People in Elections at Pompeii

As is well-known, the election posters from Pompeii, painted on the external walls of buildings, are very lively and there are many of them, and for people living in countries which are counted as democracies and where elections are regularly held, it is easy to relate to these messages. It certainly appears as if the whole town was engaged in these annual elections of *aediles* and *duoviri*. We find not only individuals (*rogatores*) promoting certain candidates, but also professional and cultural associations and “neighbours” (*vicini*), as they call themselves, taking part in the election campaigns.² Here there are many

² For the evidence, see H. Mouritsen, *Elections, Magistrates and Municipal Elite. Studies in Pompeian Epigraphy* (ARID Suppl. 15) (Rome 1988), 83–84 (list of candidates supported in the most ancient surviving *programmata*, including epigraphic references), 104–106 (the material from c.30 BCE to 40 CE), 125–159 (the most recent material, the *programmata recentiora*). For a list of all individual and collective *rogatores*, see Mouritsen 1988, 160–178.

similarities with the practice in modern democracies. A particularly rich example is provided by the *programmata* which in the period 77–79 CE supported Cn. Helvius Sabinus for *aedile*. Over one hundred have been identified, two of which have the following wording:³

Helvium Sabinum / aed(ilem) Parth(en)ope rog(at) cum Rufino.

(Elect) Helvius Sabinus *aedilis*, Parthenope supports him with Rufinus.⁴

Cn. Helvium Sabinum aed(ilem) / pist(ores) rog(ant) et cupiunt cum vicinis

(Elect) Cn. Helvius Sabinus *aedilis*, the bakers support him and desire it together with (his) neighbours.⁵

Throughout the twentieth century, scholars studied these posters, aiming above all at deciphering what they could tell us about the ruling class in Pompeii. A crucial skill here was the ability to read these posters accurately, which also meant being able to discern which layer each poster belonged to. For the chronology – which candidates are earlier and which are later, and which of them were campaigning against each other – is important when trying to figure out how the socio-political elite developed.

There would be much to say about the debate concerning elections at Pompeii, but for the sake of brevity I will leave unmentioned a series of worthy earlier contributions and focus on the work of H. Mouritsen, an eminent epigrapher who better than anyone else has deciphered the election posters, as his doctoral dissertation from 1988 made clear.⁶

However, the interpretation which H. Mouritsen gave his material fails to convince. In his view, there was no real influence or true participation from the Pompeian population in the election campaigns. The many posters are deceptive, H. Mouritsen argued: they were painted by professional painters and the location of the posters, along the main roads and in the most frequented parts of town – and not in the quiet residential quarters where people actually lived – showed that the whole election campaign was run by the candidates instead of by the people. One must doubt that there was any real popular

3 On the *programmata* for Helvius Sabinus, see Mouritsen 1988, op. cit. (n. 2), 136–137.

4 *CIL* IV 3403.

5 *CIL* IV 7273.

6 Mouritsen 1988, op. cit. (n. 2). For a fuller account of both earlier scholarship and studies after Mouritsen, see L.E. Tacoma, *Roman Political Culture. Seven Studies of the Senate and City Councils of Italy from the First to the Sixth Century AD* (Oxford 2020), 63–65.

interest in the elections at Pompeii, according to H. Mouritsen and those who support his argument.⁷

When investigating the extent to which local municipal elections took place in the Roman world during the second century CE, it is important to be aware of the debate about elections in Pompeii. If H. Mouritsen is right in his claim that there was no real interest from the side of the Pompeian population even during the early Flavian years, it makes it much more difficult to make a case for the continuation of this tradition during the following decades in other Roman towns.

There are two separate questions to consider when approaching the sources about Pompeian elections, but regardless of which of them is of interest, it is difficult to agree with H. Mouritsen's interpretation of the sources. On the one hand, one may ponder whether at Pompeii we find a political system that has similarities with what occurs in modern democracies at the time of elections, and on the other hand, one may evaluate the extent to which the Pompeian population at large had an interest in said elections. While the latter issue is of interest here, a few words also need to be said about the first question, i.e., the extent to which the Pompeian election campaigns resemble the processes which precede elections in "modern democracies".

First, it is unavoidable that the accusation of 'anachronistic thinking' will be lodged at those who attempt to find Pompeian features that appear similar to certain aspects of modern election campaigns,⁸ because when analyzing the Pompeian election procedure we only have modern models with which to operate. There is no ancient "ideal of political participation by the citizens" against which one could compare what we are able to deduce about election campaigns at Pompeii. The only possible *comparanda* are modern.

Second, there is a vast range of different systems to choose between when one ponders what a "true democratic election campaign" should look like and in what respect the Pompeian system might fall short. We are talking about a tradition well over a century old, about elections now regularly held in a

7 Mouritsen 1988, op. cit. (n. 2), 56–60; H. Mouritsen, 'Electoral Campaigning in Pompeii: A Reconsideration', *Athenaeum* 87 (1999), 515–523. Strong support in Tacoma 2020, op. cit. (n. 6), 64, exemplified by the verdict "more rigorous study of the *programmata* has done much to undermine confidence in the democratic model of the elections".

8 Tacoma 2020, op. cit. (n. 6), 63: "In retrospect, the approach was rather anachronistic, if not naive", on scholars who took the Pompeian *programmata* as a sign that political leaders attempted to reach out to larger parts of the population. The criticism is unfounded, see below.

multitude of countries on six continents.⁹ What modern scholars can do is to relate the Pompeian evidence to their modern experiences of democratic elections. In this light, H. Mouritsen's interpretation is arguably fundamentally at odds with what is known about how election campaigns are run, or used to be run, in many western democracies.¹⁰

While a candidate usually has a team of close advisers and assistants, and much money is spent on advertising and professional firms are hired for this purpose, volunteers still in many or most situations play a role, volunteers who obviously are engaged and consider the elections important. This is the case also in the USA, where the sums spent on election campaigns have reached obscene levels. But even so, election campaigns highly value the often unpaid enthusiasm of volunteers, and most volunteers are happy to coordinate their actions with the central campaign office; anything else would be stupid. The same elements seem to be in place also in the political life of Pompeii.

Where does this leave the question of whether there was a genuine interest among the population of Pompeii for the annual elections? We lack every kind of data in this regard and can only base our argument on the activity which the *programmata* reveal. The conclusion must be that what we see at Pompeii is perfectly commensurable with a pattern that can be or has been observed in connection with elections in modern democracies, in which there normally is a robust participation by the electorate.¹¹

Indeed, H. Mouritsen's view on the lack of popular interest in the elections at Pompeii has been convincingly rebutted by scholars such as R. Biundo and C. Chiavia, albeit usually in publications in Italian, which may have dulled their impact in the anglophone world.¹²

9 If one were engaged in writing an essay in Political science, one would obviously have to deal with the question of when an election campaign can truly be called "free and democratic", but that is not the issue here.

10 This judgement is based on seven years of political activism in Finland, from the age of fifteen to twenty-two, and on observations made while living in a number of other western democracies.

11 The issue here is obviously not with the question of what effect the elections at Pompeii had on the power structures in the town or on the entry of "new families" into the local elite.

12 R. Biundo, 'La propaganda elettorale a Pompei: la funzione e il valore dei programmata nell'organizzazione della campagna', *Athenaeum* 91 (2003), 53–116.; C. Chiavia, *Programmata. Manifesti elettorali nella colonia romana di Pompei* (Turin 2002); Biundo was cited by Tacoma 2020, op. cit. (n. 6), 65. The issue of popular participation was not mentioned by J. Franklin, 'Epigraphy and Society', in: J.J. Dobbins and P.W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (London/New York 2007), 518–525.

3 Central Elections in Rome during the Principate

H. Mouritsen's pessimistic view on the lack of popular enthusiasm for elections in Pompeii would seem to tie in well with what went on in Rome on the national scene during the early Principate. There, change had certainly taken place since the fierce election campaigns for senatorial offices during the Late Republic. Well-known to all is the inflamed situation in the years 65–63 BCE, when two ambitious men, L. Sergius Catilina and M. Tullius Cicero, both sought the consulship, and the former twice failed to prevail in the *comitia*. The pamphlet known as the *Commentariolum petitionis*, allegedly written for Cicero's benefit by his brother Quintus, explains well how an election campaign was to be conducted among the voting public.¹³

But the situation changed once Augustus was firmly in power. The first emperor held the consulship whenever he wished, in total thirteen times, and he clearly used his influence when it came to the election of Roman magistrates. It used to be said that the traditional election of magistrates in Rome disappeared during the early Julio-Claudian emperors. The emperor made most of the choices and the senate ratified, but the popular voting assembly no longer met.¹⁴

This view of how the role of the assembly in Rome had been reduced or had altogether disappeared made an impact also on the study of municipal affairs. A prime example is represented by R. Meiggs's classic monograph *Roman Ostia*, still the standard work on Rome's harbour town. In the first edition of *Roman Ostia*, published in 1960, and again in the second edition from 1973, R. Meiggs stated that at Rome, elections in the *comitia* were abolished at the beginning of Tiberius' reign, as scholars in those days indeed widely believed.

13 On electioneering during the Roman Republic, see A. Yakobson, *Elections and Electioneering in Rome: A Study in the Political System of the Late Republic (Historia Einzelschriften 128)* (Stuttgart 1999). On the *Commentariolum petitionis*, see W.J. Tatum, 'Canvassing the Elite: Communicating Sound Values in the Commentariolum petitionis', in: C. Rosillo Lopez, ed., *Communicating Public Opinion in the Roman Republic (Historia Einzelschriften 256)* (Stuttgart 2019), 257–272; M.C. Alexander, 'The Commentariolum Petitionis as an Attack on Election Campaigns', *Athenaeum* 97 (2009), 31–57, 369–395; Alexander, *Roman Amoralism Reconsidered: The Political Culture of the Roman Republic and Historians in an Age of Disillusionment*, self-published online (tinyurl.com/RomanAmoralism); Ph. Freeman, *Quintus Tullius Cicero. How to Win an Election: An Ancient Guide for Modern Politicians* (Princeton, N.J./Oxford 2012) with L. Spina, 'Quintus Tullius Cicero. How To Win an Election: an Ancient Guide for Modern Politicians', *BMCR* 2012.08.12 (2012).

14 See, for instance, M. Cary and H. Scullard, *A History of Rome* (London 1935, 1st ed.), 360. Perhaps surprisingly, a very similar view is found in M.T Boatwright et al., *A Brief History of the Romans* (New York/Oxford 2006, 1st ed.), 252–253.

He continued: "Ostia, always closely influenced by the capital, probably followed her example soon afterwards".¹⁵

Of course, Ostia continued to have a functioning local government after the mid-first century CE. That is evident from a welter of inscriptions which give us the names and careers of local dignitaries. But the appointments, in R. Meiggs's view, were always made by the town council itself, by the *curia*, i.e., the *ordo decurionum*. The council members, the *decuriones*, co-opted new members, and every year they chose some among themselves to hold the local magistracies, without any input from the population at large; no elections by the people took place.¹⁶

But then, in his 1977 monograph *The Emperor in the Roman World*, the British historian F. Millar drew attention to previously neglected sources concerning the late second and early third century CE, especially the work of the early-third-century senator and historian Cassius Dio. Dio was a contemporary observer, and his text allowed F. Millar to re-assess the matter of elections in the *comitia* and to write: "voting by *tribus* and *centuriae* continued in Rome at least until the 3rd c."¹⁷ This view is now generally thought to be correct, while scholars acknowledge that the senate, influenced by the emperors, carried out a pre-selection among the candidates for Roman magistracies.¹⁸ Thus, R. Talbert, in his authoritative study of the senate of the Principate, could state: "As late as the early third century the assemblies still continued to meet for the purpose of ratifying the choice of candidates".¹⁹

If previously the alleged disappearance of elections by the people in the *comitia* at Rome had provided the rationale for assuming that they were abolished on the local level as well, the result of F. Millar's research created a wholly new context into which to situate the evidence from *coloniae* and *municipia*.

15 R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (Oxford 1973, 2nd ed.), 183.

16 Support for Meiggs's view is not difficult to find; see, e.g., H. Mouritsen, 'The Album from Canusium and the Town Councils of Roman Italy', *Chiron* 28 (1998), 250.

17 F.G.B. Millar, 'Nicolet's L'inventaire du monde', *JRA* 1 (1988), 140; F.G.B. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (London 1992, 1st ed. 1977), 302. Dio 37:28; 58:20.

18 For a detailed discussion about the impact of the emperor, see B. Levick, 'Imperial Control of Elections under the Early Principate: Commendatio, Suffragatio, and "Nominatio"', *Historia* 16 (1967), 207-230.

19 See R.J.A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton, NJ 1984), 341-345 with p. 342 for the quote. In agreement K. Kröss, *Die politische Rolle der stadtrömischen Plebs in der Kaiserzeit* (Leiden 2017), 94 (n. 106); Tacoma 2020, op. cit. (n. 6), 114 (although the overall emphasis is the opposite; cf. p. 61, p. 114: "from AD 14 onwards elections had become an internal affair in which senators voted about each other").

4 What the Album of Canusium Shows about the Tradition of Elections

From the Roman town of Canusium in southern Italy (modern Canosa in Puglia; not a large centre) comes the extraordinary inscription known as the Album of Canusium. It uses four columns to list the names of all one hundred members of the town council in 223 CE, and of an additional group of men waiting to be admitted. The reason for dedicating attention to this document in the present context is not that the town provides undeniable evidence for local elections. Canusium receives its own section because the album sheds light on two questions of importance for understanding the municipal context in Roman Italy during the second and early third century CE: *adlectiones* (co-optations) of members of the *ordo decurionum*, and the alleged decline of local elites and their reluctance to take on duties in local government.

Of interest when discussing municipal elections is the hierarchy that the album reveals to us. The members of the *curia* were divided according to what level they had reached on the political career ladder, in the following way:

<i>quinquenna-</i>	<i>adlecti inter</i>	<i>duoviralicii</i>	<i>aedilicii</i>	<i>quaestoricii</i>	<i>pedani</i>	<i>praetextati</i>
<i>licii</i>	<i>quinquen-</i>					
	<i>nalicios</i>					

7	4	29	19	9	32	25
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The members were categorized according to the highest office they had held, i.e., the *quinquennalicii* were former *quinquennales*, the *duoviralicii* were former *duoviri*, and so on. Close readings and analyses of this document were presented by F. Jacques in 1984 and B. Salway in 2000. In basic agreement with Jacques, the latter provided a sensible explanation for the presence of the *pedani*, a category of *decuriones* one does not hear much about in other sources; men who had not (yet) held any magistracies. As far as their place in the municipal hierarchy was concerned, they were surely similar to the low-ranking *pedarii* who had a seat in the Roman senate.²⁰

²⁰ On the *pedanii*, see F. Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté. Politique impériale et autonomie municipale dans les cités de l'Occident romain (161–244)* (Coll. ÉFR 76) (Rome 1984), 478–486 and *passim*; B. Salway, 'Prefects, patroni, and Decurions: A New Perspective

Setting out from the annual magistrates that scholars think were elected every year – two quaestors, two *aediles*, and two *duoviri* – B. Salway presented a demographic argument for why a town council could not maintain its numbers if the only way in which it was replenished was by the entry, every year, of the annual junior magistrates, the two quaestors. Because of the average life expectation in the Roman world, in such a situation the number of one hundred *decuriones* could not be maintained. Therefore, co-optation or, in Latin, *adlectio* of new men was required, co-optation of men who had not held any office (yet), and who may never hold one; they might remain undistinguished *decuriones* while being members of the *ordo decurionum* for life.

It was also necessary to have a larger number of men of acceptable age to choose from when electing magistrates. We know from Roman legal sources that an age of 25 years was required for a local elected office. One pool of possible new magistrates consisted of the *praetextati*, who are thought to have been in the age range of 17 to 24 years and who are also thought to have been well-connected young men; in some years, and perhaps every year, some of them would reach the required minimum age so they could become candidates for the quaestorship. And additional candidates could be found among the *pedani*, the lowest ranking members of the *curia*.

Important for the current investigation is that the picture which emanates from the Album of Canusium is one in which there was competition for municipal offices. The competition played out in a situation where there was a two-pronged procedure for maintaining the size of the town council, namely, through the introduction into the *curia* of men who had served as junior magistrates, and through the co-optation or *adlectio* of additional members, the *pedani*, from the population of the town. The latter probably had a varied background, although they shared the characteristic of being successful and sufficiently wealthy; some may have been more advanced in age and when they were younger were never registered as *praetextati*. There are no signs of a withdrawal of the elite from municipal politics or, if there was some, even in a town of a not overly large size like Canusium this does not seem to have impacted the functioning and replenishing of the *ordo decurionum*.

on the Album of Canusium', in: A. Cooley, ed., *The Epigraphic Landscape of Roman Italy* (*BICS Suppl.* 71) (London 2000), 127–133 for what follows. Talbert 1984, op. cit. (n. 19), 249–250 on the *pedarii* in the Roman senate.

5 A Few Significant Chapters on Elections in the Flavian Municipal Code

The Flavian municipal code, often called the *lex Flavia municipalis*, dates to the late 80s CE.²¹ Several surviving chapters concern the elections of *quaestores*, *aediles*, and *duoviri*. Some of the central chapters were known already before the publication of the *Lex Irnitana* in 1986, thanks to partially preserved copies of the law discovered in other Spanish towns. Of particular importance for the issue of elections are chapters 51 to 60, which are preserved in the so-called *Lex Malacitana* and have been known since the late nineteenth century.²²

This being the case, one might have thought that the paragraphs about municipal elections should have made scholars such as R. Meiggs hesitant to declare that elections at Ostia were abolished more or less at the same time as the Flavian municipal code was approved. But evidently R. Meiggs and with him other scholars were strongly influenced by what they thought was happening in Rome in regard to the role played by the election assembly.

In addition, I have a suspicion that passages such as chapter 51 of the Flavian *lex* may have influenced the thinking of some modern scholars:²³

[*R(ubrica) De nominatione candidatorum*]

[*Si ad quem diem professionem*] *fieri oportebit, nullius nomine aut pauciorum, quam tot quod creari oportebit, professio facta erit.*

[Concerning the nomination of candidates]

[If on the day by which application] must be made, application has been made in no one's name or in the names of fewer persons than it is necessary to appoint.

If the situation was as described in this passage, the law further established that the *duovir* in charge of the elections must find additional candidates. One

21 On the Flavian municipal law and the somewhat unclear approval procedure it underwent in Rome, see G. Rowe, 'The Roman State: Laws, Lawmaking, and Legal Document', in: C. Bruun and J. Edmondson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy* (New York 2015), 302–304, who preferred the term "code" instead of "charter". Now also see J.F. Rodríguez Neila, *Política y elecciones municipales en el Imperio Romano. Una visión desde la provincia Hispania Ulterior Baetica* (Seville 2021) (*non vidi*; not yet processed in the University of Toronto library system).

22 *CIL* II 1964 = *ILS* 6089 = *FIRA* I 24.

23 J. González, 'The Lex Irnitana: A New Copy of the Flavian Municipal Law', *JRS* 76 (2018), 162 (Latin text), 188 (English translation, by M. Crawford).

might hold that this chapter bodes ill for local democracy, that “names of fewer persons than it is necessary to appoint” is a warning sign and forebodes a situation when no one is willing to take on communal duties. But it is important to remember that the Flavian municipal code was composed centrally and built on the experience from numerous communities, and above all, in the typical Roman legalistic manner, the law wanted to take into account every possible future scenario. One must obviously also prepare for exceptional years in which there may not initially be enough nominations, for whatever reason. This chapter cannot be taken to mean that the legislators suspected that in general the interest in public office among the town’s elite had disappeared.

In any case, chapter 52 of the Flavian law establishes that one of the *duumviri* currently in office shall organize elections to determine who the next *duumviri*, *aediles*, and *questores* will be:²⁴

tum alter ex his comitia IIuir(is), item aedilibus, item quaestoribus rogandis subrogandis h(ac) l(eg)e habeto; utique ea distributione curiarum, de qua supra comprehensum est, suffragia ferri debebunt, ita per tabellam ferantur facito. Quique ita creati erunt, ii annum unum aut, si in alterius locum creati erunt, reliqua parte eius anni in eo honore sunt, quem suffragis erunt consecuti.

then the other of them, is to hold the election under this statute for choosing or choosing in replacement *duumviri*, likewise *aediles*, likewise *quaestores*; and as the votes must be cast according to that distribution of *curiae* which has been laid down above, so he is to see that they are cast by ballot. And those who are thus appointed are to hold that office which they have achieved in the voting for one year, (but) if they are appointed in replacement of someone else, for the remaining part of that year.

The following chapters 53–58 provide detailed instructions about how residents were able to vote (53), who was eligible to be a candidate (54), the casting of votes (55), the mechanism for deciding in the case of an equal number of votes (56), on the order in which the *curiae* report their results (57), and sternly warns that no one may prevent the holding of elections (58).²⁵

Probably the main reason for believing that Roman towns cancelled their elections from the second half of the first century CE onwards has to do with

24 See González 1986, op. cit. (n. 23), 163 (Latin text), 188 (English translation by M. Crawford).

25 González 1986, op. cit. (n. 23), 163–165 (Latin text), 188–189 (English translation by M. Crawford).

the widespread belief that municipal magistracies had by that time become a heavy burden for members of the elite. Instead of counting a magistracy as an *honor*, which Romans, by nature very competitive, were eager to hold, at least some of these offices were perceived to be *munera*, i.e., burdens. A local magistrate always needed to pay something for the distinction, at least the so-called *summa honoraria*, and sometimes further expenses were expected during his tenure. Therefore there were ever fewer candidates, according to this line of argument. Town councils had to work hard to find the minimum number of willing candidates, and in this situation elections became obsolete. The town councils were happy to appoint whomever they could find from among their own social group, according to a certain modern reading of the evidence.²⁶

However, the idea that burdensome *munera* caused local members of the elite to avoid holding public office is anachronistic in the context of the second and early third centuries. The legal sources in which we find complaints and problems concerning *munera* are usually later, from the late third century and from Late Antiquity. This question was convincingly and exhaustively treated by F. Jacques in his substantial 1984 monograph.²⁷

6 Elections at Ostia during the Principate: Tradition Abides

The following section is wholly dedicated to Rome's harbour town, the *colonia Ostiensium*. When dealing with such a vast topic as the present one, little would be gained by using examples drawn from all over the Roman world; the evidence would be much too scattered. If some kind of coherent picture is to result, it is important that the study be focused. Next to Pompeii, it is Ostia which provides us with the most and best information about the composition of the socio-political elite and about local political career patterns.

At Ostia, we find no album of the *ordo decurionum* like at Canusium but instead a vast number of individual inscriptions of interest. Based on the evidence for both magistrates and simple *decuriones* during the period c.50 BCE to c.250 CE that I have collected in the context of another study, I estimate that we know by name some 26 per cent of the *duoviri* and possibly some 15 per cent of the *decuriones*.²⁸ These are modest numbers compared with the

26 Among scholars who subscribe to this scenario, there may be some who instead emphasize, as the main reason for abolishing elections, a wish to reduce influence from the population at large. In this context it is not possible to analyze in any detail these two different explanations for the alleged disappearance of municipal elections.

27 Jacques 1984, op. cit. (n. 20), 351–376, 501–503, and *passim*.

28 See C. Bruun, *Ostia-by-the-Sea: A Roman History. Population, Society, and Identities in Rome's Port* (Oxford/New York, forthcoming), Table 7.1 in Chapter VII.

information that is usually available to modern historians in archival sources, but in the Roman world only Pompeian society is better known.

When focusing on Ostian elections during the Principate, some evidence is admittedly missing. Not surprisingly, no election posters can be seen on the walls of Ostian buildings, since any plaster on the outer brick walls disappeared long ago. Moreover, Ostia was inhabited into the sixth century, for several centuries past the time when even the most optimistic estimates would suggest that local elections took place, and it is not clear that traces of any election posters from the first or second centuries could have survived so long. Furthermore, we lack epigraphic evidence for *curiae* or voting units at Ostia. The Flavian municipal code refers to elections taking place in *curiae*,²⁹ but Ostian inscriptions are silent about this feature. This is not surprising, since in the epigraphic sources from Roman Italy, *curiae* are mentioned only at Lanuvium and in a graffito from Pompeii. In the provinces, this institution is known primarily in North Africa.³⁰

Instead we can observe the offices which were held by the local leaders, in some cases cited in epigraphic texts which clearly register the full *cursus honorum*, and in other cases found in inscriptions which mention only a selection of offices. There are some sixty inscriptions in total which register more than one local magistracy or office.³¹ For a Roman town (other than Pompeii), this is rich evidence.

These inscriptions, whether they cite a complete *cursus* or only a selection of offices, are obviously in themselves not proof one way or another when discussing municipal elections. However, one particular subgroup among the inscriptions which provide information about Ostian office-holding is crucial for the argument that elections by the people continued. Incidentally, these are the very inscriptions which R. Meiggs took aim at when he claimed that elections had been abolished.

R. Meiggs singled out three inscriptions in which an *adlectio* (that is, a co-optation) of a magistrate was mentioned, and he took the fact that these three men declared that they had been co-opted by the *decuriones* (instead

29 González 1986, op. cit. (n. 23), 171–174 (chapters 52, 53, 55, 57, and 59).

30 For the evidence of *curiae* (occasionally found in provinces other than Africa, such as in Sardinia at Turrus Libisonis; *CIL* X 7953 with A. Ibba, 'Gli statuti municipali', in: S. Angiolillo et al., eds., *La Sardegna romana e altmedievale. Storia e materiali* (Cagliari 2017), 187), see M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, M.L. Caldelli, and F. Zevi, *Epigrafia latina. Ostia: cento iscrizioni in contesto* (Rome 2010) 1394–1395; A. Caballos Rufino, *El nuevo bronce de Osuna y la política civilizadora romana* (Sevilla 2006), 230–231, with 231–258 for the twenty-four *curiae* mentioned in the municipal statutes of the *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae* (Urso) (*AE* 2006, 645).

31 See Bruun forthcoming, op. cit. (n. 28), Table 7.2 in Chapter VII.

of being elected by the people) as proof that elections had been abolished at Ostia. The three cases are seen here:

1. M. Acilius [M. f.] Priscus, *quaest(or) aer(arii) suffra[gi]o de]curionum* (*AE* 1955, 169); Flavian.
2. L. Calpurnius L. f. Vot(uria tribu) Saturus, *d(ecurionum) decreto aedilis allectus* (*CIL* XIV 415); last third first century/first third second century.
3. Cn. Sergius Cn. f. Vot(uria tribu) Priscus, *ex d(ecurionum) d(ecreto) aedilis allectus* (*CIL* XIV 412 = *ILS* 6142); last third first century/first third second century.³²

There is also a fourth case which R. Meiggs did not mention, but which is the most significant, since it adds considerably to our understanding of the practice of *adlectio*:

4. Cn. Sentius Cn. f. Cn. n. Ter(etina tribu) Felix, *dec(urionum) decr(eto) aedilicius adl(ectus) d(ecurionum) d(ecreto) d(ecurio) adl(ectus)* (*CIL* XIV 409 = *ILS* 6146 = *IPO* B 339); first quarter second century.

Cn. Sentius Felix was one of the most prominent Ostians of his day, as shown by his above-mentioned extensive epitaph, which runs over twenty lines and presents him as *patronus* of close to a score of Ostian associations, most of them of professional nature. It is important to note that he was co-optated as *aedilicius*, as a “former *aedile*”, which means that he entered the *curia* with seniority. The mention that he was also a *decurio adlectus* seems redundant, unless the inscription deviates from the chronological order and lists the more important but later *adlectio* first; the following offices are *q(uaestor) a(erarii) Ostiens(ium)* and *Ivir* in proper ascending order.

In Sentius Felix’s case we can identify a very clear rationale for the *adlectiones*: the desire to involve a powerful local inhabitant in municipal affairs, someone who perhaps was a newcomer in Ostia, since his tribe, the Teretina, reveals a non-local origin of the family. Once he had been given the rank of former *aedile*, he could be a candidate for the duovirate, and indeed he eventually became *duovir* after first having been *quaestor*. After the bare list of offices, the unusual progress of his municipal career is emphasized in a separate clause: *hic primus omnium quo anno dec(urio) adl(ectus) est et / q(uaestor) a(erarii) fact(us) est et in proxim(um) annum Ivir designat(us) est* (“he was the first among all, in the year when he was co-optated as a member of the *curia*, to be made *quaestor aerarii* and *Ivir designatus* for the following year”).

The situation in Ostia at the turn of the first century CE – likely the period when Sentius Felix entered municipal politics – certainly seems to have been

32 See Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi 2010, op. cit. (n. 30), 195.

unusual. Be that as it may, if we focus on his personal career, it is noteworthy that the inscription says nothing about an *adlectio* to either the quaestorship or to the highest magistracy. This must mean that here we are talking about regular elections, and *factus est* for the quaestorship can certainly cover this meaning.³³ To be sure, for the duovirate Sentius Felix probably had the recommendation of the *ordo* as support at the election meeting, as indicated by the term *designatus*.

It is important to consider the full picture when interpreting what it means when an *adlectio* is mentioned in an epigraphic source; this R. Meiggs never did. For something to be added to the simple mention of a magistracy, like the *adlectio decreto decurionum*, it has to be a noteworthy and uncommon feature. But if there are no elections in the assembly of Ostian citizens, as R. Meiggs postulated, then the choice of magistrates is wholly based on a decision by the *decuriones*. In this case, everyone is chosen in the same way. There is no difference: an *adlectio* is also based on a decision made by the *decuriones*, as seen here:

No elections = the magistrate is chosen = *adlectio* (the magistrate is
by the *decuriones* chosen by the *decuriones*)

Thus, if there were no elections and each and every magistrate was chosen by the *decuriones*, why would an Ostian magistrate use an expression such as *d(ecurionum) decreto aedilis allectus*? That same situation would apply to all other magistrates and would not be worth mentioning.

But it is clear that being co-opted to an Ostian magistracy was seen as a particular honour, as shown by the case of Sentius Felix and of the three men whom Meiggs cited. Quite in agreement with such a scenario is the fact that most Ostian *quaestors* and *aediles* who mention their office do not mention an *adlectio*. This goes for 16 of 17 known *quaestors* and 13 of 16 explicit holders of the aedileship. Moreover, none of the almost forty *duoviri* known from individual inscriptions mention an *adlectio*, nor is the term used in connection with the yearly entries in the so-called *Fasti Ostienses* chronicle.³⁴ The reason why these inscriptions never mention an *adlectio* must be that these magistrates were elected in an assembly of the Ostian people.

While it is obvious why the leadership of Ostia had an interest in ‘recruiting’ someone as influential as Sentius Felix, some thought may also be dedicated to why the other three co-opted magistrates received this preferred treatment.

33 Cf. that in *CIL* XIV 376 it is said of P. Lucilus Gamala “the Younger” *in comitiis factus* when referring to his election as *curator pecuniae publicae exigendae et attribuendae*.

34 The data can be found in Chapter VII of Bruun, forthcoming, op. cit. (n. 28).

The profile of M. Acilius Priscus, as revealed by his inscription, is similar: he had extensive previous experience as an officer in the Roman army and with his authority must have appeared as an attractive addition to the local elite. C. Calpurnius Satorius had close contacts with several Gaii Sillii, as his inscription reveals, among whom can also be found the Ostian *Ivir* C. Silius Nerva and another member of the *ordo*. These connections explain well why the *adlectio* took place. As for Cn. Sergius Priscus, his father was a wealthy freedman, an *Augustalis* (*CIL* XIV 412), and it would not be a surprise if singling out the son for rapid advancement was in reality an acknowledgement of the father's influence.

At this point, some comments on what a devil's advocate might want to argue may be warranted. It is noticeable that the four *adlectiones* to magistracies all took place before the mid-second century CE. Perhaps that is when the Ostians abolished meetings of the *comitia*? After that, it is clear that no magistrate would claim to have benefited from an *adlectio* because all magistrates were chosen by the *decuriones*. But this argument is refuted by the fact that some, but not all, Ostian plain *decuriones* continue to refer to their *adlectio* to the *curia* long after the mid-second century.³⁵ This means that the traditional mechanism for entering the *curia* was still in place: every year the elected holders of the junior magistracies would enter. And, as we saw above in connection with the Album of Canusium, at irregular intervals additional men would be co-opted, in order to keep the number of *decuriones* stable. If the *decuriones* of Ostia elected the junior magistrates because elections had been abolished, then it does not confer any distinction on a common *decurio* to claim that he had benefited from an *adlectio*. What it means is, he was not deemed worthy of a magistracy by the *ordo decurionum*, but they decided to allow him entry into the *ordo* anyway, by co-opting him. Clearly, the continuing occurrence of *decuriones adlecti* means that elections in the *comitia* continued to take place.

Finally, there is one undeniable piece of evidence that Roman citizens at Ostia convened and held elections during the third quarter of the second century CE, in the form of the expression *curator pecuniae publicae exigendae et attribuendae in comitiis factus*, which appears in the *elogium* of P. Lucilius Gamala "the Younger".³⁶ Albeit the reference to the *comitia* in the *elogium* shows clear echoes of the *elogium* of the Elder P. Lucilius Gamala, an Ostian political leader who lived some two centuries earlier, it is not credible

35 There are in total twenty-three *decuriones* who make this claim; see Bruun, forthcoming, op. cit. (n. 28), Appendix 7c.

36 *CIL* XIV 376.

that the author of the *elogium* would have invented a meeting of the Ostian *comitia*.³⁷

R. Meiggs's view that elections by the people were abolished at Ostia already by the late first century is based on too narrow a view of the epigraphic evidence. The British historian included only part of the *adlectiones* in his argument, and he omitted the most significant case, that of Sentius Felix. Nor did he consider what the Album of Canusium can tell us in this regard. Furthermore, the *elogium* of the younger P. Lucilius Gamala clearly did not receive sufficient attention. It would seem that he set out from a preconceived notion, very common in the late 1950s, that Roman elections overall became obsolete during the first century CE, and he only needed three cases of *adlectiones* to conclude that this method had replaced elections by the people at Ostia. But it was the other way around, the *adlectio* to a magistracy found mention in a few inscriptions because it was so rare.

7 The New Evidence from Troesmis for Municipal Elections

When scrutinized closely, the Ostian evidence in no way lends itself to arguing that the tradition of holding local municipal elections had disappeared in the second century CE or even during the first half of the third. But even Ostia provides no explicit references to electioneering.

Then, quite recently, the belief in the continuation of Roman local elections received a mighty boost through the publication of two bronze tables containing parts of three chapters of the municipal charter of the town of Troesmis in the province Moesia Inferior, the *Lex Troesmensium*, which is dated to the end of the 170s CE (between mid-177 and March 180). The text was published by W. Eck in 2016, although passages had been presented in a preliminary fashion and discussed by the editor already for some years previously.³⁸ In Chapter 27 the magistracies and priesthoods are listed which will be filled by elections in the *comitia: Ilvir, quinquennalis, aedilis, quaestor, and sacerdos*.³⁹ The beginning of chapter 28 is of particular relevance for the present topic, while the

37 For a more extensive discussion and previous bibliography (extensive), see Chapter IV in Bruun, forthcoming, op. cit. (n. 28). *CIL* XIV 375 = *CIL* I² 3031a = *ILS* 6147 = *IPO* B 335.

38 See W. Eck, 'Die lex Troesmensium: ein Stadtgesetz für ein municipium civium Romanorum. Publikation der erhaltenen Kapitel und Kommentar', *ZPE* 200 (2016), 565–606, for the *editio princeps*, and J. Platschek, 'Zur Lesung von Kap. 27 der lex Troesmensium', *Tyche* 32 (2017), 151–165, for some relevant comments.

39 Eck 2016, op. cit. (n. 38), 580–581 (text and translation) = *AE* 2015, 1252.

rest of what is preserved of the chapter gives further details about the election procedure, namely about voting *curiatim*, by *curia*:⁴⁰

kaput XXVIII. De municipibus ad suffragium vocandis custodibusque ternis ponendis ad singulas cistas, quae suffragiorum causa positae erunt; item si quis in alia curia quam sua inter custodes suffragium tulerit, uti valeat, et de poena eius, qui duas pluresve tabellas in cistam deiecerit; item eius qui falsam rationem rettulerit.

Chapter 28. About the procedure for how citizens will be called to vote and about how three supervisors will be placed at each ballot box, which are set up for receiving the votes. Moreover: if one of the supervisors votes in a *curia* which is not his own, then it shall be valid, and about the punishment for someone who drops two or more votes into a ballot box. Moreover: about the punishment for someone who announces a false election result.

Any comments are almost superfluous. It is quite clear that when the charter for the town of Troesmis was drafted, the expectation was that contentious election campaigns might sometimes occur, in which the supporters of the various candidates might resort to illegal tricks in order for their champion to gain the majority of the votes. Here, it does not matter if the inspiration for this formulation was local, or if the text was based on experiences from other towns. The main thing is: elections at the local level in the Roman world demonstrably took place still at the end of the second century CE.

8 Conclusion: the Strength of Tradition

The new municipal code from Troesmis, dating to the late 170s CE, has undoubtedly changed the landscape in which the existence (or not) of municipal elections in the western part of the Roman empire is discussed. It makes little sense to claim that the law code represented an antiquated template that routinely was sent out to local communities. What has survived is enough to show that there are clear differences with the Flavian law found in several towns in Roman Spain, and thus if the text from Troesmis was inspired by a central template the latter must date to the early second century CE or later. Overall, it is difficult to believe that the law had contained such detailed prescriptions

⁴⁰ Eck 2016, op. cit. (n. 38), 580 for the Latin text. *AE* 2015, 1252.

for how local elections should be conducted, if they were in fact not held. The tradition of holding municipal elections appears to be alive and well.

Even without the discovery of the inscription from Troesmis, a valid case can be made for the continued existence of municipal elections into the first half of the third century. Rome itself stands as a certain model in this regard, and when the rich epigraphic and prosopographical evidence from Roman Ostia is taken into account, it is evident that the election meeting must have survived, even though we only have a single reference to a meeting of the local *comitia*, in the case of the younger P. Lucilius Gamala, around 150 CE. Roman historians have been able to show that a number of everyday procedures are poorly reflected in the epigraphic medium, and the annual elections would seem to belong in this category.

It would therefore seem that when it comes to the political scene in Roman towns from the period from the reign of Augustus to the early third century, the tradition of holding elections lived on and communities experienced less change in this regard than is often assumed. In this period, it is too early to talk about a drastic withdrawal of the elite from communal matters; there was still competition for elected office. And the citizenry was able to exercise some influence over the election of magistrates.

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Plotina and the (Re)Invention of the Tradition of Womanhood

Margherita Carucci

1 *Matrona*: an Idealised Representation of Roman Women

In ancient societies, women were consistently entangled and entrapped in the constraints of a traditional male-dominated discourse of gender. Since early Republican times the male elite of Rome had constructed an image of the ideal woman that served as a means for instructing their female counterparts on their social role, for judging their behaviour, and for limiting their sphere of actions. The idealised Roman *matrona* was defined by moral qualities, such as domesticity, reticence, and modesty, that knew little variation throughout Roman times. In the so-called *Laudatio Claudiae*, an epitaph from Rome dated to the late second century BCE, Claudia is praised for those female virtues that should adorn Roman *matronae*: she was a beautiful daughter, a loving wife and a mother; she was charming when she talked and graceful when she walked; she took care of her house and worked wool.¹ Livy, the Roman historian of Augustan age, gives a picture of wifely virtue in his account of Lucretia that her husband and the other young Romans, arriving unexpectedly during the night, found at home surrounded by her maids and working at her loom.² I quote these well-known passages on two aristocratic Roman women as examples of a wider range of textual references to the *topoi* of good womanhood that celebrated women's roles in the household as obedient daughters, devoted wives, and good mothers for the benefit of the male members of their family (fathers, husbands, and sons).

The traditional ideal of the aristocratic *matrona* conflicted with the reality of elite women's life. The traditional image of the *matrona* whose life revolved around the requirements of the male members of her family was the product and reflection of a patriarchal ideology, which was not realised in the actual practices of the elite women acquiring an education, owning property, and

1 *CIL* 6, 15346. For more parallel funerary reliefs, which praise women for their domestic qualities, see R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana, Ill. 1942), 295–300.

2 Liv., 1.57.

participating in a wide range of social activities at home and in public. The position of the upper-class women in Roman society was certainly marked by ambiguity on both a social and a visual level. On the one hand, as women, they were required to embody the male-constructed ideal of womanhood, which was defined by a range of moral qualities such as invisibility, reticence, domesticity, obedience to a father, and devotion to a husband. On the other hand, as members of the elite, they were expected to live up to the standards of their class through the visual display of their possessions, civic benefaction, and participation in social rituals.³ This tension between the standards of idealised womanhood and the requirements of practical life was perceived even stronger when women were members of the emperor's entourage and became part of the male structures of power. In the male perception, such privileged women could either remain untouched by their position and live up to the male standards of idealised womanhood, like the highly celebrated Octavia Minor, or turn into intriguing and vicious women, who interfered in the male-dominated domains of politics and the army, like the infamous Agrippina the Younger. From the women's perspective, by contrast, occupying a privileged position within the emperor's court sustained the possibility of their subjectivity, as they required a certain degree of agency to fulfil their opposite allocated roles as *domiseda*⁴ and public figure within the traditional structures of power.

Plotina's experience in the court of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian provides a telling example of the ways a woman of the imperial family asserted her identity within the traditional structures of power by complying to the normative societal expectations around women's behaviour. In fact, the few textual references preserved to us describe Plotina as the quintessence of the ideal woman and yet she was able to innovate the traditional role of imperial women. Taking Plotina as a test-case, this chapter will explore the tension between the rhetoric of tradition in the male construction of ideal womanhood and the departure from traditional discourse of gender, when a woman becomes a part of the male power structures. With the support of textual evidence, it will show that Plotina was able to break through social, cultural, and legal restrictions to claim some political agency, to occupy positions of authority, and to exercise some forms of power while carefully displaying her deference to the patriarchal norms of female behaviour.

3 For some examples, see M.R. Lefkowitz and M.B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece & Rome: A Source Book in Translation* (London 2005); E. D'Ambra, *Roman Women* (Cambridge 2007).

4 The term *domiseda*, which literally means "who stays at home", is often found in funerary inscriptions dedicated to Roman women, e.g. *CIL* 6, 11602 and *CIL* 8.647.

2 Plotina: the Exemplary Wife

There is little information about Plotina's early years. Most scholars' educated guess is that her father L. Pompeius was a member of the equestrian or senatorial class and came from Nemausus, a Roman colony in Gallia Narbonensis, where the emperor Hadrian dedicated a basilica to Plotina after her death.⁵ Plotina had been married to Trajan for some years, when her husband became emperor in 98 CE.⁶ Trajan's proclamation as emperor was a turning point in the couple's lives that would have affected Plotina profoundly, being no longer the ordinary spouse of a man pursuing a military and political career in the imperial provinces, but the wife of the ruler of a large empire and an empress herself. The historian Cassius Dio gives us a hint of Plotina's reaction to her social elevation when reporting what she said when as empress she entered the palace in Rome after the ceremonies installing Trajan as emperor:

Πλωτῖνα δὲ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ὅτε πρῶτον ἐς τὸ παλάτιον ἐσῆει, ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀναβαθμοὺς καὶ πρὸς τὸ πλήθος μεταστραφεῖσα εἶπε 'τοιαύτη μέντοι ἐνταῦθα ἐσέρχομαι οἷα καὶ ἐξελεῖν βούλομαι'. καὶ οὕτω γε ἑαυτὴν διὰ πάσης τῆς ἀρχῆς διήγαγεν ὥστε μηδεμίαν ἐπηγορίαν σχεῖν.

When his wife Plotina entered the palace for the first time, she turned around so as to face the stairway and the people and said: "I enter here such a woman as I want to be when I depart". And she conducted herself throughout the entire reign in a manner as to incur no reproach.⁷

With this short statement, Plotina was assuring the people of Rome that her new status and position in court would not affect her simple, unpretentious way of life. That she lived up to her words is confirmed by the contemporary

5 The possible origins of Plotina are discussed in H. Temporini, *Die Frauen am Hofe Traians* (Berlin 1978), 10–18; W.C. McDermott, 'Plotina Augusta and Nicomachus of Gerasa', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 26 (1977), 192–203; 195; M.-T. Raepsaet-Charlier, *Prosopographie des femmes de l'ordre sénatorial (I^{er}–II^e siècles)* (Louvain 1987), 51–512; M. Boatwright, 'The Imperial Women of the Early Second Century A.C.', *American Journal of Philology* 112 no. 4 (1991), 513–540: 515; P. Pavón, 'Plotina Augusta: luces y sombras sobre una mujer de estado', *Veleia* 35 (2018), 21–39: 22–23 For more information on Pompeius, see R. Hanslik, 'Pompeius' 131, *RE* XXI 2 (1952) col. 2293–2298. *HA, Hadr.* 12.2 reports that the basilica that Hadrian added and named after Plotina was "of marvellous workmanship".

6 The marriage between Plotina and Trajan is dated between 74 and 86 CE (Temporini 1978, op. cit. (n. 5), 19; D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie* (Darmstadt 1996), 126). All dates are CE unless stated otherwise.

7 Cass. Dio, 68.5.5. All translations are my own.

Pliny the Younger, who, in his speech to Trajan, praises Plotina as a woman who embodies and exemplifies the virtues of idealised womanhood:

Tibi uxor in decus et gloriam cedit. Quid enim illa sanctius? quid antiquius? Nonne, si Pontifici Maximo deligenda sit coniux, aut hanc, aut similem (ubi est autem similis?) elegerit? Quam illa nihil sibi ex fortuna tua, nisi gaudium, vendicat! quam constanter, non potentiam tuam, sed ipsum te reveretur! Idem estis invicem, quod fuistis: probatis ex aequo: nihilque vobis felicitas addidit, nisi quod scire coepistis, quam bene uterque vestrum felicitatem ferat. Eadem quam modica cultu! quam parca comitatu! quam civilis incessu! Mariti hoc opus, qui ita imbuat, ita instituit: nam uxori sufficit obsequii gloria. An, quum videat, quam te nullus terror, nulla comitetur ambitio, non et ipsa cum silentio incedat? ingredientemque pedibus maritum, in quantum patitur sexus, imitetur? Decuerit hoc illam, etiamsi diversa tu facias. Sub hac vero modestia viri, quantam debet verecundiam uxor marito! femina sibi!

Your wife contributes to your honour and glory as a supreme model of the ancient virtues. In fact, who is more venerable and respectful of ancient customs than she? If a *pontifex maximus* had to choose a wife, would he not choose her or someone like her (where is one similar to her)? How she claims for herself nothing from your fortune but joy! How consistently she respects not your power but yourself! You are to each other as you have always been, you approve each other, and your good fortune does not add anything to you but understanding how each of you can use your mutual fortune. How modestly she dresses, how small the retinue she has, how graciously she walks! This is the work of her husband, who gives her such an education and training: for a wife, in fact, simply being obedient brings her glory. When she sees you unaccompanied by terror or pomp, would she not walk in silence and, as far as her sex permits, would she not imitate her husband walking on foot? This would be praiseworthy for her, even if you did differently. But with such a modest husband, how much respect she owes him as a wife and herself as a woman!⁸

In ancient Romans' perception as well as in modern scholarship, Plotina truly embraces the role of the exemplary wife who supports her husband with devotion and lives modestly in his shadow. Her reputation as a modest empress elevated her as one of the most well-respected empresses of the Roman empire.

⁸ Plin., *Paneg.* 83.5–7.

However, in spite of her initial modest intentions and unpretentious way of life, the role as empress did change Plotina, who participated actively in her husband's exercise of imperial power and exerted her influence in various ways. Far from remaining an invisible, passive spouse living in the shadows of the emperor, Plotina became an accomplished woman, who was able to use her position in the imperial court for innovating the traditional structures of power from within the patriarchal discourse of gender roles and behaviour.

3 The Women of the Ulpian Household

In line with the traditional ideas of female conduct, Plotina ensured her support to Trajan by maintaining good relations with her husband's family. This included Marciana, Trajan's sister, who lived in the imperial palace with the imperial couple; Salonia Matidia, Marciana's daughter, who moved to the imperial palace after her mother's death in 112; and Salonia Matidia's daughters, Vibia Sabina and Mindia Matidia. Pliny praises Plotina and her sister-in-law Marciana as ideals of matronal virtues, when he states that the two women lived so harmoniously that they gave the impression of merging into one individual and they were reluctant to accept the honorific title of *Augusta* but ultimately acquiesced to Trajan's wishes.⁹ A *sardonyx intaglio* dated to the early second century celebrates the *concordia* of the *domus Traiana* with the portraits of Trajan and Plotina facing Marciana and her daughter Salonia Matidia.¹⁰ In textual and visual media, the female members of Trajan's family were staged as exemplary women for reinforcing the image of the emperor as the virtuous head of the household and, by extension, of the whole empire. It may seem that the Ulpian women's deference to the patriarchal ideal of female lives revolving around the requirements of the male head of the household resulted in their lack of agency, power, and subjectivity. This is all the more striking when they are compared to their counterparts in other eras, such as Livia, Agrippina, and Julia Domna, who played more dominating and active

9 Plin., *Paneg.*, 84. The title *Augusta* did not give any political office or authority to the imperial women who were bestowed with this honour by a *senatus consultum*. It was rather an honorary title through which the senate showed their esteem toward the ruling *princeps* and legitimised the ruling order. However, for the honoured women, the title *Augusta* served to legitimise their position within the imperial family.

10 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Farnese gems, Naples. See also P.A. Roche, 'The Public Image of Trajan's Family', *Classical Philology* 97 no. 1 (2002), 41–60.

roles in the male-dominated court.¹¹ However, we need to be careful not to confuse the reality of royal women's lives with what was convenient propaganda. The women of the Ulpian household shared the same condition: they had lost their father or husbands when they were very young, did not marry again, and did not produce male children. Trajan remained the only male member of their family on whom these women depended for occupying a position in court and shaping their social identity. Their common experience may have created genuine bonds between the Ulpian women, who, however, had an interest in strengthening the bonds of patriarchal tradition for keeping the privileges that originated from belonging to the imperial family.¹²

4 Plotina: the Empress from a Roman Province

For Plotina, the embodiment of the traditional male ideas about female conduct, which dictated that a caring wife maintains good relationships with her husband's family and supports her spouse in his public offices, was also a strategy for being accepted by the senatorial families of Rome in spite of her provincial origins. Plotina, in fact, was born in a family that could not claim Roman lines of ancestry and was married to a man that Cassius Dio describes as "an Iberian, and neither an Italian nor even an Italiot".¹³ The social status of Trajan and Plotina as the first imperial couple coming from a province would have influenced the way in which the elite of Rome and Italy, who had controlled the political affairs of the *res publica* since Republican times, perceived the ruler and his consort. Unable to parade glorious Roman lineages like the imperial women of the previous century, Plotina shaped her identity around the traditional image of the ideal woman as constructed by the Roman elite as a means to make her position as a provincial empress acceptable. On the other hand, her enhanced status and visibility also gave her opportunities to engage in, and influence, the political processes of the court from which she was excluded by the patriarchal ideology because of her gender.

11 Boatwright 1991, op. cit. (n. 5).

12 The male-authored texts do not give us much information on the relationships between elite women within or outside the family's circle.

13 Cass. Dio, 68.4.1: οὐδ' αὖ ὅτι Ἰβηρὸς Τραιανὸς ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἰταλὸς οὐδ' Ἰταλιώτης ἦν. Trajan was born in Italica, in the province of Hispania Baetica. The role that ancestry played in the construction and communication of Roman emperors is analysed by O. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford 2015).

5 Plotina: the Influential Empress

Plotina's involvement in her husband's policies is recorded in a fragmentary papyrus documenting an audience by Trajan of Greek and Jewish delegations from Alexandria that had arrived at Rome for presenting their opposing views to the emperor. Before the audience took place, Plotina is told to have approached the senators for supporting the Jewish cause and have influenced Trajan whom the Greek author of the text accuses of displaying an anti-Alexandrian sentiment.¹⁴ On another occasion, Plotina urged Trajan to take some action against corruption among officials in the provinces, as reported in the *Epitome de Caesaribus*:

Namque ut ceteras omittam, Pompeia Plotina incredibile dictu est quanto auxerit gloriam Traiani; cuius procuratores cum provincias calumniis agitent, adeo ut unus ex his diceretur locupletium quemque ita convenire: "Quare habes?" alter: "Unde habes?" tertius: "Pone, quod habes"; illa coniugem corripuit atque increpans, quod laudis suae esset incuriosus, talem reddidit, ut postea exactiones improbas detestans fiscum lienem vocaret, quod eo crescente artus reliqui tabescunt.

It is incredible to report how much Pompeia Plotina added to Trajan's glory. When his procuratores were disrupting the provinces with false accusations to the extent that one of them was said to have met a rich fellow with the following question: "By which means did you get your wealth?", and another: "Where did you get it?" and a third one: "Give me what you have.," she [Plotina] reproached her husband and rebuking him for his lack of concern toward his reputation restored the situation to the point that afterward he spurned against unjust taxes.¹⁵

In the words of the historian who penned down this episode, Plotina is an example of those women who help their husbands and add to their reputation with their upright morality and precepts. Plotina's influence over her husband is perhaps the reason why Voconius Romanus entrusted his friend Pliny with the duty of delivering some of his letters to the empress.¹⁶ Pliny mentions this task in a letter dated to 107–108, when Plotina had been empress for ten years.

14 *P. Oxy.* 1242, col.2, lines 26–32; J.P.V.D. Baldson, *Roman Women: Their History and Their Habits* (New York 1962), 138, 306, note 33.

15 *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 42.21.

16 *Plin., Epist.*, 9.28.1.

We do not know the contents of these letters, but, since Pliny had introduced his Spanish friend to Trajan for a senatorial appointment that was refused, we may suppose that Plotina was addressed for the influence she could have on her husband for advancing Romanus' career.¹⁷ It is also possible that Voconius, who in Pliny's opinion had remarkable writing skills, approached Plotina for the support that the empress could give to his literary pursuits.¹⁸ Plotina, in fact, was a well-educated woman who acted as a patron of learning. W. McDermott argues that 'the noblest and most revered woman' that the eastern mathematician and neo-Pythagorean philosopher Nicomachus addresses in his *Enchiridion Harmonicon* is in fact Plotina.¹⁹ More secure evidence of her intellectual interests is attested in the epistolary exchange between Plotina and the emperor Hadrian, which has been preserved in a fragmentary bilingual inscription from Athens dated to 121.²⁰ This correspondence was concerned with the appointment of the head of the Epicurean school. Law stated that only Roman citizens could fill this post, but it seems that there were no suitable candidates among Roman citizens at that time. Plotina interceded with Hadrian on behalf of Popillius Theotimus, the then-current head of the school, by writing the emperor a letter, in Latin, in which she asked him to loosen this rule and allow peregrines to achieve leadership positions in the school. In his reply to Plotina, in Latin, Hadrian granted the request. A letter of Plotina in Greek to the Epicureans in Athens subsequently conveyed the good news about the imperial decision.²¹

Plotina's address to Hadrian in support of the Epicurean school at Athens raises the question of her relation with Hadrian and, more specifically, her role in his succession, which remains a subject of historical controversy. The ancient sources seem to suggest that Plotina used her position at court and her powerful status as Trajan's wife to the extent that she overruled her husband's authority on family matters that had political implications. The author of Hadrian's life in the *Historia Augusta* states that the marriage between Hadrian and Vibia Sabina, Trajan's grandniece, was "advocated by Plotina, but, according to Marius Maximus, little desired by Trajan himself", while Hadrian's appointments as the emperor's legate and consul for the second time were granted

17 R. Syme 'Pliny's Less Successful Friends', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 9 (1960), 362–379: 365–366.

18 Plin., *Epist.*, 2.13.7; Syme 1960, op. cit. (n. 17), 378.

19 McDermott 1977, op. cit. (n. 5). Nichomachus, *Enchiridion Harmonicon* 242.14.

20 *IG*² 1098–1099–1100; H. van Bremen, 'Plotina to all her Friends: The Letter(s) of the Empress Plotina to the Epicureans in Athens', *Chiron* 35 (2005), 499–532.

21 E. Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated women in the Roman élite from Cornelia to Julia Domna* (London/New York 1999, 2nd ed. 2004), 111–112.

through Plotina's favour.²² Later in the text, the author reports a rumour "that Hadrian was adopted when Trajan was already dead for the action of Plotina who had someone speak in a feeble voice as if he was Trajan".²³ For Eutropius, both Hadrian's adoption and proclamation as emperor were not in Trajan's plans but the result of his wife's influence.²⁴ The earlier historian Cassius Dio claims the accuracy of his account based on the enquiry from his father, who was governor of Cilicia, when he reports that:

ὅτι ὁ θάνατος τοῦ Τραϊανοῦ ἡμέρας τινὰς διὰ τοῦτο συνεκρύφθη ἴν' ἡ ποίησις προεκφοιτήσοι. ἐδηλώθη δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἐκ τῶν πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν γραμμάτων αὐτοῦ: ταῖς γὰρ ἐπιστολαῖς οὐχ αὐτὸς ἀλλ' ἡ Πλωτῖνα ὑπέγραψεν, ὅπερ ἐπ' οὐδενὸς ἄλλου ἐπεποιήκει.

The death of Trajan was concealed for some days for this reason: that the adoption [of Hadrian] might be announced first. That was proved also by Trajan's letters to the senate: for not Trajan but Plotina had signed them, something that she had never done before.²⁵

For Cassius Dio, Plotina's behaviour could be explained only in one way: the empress was in love with the young man.²⁶ Plotina's inner machinations or interference in Trajan's politics for securing Hadrian's adoption into the Ulpian family and his proclamation as the emperor may be the imaginary product of a certain historiographical tradition that was hostile to Hadrian for the disrespect that the emperor had showed toward the senatorial class: hinting at a woman's plotting and familiar tricks was intended to belittle the morality and rulership of the emperor.²⁷ The later author of the *Historia Augusta* and Eutropius might

22 *HA, Hadr.* 2.10: nepte per sororem Traiani uxore accepta favente Plotina, Traiano leviter, ut Marcus Maximus dicit, volente. For Hadrian's appointments: *HA, Hadr.* 4.1, 4.4.

23 *HA, Hadr.* 4.10: nec desunt qui factione Plotinae mortuo iam Traiano Hadrianum in adoptionem adscitum esse prodiderunt, supposito qui pro Traiano fessa voce loquebatur.

24 *Evtr.*, 8.6: *Defuncto Traiano Aelius Hadrianus creatus est princeps, sine aliqua quidem voluntate Traiani, sed operam dante Plotina, Traiani uxore; nam eum Traianus, quamquam consobrinae suae filium, vivus noluerat adoptare* – After Trajan's death, Aelius Hadrian was made emperor not for Trajan's wish but through the influence of Plotina, Trajan's wife. In fact, Trajan, when he was alive, did not want to adopt him, though he was the son of his female cousin.

25 *Cass. Dio*, 69.1.3–4.

26 *Cass. Dio*, 69.1.2; 69.10.3.1.

27 The scene of Plotina's camouflage in *HA, Hadr.* 2.10 reminds the trick that Livia is reported to have played for ensuring the throne to his son Tiberius after the death of Augustus (*Tac., Ann.* 1.5).

not be reliable sources for reconstructing second century imperial history and Plotina's biography. The *Historia Augusta* in particular, seems an ancient mockumentary for the number of inaccuracies, bizarre details, and fabricated information that are included in the biographies of the Roman emperors from Hadrian to Carus and his sons. Nevertheless, these Late-Antique works represent the few preserved narrative sources for reconstructing Plotina's story and their testimony is invaluable. They may be not always reliable as historical sources, but they offer valuable insights into the patriarchal norms and ideals of womanhood that shaped ancient women's identity and influenced Plotina's mode of being an empress.

6 Behind 'Plotina's Plot'

In their accounts, ancient male authors may have introduced some elements (historical, partially historical, or totally fictional) with the primary aim to outline a negative portrayal of Hadrian for their predominantly male elite audience. Notwithstanding, these accounts should be valued as evidence of Plotina's agency in a particularly dangerous situation that Trajan's sudden death had created. In fact, the imperial couple did not have children, while the emperor's sister Marciana and niece Salonia Matidia did not marry again after the death of their husbands, and Trajan's grandniece Mindia Matidia either never married or was married to a man who did not have a close relationship with the Ulpian family.²⁸ The lack of male children in the emperor's family raised a dynastic issue for the transmission of power. Denied a son and an heir himself, the emperor promoted the standing of Hadrian, who, after his father's death, had been entrusted to the care of his cousin Trajan in Rome. In 100, two years after Trajan had been proclaimed emperor, Hadrian married Vibia Sabina, Trajan's grandniece, whose status as the direct descendant of the emperor ensured that the imperial power was kept within the Ulpian family.

28 Marciana's husband, C. Salonius Matidius Patruinus, a senator from Vicetia, died in 78. In 81–82, Salonia Matidia married a former proconsul Lucius Vibius Sabinus, with whom she had a daughter, Vibia Sabina. After Sabinus' death in 83–84, Matidia married an unknown Lucius Mindius with whom she had another daughter, Mindia Matidia. The second marriage too ended shortly with the death of Lucius Mindius in 85. The prosopographic record offers no evidence that the younger Matidia ever had a husband. She may have lost her husband at an early age and remained a widow like her mother and grandmother. F. Chausson, 'Une dédicace monumentale provenant du théâtre de *Suessa Aurunca*, due à Matidie la jeune, belle-soeur de l'empereur Hadrien', *JSav* (2008), 233–259: 234 n. 7 suggests that her husband was among the executed senators that had been suspected of plotting against Hadrian.

However, at the time of the sudden death of Trajan in 117, Sabina and Hadrian had not produced the next male heir to the throne; nor had the emperor been able to formalise Hadrian's adoption. The combination of these conditions created a void that the memory of the recent civil wars urged to fill in immediately with the proclamation of the next emperor.

If the rumours reported by the ancient writers have some elements of truth, Plotina should be celebrated as the empress who saved the Empire from political chaos, since with Hadrian the prosperity and peace brought by Trajan continued. We do not know to what extent Plotina's supposed machinations were intended to guarantee the continuation of Roman rule, but for a childless consort Hadrian's adoption in her husband's family certainly served to add to the construction of her image as the ideal woman as well as to secure a position of power. In the patriarchal structures of Roman society, motherhood was highly celebrated for the male need to have heirs who could continue the family name and transfer properties. Within the system of imperial rule, this requirement was deemed crucially important for ensuring the continuation of the ruler's dynasty and the stability of the Empire that financial resources, military power, and senatorial support alone could not guarantee. An emperor needed women at the most basic biological level. Trajan and Plotina did not have children, which would have put a considerable amount of pressure on the imperial couple, but even more on Plotina who, as a woman, could not fulfil the reproductive role promoted by patriarchal ideology. A fully recognised solution to the lack of natural children was adoption, which had also been practiced by previous emperors. Hadrian's adoption into the Ulpian family would have been promoted by both Trajan for ensuring the continuity of the dynasty and by Plotina for complying with the patriarchal requirements of motherhood. In the official epistle to the School of Epicurus in Athens, Plotina describes the emperor Hadrian as a good son,²⁹ and in the programmed agenda of Hadrian as the legitimate ruler, she is celebrated as Hadrian's mother.³⁰ As an adoptive mother, Plotina could claim the fulfilment of her maternal role in the imperial system and ideology in spite of the biological failure of her reproductive function. There was, however, another more practical reason of political convenience. By supporting Hadrian's achievements and building a close relationship with the emperor, Plotina could secure her privileged position in court after the death of her husband.

29 *IG II² 1100*, lines 18.20.

30 *RIC II*, 367 n. 232a–b: the reverse of the coin bears the inscription *DIVIS PARENTIBUS* around the portraits of Trajan and Plotina. A similar epithet is used in an inscription from the temple of Trajan and Plotina at Rome (*CIL VI*, 966: *parentibus suis*).

7 Plotina: the Widow

Following an established practice in the Roman elite, Plotina accompanied Trajan to the provinces for his political and military duties: the shared travel experience served to advertise the *concordia* of the imperial couple while reinforcing the wifely qualities of the empress.³¹ It was during one of these trips to the eastern provinces that Trajan fell ill. With his body partly paralysed by a stroke, it was decided to sail back to Rome, but the emperor's conditions worsened suddenly and he died in the city of Selinus in Cilicia on 8 August 117.³² Plotina, who on that occasion was accompanied by her niece Salonia Matidia, returned to Rome with the ashes of her dead husband.³³ For nineteen years Plotina had been the wife of a much-celebrated emperor whom she had supported, cherished, and assisted until his last day as the perfect spouse as outlined by the patriarchal ideology. Though Trajan's death deprived her of the title and honours of the emperor's wife, Plotina continued enjoying the privileges of a position in the imperial family as a financially independent widow and as the adoptive mother of the new emperor Hadrian.³⁴ Her address to Hadrian about the future of the Epicurean school and the emperor's remark in the speech delivered at Plotina's funeral that he never refused what she asked, because she always made sensible requests, bespeak her continued influence in the political affairs in the remaining years before her death in 123.³⁵

8 Women's Virtues and Vices in the Male Discourse

The ancient male-authored texts portray Plotina as the embodiment of those female virtues that in the traditional discourse on gender roles were celebrated as the quintessence of the ideal womanhood. These core values were the deeply ingrained principles that served to judge women's character and

31 For a discussion of women's travels with their husband see, M. Carucci, 'The Dangers of Female Mobility in Roman Imperial Times', in: E. Lo Cascio and L.E. Tacoma, eds., *The Impact of Mobility and Migration in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Twelfth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Rome, June 17–19, 2015)* (Leiden-Boston 2017), 173–190.

32 Cass. Dio, 68.33.

33 *HA, Hadr.* 5.9.

34 Plotina owned extensive proprieties for the manufacture of ceramic throughout the Empire (see, for instance, *CIL* XII, 5678 = *CIL* XV, 693.16; *CIL* X, 7587 = *ILS* 1402; see also F. Chausson and A. Buonopane, 'Una fonte della ricchezza delle *Augustae*. Le *figlinae urbanae*', *KOLB* (2010), 91–110).

35 Cass. Dio, 69 pos = 1636.3a.

formed a stock repertoire from which to draw when commemorating them. These values were possibly emphasised in the funerary speech that the emperor Hadrian pronounced in honour of his adoptive mother Plotina, in a language probably similar to the *Laudatio Claudiae*, that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and many other *laudationes* in memory of other women.³⁶ The traditional female virtues for which a Roman woman should be commemorated were so much of a stereotype that a man felt obliged to apologise for listing them in memory of his mother Murdia, “because it is difficult for a woman to earn new forms of praise, since her life proceeds with small variations, it should necessarily honour the virtues in common so that what is omitted from fair precepts does not discredit the remaining virtues”.³⁷

It is arguable that many Roman women led highly eventful lives, but in the male perception of what ought to be a good woman the conventional domestic virtues remained the standard for female behaviour. A woman departing from the traditional norms of good behaviour and invading the male space of politics was inevitably subject to fierce criticism. On a deeper level, this kind of judgment unmasks the Roman male’s fear that women actively engaged in the public as property owners, benefactors, and patrons may threaten male power and authority, if their wealth and public activities were not directed towards the support and social promotion of the male members of their family. A woman’s position was perceived as highly problematic and a source of tension by the traditionally dominant group of men especially when she belonged to the emperor’s court. When imperial women claimed a voice in the space of masculine politics, the male-authored texts placed great emphasis on political intrigue, sexual scandal, and female scheming for describing these women. Their allegations bespeak the male attempt to contain powerful women within the domestic space of house and family, which makes it difficult for modern scholars to disentangle slander from reality. By contrast, imperial women who remained behind the scenes of public affairs and kept a modest demeanour,

36 Only one line of this speech is recorded by Cass. Dio, 69 pos = 1636.3a: ‘None of the many requests she made to me was declined’. The historian adds that after Plotina’s death Hadrian composed some hymns in her memory, none of which has been preserved to us.

37 *CIL* VI, 10230 = *ILS* 8394. The so-called *Laudatio Murdiae* was inscribed on a marble slab found in Rome in 1784 and dated to Augustan time. It is discussed together with other *laudationes* by C. Pepe. ‘La fama dopo il silenzio: celebrazione della donna e ritratti esemplari di *bonae feminae* nella *laudatio funebris* romana’, in: C. Pepe and G. Moretti, eds., *Le parole dopo la morte: forme e funzioni della retorica funeraria nella tradizione greca e romana. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Trento 6–7 giugno 2014* (Trento 2015), 179–222.

like Plotina, were praised in the sources for their virtuous character and deference to male authority.³⁸

9 Plotina between Tradition and Innovation

From a liberal feminist perspective, Plotina may appear as a passive, subservient woman who did not take advantage of her stable relationship with Trajan and of her position as an empress for supporting the women's cause and demanding political equality and shared power in the imperial institutions. In her privileged position as the spouse of the emperor Trajan and later as the adoptive mother of the emperor Hadrian, she seems to have introduced no innovation to the traditional structures of power or gendered practices. Rather, Plotina seems to have kept the promise she made when she entered the imperial palace for the first time: "I enter here such a woman as I want to be when I depart".³⁹ However, this description of Plotina in terms of empowerment and gender equality is influenced by modern concerns about women and society as much as the ancient portrait of the empress was defined by the socially constructed image of the woman as a wife and a mother for the benefit of one man: both approaches read Plotina's story through the lens of the current ideological programme.

There is no doubt that the *mos maiorum* served as a tool for reinforcing the law of patriarchy, sustaining male dominance, and oppressing the female sex, as it is highlighted by feminist readings of ancient history. In this sense, Plotina's life was not different from the destiny of other empresses of the Roman empire: all of them operated within a patriarchal, misogynist framework that denied them the right to hold any office or become a queen or replace their husband. Nevertheless, Plotina was able to manipulate the patriarchal norms of female behaviour as potentialities through which she reinforced her self-identity, preserved the privileges of her social position, and affirmed her agency within the traditional structures of power. Dio of Prusa epitomises well Plotina's ability to move across the boundaries of tradition and innovation, when he notes:

γυναῖκα δὲ οὐ κοίτης μόνον ἢ ἀφροδισίων κοινωνὸν νενόμικεν, βουλῆς δὲ καὶ ἔργων καὶ τοῦ ξύμπαντος βίου συνεργόν.

38 P. Pavón, 'Mujer y *mos maiorum* en la época de Trajano y Adriano', in: A.F. Caballos, ed., *De Trajano a Adriano, Roma matura, Roma mutans* (Sevilla 2018), 175–195.

39 Cass. Dio, 68.5.5. Quoted above (pp. 158).

[Trajan] regards his wife not only as his love partner but also as his helpmate in his counsel and actions and in his whole life.⁴⁰

The use of the synonymous words *κοινωνόν* and *συνεργόν* emphasises the degree to which Plotina participated in her husband's life in the bedroom and at work. She played the double role as the traditional wife who shares bed and affections with her husband and as his unconventional colleague at work (*συνεργόν* means literally 'working together'), which placed her in a liminal space between the feminine domesticity and the masculine publicness. That is, Plotina sustained the patriarchal structures of Roman society with her commitment to continuity in gender practices but at the same time innovated the traditional structures of male power by exercising a form of nuanced agency and liminal power.⁴¹

She may seem to have enjoyed less power and autonomy than the earlier Julio-Claudian and Flavian women of the imperial court, who are described in ancient texts as women who asserted their power, were quite vocal in their demands, and made independent political and sexual choices. In contrast, Plotina's political engagement in public life occurred behind the scenes of the long-established male authority. Yet, her apparent submissiveness and invisibility were a modality of political participation. Her mode of being an empress shows that a woman in the imperial court could achieve prominence and affirm her subjectivity within the framework of patriarchal ideals of gender inequality and male dominance. Her success can be measured from the degree to which she was able to embody, express, and amplify the male rhetoric of tradition and equally to depart from it for empowering her gender and social identity.

40 Dio, *De Reg.* 3.122.

41 For other examples of Roman women's nuanced agency in political matters, see M. Carucci, 'Female reticence in republican Rome: agency and the performance of exclusion', in: T. Tsakiropoulos-Summers and K. Kitsi-Mitakou, eds., *Women and the Ideology of Political Exclusion: From Classical Antiquity to the Modern Era* (London and New York 2019), 188–202.

Hadrian: *Imperator Nomothetes* – Ancient Laws for the Empire

Juan Manuel Cortés-Copete

Of all the emperors, Hadrian had the closest, most committed relationship with the cities in the provinces, whether they were Roman cities or Greek *poleis*.¹ He strove to find ways of integrating the Greek cities into the Empire's political, legal and institutional framework. This was no easy task.

As the Greek cities and Roman power gradually became increasingly interdependent, the number of embassies and legal appeals multiplied, threatening to exhaust the capacity of Roman institutions.² Furthermore, growing interdependence also exerted negative effects on the very status of the *polis*, which was subject to the foreign legislation and arbitration of Roman power. Echoes of this situation reverberate in Plutarch's *Precepts of Statecraft*. Plutarch claimed that a statesman's fundamental mission was to ensure that unnecessary provocations did not oblige Rome to intervene, in order to "avoid the need for a physician and medicine from outside". He summed this up in a single sentence: "You govern, being governed, a city subject to proconsuls, to the emperor's procurators".³

Hadrian clearly understood this difficulty and put various strategies in place to help overcome this problem and, at the same time, protect the Empire's political and legal diversity. Although there is no programmatic statement of policy, the traces of an ideological framework are nevertheless preserved in some of the emperor's public declarations and acts of governance. The most significant of these appears in Aulus Gellius' commentary on Hadrian's *oratio de Italicensibus*, a speech which the emperor read before the senate to promote a *senatus consultum* in favour of his motherland. In it, he staunchly defended the status of the *municipia antiqua*, as he called them. The distinguishing

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- 1 M.T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton 2000). E. Guerber, *Les cités grecques dans l'Empire romain* (Rennes 2009), 222–233.
 - 2 R. Haensch, 'Des empereurs et des gouverneurs débordés. À propos des lettres d'Hadrien', *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 19 (2008), 176–186.
 - 3 Plut., *Mor.* 815C; 813E; P. Desideri, 'La vita politica cittadina nell'impero: lettura dei *Praecepta gerendae rei publicae* e dell'*An seni res publica gerenda sit*', *Athenaeum* 74 (1986), 371–384.

feature of these ancient municipalities was that they “could make use of their laws and customs” (*cum suis moribus legibusque uti possent*).⁴

These very same words of the emperor are recorded in a decree that the city of Synnada ordered to be published in the Acropolis of Athens. Despite the inscription’s highly fragmentary state, it remains possible to identify the part that is of interest here, where Hadrian grants Synnada the right to “use the ancient laws of the city” (χρησθαι τ]οῖς παλαιοῖς τῆς πόλεως νόμοις).⁵

The emperor’s respect for the cities, whether Roman or Greek, and for their institutional and political customs is not only evident in these indirect testimonies but was also formulated explicitly by Hadrian himself in his first letters to Delphi and Hierapolis. He praised these cities for their antiquity and piety, which were perceived as the basis for their political and religious privileges in the Empire.⁶ The letter he addressed to the city of Naryca at the end of his reign is also of particular interest. Naryca had asked the emperor for protection against the claims of other neighbouring cities that denied it the status of a polis. In response, Hadrian sent a letter making it clear that for cultural and political reasons, Naryca’s status as a city was beyond doubt. As far as the Empire was concerned, participation in pan-Hellenic leagues and associations, the existence of magistracies and a council, organisation into Greek tribes and the possession of traditional Greek laws – those of the Opuntians (νόμοι οἱ Ὀπουνητίων) – rendered Naryca a full, valid and legitimate city.⁷ The inhabitants of Naryca, as well as the citizens of the *municipia antiqua* or those of Synnada, Delphi and Hierapolis, could “use their laws and customs” within the Empire.

1 Ancient Laws for Modern Times

The emperor’s evident desire to uphold the cities’ use of their own laws, coupled with the period’s passion for the past, prompted an upsurge in what might be termed ‘legal antiquarianism’. Thus, cities in the Empire felt encouraged to revive their own legal and political customs because it was clear that Hadrian would appreciate it. In turn, the emperor’s favour might bring benefits and

4 Gell., *NA* 16.13.4. J.M. Cortés-Copete, ‘KOINOI NOMOI: Hadrian and the harmonization of local laws’, in: O. Hekster, K. Verboven, eds., *The Impact of Justice on the Roman Empire* (Leiden 2019), 105–121.

5 *SEG* 30, 89 (*IG* II², 1075).

6 J.H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* (Philadelphia 1989), n° 62; *SEG* 55, 1415.

7 D. Knoepfler, ‘L’Inscription de Naryka (Locride) au Musée du Louvre: la dernière lettre publique de l’empereur Hadrien?’, *REG* 119 (2006), 1–34.

new opportunities as regards the social and political advancement of the local elites promoting this recovery of the past.

Thus, in an interesting feedback loop, past and politics became intertwined. As a result, studies on the histories of cities and their own ancient laws proliferated,⁸ and possession of these traditions became a political advantage, since they provided a means to attract the emperor's attention and might perhaps constitute a source of material and political benefits. This process explains three very important epigraphic testimonies, all of which were republications of ancient texts, and perhaps something more.

The oldest document that was republished in Hadrian's time is a letter from the Persian King Darius to Gadatas concerning the cultivation of land and the cult of Apollo in Asia Minor. This inscription is as valuable as it is problematic. If King Darius' letter really did exist and was not a later invention, it would have dated to the late sixth to early fifth centuries BCE. How it could have been preserved is perplexing. There is no question that this is an inscription from the imperial period: the style of the monument (stone, lettering and engraving) leaves no room for doubt on this point. It is possible that the letter was copied in order to provide historical and legal justification for maintaining or asserting economic privileges, along the lines of what happened at the temple of Zeus at Aezani.⁹

The second of the documents republished in Hadrian's time is the law of the *astynomoi* of Pergamon. The heading of this text defines it as a royal law that was republished by an *astynomos* who funded the inscription out of his own pocket. The law that was copied dates back to the second century BCE, but the palaeographic and epigraphic evidence rules out any doubt that the inscription is from Hadrian's time, despite the fact that nothing is said about the date of the copy. In the *editio princeps*, W. Kolbe proved that the lettering was identical to that of another Hadrianic monument in Pergamon: the emperor's letter concerning the city's bank and moneylenders.¹⁰ The similarities are so great that it is beyond question that both inscriptions were produced by the same hand. The same workshop also produced other monuments commissioned by the senator Aulus Julius Quadratus, who sponsored the temple of Zeus Philios and Trajan.¹¹

8 E.L. Bowie, 'Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic', *Past & Present* 46 (1970), 3–41.

9 L. Boffo, 'La lettera di Dario a Gadata', *Bullettino dell'Istituto di Diritto Romano Vittorio Scialoja* 20 (1978), 267–303; C. Tuplin, 'The Gadatas Letter', in: L. Mitchell & L. Rubinstein, eds., *Greek History and Epigraphy* (Swansea 2009), 155–184.

10 H. Prott, W. Kolbe, 'Die inschriften', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung* 27 (1902), 47–74; *OGIS* 484.

11 S. Saba, *The Astynomoi Law of Pergamon. A New Commentary* (Mainz 2013).

The nature and reason for republication of this document remain difficult questions. It is not clear whether the copy is a simple 'reprint' or if it is a 'revised and expanded' version. One possible reason for republishing the law may have been the urban expansion of Pergamon in the early decades of the second century. During Hadrian's reign, a new quarter was built in the city that led up to the sanctuary of Asclepius and lay parallel to the temple of Zeus Philios. Perhaps this rendered it necessary or desirable to republish the law, because among its many provisions were some concerning the width of streets and the size of residential blocks.¹²

The city of Palmyra provides the third example of the resurrection and republication of an ancient law. In this instance, it was not simply a case of republishing the law that regulated the city's commercial port. The content of the law was updated to reflect conditions in the Empire in the second century. Hadrian had visited the city in 130, and in 137, Hadriane Palmyra – the new name of the city – decided to republish its law in order to adapt it to new needs arising from reorganisation of the East following consolidation of the border.¹³ Circumstances had changed, and the old law required revision.

2 Hadrian *Nomothetes*

In addition to recognising the political value of local laws and favouring the restoration of ancient laws, Hadrian implemented other strategies to strengthen civic life. His visits, his numerous euergetic acts and his willingness to assume civic magistracies, even in person, are all proof of his support for and commitment to civic life in the imperial provinces.¹⁴ Moreover, in some cities, the emperor was appointed as *nomothetes*, or legislator.

So far, only six cities are known in which Hadrian was *nomothetes*. The information on four of these – Megara, Aegina, Thespieae and Cythera – comes from honorific inscriptions and says little about any legislative action. More interesting are the cases of Cyrene and Athens, since the epigraphic and, for Athens, also literary documentation is more extensive and meatier. It should be noted that the role of legislator in a Greek city was a temporary appointment for the purposes of wholly or partially reforming the city's legal system. Offering the

12 H. Halfmann, *Éphèse et Pergame. Urbanisme et commanditaires en Asie Mineure romaine* (Bordeaux, 2004), 68–83.

13 J.F. Matthews, 'The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a City of the Roman East', *Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984), 157–180; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East* (London 1993), 106.

14 Boatwright 2000, op. cit. (n. 1), 57–72.

magistracy to the emperor had an honorary component that might work in the city's favour if Hadrian accepted. Bestowing such an honour on the emperor was inherently political. The emperor assumed the role of legislator to change the laws of a particular city from within the city itself. It seems likely that Hadrian agreed to become magistrate of Megara, Aegina, Thespieae, Cythera – actually Sparta – Cyrene and Athens in order to reform their laws and bring them into harmony or alignment with the legislative, legal and political reform that the emperor had initiated within the Empire.

It is not possible to separate Hadrian's legislative work in the cities under discussion from the major legal changes that he introduced in the Empire during his reign.¹⁵ In these reforms, Hadrian was assisted by expert jurists who also formed part of the *concilium principis*. This team of jurists, prominent among whose number was Salvius Julianus, lent solid expertise to the emperor's legislative work not only in the Empire but also in cities in the provinces.¹⁶ Nor should Hadrian's role as *nomothetes* be separated from his activity as a universal benefactor of the cities in the Empire. Hadrian brought many benefits to the cities, such as urban improvements and access to the Empire's food resources, and the recipients of his laws viewed them as yet another benefit provided by the emperor.

Evidence from Megara is explicit in such a reading of imperial laws as benefits, even though this is the only place where Hadrian failed in his efforts to revive the weaker Greek cities. A group of four identical inscriptions, erected by each of the tribes of Megara, call Hadrian “founder, *nomothetes* and foster father” (κτίστην καὶ νομοθέτην καὶ τροφέ[α]). According to Pausanias, the citizens of Megara were “the only Greeks not even the emperor Hadrian could make more prosperous”.¹⁷ The same titles, *ktistes*, *nomothetes* and *tropheus*, are also bestowed on Hadrian on a pair of inscriptions from the island of Aegina.¹⁸ Meanwhile, a monument in Thespieae erected by a private individual to commemorate the emperor's legislative work accords him the title of “legislator of piety, justice and philanthropy” (τὸν εὐσεβείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ φιλάνθρωπίας νομοθέτην).¹⁹ On an honorific inscription from the island of Cythera, Hadrian is called not only *nomothetes* but also benefactor. Produced after the year 128, the inscription is written in Dorian and should be viewed as another example of this drive to regain the richness and diversity of a past that had been largely

15 A. D'Ors, 'La signification de l'œuvre d'Hadrien dans l'Histoire du Droit romain', in: A. Piganiol, M. Terrase, eds., *Les empereurs romains d'Espagne* (Paris 1965), 147–161.

16 R.A. Bauman, *Lawyers and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Munich 1989), 235–286.

17 *IG VII* 70–74. Paus. 1.36.3.

18 *SEG* 51 334, 336; *AE* (2001) [2004] no. 1815–1817.

19 *IThesp* 437. A. Gangloff, *Pouvoir Impérial et vertus philosophiques* (Leiden 2019), 243–254.

forgotten. It is probable that the legislative action in Cythera was associated with the donation of the island to the city of Sparta, perhaps in fulfilment of the will of the Spartan Eurycles.²⁰

3 Athens: ἐνομοθέτησε δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλά

In contrast to the above-mentioned cities, no inscription which states that Hadrian was *nomothetes* of the city has been preserved from Athens. There are, however, other sources that record the emperor's legislative work in Athens, the earliest of which is a passage in Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. Perhaps as a result of the work of the epitomist Xiphilinus, rather than of Cassius Dio himself, a paragraph in his book LXIX summarises much of Hadrian's work in Athens. Among the other things that Hadrian did there, Dio tells us:

ἐνομοθέτησε δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλά, καὶ ἵνα μηδεὶς βουλευτῆς μήτ' αὐτὸς μήτε δι' ἑτέρου τέλος τι μισθῶται.

He enacted numerous and diverse laws; there was also one to the effect that no senator, either personally or through the agency of another, should have any tax farmed out to him.²¹

The passage is echoed in Eusebius' *Chronicon*. Although the original text has not survived, three derivative versions of the *Chronicon* record Hadrian's legislative work in Athens. Despite their many similarities, these three texts contain some significant differences:²²

Hadrianus Atheniensibus leges petentibus ex Draconis et Solonis reliquorumque libris iura composuit.

For the Athenians who had petitioned him for laws, Hadrian composed a legal code drawn from the books of Draco, Solon, and the rest.²³

20 I.E. Petrocheilos, 'An Unpublished Inscription from Kythera', *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 83 (1988), 359–362; G. Steinhauer, S. Paspalas, 'The Euryklids and Kythera', *Mediterranean Archaeology* 19–20 (2006–2007), 199–206.

21 Cass. Dio, 69.16.2.

22 R. Helm, *Eusebius Werke, VII. Die Chronik des Hieronymus* (Berlin 1956), 198; A. Schoene, *Eusebii Chronicon Libri Duo, II* (Berlin 1866), 166.

23 Hieron., *Chron.* 198 Helm (122 CE).

Adrianus Atheniensibus, qui ipsum precati sunt, leges a Dracone et a Solone aliisque composuit.

For the Athenians who had begged him, Hadrian composed laws based on Draco, Solon, and the others.²⁴

ὁ αὐτὸς Ἀθηναίοις ἀξιόωσιν ἐκ τῶν Δράκοντος καὶ Σόλωνος νόμους ἐπισυνέταξε, χειμάσας εἰς Ἀθήνας.

At the request of the Athenians, Hadrian himself composed laws based on those of Draco and Solon, while spending the winter in Athens.²⁵

The first significant discrepancy is the date: 121 in the Armenian version, 122 in Jerome and 125–6 in Syncellus, which contains the addition that Hadrian spent the winter in the city. Attempts have been made to address this incongruity by proposing different meanings for the early and late dates. Thus, the year 121 or 122 may have been the year that the Athenians made their petition for new laws, and 125–6 the year in which Hadrian assumed the magistracy, since he was actually present in Athens. However, this seemingly simple solution creates serious problems that hinder understanding of the nature of the emperor's legislative action in the city.

During Hadrian's reign, Athens witnessed significant changes that could be termed constitutional.²⁶ The *boule* shrank from six hundred to five hundred members, a new tribe (the Hadrianis) was created in the city, as was a new *demos* (the Antinoeis), which formed part of the new Hadrianis tribe. The city also underwent a profound urban transformation, expanding into an area that received the name of Hadrian's City.²⁷ In addition, the political calendar was changed, establishing the month of Boedromion as the beginning of the year. Moreover the so-called oil law was enacted, and according to Cassius Dio, another law was passed prohibiting members of the *boule* to collect taxes. Furthermore, legislation was passed outlawing artificial price increases in the market, and some action may also have been taken against defaulting on public bank loans. All of these changes bear Hadrian's seal. Cassius Dio displays a

24 *Vers. Arm. ab Abr.* 2137, 166 Schoene (121 CE).

25 Sync., 659 9D (125–6 CE).

26 P. Graindor, *Athènes sous Hadrien* (Le Caire 1934), 73–86. S. Follet, *Athènes au II^e et au III^e siècle* (Paris 1976), 116–125, with references.

27 *IG II²* 5185. A. Kouremenos, 'The City of Hadrian and not of Theseus: a cultural history of Hadrian's Arch', in A. Kouremenos, ed., *The Province of Achaëa in the 2nd Century CE* (London-New York 2022), 345–374.

clear understanding of the emperor's work, describing it simply and accurately as: "Hadrian enacted numerous and diverse laws" (ἐνομοθέτησε δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλά).

The problem, however, is that further evidence for these changes mostly comes from partial or indirect epigraphic testimony and that this evidence is not consistent with the claim that Hadrian's legislative work in Athens occurred at one specific point in time by enacting a single code. A brief enumeration is necessary to illustrate this. *Boedromion* (September) became the new beginning of the year in 125. Hadrian's first visit as emperor therefore coincided with the inception of a new chronological era in the city, a change that brought Athens' political calendar in line with that of Asia, where it had already been decided in Augustus' time to start the year in September. The last mention of the *boule* of the 600 is also dated to 125. It seems logical, therefore, and to some extent necessary, that the reduction of the *boule* to 500 members would have occurred simultaneously with the creation of the new Hadrianis tribe and its new, associated *demos*, Antinoeis, but the earliest evidence for the *boule* of the 500 – a letter from Hadrian himself – dates from 132. This is also the earliest attested date for the Hadrianis tribe.²⁸ Furthermore, the Antinoeis *demos* could not have been created before 131, the year of the young man's death in Egypt.²⁹ The conclusion seems obvious: many of the constitutional changes in Athens did not occur at a single point in time, in one year, but were spread over more than seven years, coinciding with the city's major urban transformation. Therefore, Hadrian would not have been *nomothetes*, or have issued a unitary legal code, at a single point in time. There are other arguments in support of a long, open-ended process, and I shall briefly summarise them here.

First, there is the nature of Eusebius' *Chronicon*. The purpose of writing a chronicle predetermines the form, content and presentation of the historical events that are recorded. Eusebius had to date each of the events he wished to include to a given year, regardless of that event's duration.³⁰ Despite having been assigned the date 121, 122, or 125–6, the imperial action that Eusebius summarises with the formula *iura composuit* or νόμους ἐπισυνέταξε was not necessarily carried out in a single year. Modern attempts to situate the Athenians' request at the earliest date and Hadrian's work at the latest are merely a workaround to try to resolve a discrepancy that did not exist in the *Chronicon*.

Meanwhile, the Athenians themselves did not assume that the work of a *nomothetes* was necessarily a one-year task. At the start of Hadrian's reign,

28 J.A. Notopoulos, 'The Date of the Creation of Hadrianis', *TAPhA* 77 (1946), 53–56.

29 The debate and evidences on the chronology of constitutional changes: Graindor 1934, op. cit. (n. 26), 1–36. Follet 1976, op. cit. (n. 26), 109–125. E. Kapetanopoulos, 'The Reform of the Athenian Constitution under Hadrian', *Horos* 10–12 (1992–1998), 215–237.

30 O. Andrei, 'Canons chronologiques et Histoire ecclésiastique', in: S. Morlet, L. Perrone, eds., *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire Ecclésiastique. Commentarie, TI* (Paris 2012), 33–82.

the Athenians attempted legal reform by their own means, appointing a local aristocrat, Annius Pythodoros, who had ties with Plutarch and the emperor, as *nomothetes* from 119/120 to 125/6.³¹ It would have been from the final year onwards that Hadrian assumed personal responsibility for the task, which he undertook for several years. It seems clear that no one in Athens expected legal reform to be achieved in a single year. There is thus a simple solution to the apparent discrepancy in the evidence, and one that coincides neatly with Cassius Dio's testimony: "he enacted numerous and diverse laws".

4 Cyrene: Ktistes, Tropheus, Nomothetes

The case of Cyrene seems to resemble that of Megara and the other cities in which Hadrian is called *nomothetes* in honorific inscriptions. A fragmentary marble tablet contains the dedication of a statue of the emperor dated to 129 BCE. The city of Cyrene also gives him the titles of "founder, foster father and legislator" (κτίσταν καὶ τροφ[έα] καὶ νομο[θέ]ταν). Obviously, Cyrene was grateful to Hadrian for his support in the process of rebuilding the city after the Jewish revolt of 115–117. The continuity of the city of Cyrene, and of all civilised life in the region, had been seriously threatened and was only saved by the emperor's help. Reconstruction required not only substantial economic and material resources, but also, as Eusebius records, the arrival of settlers to repopulate the countryside, and help with this would clearly justify the titles of founder and foster father. Another question is Hadrian's status as *nomothetes*.³²

P.M. Frazer, J.M. Reynolds and, lastly, C.P. Jones have successfully restored – albeit not in its entirety – a lengthy Cyrenaic inscription engraved in the time of Antoninus Pius.³³ The stele bears at least five imperial documents, separated by titles indicating their nature and author. The first three documents are from Hadrian, the last two from Antoninus Pius, and all of them are letters from the emperors, except for the third, which is of a different nature and of interest here (ll. 25–68). Unfortunately, approximately the third quarter of the lines in the direction of reading is missing from the inscription, and the missing parts increase in size towards the bottom of the stele. This loss has also

31 Graindor 1934, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 32.

32 SEG 17, 809. F. Ziosi, "Sulle iscrizioni relative alla ricostruzione di Cirene dopo il tumultus Iudaicus, e sul loro contesto", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 172 (2010), 239–248. Euseb. *Chron.* 121 CE (191 Helm).

33 P.M. Fraser, 'Hadrian and Cyrene', *Journal of Roman Studies* 40 (1950), 77–87. J.M. Reynolds, 'Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and the Cyrenaican Cities', *Journal of Roman Studies* 68 (1978), 111–121. C.P. Jones, 'A Constitution of Hadrian concerning Cyrene', *Chiron* 28 (1998), 255–266.

affected the title of the third document, which is obviously important in trying to understand its legal and political nature.

In its current state, the title of the third document reads as follows (l. 25): κεφάλαιον ἐκ [...]. Clearly, the document cannot be a letter, since the preposition would have taken the form ἐξ as in l. 13: Κεφάλαια ἐξ ἐπιστολῆ[ς θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ]. P.M. Frazer proposed the following continuation of the sentence: κεφάλαιον ἐκ [διατάγματος Θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ], “Chapter of an edict by the divine Hadrian”. Meanwhile, despite thinking she had identified a faint trace of the Δ from διατάγμα, J.M. Reynolds admitted that the style of the text was not appropriate for an edict. Subsequently, J.H. Oliver tentatively proposed κεφάλαιον ἐκ δ[ημηγορίας Θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ], “Chapter of a speech by the divine Hadrian”, but this is not satisfactory either.³⁴ *Demegoria* is a word with a long literary tradition, but unfortunately absent from imperial Greek documents.

Despite the missing parts of the text, at least three sections of this document are legible, each starting with a line moved to the left. The first section is six lines long (ll. 26–30) and begins with an exhortation from the emperor to the citizens of Cyrene not to yield to fear and not to forsake their city after the Jewish revolt. He reminds them that the city was founded following an oracle of Apollo, and that it would be shameful to abandon it. He ends this section by asking them to join together to restore the city to life as quickly as possible and “thus become not only inhabitants (οἰκήτορας) but also settlers of the homeland (οἰκιστὰς τῆς πατρίδος)”.

The second section, which also begins with a first-person verb, is devoted to the education of youth (ll. 31–35). Hadrian says he knows that the city’s gymnasium was destroyed during the revolt but also that more children are being born and growing older. Consequently, he donates, or enlarges, a gymnasium in the city, so that the children do not have to mix with the *ephebes* while they are training. In this gymnasium, the children will be able to receive lessons as well as food given by the emperor himself. This may have followed the pattern of the *alimenta* known from Antinoopolis.³⁵ C.P. Jones proposed the following reconstruction: τὰς τροφὰς] λήμψονται τὰς | παρ’ ἐμοῦ διδομένας, “and they will receive the food distributions given by myself”.³⁶

Before moving on to the third section, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the first section of the imperial inscription discusses the transformation of the Cyreneans from simple “inhabitants” (οἰκήτορας) of their city into its new “settlers” (οἰκιστὰς), and the first title that the Cyreneans give Hadrian

34 Fraser 1950, op. cit. (n. 33), 82–83. Reynolds 1978, op. cit. (n. 33), 118. Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 6), n° 122.

35 H.I. Bell, ‘Diplomata Antinoitica’, *Aegyptus* 13 (1933), 518–522.

36 Jones 1998, op. cit. (n. 33), 264.

in the above-mentioned honorary inscription is that of “founder, restorer” (Κτιστήης).³⁷ The second section, which focuses on the care of the younger generation, discusses the expansion of the gymnasium and the delivery of food to young people and children. The second title given by the Cyreneans to Hadrian is that of Τροφεύς, which obviously means here “one who provides or procures sustenance”.³⁸ If the city had bestowed these honours on the emperor in response to his acts as described in this inscription, the next paragraph would necessarily have to contain the reasons for awarding Hadrian the title of *nomothetes*.

The missing part of the text increases in size in this last section of the text (lines 36 to 43), rendering it extremely difficult to reconstruct the content with any confidence. However, the surviving words in the first two lines are sufficient to give an indication of what this inscription said. Following J.M. Reynolds’ proposals, the text requires a somewhat closer examination:

ὁ μάλιστα ἀνανκαῖον ἦν ὡς ἤξιώσατ[ε ὑμεῖς αὐτοὶ c. 13 νομοθε]σίαν
ἐποίη[σ]ά|μην, ἐστὶν δ’ οὐδὲν νόμῳ πρὸ ὑμ[.....

Hadrian begins by recalling “what was most necessary”. This might be considered a banal phrase, were it not for the fact that “necessity”, *ananke*, understood as conformity with nature, constituted a fundamental principle of the emperor’s political action, along with conformity with the law, *dikaion*. Considering certain imperial decisions or rulings as necessary, *anankaion*, implied viewing them as belonging to the natural order, to the *kosmos*.³⁹ Hence, Hadrian begins by saying that “what was most necessary, as you yourselves asked me ...”, and ends the sentence after the interruption in the text by stating that “I made the legislation”. The word νομοθε]σίαν is a reconstruction proposed by J.M. Reynolds, but it is not unsubstantiated: immediately afterwards the inscription reads ἐστὶν δ’ οὐδὲν νόμῳ, “but there is not in the law ...”. It is not possible to go any further; the missing words in the text prevent any understanding of the full meaning. Nevertheless, it is no small thing to know that Hadrian made laws for Cyrene because he considered it “most necessary” to restore order, the *kosmos*.

Clearly, there are sufficient reasons for Hadrian’s third title in Cyrene, *nomothetes*. It is therefore time to propose a possible title for this document on the Cyrenean stele: Κεφάλαιον ἐκ Ν[ομῶν θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ], “Chapter of the laws of the divine Hadrian”. This proposal takes us straight back to Athens where, after

37 A.V. Pont, ‘L’empereur fondateur’, *REG* 120 (2007), 526–552.

38 *LSD* s.v. τροφεύς, 4.

39 J.M. Cortés-Copete, ‘Words of the Lord’, in: F. Lozano et al., eds., *Empire in Words, Empire in Rituals* (forthcoming).

decades of debate, it now seems clear that the continuation of the abbreviations with which Hadrian's oil law is presented should be Κε(φάλαιον) Νο(μῶν) Θε(οῦ) Ἀδριανοῦ.⁴⁰

5 Hadrianic Grammar: Republishing the Past for the Empire

The large stele from Cyrene provides some clues as to how Hadrian merged ancient traditions with modern practices and laws. The emperor was familiar with the city's history and with the oracles of Apollo that had led to Cyrene's foundation. Such information was available not only through the text of Herodotus (4.150–4) but also in the oath of the colonists, dated to the seventh century BCE and republished on a stele by the Cyreneans in the fourth century BCE. The inscription mentioned the oracles of Apollo and the oaths taken by the citizens of Thera. It is clear that Hadrian's legislative work was connected with this long history of revising the past, which had coloured the cities' political struggle, under the motto *patrios politeia*, since at least the fourth century BCE.⁴¹

For the emperor, and for the Cyreneans themselves, it was important to link Cyrene with Sparta. Consequently, at one point, Hadrian spoke (ll. 42–43) of “Laconian prudence and exercise” (Λα]κωνική σωφροσύνη καὶ ἄσκη[σις). Athens and Sparta were the two ideological hubs around which the Panhellenion was constructed.⁴² Cyrene asserted its past as a Dorian city in order to claim a privileged position in the new *koinon* of Greek cities championed by the emperor. In a letter issued late in his reign, Hadrian recognised Cyrene's right to send two representatives to the Panhellenion because the city's “lineage is Achaean and pure Dorian” (τὸ γένος Ἀχαιὸν καὶ ἀκρειβῶς Δῶριον).⁴³ Hadrian's legislative work in Cyrene had contributed to resurrecting its noble past as the foundation for the city's renaissance.

The better reported case of Athens is more complex. In his brief text, Eusebius speaks of the sources of Hadrian's legislative work; these definitely included Dracon and Solon, and some of the versions also cite other legislators,

40 The trace of the Δ identified by Reynolds is so slight that it may be compatible with a Λ(όγου?) and also with a Ν(ομῶν?). *IRCyr2020*, C.163 (with photographs). Athenian oil law: Oliver 1989, op. cit. (n. 6), n° 92.

41 S. Dusanic, “The ἔρκιον τῶν οἰκιστῆρων and Fourth-century Cyrene”, *Chiron* 8 (1978), 55–76.

42 A.J.S. Spawforth, S. Walker, “The World of the Panhellenion I, II”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985), 78–104; 76 (1986), 88–105.

43 C.P. Jones, “The Panhellenion”, *Chiron* 26 (1996), 47–56.

or their books, without further clarification. The Greek version by Syncellus, however, ignores this third source.⁴⁴

It is probable that ancient laws from the seventh and sixth century BCE were still in force in imperial Athens. According to Cicero and Aulus Gellius, for example, the laws of Solon remained in force in Athens both before and after the Hadrianic reform.⁴⁵ However, the information from both authors is more ideological than historical in nature, since neither of them was in a position to identify the various legal strata that had accumulated over time under the name of “the laws of Solon”.⁴⁶ However, I would stress that, first as *archon* of Athens in 112 and then thanks to the help of his jurists and sophist friends, Hadrian was able to unearth a part of these oldest legal traditions of Athens.

Even in the second century CE, material traces of Dracon's and Solon's legislation remained accessible in Athens. As is well known, of Dracon's laws only the law on homicide had been retained, the text of which had been republished in 409/8 BCE.⁴⁷ In that year, the law was inscribed on a marble stele which has survived to the present day and which Hadrian could also see in the Stoa Basileios. It has therefore been suggested that the provisions of Dracon's law on involuntary homicide may have influenced some of Hadrian's reforms in the area of the public criminal law.⁴⁸ The emperor also had the opportunity to see and study the remains of the archaic *axones* and *kyrbeis* that were used to publish Solon's laws. Describing the *axones*, Plutarch stated that they were still visible in his day and that they were stored in the *prytaneum*. Pausanias also reported seeing them there.⁴⁹ Given Hadrian's antiquarian tastes, these historical legal relics would clearly have attracted his attention. There are, however, also other ways in which Hadrian could have acquired knowledge of Solon's laws, the main one being Aristotle.

In the early centuries of the Empire, any interested Roman had access to the works of Aristotle thanks to the greatest Roman enemy of Athens: Sulla. When he sacked the city, the dictator took Aristotle's library back to Rome. The grammarian Tyrannion took care of it and transformed it into the spring from which

44 Euseb. *Hieron. Chron.* (198 Helm). For the three versions echoing the *Chronicon* including the one by Syncellus see footnote 22: Helm 1956, op cit. (22), 198; Schoene 1866, op.cit. (22), 166.

45 Cic., *Rosc.Am.* 70, Gell., *N.A.* 2.12.1.

46 Ruschenbusch, E., *Solon: das Gesetzeswerk. Fragmente* (Stuttgart 2010). D. Leão, P.J. Rhodes, *The Laws of Solon* (London 2016).

47 R.S. Stroud, *Dracon's Law on Homicide* (Berkeley 1968).

48 Bauman 1989, op. cit. (n. 16), 264–267.

49 Plut., *Sol.* 25.2, Paus., 1.18.3; R.S. Stroud, *The axones and kyrbeis of Dracon and Solon* (Berkeley 1979).

the Peripatetics drank, thanks to the work of Andronicus of Rhodes.⁵⁰ This revived interest in Aristotle's recovered works also encompassed his historical and political texts. An indication of this interest is the fact that the only two papyri of the *Athenaion Politeia* are from the imperial period, one from the Flavian period and the other from the second century CE.⁵¹ Aristotle's treatise on Solon's *axones* and *kyrbeis*, a work that Plutarch was able to consult, must also have been available. It is evident that in the emperor's day, men in Rome and Athens had excellent information about the Athenian legislators at their disposal.

These Aristotelian books, and perhaps other historical works such as those of the Atthidographers, could be recognised in the *reliquorumque libris* to which Eusebius and Jerome referred. It were these that contained valuable news about the *boule* of the 500 which Hadrian had restored in Athens, returning to Cleisthenes' original form and moving away from Hellenistic expansions. As we have seen, in Cyrene too Hadrian had demonstrated this predilection for the archaic and classical past as opposed to the Hellenistic legacy.⁵² Although the creation of the thirteenth tribe might seem to run counter to Cleisthenes' original scheme, in another respect Hadrian perpetuated the work of this legislator. The discussion of Cleisthenes' reforms in the *Athenaion Politeia* concluded with a list of "the eponymous heroes of the tribes, which the Pythia selected from a previous list of one hundred founding heroes". Hadrian became the thirteenth founding hero of the city, giving his name to one of the *phylae*, the Hadrianis, and a statue of the emperor was erected alongside those of the city's other twelve founding heroes.⁵³

However, one final caveat is necessary. The spirit of the times was very much enamoured of the past, around which the Sophists' intellectual and cultural activity pivoted. Hadrian was not only a *pepaideumenos* but also, to a certain extent, a sophist. Above all, however, he was an emperor, and it would have been insufficient for the Empire he ruled to simply resurrect the past, no matter how attached he was to it. His aim, therefore, was not to 'reprint' the past but to produce a "new, revised and expanded edition". This is well exemplified by his oil law.

50 M. Hatzimichali, 'Andronicus of Rhodes and the Construction of the Aristotelian Corpus', in: A. Falcon, ed., *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity* (Leiden 2016), 81–100.

51 P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1985), 1–5.

52 S.R. Asirvatham, 'No patriotic Fervor for Pella: Aelius Aristides and the Presentation of the Macedonians in the Second Sophistic', *Mnemosyne* 61 (2008), 207–227.

53 *Athen.Pol.* 21, Paus., 1.5.5.

Plutarch recorded that Solon had regulated the export of agricultural products, allowing only the sale of oil. Hadrian's law seems to refine the content of Solon's rule by continuing to allow the sale of Athenian oil abroad, but establishing production quotas that could not be exported. However, the most characteristic features of the Hadrianic law concern Athens' institutional integration into imperial life. Hadrian's law had to provide a solution for issues that Athens could not solve on its own. It will suffice to list a few of these: the portion of Hipparchus' lands that belonged to the *fiscus*, the persecution throughout the Empire of ship owners who broke the law, and the right of appeal to the Roman courts, including the emperor himself, against the decisions of the Athenian courts.⁵⁴

Two final considerations. Firstly, Hadrian viewed the legal diversity of the ancient Greek cities, municipalities and poleis as an asset that merited preservation within the Empire. The second principle, however, somewhat contradicts the first: the intended legislative standardisation of the Empire. The gradual integration of the provinces into the Empire, and the impetus given to this process by Hadrian himself, revealed that local laws were largely incompatible with the social and political advancement of the provincials. There was a risk that the local laws which Hadrian wished to protect would be impractical in modern times. Hadrian had to preserve the old, local laws but at the same time blend them into the new imperial order. He also had to combine the work of legislator and antiquarian. This was something only an *Imperator Nomothetes* could achieve.

54 Plut., *Sol.* 24; K. Harter-Uibopuu, 'Hadrian and the Athenian Oil Law', in: R. Alston, O. van Nijf, eds., *Feeding the Ancient Greek City* (Leuven 2008), 127–142; K. Tuori, *The Emperor of Law* (Oxford 2016), 207–239.

Between Tradition and Change

The Imitatio Principis in the Imperial East

Giorgos Mitropoulos

1 Introduction: *Exempla*, Structures of Power, and the Imperial Model

One of the most important conceptions in Roman mentality is that of the *exemplum*. The ancient Romans systematically utilized examples (*exempla*) as rhetorical devices and most of all examples provided by Romans who in the past performed (or were glorified for performing) great deeds for Rome, such as Horatius Cocles or Appius Claudius Caecus.¹ These *exempla* were recognized as such due to their moral authority and Romans were encouraged to imitate them. A common *topos* in the literary sources was the idea that the present or next generations ought to imitate the older, morally superior generations and past *exempla*. Indeed, one of the most significant Roman notions, connected with that of the *exemplum*, was that of the *mos maiorum*, the respect owed to the model ancestral morals. Among writers of the Roman imperial period, Tacitus expressed this widely held perception of respect to the exemplary older generations in a famous passage of the *Annales*. In the conclusion of the third book, Tacitus describes that Vespasian, himself of austere manners like the Romans of the past, provided a model for his contemporaries. However, Tacitus argued that his own period also produced many *exempla* in nobility and art to be imitated by posterity. In this way, the present would continue to compete with the glorious past in the production of *exempla*.²

1 On *exempla* and 'Roman exemplarity', see indicatively M. Roller, *Models from the Past in Roman Culture: A World of exempla* (Cambridge 2018), cf. J. Harrison, 'The Imitation of the "Great Man" in Antiquity: Paul's Inversion of a Cultural Icon' in S. Potter – A. Pitts, eds., *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (Leiden-Boston 2013), 213–254.

2 Tac., *Ann.* 3.55.5. On the use of models in Greek and Latin literature, see W. Turpin, 'Tacitus, Stoic *exempla*, and the *praecipuum munus annalium*', *Classical Antiquity* 27 (2008), 359–404, esp. 363 with nn. 16–19. See also Cic., *Phil.* 14.17: *id quod semper ipse fecissem, uti excellentium civium virtutem imitatione dignam, non invidia putarent* ('to adopt the line of conduct which I myself have always pursued, to think the virtue of excellent citizens worthy of imitation, not of envy', transl. C.D. Yonge).

Obviously, the idea of the *exemplum* was closely, if not inextricably, connected with that of tradition, since the examples were turned into precedents and simultaneously formed an important part of the Roman political tradition. But imitation was not an action that referred exclusively to the distant past. The persons recognized as *exempla* were included in the Roman tradition as models worthy to be imitated and, thus, the living-up to an example signified nothing less than the continuation of an already approved and highly estimated tradition. By establishing such a connection, leading men and women could enhance their social capital,³ and the (claim to) imitation of a model connected not just individuals, but also past and present. In other words, *exempla* made the past part of the present as a sort of moral continuum.

The notions of 'example' and 'imitation' were not limited in Roman culture, but were also widespread in the ancient Greek world. Both Greeks and Romans recognized certain individuals as models and followed in their steps. In the literary sources, the students imitate their teachers, while the children imitate their parents.⁴ On the civic level, countless honorific inscriptions and decrees set up in the public spaces of Greek cities honoured the benefactor for following the example of his noble ancestors and, in turn, urged the rest of the citizens to follow his example.⁵ Within the Hellenistic royal tradition, *imitatio Alexandri* is of course relevant, since Alexander the Great constituted a steady model for both the Hellenistic kings and Roman leading men.⁶ Despite the lack of modern research on the Hellenistic kings' exemplarity and imitation, literary works,

3 Social relationships are substantially influenced by the distribution of different forms of what Bourdieu described as 'capital': among others, there is economic capital (i.e., material resources), social capital (relationships with prominent persons) and symbolic capital (such as prestige), P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge 1977), 171–197. Here, the social and symbolic capital are particularly important for outlining the role of the *imitatio principis*.

4 Students imitate their teachers: Xen., *Mem.* 1.6.3. Cf. *I.Ephesos* 202 on the praise of Attalos' III teacher: ὅτι γὰρ ζήλοῦσι τὰς ἀγωγὰς [τῶν ἐ]πιστατῶν οἱ ἐκ φύσεως καλοκάγαθικοὶ τῶν νέων (ll. 6–7, ca. 150–140 BCE). Children imitate their parents: Isoc., *Dem.* 11. Parents as models for imitation concerning virtue in Aristotle: C. Hedrick, 'Imitating Virtue and Avoiding Vice: Ethical Functions of Biography, History, and Philosophy', in R. Balot, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Malden 2009), 435–436.

5 Indicatively, see the decree for Aba from Histria, *ISM I*, 57, esp. ll. 16–22 (under the Antonines), or *I.Didyma* 439 (ll. 8–9, early imperial period) on exemplarity and imitation in euergetic practices.

6 On the *imitatio Alexandri* in the Roman age, see indicatively D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter 2002); A. Kühnen, *Die Imitatio Alexandri in der römischen Politik (1. Jh. v. Chr.–3. Jh. n. Chr.)* (Münster 2008). By Hellenistic kings: See Plut., *Dem.* 41.3, cf. M. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings, War, and the Economy', *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986), 462.

such as the Neopythagorean Ekphantos' 'On Kingship' and some inscriptions, indicate that there was indeed a discourse on these notions.⁷

In sum, the imitation of a model's virtues, practices, rhetoric, or visual language is a phenomenon widely attested in the Greco-Roman world, be he a god, a parent, a benefactor, or the ruler. Indeed, many members of the socio-political elites claimed publicly that they followed a prominent model. Tiberius offers a clear example, proclaiming in a speech in the senate in 23 CE that he observed every action and word of Augustus as law and followed his precedent.⁸ Such a case illustrates that *exempla* had a special application to the structures of power in the Greco-Roman world in a number of ways, since they were negotiated by both Greeks and Romans and carried great symbolical and political significance.

The first emperor, Augustus, was well aware of the importance of *exempla* and utilised them widely and publicly during his reign.⁹ Not only did he present others as *exempla* to connect them with his reign, but he also promoted himself as such in a renowned passage of the *Res Gestae*:

Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi

By the passage of new laws, I restored many traditions of our ancestors which were falling into disuse in our time and I myself set precedents in many things for posterity to imitate.¹⁰

7 Though the date of Ekphantos' 'On Kingship' remains disputed, it seems that it can be placed on the 3rd c. BCE., M. Schulte, *Speculum regis: Studien zur Fürstenspiegel-Literatur in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Hamburg 2001), 135–136. On the fragmentation of the Hellenistic texts on the matter of the Hellenistic kings' exemplarity, see recently M. Haake, 'Writing to a Ruler, Speaking to a Ruler, Negotiating the Figure of the Ruler: Thoughts on "Monocratological" Texts and Their Contexts in Greco-Roman Antiquity', in R. Forster – N. Yavari, eds., *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (Cambridge 2015), 70–72. On the description of the ideal Hellenistic king in inscriptions and papyri, see W. Schubart, 'Das hellenistische Königsideal nach Inschriften und Papyri', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 12 (1936), 1–26. Noteworthy is OGIS 383, in which the descendants of Antiochos I of Kommagene are encouraged to imitate the king regarding his piety towards the gods.

8 Tac., *Ann.* 4.37: *qui omnia facta dictaque eius vice legis observem, placitum iam exemplum promptius secutus sum.*

9 See indicatively Suet., *Aug.* 31.5; 89.2, cf. J. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford 2000), 173–196.

10 RG 8.5. Transl. by Loeb, with minor emendations. The same passage is quoted and discussed in the Introduction, p. 1.

This passage constitutes an important starting point for the researcher of imperial exemplarity. It was proclaimed publicly also in Greek, since the *Res Gestae* were set up in eastern cities: Ankara, Apollonia and Pisidian Antiochia.¹¹ Augustus declared himself publicly as a role model, thus turning the idea of the *princeps* as an *exemplum* into an important and lasting ideological conception for the imperial regime. Of course, this notion was not a purely Augustan creation. The first emperor continued Hellenistic and late Republican conceptions of the ideal ruler who governed on the basis of his example and virtue.¹² The notion of ideal rulership was already a deeply rooted tradition, so it should come as no surprise when one finds references in the ancient sources according to which an emperor, a Roman aristocrat or a leading provincial followed imperial precedent.¹³ The exemplarity of the *princeps* was not merely a propagandistic slogan, deprived of deeper meaning, but a seminal notion that united the Roman Empire.¹⁴ Though generic formulations should be avoided and every case should be examined separately, it is clear that the emperor was the leading role model in a strictly hierarchical society in which he controlled the majority of the means of representation.¹⁵ Of course, the emperors lived in a society and were influenced by others and most of all by their aristocratic

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- 11 The relevant Greek passage is formulated thus: Εἰσαγαγῶν καινοὺς νόμους πολλὰ ἤδη τῶν ἀρχαίων ἔθῶν καταλυόμενα διωρθωσάμην καὶ αὐτὸς πολλῶν πραγμάτων μείμημα ἑμαυτὸν τοῖς μετέπειτα παρέδωκα. See now C. Kokkinia, 'On the inscribing in stone of Augustus' *Res Gestae*', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 220 (2021), 281–289 on the text of the *Res Gestae* in Augustus' temple at Ankara and the aspect of *imitatio* at play in the creation of copies in other eastern communities.
- 12 A. Cooley, *Res gestae divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge/New York 2009), 144.
- 13 I will limit myself here to only a few examples. Emperor: see op. cit. (n. 8) on Tiberius and the Augustan *exemplum*. The monograph of O. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford 2015) on imperial ancestry and tradition and its significance for all *principes* is also relevant. On Roman aristocrats imitating the emperor, one can refer indicatively to Galen's passage 17.2.150 Kühn, in which all the *amici* of Marcus Aurelius are presented to have adopted his short haircut, while the *amici* of Lucius Verus are depicted with the latter's long hair. Indeed, Lucius Verus called them mockingly as μιμολόγοι.
- 14 On the imperial model, see indicatively J. Lendon, *Empire of Honour. The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford 1997); P. Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (München 1990, 2nd edition); C. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge 2011). A monograph on imperial exemplarity and its imitation remains a *desideratum*, hopefully to be partly completed in G. Mitropoulos, *The Model of the Roman Emperor and the imitatio principis: Dialectics of Influence between the princeps and the Provincials in the Greco-Roman East* (31 B. C.–A. D. 235) (forthcoming) and future works.
- 15 In this regard, see also Noreña 2011, op. cit. (n. 14), 323–324.

counterparts. However, in some certain cases they seem to have provided the stimulus for actions in Rome and the provinces that resembled imperial ones.

While the imitation of a practice or of a specific action is based on a pre-existing model, it simultaneously constitutes a novel element in the political scene. This is because the imitating action could not be and was not an exact reproduction of the original one. The imitation of an 'exemplary' action obviously keeps up with the precedent, but there are different social actors at play, often addressing a different audience in time and space. Therefore, a different socio-political context is created in every case, which determines the very character of the imitating action and places it between 'tradition' and 'change'.

As will be illustrated, the imitation of the emperor was a conscious, selective, and common strategy employed in different Roman provinces. Since the emperor was 'the leading actor' in the Roman Empire, many provincial men and women found his imitation appealing, irrespective of their social position and place in the civic, provincial, or imperial power structure. Of course, the act of imitating the emperor increased their social and symbolic capital since they appropriated part of the higher imperial prestige. In turn, they could potentially reinforce their image and social status in the civic scene.

With these briefly-sketched theoretical considerations in mind, I aim to demonstrate the way the imperial *exemplum* was imitated by prominent provincials in the Greco-Roman East who were attracted by the superior prestige of the leading aristocrat of the Roman Empire. The imitation of the Roman emperor, a phenomenon that can be conveniently characterized today as *imitatio principis* or *imitatio imperatoris* was employed also by men outside Rome to enhance their socio-political capital. By utilising the imitation of the emperor as a political and ideological tool, these illustrious provincials consolidated their leading position in the power structures of the Hellenophone provinces. Some characteristic examples from the geographical regions of Greece and Asia Minor in the Augustan (second section), and Hadrianic – Antonine age (third and fourth sections) will serve as case-studies, though the aim of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of these examples, but to delineate some main points that will be an aid to the better interpretation of the wider role the *imitatio principis* played in the structures of power of the Roman Empire.

2 Eurycles of Sparta

We can start the discussion with the Spartan magnate Eurycles. His connection with Augustus was formed early on, since he took part in the battle of Actium

in 31 BCE on his side.¹⁶ It is interesting that according to Plutarch, Eurycles chose to support Octavian, because Mark Antony had executed his father.¹⁷ Eurycles, then, is presented as avenging the violent death of his father, just as Octavian had avenged the murder of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, on Brutus and Cassius. It seems that a parallel between Eurycles and Octavian appears in the literary sources.

After Actium, Octavian rewarded Eurycles for his active support by placing him in charge of Sparta, his home city. However, it is not clear what kind of authority Eurycles possessed in Sparta. The contemporary writer Strabo describes him as ἡγεμών (leader) who exercised ἐπίστασια (authority) in the city.¹⁸ However, Eurycles was not a *hegemon* in any technical or official sense. The local coinage from Sparta does not refer to any official title, but the description ‘issued under Eurycles’ (Ἐπὶ Εὐρυκλέος) is simply stated on the reverse legend, while on the obverse of some issues Augustus, Livia, and Agrippa are depicted.¹⁹ The ambiguity of Eurycles’ official position has confused even modern researchers and various designations can be found in the bibliography. A. Spawforth calls Eurycles simply a ‘leader’, in J.-S. Balzat he is ‘le chef de la cité’, and E. Calandra and M. Gorrini remark that Eurycles and his successors (known as the ‘Euryclids’) had “an extraordinary constitutional position” in Sparta.²⁰ The most interesting parallelism can be found in some recent studies in which Eurycles is described as *princeps*.²¹ Overall, it seems

16 A. Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge/New York 2012), 86–87. On Eurycles in general, see E. Groag, *RE* X 1 (1918), 580, s.v. Iulius [220]; *PIR*² I 301; *Roman Peloponnese*, LAC 461.

17 Plut., *Ant.* 67.2–3, in which Eurycles addresses Antony thus: Εὐρυκλῆς ὁ Λαχάρους, τῆ Καίσαρος τύχῃ τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκδικῶν θάνατον (2).

18 Str., 8.5.1. Strabo uses the term ἡγεμών freely in his ‘Geography’ and attributes it to many persons, Romans or not. For example, he refers to the ἡγεμονία of Augustus, but he also writes in the same passage that he dispatched ἡγεμόνας καὶ διοικητὰς in the provinces, Str., 17.3.25. Tiberius is characterized as ἡγεμών in 13.4.8.

19 *RPC* I, 1102–1107, cf. J.-S. Balzat, ‘Le pouvoir des Euryclides à Sparte’, *Les Études Classiques* 73 (2005), 296–297. Augustus: *RPC* I, 1104; Livia: *RPC* I, 1105; Agrippa: *RPC* I, 1106. The imperial couple visited Sparta in 21 BCE and Agrippa in 16 BCE, so the coins may have been issued in commemoration of these sojourns, E. Calandra, M. Gorrini, ‘Cult Practice of a pompé in the Imperial Age: S.E.G. XI 923’, *Sparta* 4 (2008), 19, n. 37.

20 P. Cartledge, A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta. A Tale of Two Cities* (London – New York 2002), 98; Balzat 2005, op. cit. (n. 19), 292; Calandra and Gorrini 2008, op. cit. (n. 19), 5.

21 A. Rizakis, S. Zoumbaki, C. Lepenioti, *Roman Peloponnese II: Roman Personal Names in their Social Context. Laconia and Messenia* (Athens 2004), 283; M. Kantiréa, *Les dieux et les dieux Augustes. Le culte impérial en Grèce sous les Julio-claudiens et les Flaviens* (Athènes 2007), 160.

that he exercised a form of personal rule at Sparta but without abolishing the traditional civic institutions, a power structure much like that of Octavian's Rome. The new position that was created for Eurycles was at the top of and simultaneously outside the city's constitutional framework.²² Therefore, it could be thought that Eurycles' leading and unofficial position at Sparta was partly based on the power structure formed by the *princeps* in contemporary Rome. It may be reasonably suggested that Eurycles watched his patron and benefactor for inspiration. Like his imperial benefactor, Eurycles exercised monarchical power simultaneously respecting and preserving the already existing civic institutions.²³

Eurycles probably served as the first priest of Augustus in the city and founded the local festival of the *Kaisareia*, actions that must have strengthened the already close bond of the Spartan magnate with the first emperor.²⁴ Moreover, he played an active role in the ambitious building programme in Sparta that presents strong parallels to the contemporary activities of Augustus in Rome.²⁵ As the first priest of the imperial cult and the ἡγεμὼν of the city, Eurycles is the most likely candidate for the construction of two temples dedicated to Caesar and Augustus in the Spartan *agora*.²⁶ The dedication of the temples probably took place shortly after the battle of Actium and the construction of a temple of *divus Iulius* in the Roman Forum by Octavian (29 BCE).²⁷ The construction

22 Compare with Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 87, in which Eurycles is described as exercising 'unofficial hegemony' over the Spartans.

23 Inspiration from the imperial model is also suggested by Spawforth in Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, op. cit. (n. 20), 98 and G. Steinhauer, 'C. Iulius Eurycles and the Spartan Dynasty of the Euryclids' in A. Rizakis – C. Lepeniotti, eds., *Roman Peloponnese III: Society, Economy and Culture under the Roman Empire. Continuity and Innovation* (Athens 2010), 76, 80.

24 Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, op. cit. (n. 20), 99, 184–185; Kantiréa 2007, op. cit. (n. 21), 161; F. Camia, *Theoi Sebastoi. Il culto degli imperatori romani in Grecia (provincia Achaia) nel secondo secolo d.C.* (Athens 2011a), 115; F. Camia, 'Between Tradition and Innovation: Cults for Roman Emperors in the Province of Achaia' in A. Kolb, M. Vitale, eds., *Kaiserkult in den Provinzen des Römischen Reiches: Organisation, Kommunikation und Repräsentation* (Berlin/Boston 2016), 264; Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 125. The festival is first attested under the Flavians, but its introduction probably took place already in the Augustan age and after the initiative of Eurycles, Camia 2016, op. cit. (n. 24), 264.

25 See also Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 220–221; J. Fouquet, *Bauen zwischen Polis und Imperium: Stadtentwicklung und urbane Lebensformen auf der kaiserzeitlichen Peloponnes* (Berlin 2019), 237.

26 Paus., 3.11.4. Two *Kaisareia* in Gytheion and Asopos were also constructed probably under his influence or active support, see Kantiréa 2007, op. cit. (n. 21), 161.

27 On the temple of *divus Iulius*, see J. Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire* (Cambridge 2005), 109–111, cf. S. Weinstock, *Divus Iulius* (Oxford 1971), 385–401; F. Coarelli, *Roma* (Bari/Roma 2018⁷), 90–92.

of the two temples of the imperial cult made the civic centre of Sparta quite comparable to a Roman Forum.²⁸

Furthermore, aside from the construction of magnificent public buildings in the civic centre, it has been remarked that Eurycles and his circle played a role in the revival of ancient local cults and religious practices according to epigraphic testimonies. Many members of the local aristocracy, connected with Eurycles, are attested in catalogues of participants in the renewed celebrations of the Taenarian Poseidon and the sacred banquets of the Dioscuri.²⁹ These cults saw a renewed importance after thin attestations in the Late Republican period. The revival of the cult in Tainaron was supported probably by Eurycles, whose family was active through benefactions in the coastal zone of Laconia, while members of the family of Pratolaos, a relative of Eurycles, are attested in the sacred banquets of the Dioscuri. Pratolaos' family contributed to the repair of the temple of the divine twins and thus assisted in the revival of this local cult. It is worth noting that the temple of Castor and Pollux in the Roman Forum was repaired and dedicated by Tiberius in 6 CE.³⁰ Taken as a whole, the renewal of ancient cults in Sparta must have been realized by well-informed prominent local families, connected to Rome. They followed the mood of religious renewal of Augustan Rome and promoted divinities such as the Dioscuri contemporaneously with the imperial centre to advance their εὐσέβεια (reverence) towards the gods and connection with the regime.³¹

The phenomenon of the renewal of Spartan cults through, for example, the construction of new and restoration of ancient sanctuaries has been connected to, and was in accordance with, the topical religious programme of Augustus in Rome.³² In this way, a part of the extensive programme of public works in Sparta, led by Eurycles himself and his circle, seems to have followed the contemporary Augustan building programme in Rome. Moreover, the renewal of ancient Spartan cults was modelled in the promotion of *pietas* and the imperial care for traditional cults in Rome.

With this connection in mind, we may recall that many researchers have pointed out that white marble was employed widely in the theatre of Sparta

28 Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 220.

29 *IG V, 1* 206–209 (sacred banquets of the Dioscuri), 210–212 (sacred banquets of the 'Taenarii'), see further C. Böhme, *Princeps und polis. Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsform des Augustus über bedeutende Orte in Griechenland* (München 1995), 152, n. 2; Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, op. cit. (n. 20), 99; Balzat 2005, op. cit. (n. 19), 293; Kantiréa 2007, op. cit. (n. 21), 162; Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 186–190.

30 Coarelli 2018, op. cit. (n. 27), 84.

31 See also Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 190–191.

32 Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, op. cit. (n. 20), 99; Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 186–191.

under Augustus and, characteristically, it was the first time white marble was used extensively in the city.³³ Under Augustus, this material served as a symbol of architectural modernisation in the imperial constructions in Rome.³⁴ Of course, the use of marble was already widely attested in ancient Greek cities, but its unprecedented utilisation in the Spartan theatre and *agora* can be connected with the renewed importance this material acquired in Augustan Rome, in combination with other developments such as the inflow of wealth to Sparta.³⁵ Moreover, the improvement of the Spartan theatre fits well with the Augustan emphasis on the restoration of public buildings after the battle of Actium. For this reason, it has been proposed that the work was undertaken by Eurycles.³⁶ The monumental theatre was the centre of the Spartan building programme and one can reasonably suggest that this Spartan 'partisan' of the emperor imitated the contemporary Augustan programme in Rome.³⁷

Imitatio Augusti did not inspire every single aspect of Eurycles' reign, but it certainly *did* impact him on a constitutional, building, and cultic level. The prominent political position of Eurycles in the city, an outcome of his personal acquaintance with the first emperor and the favour he enjoyed, directed him towards the ideology of the imperial state, as happened in other cases of prominent provincials. It seems that Eurycles knew of the contemporary activities and the ideological themes promoted by Augustus, such as his extensive building programme in Rome and the revival of ancient cults, which he implemented in his own area of authority.³⁸ The nature of his power and the deeds of the local magnate recall Augustus and the topical imperial ideology.

3 *Par inter principes: Herodes Atticus and the imitatio principis*

The Spartan Eurycles was not the only prominent Greek provincial employing the imitation of the Roman emperor as an instrument to acquire precious

33 Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 120.

34 Cf. the famous Augustan quote in Suet., *Aug.* 28.3, cf. D. Favro, 'Making Rome a World City' in K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2005), 254.

35 Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 120; Fouquet 2019, op. cit. (n. 25), 237 who described this development as 'Marmorisierung' of the city.

36 In this regard, it is very likely that the Spartan *Kaisareia*, instituted by Eurycles, took place in the same theatre, F. Camia, 'Spending on the *agones*: The Financing of Festivals in the Cities of Roman Greece', *Tyche* 26, 2011b, 58.

37 Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 220–221, who speaks of 'imitative flattery of the princes' (p. 220), cf. Fouquet 2019, op. cit. (n. 25), 235.

38 Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 85, 99.

social and symbolic capital. Another instructive example is that of the famous Athenian magnate of the second century CE, Herodes Atticus.³⁹

It is impossible to describe here all the actions and ways through which Herodes attempted to imitate the Roman emperors, so an outline of some selected and characteristic examples has to suffice. As will be clear, the case of Herodes Atticus presents perhaps the culmination of the *imitatio principis* in the Hellenophone provinces. The prominent Athenian did not try to hide his ambition to be compared with the emperor, especially Hadrian, but many of his public initiatives were based on the imperial model.

When he was still a child, Herodes Atticus resided with the grandfather of Marcus Aurelius in Rome, an experience quite atypical for the son of a Greek provincial, even a prominent one.⁴⁰ Afterwards, he was included among the *amici* of Hadrian (124 CE) as a *quaestor* and travelled in his entourage.⁴¹ His personal bonds with the imperial house were sealed with his marriage with Regilla, a relative of Faustina Maior, Antoninus Pius' wife. Together, they owned a great estate on the Appian Way, a few miles from Rome, called the Triopion.⁴² The fact that he wed a Roman lady coming from the highest echelons of Roman society singled out Herodes among his Greek counterparts.⁴³ As one researcher has aptly put it, 'for the king-like Athenian magnate, Regilla, "little queen" by name, was thus an appropriate match'.⁴⁴

The catalogue of the offices Herodes held in Rome and the provinces is dazzling: *archon eponymos* in Athens (126/7 CE), *agoranomos*, *agonothetes* of the *Panathenaea*, high-priest of the imperial cult (ca. 138), priest of Dionysos, *corrector* of the free cities of Asia (ca. 135/6), *archon* of the *Panhellenion* in the first years of the institution (between 137 and 141 CE). He even reached the consular

39 The modern bibliography on Herodes Atticus is immense. See indicatively: *PIR*² C 802, cf. P. Graindor, *Un milliardaire antique: Hérode Atticus et sa famille* (Le Caire 1930); K. Neugebauer, 'Herodes Atticus, ein antiker Kunstmäzen', *Die Antike* 10 (1934), 92–121; W. Ameling, *Herodes Atticus I–II* (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1983); J. Tobin, *Herodes Attikos and the City of Athens. Patronage and Conflict under the Antonines* (Amsterdam 1997); M. Galli, *Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten. Untersuchungen zu den Bauten und Stiftungen des Herodes Atticus* (Mainz am Rhein 2002); M. Gleason, 'Making Space for Bicultural Identity: Herodes Atticus Commemorates Regilla' in: T. Whitmarsh, ed., *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World* (Cambridge 2010), 125–162; A. Kuhn, 'Herodes Atticus and the Quintilii of Alexandria Troas: Elite Competition and Status Relation in the Graeco-Roman East', *Chiron* 42 (2012), 421–458.

40 Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 130 with n. 31 who compares Herodes' residence in Rome with that of the sons of client kings.

41 *Syll.*³ 863, no. 1, cf. Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 129.

42 Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 142–156.

43 Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 126; Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 433, n. 62.

44 Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 433.

office in Rome, being *consul ordinarius* in 143 and surpassing his father who had been a suffect consul. Herodes was also the teacher of oratory of the young imperial heirs Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus from 141 to 146.⁴⁵ It is evident, then, that Herodes Atticus maintained personal, close and lasting ties with the imperial family.⁴⁶ The personal bond with the imperial centre is an aspect we already witnessed in the case of Eurycles and should be taken into account in the study of the *imitatio principis*. In case the prominent men were personally acquainted with the emperor, they were directly affected and (possibly) impressed by imperial magnanimity, thus making it easier for them to follow his example. Personal contact with the emperor is an element that cannot be 'measured', but I think we should not underestimate it as a factor for imitation. Of course, this does not mean that there is no *imitatio* without a personal connection between emperor and imitator. As appears from e.g. the imperial impact on hairstyle and fashion trends, numerous provincials were inspired for their self-representation from features of the imperial representation without being personally acquainted with members of the imperial family. The personal bond can serve merely as an additional indication that imperial imitation is at play in the cases of the most prominent men who might have been influenced from their contact with the *princeps*.

The most impressive way through which Herodes Atticus sought to imitate and even emulate the emperors was in his euergetic activity. The numerous and magnificent benefactions of Herodes in many provincial cities, including Athens, Eleusis, Corinth, Delphi, Olympia, Alexandria Troas, and Ephesos render his multi-faceted euergetic activity reminiscent of the imperial. Accordingly, it has been remarked that his passion for building activities was in accordance with the Hadrianic model of euergetism, and I would add that it was based on the contemporary *exemplum* of the philhellene emperor.⁴⁷ This is illustrated especially in the benefactions of Herodes at Athens that can be compared

45 Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 30; G. Mitropoulos, 'Politics of the Past: Marcus Aurelius and Commodus in Achaëa', in: A. Kouremenos, ed., *The Province of Achaëa in the Second Century CE: The Past Present* (London/New York 2022), 144.

46 Herodes' bond with the emperor lasted until his last years: In the renowned trial of Sirmium, he was acquitted for acting as tyrant at Athens by Marcus Aurelius, obviously due to his personal bonds with the *princeps*, N. Kennell, 'Herodes Atticus and the Rhetoric of Tyranny', *Classical Philology* 92 (1997), 347, 350; Lendon 1997, op. cit. (n. 14), 127; Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 448–449, 452. Marcus Aurelius also asked the Athenians in a letter to accept Herodes back to the city and he specifically encouraged them to love 'his own and their' Herodes (174/5 CE, Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* 184, ll. 87–94, the phrase in l. 93: τὸν ἑμὸν καὶ τὸν ἴδι[ο]ν αὐτῶν Ἡρώιδην στέργειν).

47 C. Kokkinia, 'Games vs. Buildings as Euergetic Choices', in: K. Coleman, J. Nelis-Clément, eds., *L'organisation des spectacles dans le monde Romain* (Geneve 2012), 123.

with Hadrian's extensive building works in the same city only a few decades earlier.⁴⁸

As is well-known, Hadrian completed the great temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens, founded a new neighbourhood in this temple's vicinity, and constructed a magnificent library. He also built a great aqueduct, a temple dedicated to all the gods, the Pantheon, a temple of Hera and Zeus Panhellenios, and a bridge over the river Kephissos.⁴⁹ In this way, an ancient writer would have argued justifiably that Hadrian was the greatest benefactor of Athens. However, Philostratus stated that the two monuments of Herodes Atticus in Athens, namely the Panathenaic stadium (which he rebuilt in marble) and the Herodian Odeon were unparalleled throughout the Empire.⁵⁰ This undoubtedly exaggerated statement sets aside the Hadrianic constructions and places Herodes in direct rivalry with Hadrian, albeit on a rhetorical level, in terms of magnanimity of construction, and in the symbolical euergetic primacy of an individual over the city of Athens. Indeed, the capacity of the Panathenaic stadium renovated by Herodes can be compared with the Roman Colosseum and its dimensions with Domitian's stadium in Rome.⁵¹ Moreover, the impressive Odeon has been interpreted as an almost regal 'answer' of Herodes to the reconstruction of the theatre of Dionysos by Hadrian, located on the same slope of the Akropolis hill.⁵² Lastly, the bridge Herodes constructed over the river Ilissos, close to the Hadrianic *Olympieion*, perhaps imitates the bridge Hadrian had constructed over the river Kephissos in terms of its practical

48 See also K. Arafat, *Pausanias' Greece. Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* (Cambridge 1996), 200–201 for more comparisons between Hadrian and Herodes, Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 161–162, cf. F. Quass, *Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens. Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (Stuttgart 1993), 221–222; C. Noreña, 'Emperors, Benefaction and Honorific Practice in the Roman Imperial Greek Polis', in: M. Gyax, A. Zuiderhoek, eds., *Benefactors and the Polis: The Public Gift in the Greek Cities from the Homeric World to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 2021), 201–221 offers some interesting general remarks on the promotion of the emperor as a model benefactor in the Greek *poleis* of the imperial period and the utilisation of this ideal by leading provincials through imperial imitation.

49 On Hadrian's building activity in Athens, see indicatively M. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton 2000), 144–157, 167–171.

50 Philostr., *VS* 2.551: δύο μὲν δὴ ταῦτα Ἀθήγησιν, ἃ οὐχ ἑτέρωθι τῆς ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις.

51 J. Rife, 'The Burial of Herodes Atticus: Elite Identity, Urban Society, and Public Memory in Roman Greece', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 128 (2008), 102. Galli 2002, op. cit. (n. 39), 23–24 suggests that Herodes might have been influenced by the stadium Antoninus Pius may have planned to construct next to Hadrian's tomb in Puteoli.

52 Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 134.

function and symbolical significance.⁵³ Therefore, there were new, grandiose benefactions and novel additions to the civic landscape of Athens by Herodes, which simultaneously continued the great Hadrianic benefactions completed a few years prior, which Herodes had seen in person.

According to Philostratus, the Athenians regarded the Herodian benefactions with suspicion due to the dispute over the donation of Herodes' father to them.⁵⁴ However, there would have undoubtedly been many Athenians who appreciated deeply the benefits of Herodes' works both in practical terms and for the augmentation of the city's prestige as a cultural centre and the seat of Hadrian's newly-instituted *Panhellenion*. The Herodian monuments constituted (and many of them still do) a vivid example of the degree to which the emperor could be a model for imitation by prominent provincials. Hadrian provided an example of benefactions in Athens which Herodes consciously continued, imitated, and perhaps even competed with.⁵⁵

The height the ambitions of Herodes may have reached is revealed in his almost imperial plan to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, which was a clear attempt at *aemulatio principis*, since this was a work that even Nero and, to a lesser extent, Caesar and Caligula could not achieve.⁵⁶ Indeed, Philostratus has Herodes stating that only this deed would ensure posthumous fame for him. In the end, Herodes did not seek imperial permission for carrying out his plan, because he was afraid that he would be accused of trying to complete a project that even Nero could not achieve, and he abandoned the whole effort. Even if we take Philostratus' account as rhetorical exaggeration rather than historical fact (though there is no reason to do so), it is revealing both for the 'imperial' impression Herodes Atticus had made on later generations of Greeks and for him being portrayed as careful not to challenge imperial authority.

The scale of Herodes' ambitions in the euergetic sphere became evident already during his correctorship of the free cities of Asia (ca. 135/6). Hadrian

53 See also Galli 2002, op. cit. (n. 39), 28 who does not refer to imperial imitation, but to Herodes' connection to and inspiration by Hadrian. The same Hadrianic bridge itself constituted a model for Marcus Ulpius Eurycles from Aezani, for which see the next section.

54 Philostr., VS 2.549: παρώξυνε [s.c. ὁ Ἡρώδης] ταῦτα τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὡς ἠρπασμένους τὴν δωρεὰν καὶ οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο μισοῦντες, οὐδὲ ὁπότε τὰ μέγιστα εὐεργετεῖν ᾤετο. τὸ οὖν στάδιον ἔφασαν 'εὐδέπνωμάσθαι Παναθηναϊκόν, κατεσκευάσθαι γὰρ αὐτὸ ἐξ ὧν ἀπεστεροῦντο Ἀθηναῖοι πάντες, cf. Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 63, 162.

55 See Graindor 1930, op. cit. (n. 39), 180 who writes about Herodes' 'secrète pensée' of *aemulatio principis* on this level – perhaps not that secret, cf. Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 162.

56 Philostr., VS 2.551–552, cf. Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 291, 293, 314; C. Jones, 'Culture in the Careers of Eastern Senators', in: W. Eck, M. Heil, eds., *Senatores populi Romani: Realität und mediale Präsentation einer Führungsschicht; Kolloquium der Prosopographia Imperii Romani vom 11.–13. Juni 2004* (Stuttgart 2005), 267.

had donated three million *drachmae* for the construction of an aqueduct in Alexandria Troas. But when the sum proved to be inadequate, Herodes covered the additional expenses by disbursing four more million *drachmae* from his family's fortune, thus surpassing the sum the emperor had initially offered.⁵⁷ In this interesting and peculiar episode, Herodes is presented as emulating the emperor by not merely imitating him in the sense of personally continuing the construction of the aqueduct, but even surpassing him.⁵⁸ Herodes' ambitions became clear, since the magnificent aqueduct, the *nymphaeum* and a complex of baths and gymnasium he constructed with the family's fortune dominated the landscape of Alexandria Troas.⁵⁹ In my opinion, Herodes was promoted as a 'mirror' of Hadrian to the inhabitants of the city through these impressive benefactions.

One of the most striking expressions of Herodes' *imitatio Hadriani* was his reaction following the premature death of his young adopted son, Polydeukion. Herodes bestowed heroic honours on him and set up statues in his honour at numerous sites. It has been suggested that Herodes' exceptional mourning and honorific actions for his foster son were modelled after the honours of Hadrian to his deceased beloved Antinoos.⁶⁰ Indeed, the cases of the two young men can be compared: both were objects of affection by wealthy prominent men, died prematurely and received cultic honours (through worship, dedication of statues and institution of festivals in their honour). The portraits of Polydeukion are similar to those of Antinoos concerning the depiction of the youthful and idealized facial features. Polydeukion is the best and most widespread example of imitation of the Antinoean model of juvenile beauty

57 Philostr., *VS* 2.548, cf. S. Mitchell, 'Imperial Building in the Eastern Roman Provinces', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 91 (1987), 346–347; Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 25–26, 327–330; Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 424–425; T. Esch, 'Die Quintilii aus Alexandria Troas: Aufstieg und Fall einer Familie' in: E. Schwertheim, ed., *Neue Forschungen in Alexandria Troas* (Bonn 2018), 38–42. Esch 2018, 40 with n. 272 points out that the sum of four million *drachmae* is not attested elsewhere in the Roman Empire for the funding of a non-imperial construction.

58 Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 424 also pointed out independently the *aemulatio* of Hadrian as Herodes' motive in this case, cf. Esch 2018, op. cit. (n. 57), 41.

59 Philostr., *VS* 2.548, cf. Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 26, 327–328; Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 424–425.

60 Thus, Neugebauer 1934, op. cit. (n. 39), 99–100; Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 105–107; C. Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge/New York 2007), 124, n. 39; Gleason 2010, op. cit. (n. 39), 159; Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 447, cf. below, n. 65. Gleason and Kuhn stress that Herodes' mourning and honours to both his three foster sons (Polydeukion, Achilleus, Memnon) were based on those of Hadrian for Antinoos. Therefore, one could state that Herodes 'surpassed' Hadrian in a way by honouring *three* deceased favourites.

in sculptures.⁶¹ Even more impressive is the fact that some youthful private portraits depended iconographically on the portrait of Polydeukion, thus disseminating the ideal of juvenile beauty both Antinoos and Polydeukion promoted.⁶² Moreover, Antinoos was often depicted in the guise of a god – for example as Dionysos or Osiris – or as a hero, and it seems that some statues of Polydeukion in Herodes' estates in Marathon and Eva-Loukou perhaps presented him as an Egyptian god and one of the Dioscuri.⁶³ Furthermore, the private contests Herodes instituted in honour of Polydeukion in Kephisia imitated those of Hadrian for Antinoos in Antinoopolis and elsewhere.⁶⁴ Taken together, the worship, the contests, the numerous statues of Polydeukion (also as a god), and his portraits can be interpreted as a conscious *imitatio* or even *aemulatio* of Hadrian's honours for Antinoos.⁶⁵

However, the worship of Polydeukion seems to have been limited to Herodes' estates. The cult was probably not promoted publicly, but had more of a personal character for Herodes and some members of his circle.⁶⁶ In this regard,

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- 61 H. Goette, 'Heroenreliefs von Herodes Atticus für seine Trophimoi', in: D. Tsifaki, ed., *ΑΓΑΛΜΑ. Μελέτες για την αρχαία πλαστική προς τιμήν του Γιώργου Δεσπίνη* (Θεσσαλονίκη 2001), 425, n. 15; H. Goette, 'Zum Bildnis des Polydeukion. Stil Tendenzen athenischer Werkstätten im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.', in: P. Noelle, ed., *Romanisation und Resistenz in Plastik, Architektur und Inschriften der Provinzen des Imperium Romanum; Neue Funde und Forschungen. Akten des VII. Internationalen Colloquiums über Probleme des Provinzialrömischen Kunstschaffens, Köln 2. bis 6. Mai 2001* (Mainz 2003), 551, 553; H. Goette, 'The Portraits of Herodes Atticus and his Circle', in: O. Palagia, ed., *Handbook of Greek Sculpture* (Berlin/Boston 2019), 244, n. 54, 245; C. Vout, 'Antinous: Archaeology and History', *Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005), 91–92; 2007, op. cit. (n. 60), 85–88 (but K. Fittschen, 'The Portraits of Roman Emperors and their Families: Controversial Positions and Unsolved Problems', in: B. Ewald – C. Noreña, eds., *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual* (Cambridge 2010), 245–246 for some reservations on the examples provided by Vout). According to Vout 2005, op. cit. (n. 61), 92–93; 2007, op. cit. (n. 60), 87–88, it is difficult even to discern between the two in some cases.
- 62 Goette 2019, op. cit. (n. 61), 245–246. The similarity is so striking that initially these individuals were wrongly identified with Polydeukion.
- 63 Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 105–106, 258.
- 64 Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 106; C. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity. From Achilles to Antinoos* (Cambridge 2010), 81.
- 65 Graindor 1930, op. cit. (n. 39), 118 (*imitatio*); Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 106 (*aemulatio*), 292 (*imitatio*); P. Karanastasi, 'Ένα νέο πορτρέτο του Αντινόου από το ιερό της Νεμέσεως στον Ραμνούντα', in: H. Goette and I. Leventi, eds., *Excellence: Studies in Honour of Olga Palagia* (Rahden/Westf. 2019), 296 (*imitatio*).
- 66 Tobin 1997, op. cit. (n. 39), 106–107, 110, cf. R. Neudecker, 'Die Villa Hadriana als Modell für Herodes Atticus', in: E. Calandra and B. Adembri, eds., *Adriano e la Grecia: Villa Adriana tra classicità ed ellenismo: Studi e ricerche* (Roma 2014), 138–139 who states that the heroisation of Polydeukion in Herodes' villas followed the model of the Antinoeion in the *villa Hadriana* in Tivoli.

it is perhaps relevant that Polydeukion was honoured as ‘the hero of Herodes’ (τὸν Ἡρώδου ἥρωα) in an inscription from Delphi.⁶⁷ Obviously, the provincial cities did not regard Polydeukion’s death as an event of equal importance to Antinoos’ passing, and of course Herodes did not equal the emperor, and thus Polydeukion’s worship was not elevated in the public sphere. After all, as noted above, many Athenians bore a hostile attitude to Herodes.⁶⁸ Moreover, perhaps Herodes himself did not intend to disseminate further the worship of Polydeukion, since he would have been conscious that a promotion of the cult in public spaces could have been considered as a provocation by the imperial centre. As Philostratus’ narration about Herodes’ plan to cut a canal through the Isthmus indicates, he was careful not to attract displeasure from the imperial government. Indeed, it is characteristic that the governors of Achaëa, the brothers Quintilii, considered Herodes’ honours for his deceased favourites as excessive and criticised the statues he had dedicated, thus forcing Herodes to appease them by pointing out the private character of ‘his poor marbles’ (τοῖς ἐμοῖς ... λιθαρίοις). Herodes’ exceptional grief and honours would probably have reminded the Quintilii of the by then deceased Hadrian’s mourning for Antinoos, and thus Herodes risked being accused of emulating the emperor, as could have happened in the case of his plan to cut through the Isthmus.⁶⁹ The Quintilii episode indicates that Herodes’ excessive mourning, though expressed in a mainly private context, also had a public function. It probably became a topic of discussion among Athenians and attracted the attention of the provincial governors who rushed to reprimand the important magnate. In this way, it seems that sometimes the imperial imitation created tension in the imperial structures of power and, more specifically, in the relations between the official authorities representing the emperor, even the emperor himself, and the provincial imitators.

To briefly sum up, the benefactions of Herodes Atticus can be compared with the inter-provincial and extraordinary euergetic activity of a Roman emperor. His *imitatio principis* is illustrated most of all in his ambitions and the magnificence, the breadth, the number, and the permanence of his public benefactions in numerous cities, especially in Athens. It is especially these actions that reveal a person who acted like an emperor in many ways and

67 *F.Delphes* III.3 74, ll. 6–7.

68 Rife 2008, op. cit. (n. 51), 120.

69 Philostr., *VS* 2.559. Similarly, Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 447 points out that Quintilii might have understood the political dimensions of Herodes’ actions: the impressive commemoration of his τρόφιμοι contributed to his omnipresence in Greece which surpassed the imperial. On the hostility that developed between Herodes and the Quintilii brothers, see Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39).

'forced' ancient writers like Philostratus to refer to him using descriptions more appropriate for emperors.⁷⁰ To this we should add the heroisation and the various honours Herodes bestowed to his favourite, Polydeukion, based on the Hadrianic model of those addressed to Antinoos. Moreover, his *aemulatio principis* is also clear in the events around the aqueduct of Alexandria Troas and his plan concerning the cutting of a canal through the Isthmus. All taken together, Herodes Atticus probably constitutes the apex of the *imitatio principis* in the Greco-Roman East concerning its extent and the clarity through which this is detected.

4 Marcus Ulpius Apuleius Eurycles: the Panhellene from Aezani

A final case study of *imitatio principis* from the Greco-Roman East brings us to the prominent M. Ulpius Apuleius Eurycles from the city of Aezani in Phrygia. Eurycles was chosen from his city to serve as a Panhellene in the *Panhellenion* at Athens, founded by Hadrian in 131/2. Eurycles remained in Athens during his entire service as a Panhellene, from 153 to 157. This was an unusual practice, as most Panhellenes did not stay in the city for the full term of their office, but returned to their home cities. However, Eurycles sought to be advanced in the public scene through his office in the *Panhellenion*, as is illustrated in the numerous 'testimonials' composed in his honour by the Panhellenes and the Athenian *Areopagus* and addressing Antoninus Pius, the city of Aezani and the *Koinon* of Asia.⁷¹ Therefore, Eurycles was a zealous provincial who utilized his stay in Athens and his office in the *Panhellenion* for his social advancement.

During his sojourn in Athens, Eurycles obviously had the opportunity to personally observe the benefactions of Hadrian in the city and be impressed by them, which led him to dedicate a bridge to various deities as soon as he returned to Aezani in 157 CE. The text of the inscription is interesting and worth quoting in full:

70 For example, in the aforementioned passages of Philostratus describing Herodes' benefactions in Athens and his attempt to cut a canal through the Isthmus. Similarly, Kuhn 2012, op. cit. (n. 39), 447, 452 remarks that the benefactions of Herodes and the honours he received by the cities rendered him in a way more omnipresent in Greece than the emperor and reveal that he was a man who sought to be *par inter principes*.

71 *OGIS* II, n. 504–507, cf. A. Spawforth and S. Walker, 'The World of the Panhellenion. I. Athens and Eleusis', *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985), 89. Unusual practice: M. Wörrle, 'Neue Inschriftenfunde aus Aizanoi I', *Chiron* 22 (1992), 340, n. 11.

Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρ[ι] | Τ. Αἰλίωι Ἀδριανῶι Ἀν|τωνεῖνωι Σεβαστῶι | Εὐσεβεῖ
καὶ θεῶι Ἀδρι|ανῶι Πανελληνίωι | καὶ θεαῖς Ἐλευσινί|αις καὶ Ἀθηνάι Πολιά|δι
καὶ Ποσειδῶνι καὶ | Ἀμφιτρεΐτηι Εὐρυ|κλῆς ἐπὶ τῆς σλδ' Ὀ|λυμπιάδος,
Πανελ|λγηνιάδι ς'.

To *imperator* Caesar T. Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius and the deified Hadrian Panhellenios and the goddesses of Eleusis and Athena Polias and Poseidon and Amphitrite, Eurycles (dedicates this bridge) under the 234th Olympiad, 6th Panhellenias.⁷²

Therefore, Eurycles' bridge in Aezani is dedicated to a series of deities. While the reference to the living emperor and the maritime gods is expected, some deities stand out in the text: the deified Hadrian Panhellenios, the Eleusinian goddesses and Athena Polias. The choice of specifically these deities reveals vividly the motives of Eurycles: the construction of this bridge constitutes an imitation of the bridge Hadrian built over the river Kephissos, along the Sacred Way leading from Athens towards the sanctuary of Eleusis, on the occasion of his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries as recently as 124/5.⁷³ The prominent Panhellene obviously saw with his own eyes Hadrian's bridge and decided to construct a counterpart in his home city. By imitating the imperial construction and having already fulfilled his office as Panhellene, Eurycles honoured Hadrian Panhellenios and presented himself as a 'miniature' Hadrian in Aezani. It goes without saying that the new bridge also served the practical needs of the city, but this does not contradict the notion that the construction was an expression of *imitatio principis*. By carrying out this kind of construction in particular, Eurycles had the opportunity to imitate a specific benefaction of Hadrian at Athens. This interpretation explains the mention of Hadrian Panhellenios, the deities of Eleusis and Athena Polias in the text of the dedicatory inscription. It seems clear that the bridge of Aezani evoked that of Eleusis, with Eurycles by extension evoking Hadrian himself. It is also possible that Eurycles was initiated in the Mysteries, again imitating the imperial model.⁷⁴

72 Wörrle 1992, op. cit. (n. 71), 337–349 (SEG 42, 1191).

73 Hadrian and Eleusis: Hist. Aug., *Hadri.* 13.1; D.C. 69.11.1, cf. Boatwright 2000, op. cit. (n. 49), 168 with older bibliography. According to Galli 2002, op. cit. (n. 39), 28, the model was provided by Herodes' bridge in Ilissos, but the clear reference of the epigraphic text to Hadrian Panhellenios and the Eleusinian deities, as well as the 'superior' imperial model points towards the right direction.

74 Eurycles was praised for his occupation with *paideia* by the archon of the *Panhellenion* and the *Areopagus* during his sojourn in Athens, J. Oliver, *Marcus Aurelius. Aspects of Civic and Cultural Policy in the East* (Princeton 1970), n. 28, ll. 8–9 and *OGIS* II 505, ll. 7–8

As a result, the construction of the bridge at Aezani can be viewed as both an expression of *imitatio principis* and a homage to the deities of Athens and Eleusis with whom both Hadrian and Eurycles were connected.

In this connection, we should be reminded of the bridge Herodes Atticus constructed over the river Ilissos, close to the Hadrianic *Olympieion*. It seems that both Herodes and Eurycles imitated the same imperial construction: Hadrian's bridge over the Kephissos, which they both had witnessed in person. In this way, one imperial construction offered the model for similar works from two prominent provincials in two different provinces of the Greco-Roman East.

5 Conclusion: *Imitatio principis*, Tradition and the Structures of Power in the Roman Empire

The Spartan magnate Eurycles, the Athenian Herodes Atticus and Eurycles from Aezani are only some selective cases of *imitatio* and *aemulatio principis* in the Greco-Roman East. Usually, these examples are interpreted as 'flatteries' addressed to the emperor on the basis of Oscar Wilde's famous proverb 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery'. However, this interpretation is only partly correct. Flattery is only the first step to approach this phenomenon. Leading provincials like Herodes and the two Eurycles followed imperial practices, benefactions, and elements of the imperial ideology, thus 'transferring' central incentives to their home cities not as exact 'copies' of the imperial model, but in a varied and original form. They followed imperial precedent, but simultaneously their actions constituted a novel element in the civic scene, through the appearance of a new structure in the city or the expression of an ideological notion in a novel form. It can then be stated that the *imitatio principis* functioned as a 'bridge' between tradition and innovation.

The *imitatio principis* connected the imperial incentives with the provincial social practices. The imperial model often served as a firm basis for the rhetoric, initiatives, and images of prominent individuals throughout the Empire who wished to associate themselves with the emperor as well as to leave their own, unique mark in the civic scene by following the imperial *exemplum*. The *imitatio principis* was thus an important instrument for gaining precious social

respectively, cf. Spawforth, Walker 1985, op. cit. (n. 71), 88–89; Wörrle 1992, op. cit. (n. 71), 346–347; Spawforth 2012, op. cit. (n. 16), 262. Eurycles himself expressed his *paideia* through the dating of the dedicatory inscription based on the Olympic Games (ἐπὶ τῆς σλδ' Ὀλυμπιάδος), see Wörrle 1992, op. cit. (n. 71), 346–347 who also suggests that he may have been influenced by the work of Phlegon, Hadrian's freedman: Ὀλυμπιονικῶν καὶ χρόνων συναγωγῆ.

and symbolic capital in the structures of power in the Roman Empire.⁷⁵ In turn, these structures were maintained, since the provincial elites strengthened their superiority over the lower echelons by utilizing the imperial *exemplum*.

In this regard, the question of the provincial imitators' 'audience' is important. The emperor would probably have been informed about a provincial imitation only if this was considered as dangerous for his rule.⁷⁶ But otherwise, the provincial imitators examined here did not necessarily have the *princeps* in mind as their primary audience for acting imitatively. By borrowing from the imperial repertoire, these illustrious men appeared as 'mirrors' of the *princeps* to provincial society and especially its leading members, their counterparts in the higher echelons, and claimed power and prestige in the local community and the imperial society as a whole. The audience of the *imitatio principis* was mainly local and internal, be they Spartans, Athenians or Aezanitai.

Imitation of the emperor reinforced the public image of prominent provincials in the deeply hierarchical structure of Roman imperial society, as it was translated into social power and prestige. The leading men (and also women)⁷⁷ demonstrated that they could imitate and connect themselves to the leading role model and most admirable aristocrat of the Roman Empire. In this way, the *imitatio principis* contributed to the legitimation of the prominent men's rule in the communities. The imitators understood that part of the prestige of the imperial model would reflect upon them, resulting in the increase of their social and symbolic capital. Eurycles' rule and constructions, Herodes' benefactions, and Polydeukion's cultic parallelism with Antinoos, and even the 'modest' bridge of Eurycles in Aezani were all forms of *imitatio principis*, expressed in an indirect way in the literary testimonies and epigraphic texts. The Spartan Eurycles and Herodes Atticus maintained close bonds with the imperial centre and had personal experience with the emperors, which is an indication that they may have been influenced by them. However, as the case of Eurycles from Aezani demonstrates, the contact with the imperial model could also be indirect. Moreover, the *imitatio principis* was not restricted to only a top few in Greco-Roman society, but was also practiced by the lower

75 It seems evident that the augmentation of one's social capital through public promotion – and the subsequent strengthening of one's network – resulted in the enhancement of power within the civic and imperial hierarchies.

76 Usurpers are a case in point, as they appropriated imperial symbols and titles to claim imperial power for themselves, see e.g. Hächler in this volume. But see also above on Philostratus' narration about Herodes' plan to cut a canal through the Isthmus and the reaction of the Quintilii to his honours for his favourites.

77 On the *imitatio principis* by prominent (or not) women, including for example Regilla, Herodes Atticus' wife, see Mitropoulos (forthcoming).

echelons of society, as is vividly demonstrated by the impact of imperial iconography in private portraiture.

It should be pointed out that the *imitatio principis* is merely one side of the coin and a part of the wider discourse on exemplarity in the Greco-Roman world. It does not exclude the various interactions between emperor and leading men of the imperial and provincial elites (including their own impact to the imperial centre), nor the role local traditions might have played. The cases examined here were prominent Greeks who acted in a world of long-established civic traditions. For example, Herodes Atticus imitated Hadrian, but he was simultaneously a Greek sophist and his benefactions can also be interpreted in the context of the civic tradition of euergetism that was at its apex in the second century CE.⁷⁸ Moreover, Herodes chose to be depicted in his portraits as a Greek political man of the classical period, without any reference to the contemporary portraits of the Antonine emperors.⁷⁹ Imperial imitation did not rule out the use of local traditions and other models (for example, prominent ancestors or Hellenistic kings), but instead, could be combined with them, especially when we take into account that many elements of imperial rule were based on Hellenistic kingship. There is no reason to constrain ourselves and interpret provincial cases as deriving exclusively from *either* imperial imitation *or* other models – both apply, as they do in other examples from Rome and the Latin West. Therefore, the *imitatio principis* offers an interpretive approach that can help us understand better certain provincial actions and even general phenomena of the imperial age, since it served as an instrument for the gaining of social and symbolic capital in the structures of power in the Roman Empire. With this in mind, it would be interesting to examine more systematically the phenomenon of the *imitatio principis* in other regions of the Roman Empire.⁸⁰ Herodes Atticus and the two Eurycles are merely some

78 Along the same lines, Galli 2002, op. cit. (n. 39), examined Herodes' benefactions mainly on the basis of his capacity as a sophist.

79 R. Smith, 'Cultural Choice and Political Identity in Honorific Portrait Statues in the Greek East in the Second Century A.D.', *Journal of Roman Studies* 88 (1998), 78–79; E. Voutiras, 'Representing the "Intellectual" or the Active Politician? The Portrait of Herodes Atticus', in: A. Rizakis, F. Camia, eds., *Pathways to Power. Civic Elites in the Eastern Part of the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the International Workshop held at Athens, Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, 19 Dec. 2005* (Athens 2008), 212, 215; T. Schröder, 'Im angesichte Roms: Überlegungen zu kaiserzeitlichen männlichen Porträts aus Athen, Thessaloniki und Korinth', in: Θ. Τιβερίου, Δ. Δαμάσκος, Π. Καραναστάση, eds., *Κλασική παράδοση και νεωτερικά στοιχεία στην πλαστική της ρωμαϊκής Ελλάδας. Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου, Θεσσαλονίκη, 7–9 Μαΐου 2009* (Θεσσαλονίκη 2012), 504; Goette 2019, op. cit. (n. 61), 226–235.

80 See Mitropoulos (forthcoming) for the Greco-Roman East.

instances among many where leading men of the Roman Empire felt the allure of the imperial model and imitated it for their own benefit.

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PART 3

*Tradition and Power in the Third
and Fourth Century CE*



Tradition and Innovation in the Rescript Practice of the Emperor Caracalla

Elsemieke Daalder

1 Introduction

In the year 211 the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, also known as Caracalla, had his brother and co-emperor Geta murdered by a group of centurions and thereby assumed full control over the Roman Empire. After Geta died, ostensibly crying in his mother's arms, his death was followed by a massive purge of his supporters.¹ This is just one of the atrocities attributed to Caracalla, who after this murder reigned the Empire as its sole emperor from 211 to 217 CE.² Several contemporary literary authors, such as Cassius Dio and Herodian, describe his fickleness, cruelty, and inability to rule in colorful terms and relate his many excesses both on and off the battlefield.³ Based on these sources the British historian Edward Gibbon not surprisingly refers to Caracalla as the 'common enemy of mankind' in his monumental *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He writes:

But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left (AD 213) the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the Empire, particularly those of the East, and every province was by turns the scene of his rapine and cruelty. (...) The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes. In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general massacre.⁴

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- 1 Death of Geta: Cass. Dio, 77(78).2.3–4; purge of his supporters: Cass. Dio, 77(78).3.4, Herod., 4.6, *HA Car.* 3.3–4.9. One of the famous victims of Caracalla was the eminent jurist and *praefectus praetorio* Aemilius Papinianus.
 - 2 Besides the murder of his brother Caracalla is probably best known for massacring the populace of Alexandria in early 216 CE, cf. Herod., 4.9.
 - 3 E.g. Cass. Dio, 77(78).6.1a, 77(78)10.2, Herod., 4.3, *HA Car.* 11.5.
 - 4 E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Ware 1998), ch. 6.

The conduct of Caracalla as an emperor as described by Dio and Herodian was in sharp contrast with that of his Antonine predecessors, who were already regarded in Antiquity as ‘good emperors’.⁵ It was also inconsistent with the style of government of his own father Septimius Severus (193–211), who – after coming to power by means of two brutal civil wars – placed himself in the Antonine tradition and managed the affairs of state in a seemingly conscientious way.⁶ Caracalla’s reign is therefore regularly considered as a break with (the Antonine) tradition and as the beginning of the crisis of the third century, not in the least because of Caracalla’s assumed reliance on the army as the most important basis of his power.⁷ By extension, his rule has also more than once been marked as a pivotal moment in Roman constitutional history and a break with the Roman legal tradition. Of course, a central aspect of this assumption is the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which granted Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire.⁸ In this article, it will be argued that when it comes to the law, this is only one side of the story. By focusing on the traditional imperial legislative structures and in particular the imperial rescript practice, it will be demonstrated that Caracalla’s reign is (at least in some ways) characterized by a continuation of traditional legal and power structures.

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- 5 They are for example referred to by Dio as ‘οἱ πρώην ἀγαθοὶ αὐτοκράτορες’, cf. Cass. Dio, 74(75).2.1. See also Gibbon’s assessment of their reign, who refers to the Antonine age as ‘the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous’, Gibbon 1998, op. cit. (n. 4) ch. 3.
- 6 E.g. Herod., 2.9.2, Cass. Dio, 76(77).17, *HA Sev.* 18.7. See on this subject more extensively E.S. Daalder, *De rechtspraakverzamelingen van Julius Paulus. Recht en rechtvaardigheid in de rechterlijke beslissingen van Septimius Severus* (The Hague 2018), 36–47 with references to other literature.
- 7 See for example I. Mennen, ‘The image of an emperor in trouble (legimitation and representation of power by Caracalla)’ in: J. Hahn, P. Funke & L. de Blois, eds., *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Fifth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire 200 B.C.–A.D. 476), Münster, June 30–July 4* (Leiden/Boston 2006), 260–261, who signals significant changes in the imagery of Caracalla after his father’s death such as focus on military images and very few references to the Antonines and the Severan dynasty. Also O.J. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors. Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford 2015), 99–100. On Caracalla’s close relationship with the army, see for example Cass. Dio, 77(78).3.1–2; 77(78).9.1; 77(78).10.4; 77(78).24.1, Herod., 4.4.7–8; 4.7.4–7. Furthermore, in modern literature for example M. Handy, *Die Severer und das Heer* (Berlin 2009), esp. 105–110 and 128–141.
- 8 Cf. A. Imrie, *The Antonine Constitution. An Edict for the Caracallan Empire* (Leiden/Boston 2018), 1 (‘(...) fundamentally and irrevocably changed the constitutional nature of the Empire’) and C. Ando, *Imperial Rome AD 193 to 284: The Critical Century* (Edinburgh 2012), 76–99. On Caracalla and the Roman legal tradition in general, see also T. Honoré, *Emperors and Lawyers* (Oxford 1994, 2nd edition), 25–26 and Imrie, op. cit. (n. 8), 37–38.

2 Imperial Legislative Activity during the Reign of Caracalla

2.1 *Structures of Imperial Legal Power during the Severan Era*

By the end of the second century CE, the emperor had developed into the pinnacle of justice, the ultimate source of law and justice in the Roman Empire. The position is reflected by the legislative process during this period: the law was no longer created by popular assemblies or the senate (which had been the case during the Republic and the first century of the Principate), but relied for its development mainly on the emperor and his bureaucracy. The situation is summarized pointedly by the jurist Ulpian, who writes in his *Institutiones*: “Whatever the emperor decides, has force of law”.⁹ In practice, the legislative enactments of the emperor, *constitutiones principis*, could be issued in different forms, such as an edict (*edictum*), a judgment in a court case (*decretum*) or the answer to a legal petition (*rescriptum*).¹⁰ In particular the last category of constitutions, the rescripts of the emperor, had a profound impact on the Roman legal practice. Although rescripts were in principle nothing more than a legal opinion of the emperor in an individual case, they often contained authoritative interpretations of the law or even new legal rules. If formulated in a sufficiently general way, they could be regarded as binding precedents and as such are cited regularly by the Roman jurists in their works.¹¹ Although we possess some rescripts of earlier emperors, the imperial rescript practice truly took flight under the Antonine emperors and was greatly expanded by Septimius Severus. For this period, it can be regarded as the most important legislative instrument of the emperor and therefore as one of the most significant expressions of imperial legal power.

2.2 *Legislative Activity during the Reign of Caracalla*

As a part of his monograph on the legislation of the Severan emperors, the French legal historian J-P. Coriat has brought together and counted all of the legislative enactments of Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Macrinus, Elagabalus and Alexander Severus.¹² I have created the following table on the basis of his results:

9 *D. 1.4.1 pr.: Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem.*

10 *D. 1.4.1, Gai., Inst. 1.5.*

11 Cf. *D. 47.12.3.5*. If a rescript was not formulated in a sufficiently general way or contained a decision which clearly only pertained to the petitioner, the rescript would not transcend the individual case. See *D. 1.4.1.2* and for example T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (Leipzig 1887–1888), volume II.2, 911–912; P. Krüger, *Geschichte der Quellen und Litteratur der römischen Rechts* (München 1912), 108, K. Tuori, *The Emperor of Law. The Emergence of Roman Imperial Adjudication* (Oxford 2016), 283–284 and Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 41.

12 J.-P. Coriat, *Le Prince Législateur. La technique législative des Sévères et les méthodes de création du droit impérial a la fin du principat* (Rome 1997), 113–157, esp. 129–130.

	Reign ^a	All enactments	Rescripts
Septimius Severus	9 April 193–4 February 211	576 (32,3/year)	444 (24,9/year)
Caracalla	4 February 211–8 April 217	330 (55,5/year)	303 (49,1/year)
Macrinus	11 April 217–8 June 218	2	–
Elagabalus	16 May 218–11 March 222	9	7
Alexander Severus	13 March 222– Feb/March 235	450 (34,6/year)	446 (34,3/year)

a Dating based on D. Kienast, W. Eck, and M. Heil, *Römische Kaisertabelle* (Darmstadt 2017, 6th ed.).

The category ‘All enactments’ encompasses all types of imperial *constitutiones*, that is rescripts and other types of legislative measures such as imperial judgments and edicts. The second category contains only the number of rescripts issued during the reign of these emperors. What becomes abundantly clear from these numbers is that the reign of Caracalla is characterized by an unparalleled peak in legislative activity. The average number of surviving enactments per year is much lower for the reigns of Septimius Severus and Severus Alexander (32,3 and 34,6 respectively versus 55,5 for Caracalla).¹³ The same goes for the number of transmitted rescripts (24,9 and 34,3 for Severus and Alexander respectively versus 49,1 for Caracalla). These differences cannot be explained by arguments based on transmission: no particular reason comes to mind as to why the compilers of the Justinian Code (or the creators of the Gregorian code on which it is mainly based for these emperors) would have a predisposition to include legislative enactments by Caracalla, all the more since he probably already had the reputation of being a bad and fickle emperor in Late Antiquity.¹⁴ It seems therefore likely that these numbers can be taken at face value and signal an increase in legislative activity during his reign.

These numbers are surprising. The idea of Caracalla as an industrious legislator seems quite inconsistent with the way in which he and his reign are presented in literary sources. In general, bad emperors tend to be (depicted as) negligent and/or bad legislators and judges.¹⁵ For the Severan age, this point is illustrated by the numbers for the reign of Elagabalus, who is traditionally

13 For the calculation of these averages, the following lengths of the reigns were used: Septimius Severus 214 months; Caracalla 74 months; Alexander Severus 156 months.

14 Cf. the passages from classical authors mentioned in op. cit. (n. 3).

15 On this, see for example Tuori 2016, op. cit. (n. 11), who distinguishes distinctive narratives of good and bad emperor-judges in the classical sources.

regarded as a bad emperor as well. Although he reigned for almost four years, only nine of his constitutions survive. This poses the question how the peak in imperial legal activity in the reign of Caracalla should be explained. The first thing that might come to mind is the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 211 or 212 CE.¹⁶ Since this grant of citizenship meant that the circle of persons and number of transactions to which Roman law applied was greatly expanded, it might also account for an increase in the number of petitions concerning questions of Roman law filed at the imperial court. Indeed, J-P. Coriat has demonstrated that the number of rescripts for the year 213 is significantly higher than for the rest of Caracalla's reign.¹⁷ However, if the peak in legislative activity was caused by an increased number of petitions due to the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, one would expect this number to remain more or less stable until at least the end of the Severan age, and in particular during the reign of Alexander Severus. The table above demonstrates that this is not the case: the numbers of the reign of Alexander Severus are more comparable to the reign of Septimius Severus than to the reign of Caracalla. Besides, the peak in the year 213 might also (partially) be explained by the fact that – in contrast to the rest of his reign – Caracalla was in Rome for most of 212 and perhaps also for a significant part of 213,¹⁸ which made him and his chancery possibly easier accessible for petitions from Rome and other parts of the Empire. There can therefore be no other conclusion than that Caracalla's reign was characterized by significant legislative activity, resulting in not just a continuation but even an expansion of the imperial rescript practice. This finding alone seems to be in contradiction with the image of the bad and lazy emperor created by classical authors such as Dio, Herodian and the *Historia Augusta*.

3 Imperial Power and the *fiscus*: Caracalla's Fiscal Legislation

3.1 Cassius Dio on Caracalla's Financial (mal)Administration

Quantity surely does not equal quality. Indeed, Caracalla has been characterized in modern literature as the emperor most inclined of all third century

16 There exists a vast amount of modern literature on the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. The most recent monographs on the subject are Imrie 2018 (n. 8) and A. Besson, *Constitutio Antoniniana. L'universalisation de la citoyenneté romaine au 3^e siècle* (Basel 2020). On the effects of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (in antiquity and later times), see C. Ando, ed., *Citizenship and Empire in Europe 200–1900: The Antonine Constitution after 1800 Years* (Stuttgart 2016).

17 Coriat 1997, op. cit. (n. 12), 146–150.

18 Cf. D. Kienast, W. Eck, and M. Heil, *Römische Kaisertabelle* (Darmstadt 2017, 6th ed.), 156 and H. Halfmann, *Itinera principum. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart 1986), 223 and 225.

emperors to derogate from existing law,¹⁹ for example when deciding on petitions of soldiers.²⁰ To get a better idea of the material functioning of the rescript practice under Caracalla, one specific type of legislation will be discussed in more detail in this paper, namely the rescripts concerning the legal position of the imperial treasury (the *fiscus*). Dio treats this aspect of Caracalla's rule extensively in his account of the reign of Caracalla. He mentions his financial maladministration, greediness and spendthrift several times in the *Historia Romana* and pays special attention to Caracalla's measures to create and increase taxes in one specific passage:

τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἔργον εἶχε περιδύειν ἀποσυλᾶν ἐκτρύχειν, οὐχ ἦκιστα τοὺς συγκλητικούς, χωρὶς γὰρ τῶν στεφάνων τῶν χρυσῶν οὐς ὡς καὶ πολεμίους τινὰς αἰεὶ νικῶν πολλάκις ἤτει (λέγω δὲ οὐκ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ τῶν στεφάνων ποιήμα· πόσον γὰρ τοῦτό γέ ἐστιν; ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν χρημάτων πλῆθος τῶν ἐπ' ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ διδομένων, οἷς στεφανοῦν αἱ πόλεις τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας εἰώθασιν), τῶν τε ἐπιτηδείων ἃ πολλὰ καὶ πανταχόθεν τὰ μὲν προῖκα τὰ δὲ καὶ προσαναλίσκοντες ἐσπερασσόμεθα, ἃ πάντα ἐκεῖνος τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐχαρίζετο ἢ καὶ ἐκαπήλευεν, καὶ τῶν δώρων ἃ καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τῶν πλουσίων καὶ παρὰ τῶν δήμων προσήτει, τῶν τε τελῶν τῶν τε ἄλλων ἃ καινὰ προσκατέδειξεν, καὶ τοῦ τῆς δεκάτης ἦν ἀντὶ τῆς εἰκοστῆς ὑπὲρ τε τῶν ἀπελευθερουμένων καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν καταλειπομένων τισὶ κλήρων καὶ δωρεᾶς ἐποίησε πάσης, τὰς τε διαδοχὰς καὶ τὰς ἀτελείας τὰς ἐπὶ τούτοις τὰς δεδομένας τοῖς πάνυ προσήκουσι τῶν τελευτῶντων καταλύσας (οὗ ἕνεκα καὶ Ῥωμαίους πάντας τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτοῦ, λόγῳ μὲν τιμῶν, ἔργῳ δὲ ὅπως πλείω αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦτου προσίη διὰ τὸ τοὺς ξένους τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν μὴ συντελεῖν, ἀπέδειξεν).

but he made it his business to strip, despoil, and grind down all the rest of mankind, and the senators by no means least. In the first place, there were the gold crowns that he was repeatedly demanding, on the constant pretext that he had conquered some enemy or other; and I am not referring, either, to the actual manufacture of the crowns – for what does that amount to? – but to the vast amount of money constantly being given under that name by the cities for the customary “crowning”, as it is called, of the emperors. Then there were the provisions that we were required to furnish in great quantities on all occasions, and this without receiving any remuneration and sometimes actually at additional cost to

19 Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 25–26 and Imrie, op. cit. (n. 8), 37–38.

20 Cf. C. 1.18.1 and C. 5.16.2, mentioned as examples of Caracallan favour towards soldiers by Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 25–26.

ourselves – all of which supplies he either bestowed upon the soldiers or else peddled out; and there were the gifts which he demanded from the wealthy citizens and from the various communities; and the taxes, both the new ones which he promulgated and the ten per cent. tax that he instituted in place of the five per cent. tax applying to the emancipation of slaves, to bequests, and to all legacies; for he abolished the right of succession and exemption from taxes which had been granted in such cases to those who were closely related to the deceased. This was the reason why he made all the people in his empire Roman citizens; nominally he was honouring them, but his real purpose was to increase his revenues by this means, inasmuch as aliens did not have to pay most of these taxes.²¹

According to Dio, Caracalla not only forced wealthy citizens and communities to provide him with gifts and other provisions, but also created and increased several taxes. He demanded from many cities the *aurum coronarium*, an irregular form of taxation on communities levied by the emperor, traditionally on his accession and in honor of military victories.²² In addition, he increased the tax on the manumission of slaves (*vicesima libertatis*) and on inheritances and legacies (*vicesima hereditatum*) from 5 to 10% and he abolished tax exemptions with regard to the same inheritance tax.²³ When creating this tax, Augustus had determined that ‘very near relatives or very poor persons’ would not be liable for this form of taxation.²⁴ Especially the interpretation of the first category of ‘very near relatives’ has given rise to debate in the past. Nowadays there seems to be a general consensus that relatives of the first and second degree, sometimes referred to as the *decem personae*,²⁵ were exempted from paying this tax until the Caracallan reforms.²⁶ His measures were, however,

21 Cass. Dio, 77(78), 9, 2–5. Translations of literary texts have been derived from the Loeb Classical Library. Translations of legal texts are based on the translations of Watson et. al. (Digest) and Frier et. al. (Codex) (A. Watson et. al., *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia 1998) & B.W. Frier et. al., *The Codex of Justinian: a new annotated translation, with parallel Latin and Greek text based on a translation by Justice Fred H. Blume* (Cambridge 2016)), but have been modified to some extent.

22 On this type of taxation, see F. Millar, *The emperor in the Roman world* (London 1992), 140–143.

23 This statement is confirmed with regard to the inheritance tax by Coll., 16.9.3.

24 Cass. Dio, 55.25.5: ‘πλὴν τῶν πάντων συγγενῶν ἢ καὶ πενήτων’.

25 Cf. Coll., 16.9.2, I. 3.9.3 (*pater, mater, avus, avia, filius, filia, nepos, neptis, frater and soror*).

26 E.g. S. Günther, *Vectigalia nervos esse rei publicae. Die indirekten Steuern in der römischen Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis Diokletian* (Wiesbaden 2008), 42–46 and W. Eck, *Die staatliche Organisation Italiens in der hohen Kaiserzeit* (München 1979), 126.

not long-lived: according to Dio, Caracalla's successor Macrinus – a jurist and a former *advocatus fisci* – rescinded all of them during his short rule.²⁷ Dio famously places the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in the context of Caracalla's avaricious tax reforms as well: according to the historiographer, the main reason for the extension of citizenship to all of the inhabitants of the Empire was to increase the tax base and thereby augment the revenues of the *fiscus*, even if Caracalla himself professed otherwise in his edict.²⁸ One can wonder whether the picture painted by Dio of Caracalla's attitude towards the *fiscus* and his focus on increasing its income is also reflected in the emperor's answers on legal questions concerning the legal position of the imperial treasury.²⁹

3.2 *The Fiscal Rescripts of Caracalla*

The Justinian Code contains 19 rescripts of Caracalla on fiscal matters, while five more *rescripta* are mentioned by the jurists in their works transmitted through the Digest.³⁰ A relatively large number of these rescripts, seven in total, concern the statutory general charge of the *fiscus*, a security interest which came into force by operation of law on all of the property of fiscal debtors.³¹ When confronted with questions concerning the scope and legal effects of this charge, Caracalla seemingly tried to apply the normal legal rules concerning pledges and hypothecs to this relatively new form of security as much as possible.³² When he was asked, for example, about the legal status of

27 Cass. Dio, 78(79).12.2.

28 Cf. *P. Giss.* 40, line 1–4, in which Caracalla mentions greatfulness and thanksgiving towards the gods as his main motivation. For a discussion of all possible reasons behind the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, see most recently Imrie 2018, op. cit. (n. 8) and Besson 2020, op. cit. (n. 16).

29 For another perspective on Caracalla's fiscal measures including the Antonine constitution, see L. Eberle, 'Fiscal semantics in the long second century. Citizenship, taxation, and the *Constitutio Antoniniana*', in: C. Ando & M. Lavan, eds., *Roman and local citizenship in the long second century CE* (Oxford 2022), 92–99. She argues, in short, that Caracalla's reforms should be regarded as part of a general Severan policy to let those who enjoyed the benefits of how taxes were spent pay for them as well.

30 Codex: C. 2.4.2, C. 2.8.1, C. 4.31.1, C. 4.46.1, C. 5.16.1, C. 5.41.1, C. 7.54.1, C. 7.73.1–4, C. 8.14.1–2, C. 8.18.2 *pr.*, C. 9.12.2, C. 9.50.1 *pr.*-1, C. 9.51.2, C. 10.9.1, C. 11.6.1. Digest: *D.* 3.6.1.3, *D.* 40.5.12.2, *D.* 40.5.24.5, *D.* 49.14.13.7, *D.* 49.14.43.

31 C. 4.46.1, C. 7.73.2, C. 7.73.3, C. 7.73.4, C. 8.14.1, C. 8.14.2, C. 8.18.2 *pr.*

32 It is usually assumed that the statutory charge of the *fiscus* developed during the Severan age, see for example M. Kaser, *Das römische Privatrecht. Das altrömische, das vorklassische und klassische Recht* (München 1971), 466 and H. Wagner, *Die Entwicklung der Legalhypotheken am Schuldnervermögen im römischen Recht (bis zur Zeit Diokletians)* (Köln 1974), 92, 153 and 192.

goods sold by a fiscal debtor before he became indebted to the *fiscus*, Caracalla answered the following:

Imp. Antoninus A. Quinto. *Si debitor, cuius fundum fuisse et ipse confiteris, prius eum distraxit, quam fisco aliquid debuit, inquietandum te non esse procurator meus cognoscet. Nam etsi postea debitor extitit, non ideo tamen ea, quae de dominio eius excesserunt, pignoris iure fisco potuerunt obligari.*
PP. III k. Iul. Laeto II et Cereale cons.

Emperor Antoninus to Quintus. If the debtor whose farm it was, as even you admit, has sold it [to you] before he owed anything to the *fiscus*, my procurator will find that you shall not be disturbed. For although he became its debtor subsequently, there is no reason why things that had passed from his ownership should have been subject to a charge of the *fiscus*. Given 29 June, in the consulship of Laetus, for the second time, and Cerealis (215).³³

In short, like in the case of a private creditor,³⁴ goods which had already been sold and transferred to third parties before the vendor became indebted to the *fiscus* were not subject to the fiscal charge.³⁵ All of the other texts on this subject show a similar reluctance to award a special position to the *fiscus* with regard to its implied charge. This attitude towards the imperial treasury seems to have been a continuation of the policy of his father Septimius Severus, who showed a similar restraint in his legal decisions concerning the fiscal charge.³⁶ The same attitude towards the imperial treasury can also be found in the other rescripts in cases concerning the *fiscus*, of which three will be discussed.

The first rescript deals with the possibility of the recall of gifts between husband and wife:

Imp. Antoninus A. Tryphaenae. *Bona quondam mariti tui fiscus si nemine ei successore existente ut vacantia occupavit, donationes ab eo factae, si usque ad finem vitae in eadem voluntate permansit, revocari non possunt.*
PP. III Id. Ian. Duobus Aspris cons.

33 C. 7.73.4.

34 Kaser 1971, op. cit. (n. 32), 464.

35 A similar decision by Caracalla together with Septimius Severus can be found in C. 10.1.1, which concerns a gift of goods to a third party instead of a sale.

36 Cf. E.S. Daalder, 'The emperor Septimius Severus and the implied general pledge of the *fiscus*. A perspective from Paul's *Decreta* and *Imperiales Sententiae*', in: H.L.E. Verhagen & V. van Hoof, eds., *Secured transaction in Roman law* (Nijmegen: forthcoming).

Emperor Antoninus to Tryphaena. If your deceased husband has no surviving heir and the *fiscus* has seized his estate as unclaimed property, the gifts made by him (to you) cannot be revoked, provided he did not change his mind before he died. Given 11 January, in the consulship of the two Aspers (212).³⁷

In the case of C. 5.16.1 a husband had apparently made several gifts to the petitioner, his former wife Tryphaena, during their marriage. After his death his property had – in the absence of an heir – been claimed by the *fiscus* as *bona vacantia*. Subsequently, the officials of the *fiscus* had tried to revoke the gifts that the husband had made during his lifetime to his wife, since gifts between husband and wife were prohibited by Roman law.³⁸ Any *donatio* between spouses was therefore null and void.³⁹ As a consequence, the spouse who had made the gift remained the owner of the gifted goods and could reclaim the goods at any time. However, if the spouse did not revoke the gift during his or her lifetime, it was considered legally ratified on the basis of an *oratio principis* of Caracalla and Septimius Severus and a *senatus consultum* which followed it.⁴⁰

Oratio autem imperatoris nostri de confirmandis donationibus non solum ad ea pertinet, quae nomine uxoris a viro comparata sunt, sed ad omnes donationes inter virum et uxorem factas, ut eo moriente qui donavit [ins. Mo.] et ipso iure res fiant eius cui donatae sunt et obligatio sit civilis et de Falcidia ubi possit locum habere tractandum sit: (...).

The *oratio* of our emperor on the confirmation of gifts applies not just to property obtained by a husband on his wife's behalf but also to all gifts made between a husband and a wife. So that when the person who had made the gift dies, the property belongs to the person to whom it was given by operation of law and a [gift based] claim becomes binding under civil law and comes within the scope of the *lex Falcidia* where this is appropriate.⁴¹

37 C. 5.16.1.

38 For the background of this rule, see D. 24.1.1–3 *pr.* For its development Kaser 1971, *op. cit.* (n. 32) 331–332.

39 D. 24.1.1.

40 D. 24.1.32 *pr.* only mentions Caracalla as the instigator of the *oratio principis*, *Pap. Vat.* 294.2 attributes the *oratio* to both emperors.

41 D. 24.1.32.1 (Ulpianus, *libro 33 ad Sabinum*).

If, however, the spouse had changed their mind during his or her lifetime, their heir could claim the gifted goods from the other spouse:

Sed ubi semel donatorem paenituit, etiam heredi revocandi potestatem tribuimus, si appareat defunctum evidenter revocasse voluntatem: quod si in obscuro sit, proclivior esse debet iudex ad comprobendam donationem.

But where the donor only changes his mind once, we allow his heir the competence of revocation if it is quite clear that the deceased changed his mind. But if there is any doubt, the judge should be more inclined to confirm the gift.⁴²

Although the rescript of C. 5.16.1 does not mention the grounds for the claim of the *fiscus*, it is likely it had argued that the gifted goods could be recalled, since the husband had changed his mind at some point during his life. Alternatively, and much more speculatively, it is also possible that the officials of *fiscus* had argued that the rules created for private individuals by the *oratio principis* mentioned above did not apply to the *fiscus*. In any case, Tryphaena decided to petition the emperor on the question of the recall. In response to her petition Caracalla simply stated that the gifts could not be recalled by the *fiscus* if the husband had not changed his mind during his lifetime (*donationes ab eo factae, si usque ad finem vitae in eadem voluntate permansit, revocari non possunt*). In other words, the emperor applied the rules of existing (imperial) law on the subject, which at first sight only concerned private citizens, analogously and in full to the *fiscus* and refused to make any exception which might have benefited his own treasury in this particular case.

The second example, C. 9.12.2, concerns a partial confiscation of property by the *fiscus*:

Imp. Antoninus A. Vero. *Tutoris tui lege Iulia de vi privata damnati si tertia pars bonorum fisco vindicata est, tutelae actionem pro ea portione adversus fiscum dirige, modo si nulla praescriptio locum habeat. Nam successio oneribus portionis suae respondet.* PP. XV k. Mart. Antonino A. IIII et Balbino cons.

Emperor Antoninus to Verus. If one-third of the estate of your *tutor* has been claimed by the *fiscus* after his condemnation under the *lex Iulia de vi privata*, raise an *actio tutelae* for that portion against the *fiscus*, provided no defense applies. For the successor is liable for the burdens of its

⁴² D. 24.1.32.4 (Ulpianus, *libro 33 ad Sabinum*).

portion. Given 15 February, in the consulship of Antoninus, for the fourth time, and Balbinus (213).⁴³

We can reconstruct the facts leading to the petition as follows. A guardian had negligently administered the property of his pupil, apparently named Verus, causing damage to the pupil's estate. As a consequence, he was liable to pay damages, which the pupil could claim with the so-called *actio tutelae* (the action arising from guardianship).⁴⁴ In addition, the same guardian was also condemned in a criminal trial on the basis of the *lex Iulia de vi privata* for some violent offence and as a result the *fiscus* had confiscated one third of his property (*publicatio bonorum*).⁴⁵ Verus petitioned the emperor, asking whether he could bring an *actio tutelae* against the *fiscus* for the damages owed by his guardian. Caracalla answered that the pupil could sue the *fiscus* for a third of the damages, provided of course that no defense could be raised (for example if the guardian had been released from his debt by means of a settlement (*exceptio pacti conventi*) or on the basis of extinctive prescription). The emperor's response gives rise to the question why the *fiscus* should be held accountable for (a part of) another person's debt? Its answer can be found in the last sentence of the rescript: '*nam successio oneribus portionis suae respondet*'. The Romans traditionally reconstructed a confiscation by the state or the *fiscus* as a form of universal succession (*successio universalis*).⁴⁶ This meant that the *fiscus* succeeded in all of the duties and rights concerning the property it had confiscated, just like an heir would have. Consequently, the position of the *fiscus* in this case could be compared to that of an heir appointed to a third of the estate. In this rescript Caracalla extrapolates this position to its extreme: just like heirs were liable for the debts of the deceased in proportion to their respective shares in the inheritance,⁴⁷ so too could the *fiscus* be held liable for a third of the damages in this particular case.

The last example deals with the legal consequences of shipwreck:⁴⁸

43 C. 9.12.2.

44 D. 27.3.1 *pr.* On this *actio*, see Kaser 1971, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 365–366.

45 Cf. D. 48.7.1 *pr.*, which explicitly mentions the confiscation of one third of the offender's property in case of a conviction on the basis of the *lex Iulia de vi privata*.

46 T. Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipzig 1899), 1005.

47 Cf. D. 45.1.85 *pr.*-1. Also Kaser 1971, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 733 and U. Babusiaux, *Wege zur Rechtsgeschichte: Römisches Erbrecht* (Köln 2015), 87.

48 See for other discussions of this text E. Mataix Ferrándiz, "Washed by the waves": fighting against shipwrecking in the later Roman empire', in: A. Lampinen & E. Mataix Ferrándiz, eds., *Seafaring and mobility in the late antique mediterranean* (London 2022), 139 and S. Solazzi, 'Su C. I. XI 6 "De naufragiis"', *Revista del dirritto della navigazione* 5 (1939), 253–255.

Imp. Antoninus A. Maximo. *Si quando naufragio navis expulsa fuerit ad litus vel si quando reliquam terram attigerit, ad dominos pertineat: fiscus meus sese non interponat. Quod enim ius habet fiscus in aliena calamitate, ut de re tam luctuosa compendium sectetur?*

Emperor Antoninus to Maximus. If as a result of a shipwreck a ship is at any time thrown on to the shore, or touches land anywhere, it shall belong to the owners. My *fiscus* must not interpose itself. For what right has the *fiscus* in another's calamity, that it gain a profit from so grievous a situation?⁴⁹

In this rescript, Caracalla makes clear that the *fiscus* was not entitled to a ship (or presumably its cargo) which had washed ashore as a result of a shipwreck. It remained the property of its owner. This decision is seemingly completely in line with existing law on this subject, which can mainly be found in Title 47.9 of the Digest (*De incendio ruina naufragio rate nave expugnata*) and mostly deals with the protection of the interests of the owners of wrecked ships. To this end, the *praetor* awarded a right of action against anyone who pillaged a ship washed ashore, as can be read in the first text of this title:

Praetor ait: "In eum, qui ex incendio ruina naufragio rate nave expugnata quid rapuisse recepisce dolo malo damnive quid in his rebus dedisse dicitur: in quadruplum in anno, quo primum de ea re experiundi potestas fuerit, post annum in simplum iudicium dabo. Item in servum et in familiam iudicium dabo."

The *praetor* says: "If a man be said to have looted or wrongfully received anything from a fire, a building that has collapsed, a wreck, or a stormed raft or ship or to have inflicted any loss on such things, I will give against him an action for fourfold in the year when proceedings could first be taken on the matter and, after the year, for the value. I will likewise give an action against a slave or household of slaves".⁵⁰

Ulpian calls this a measure of '*evidens utilitas*' and '*iustissima severitas*' in *D. 47.9.1.1*. It is therefore unsurprising that the *praetor's* rules on the subject were not only confirmed, but also extended by later emperors. Hadrian, for example, stated in an edict that this action also applied to the owners of land

49 C. 11.6.1.

50 *D. 47.9.1 pr.* (Ulpianus, *libro 56 ad Edictum*).

along the seashore or the shores of rivers, if a ship landed on their property after a shipwreck.⁵¹ Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Caracalla forbade the imperial treasury to intervene with a shipwreck as well and confirmed that the ownership of the owner of the ship remained intact.

3.3 *The Fiscal Legislation of Caracalla Re-evaluated*

On the basis the examples discussed above, we might make some observations on the legal content and value of the fiscal rescripts of Caracalla. First, these rescripts are not frivolous or capricious, but are seemingly based on sound legal reasoning and generally in accordance with existing law on the subject. Second, the rescripts do not award a special legal position to the *fiscus* with the goal of increasing its income. Indeed, all of them might even have some elements of imperial benevolence in them. In some of them, *C.* 5.6.1 and *C.* 11.6.1, the emperor actually seems to be restraining the shortsightedness and avarice of his own procurators by denying their claim against the wife or prohibiting them to intervene in a shipwreck respectively.⁵² With regard to *C.* 9.12.2 concerning the *fiscus*' liability to the pupil, it should be stressed that the imperial treasury could in this period easily be considered as an actor in the domain of public law rather than an entity still governed strictly by the rules of private law, especially in its capacity of confiscating authority on the basis of a criminal verdict. This could and would justify a different approach when it came to its position towards the pupil in the dispute at hand. Caracalla's advantageous decision concerning the pupil's claim might therefore (partially) be inspired by the Severan tradition to protect the interests of minors as much as possible in their legal decisions.⁵³ Finally, the rhetorical question '*Quod enim ius habet fiscus in aliena calamitate, ut de re tam luctuosa compendium sectetur?*' as a justification for the decision of *C.* 11.6.1 is clearly meant to demonstrate the emperor's empathy for shipwreck victims.⁵⁴ The Italian legal historian S. Solazzi even refers to Caracalla's tone in this rescript as that of a preacher: 'il tono del predicatore'.⁵⁵

One might wonder whether rescripts transmitted through the Codex Justinianus give us an accurate picture of Caracalla's legislative habits as a

51 *D.* 47.9.7. See also *D.* 47.9.3.8 (Claudius and the senate), *D.* 47.9.4.1 (Antoninus Pius), *D.* 47.9.12 *pr.* (Severus and Caracalla).

52 For *C.* 11.6.1 see in a similar sense Solazzi, *op. cit.* (n. 48), 254–255.

53 See for example *D.* 26.6.2.2, in which Septimius Severus states that he regarded the protection of minors as a *cura publica*, which deserved his specific attention.

54 Caracalla's empathy might have been prompted by his own alleged experiences. In *HA Car.* 5.8 it is mentioned that Caracalla himself nearly suffered shipwreck when crossing the Hellespont (see also Cass. Dio, 77(78).16.7).

55 Solazzi 1939, *op. cit.* (n. 48), 255.

whole. After all, their inclusion in the Codex is the result of a careful selection process by its Byzantine compilers in the sixth century CE. It is to be expected that Justinian's jurists would only select and include rescripts which were a part of (or at least in line with) the Roman law in force at the time, while frivolous, useless or plainly wrong rescripts would not have been incorporated by them. Consequently, one could argue that *rescripta* transmitted via the Codex only represent the 'good' share of Caracalla's legislation, while all of the rescripts of lesser quality were excluded and have therefore perished. To a certain extent, this principle probably applies to the rescripts of all emperors, regardless of whether they were regarded as good or bad emperors. However, if we assume – in line with the picture painted by literary sources – that the bulk of Caracalla's rescripts were of an inferior nature and accordingly not included in the Codex, this would mean that the established peak in legislative activity during his reign was, relative to the legislative activity of his predecessors and successors, unrealistically high. It is therefore more likely that at least a substantial share of his rescripts was of good quality, useful for legal practice, and for that reason worthy of inclusion in the sixth-century compilation of imperial Roman law.

4 Traditional Structures of Power and the Caracallan Rescript Practice

From the foregoing two main points concerning the reign of Caracalla can be inferred. First, the imperial chancery and in particular the imperial rescript practice, an important structure of power during the Severan period, not only continued to function as before, but actually flourished and expanded during the years of Caracalla's rule. Second, the content of the promulgated rescripts generally seems to have followed along the lines of existing law. Of course, this paper has only focused on Caracalla's fiscal rescripts and more research is therefore required to confirm this statement. However, based on Dio's description of Caracalla's financial mismanagement, one would especially expect Caracalla to derogate from existing law where his own *fiscus* was concerned. This, however, turns out not to be the case. Indeed, Caracalla does not seem to come across in these rescripts as the brutal, negligent and greedy emperor that Cassius Dio makes him out to be, but rather as a skilled, conscientious, and sometimes even benevolent ruler.

All of this of course gives rise to another question, namely to what extent was Caracalla actually involved in the process of drafting these rescripts? There still exists debate on the level of personal involvement of the emperors in the answering of legal petitions. Authors such as F. Millar and W. Williams argue that the emperors were closely involved in the drafting of rescripts and,

in the case of W. Williams, even explicitly contend that Caracalla drew up his own edicts and rescripts.⁵⁶ T. Honoré has put forward a different view.⁵⁷ He argues that the rescripts of the emperors were usually drafted by the *procurator a libellis*. On the basis of a style analysis (which has not gone unchallenged), he contends that this post was probably occupied by the jurist Arrius Menander from 211 to 213.⁵⁸ For the rest of Caracalla's reign, the occupant of the position cannot be identified with any amount of certainty.⁵⁹ T. Honoré's idea of a more or less independently functioning bureau *a libellis* is supported by the fact that a considerable number of Caracalla's rescripts were issued in Rome, while we know from other sources that the emperor was not in the city at that time.⁶⁰ Still, not even T. Honoré argues that the bureau *a libellis* issued the imperial rescripts completely independently and that the emperor was not involved in the process at all: according to him, answers to most legal petitions were drafted by the *a libellis* and were subsequently read and confirmed by the emperor.⁶¹

If we are to believe Cassius Dio, Caracalla did not really care for the administration of the Empire, nor did he frequently sit as judge.⁶² Herodian has a slightly more positive account:

δικάζων μὲν σπανίως, πλὴν νοῆσαι τὸ κρινόμενον εὐθὺς ἢν εὐθίκτως τε πρὸς τὰ λεχθέντα ἀποκρίνασθαι.

He spent little time over legal cases but he was straightforward in his perception of an issue and quick to make a suitable judgement on the opinions expressed.⁶³

56 F. Millar, 'Emperors at work', *Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967), 9–19 and Millar 1992, op. cit. (n. 22), 203 ff.; W. Williams, 'Caracalla and the authorship of imperial edicts and epistles', *Latomus* 38 (1979), 67–89.

57 Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8).

58 Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 88–91.

59 Cf. Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 91–95.

60 Nörr counts 16 of them, D. Nörr, 'Zur Reskriptenpraxis in der hohen Prinzipatszeit', *Savigny Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte: Romanistische Abteilung* 98 (1981), 34–36, esp. note 105. According to Nörr all of these petitions were submitted in Rome, forwarded to Caracalla and his chancery in Germania or the eastern part of the Empire, answered by him and his staff and then sent back to Rome to be published.

61 Honoré 1994, op. cit. (n. 8), 43–45.

62 Cass. Dio, 77(78).17.1; 77(78).17.3–4.

63 Herod., 4.7.2.

All in all, the literary sources suggest that Caracalla did not regularly busy himself with hearing cases and was less interested in the administration of the Empire than his father and his Antonine predecessors. What this means for the authorship of the rescripts issued in his name and during his reign is unclear. Perhaps Caracalla was actually more involved in administrative matters than especially Dio would have liked to admit. At the same time, one could wonder whether the peak in legislative activity during the reign of Caracalla might actually be explained by the fact that in this period the emperor did not really concern himself with the issuing of rescripts on legal matters, giving way to the highly professionalized department *a libellis* to function in a more or less independent way?⁶⁴ Or maybe there was someone else overseeing and driving the process, as is seemingly suggested by Dio, who relates that Caracalla had actually appointed his mother Julia Domna “to receive petitions and to have charge of his correspondence in both languages, except in very important cases”.⁶⁵ Although the idea of the mother of the Emperor administering the legal business of the Empire entirely by herself might be stretching it too much, she could perhaps have functioned like a sort of gate keeper for Caracalla, determining which cases and petitions would be brought to his attention and which ones could be dealt with by the *a libellis* more or less independently.⁶⁶

5 Conclusion

The study of the imperial rescript practice during the reign of Caracalla demonstrates that the image of this emperor painted by authors such as Cassius Dio is biased by senatorial prejudice and was at least to some extent prompted by

64 Cf. *HA Comm.* 13,7, in which the author of the *HA* relates that Commodus, a similarly problematic emperor, barely showed any interest in the answering of petitions and left most official business to others.

65 Cass. Dio, 77(78),18,2–3. On the basis of this passage, some have argued that it was in fact Julia Domna who predominantly administered the Empire during the reign of Caracalla, see for example S.S. Lusnia, ‘Julia Domna’s Coinage and Severan Dynastic Propaganda’, *Latomus* 54 (1995) 136 (‘She was, for all intents and purposes, running the Empire’). More cautious are E. Kettenhofen, *Die syrischen Augustae in der historischen Überlieferung. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Orientalisierung* (Bonn 1979), 16–19 and B. Levick, *Julia Domna. Syrian empress* (London 2007), esp. 95–97.

66 As has been suggested by K. Tuori, ‘Judge Julia Domna? A historical mystery and the emergence of imperial legal administration’, *The Journal of Legal History* 37 (2016), 180–197.

rhetorical motives (*vituperatio*).⁶⁷ There can be no doubt Caracalla's style of government did not live up to the expectations of, at least part of the elite and that in that respect his reign was and could be perceived as a break with many imperial traditions. At the same time, important legal structures expressing imperial power, such as the rescript practice, continued to function as normal in this period. Caracalla's reign is marked by a steady, indeed even increased flow of rescripts, while his (or the administration's) answers are often of a high legal quality and continue on the legal paths which had been laid in the past. We can therefore conclude that from a legal point of view, this period is characterized by the continuation of traditional structures of power, which might be a reason to somewhat adjust our perception of the reign of Gibbon's 'common enemy of mankind'.

67 Cf. L. de Blois, 'The *constitutio Antoniniana* (AD 212): Taxes or Religion?', *Mnemosyne* 67 (2014), 1015: 'The image of the emperor as it stands is largely defined by literary sources. They only tell us, however, how they perceived Caracalla'.

The Emperor Gallienus and the Senators

Tradition, Change, and Perception

Lukas de Blois

If there are any Roman emperors who broke with traditions, Gallienus is certainly one of them. He ruled from 253 to 268, until 260 together with his father Valerian, and then on his own. He lived in a time of serious military crises, which may have forced him to opt for new military and administrative solutions.¹

Ever since the years of the emperors Philip the Arab (244–249) and Decius (249–251), Gothic bands and their allies plundered Dacia, Moesia Inferior and Thrace, and in 252 the Persian Empire renewed its war against the Romans. 249 and 253 were years of civil war between emperors and usurpers, which came at the cost of many Roman casualties. In the Balkans, looting bands may have reached Greece. Barbarian attacks on northern Asia Minor started about 254–255, and went on well beyond Gallienus' reign. From about 254 Alamanni were steadily infiltrating into the Agri Decumates (now southwestern Germany), and in 256 a series of Germanic invasions across the river Rhine started, with devastating consequences for Gallic prosperity.² In 259–260 the situation came to a climax: Elb-Germanic bands invaded Italy, coming through Switzerland and Raetia; plundering Franks went through Gaul and Spain and even reached North Africa; the Persians defeated the emperor Valerian, took him prisoner, and plundered the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire; and

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- 1 By crisis I understand an escalation of problems into an insoluble, complex, many-sided malfunctioning of the existing system, which inevitably must result in changes in administration, power relations, and social structures, and could threaten the continuity of life styles. One may speak of an empire-wide crisis when problems in different regions influence or determine one another, and cannot be solved by only regional efforts.
 - 2 In quite a few articles published in M. Auer and Chr. Hinker, eds., *Roman Settlements and the "Crisis" of the 3rd Century AD* (Wiesbaden 2021), the authors show that material traces demonstrate that at least in northwestern regions of the Roman empire radical changes in ways of inhabitation took place, which suggest that in the third century, and especially in its second half, the continuity of former lifestyles was threatened. See the articles by Simone Benguerel (31–45), Ralph Grüssinger and Alice Willmitzer (pp. 59–69), Ingrid Mader and Sabine Jäger-Wersonig (81–91), Patrick Marko (93–105), Antonin Nüsslein (107–122), and Ursula Schachinger, Raimund Kastler, and Felix Lang (133–167). Something similar happened at Athens, after the Herulian invasion of 267 CE. See the article by Sarah Beal (17–30).

in the Balkan provinces of the Empire barbarian warrior groups even seem to have settled.³ The invasions and subsequently Valerian's downfall caused many usurpations, in west and east.

Gallienus, the other Augustus, had not participated in the Persian campaign, and now became sole emperor. He had to accept that his ally in the East, Odaenathus of Palmyra, who had successfully fought Persians and usurpers in the years 260–262, became too powerful, and that in the west the usurper Postumus founded a parallel Empire that would last until 274. The remainder of Gallienus' reign was characterized by continuing invasions and ongoing civil wars.⁴ Elsewhere I suggested that Rome's enemies could be so successful because they were opposed by Roman forces that had been weakened by preceding wars, internal conflicts, and the plague.⁵ They had probably not yet been replenished by new recruits.

How did the emperor Gallienus manage to survive? Undoubtedly by personal prowess, clever tactics, popularity among his soldiers, and the support of

3 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 34.3: “Nam cum pellere Gothos cuperet (*i.e.* the emperor Claudius II), quos diurnitas nimis validos ac prope incolas effecerat. ...” On the situation in those regions from the times of Decius to the reign of Aurelian see L. de Blois, *Invasions, Deportations, and Repopulation. Mobility and Migration in Thrace, Moesia Inferior, and Dacia in the Third Quarter of the Third Century AD*, in: E. Lo Cascio and L.E. Tacoma, eds., *The Impact of Mobility and Migration in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Twelfth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Rome, June 17–19, 2015)*, (Leiden/Boston 2017), 43–54. Already early in this period of crisis, under Decius, Philippopolis was destroyed and depopulated. Nicopolis ad Istrum, which had been a thriving town in Moesia Inferior, lost its extramural houses through fire. There are more traces of devastations. The town was besieged on at least two occasions. The south gate was blocked and the defensive ditch was extended. Recovery did not take place until the closing years of the century when the frontier was restored. See A.G. Poulter, *Nicopolis ad Istrum. A Late Roman and Early Byzantine City. The Finds and the Biological Remains* (Oxford 2007), 9–11. The situation in Thrace and Moesia Inferior may not have become as bad as in the fifth century, though. In that age towns changed into fortresses because of the semi-permanent violence and unsafety, and a steep demographic decline was unmistakable. Such things did not yet happen in the third century but the situation was not entirely dissimilar. See A.G. Poulter, ‘Economic Collapse in the Countryside and the Consequent Transformation of City into Fortress in Late Antiquity’, in: L. de Blois and J. Rich, eds., *The Transformation of Economic Life under the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Second Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Nottingham, July 4–7, 2001)*, (Amsterdam 2002), 244–59; *idem* in N. Christie, ed., *Landscapes of Change. Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot/Burlington VT 2004), 223–53, esp. 242–7.

4 On this period of crisis in the Roman empire see L. de Blois, *Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power in the Third Century AD. The Impact of War* (London/New York 2019), 65–86.

5 See De Blois 2019, *op. cit.* (n. 4), 78; L. de Blois, ‘The Emperor Gallienus and the Senate. Administrative and Military Reform in the Roman Empire of the Mid-Third Century AD’, in: W. Eck, F. Santangelo and K. Vössing, eds., *Emperor, Army, and Society. Studies in Roman Imperial History for Anthony R. Birley* (Bonn 2022), 289–90.

able generals and officers.⁶ But he also implemented fairly radical military and administrative emergency measures that enabled him to survive the crisis but ran counter to Roman military and administrative traditions.

In their appointment policies almost all emperors who had reigned before Gallienus had followed the precedents set by the emperor Augustus. Senators who were active in the emperor's service had acted as *tribuni militum latyclavii* and *legati legionis*, which gave them at least some military experience and liaisons with long-serving officers, such as centurios, *primipili* and *praefecti*. They had also been appointed governors of all but a few provinces. As provincial governors they had had the support of a small staff, which mainly consisted of military who had been seconded from nearby armies, friends and helpers who had traveled with them to their provinces, and provincial notables who served one Roman governor after the other. The latter were important. They would know where to get money and supplies. The most high-status senators, the patricians, however, were allowed to follow shorter career-paths, particularly between the praetorship and the consulate.⁷ Their activities were more concentrated on Italy and the imperial court in Rome.

Early in his reign, during his joint reign with his father Valerian, when he was fighting the Goths and other invaders in the Balkans, Gallienus created a mobile army consisting of cavalry, detachments from several legions, auxiliary units, and *numeri* from allied tribes, which enabled him to run down spread-out bands of invaders.⁸ This was a wise measure because continuous plundering over a long span of time would diminish the productivity of the

6 See *HA Gall.* 15.1: "Occiso igitur Gallieno seditio ingens militum fuit, cum spe praedae ac publicae vastationis imperatorem sibi utilem, necessarium, fortem, efficacem ad invidiam faciendam dicerent raptum (Now after Gallienus was slain, there was a great mutiny among the soldiers, for, hoping for booty and public plunder, they maintained, in order to arouse hatred, that they had been robbed of an emperor who had been useful and indispensable to them, courageous and competent)". A positive note but not without criticism. The soldiers need the emperor because he gives them hope to rob and depredate!

7 P.M.M. Leunissen, *Konsuln und Konsulare in der Zeit von Commodus bis Severus Alexander (180–235 n.Chr.)*. *Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Elite im römischen Kaiserreich* (Amsterdam 1989), 34–41; N. Hächler, *Kontinuität und Wandel des Senatorenstandes im Zeitalter der Soldatenkaiser* (Leiden/ Boston 2019), 114–18.

8 On Gallienus' new army, consisting of cavalry and infantry detachments, see H.-G. Simon, 'Die Reform der Reiterei unter Kaiser Gallien', in: W. Eck, H. Galsterer and H. Wolff, eds., *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift F. Vittinghoff* (Vienna/Cologne 1980), 435–51; J.B. Campbell, 'Change and Continuity', in: *Cambridge Ancient History*² XII (Cambridge 2005), 115f.; P. Cosme, *L'armée romaine, VIII^e siècle av. J.-C.–V^e siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris 2009), 212–15; M. Geiger, *Gallienus*, Frankfurt am Main 2013, 322–8; De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 73–4; idem 2022, op. cit. (n. 5), 290–91. Such a combination of *vexillationes* and *equites* operated in southern Gaul under Claudius II, just after Gallienus' sole reign. It was commanded by Placidianus. See *ILS* 569 = *CIL* XII 2228.

regions concerned. In the Balkans enduring plundering would hit the direct hinterland of a large army, the one situated at the Lower Danube, which could only lead to starvation and rebellion among the afflicted soldiery. It was not possible to import *all* necessary food and commodities from far away provinces. Existing infrastructure, a lack of sufficient means of transportation, and insecurity underway would not allow it, and some surplus-growing regions, such as Egypt, were in trouble themselves.⁹

This military reform enabled Gallienus to reap military successes. Supported by his mobile army he successfully fought invading bands, first in the Balkans and subsequently, from about 256, in Gaul, for example at the Rhine border.¹⁰ In 259 Gallienus gained an important victory over Germanic invaders in northern Italy, near Milan. With the emperor and his army having disappeared to Italy, however, bands of Franks came over the Rhine, which resulted in Postumus usurping imperial power at Cologne. In 261, when Gallienus himself was fighting Postumus, his general Aureolus defeated usurpers coming from the east of the Empire, the Macriani, at Mursa in Pannonia Inferior.¹¹ Aureolus was one of Gallienus' best generals and had created the new mobile army together with the emperor.¹² During his sole reign, the emperor used his new army to oppose marauding bands in the Balkans, Greece, and parts of northern and western Asia Minor.¹³ Using North Italy as his base, he also continued fighting Postumus.¹⁴ In 267 he won a battle near Milan over Aureolus, who either had gone over to Postumus or had started a rebellion of his own.¹⁵

Another military reform that went against Roman tradition concerned the officer corps. From 260 onwards, no more senatorial *tribuni militum lativestralii* and *legati legionis* were appointed.¹⁶ The military tribunate became the

9 On turmoil in Egypt see De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 144–5.

10 Zos., 1.30.2f.

11 See A. Goltz and U. Hartmann, 'Valerianus und Gallienus', in: Johne, K.-P., U. Hartmann and Th. Gerhardt, eds., *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser. Krise und Transformation des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, I–II, (Berlin 2008), 261.

12 De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 74. On this able general see Goltz and Hartmann 2008, op. cit. (n. 11), 261–3; 278; 288f. Zosimus, 1.40.1, calls him commander of the cavalry, and in Zonaras, 12.25, he is described as commander of all the cavalry and very powerful, which indicates his strong position within Gallienus' new army.

13 See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 82–6.

14 De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 79–86 *passim*.

15 On Aureolus' rebellion and downfall see Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 33.17–20.

16 On Gallienus' changing appointment policies see B. Malcus, 'Notes sur la révolution du système administrative romain au troisième siècle', *Opuscula Romana* 7 (1969), 213–7; M. Christol, 'Les réformes de Gallien et la carrière sénatoriale', in: S. Panciera, ed., *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio* (Rome 1982), 143–66; I. Piso, *An der Nordgrenze des römischen Reiches*.

exclusive domain of *equites*, some of whom were members of the local gentry but others were career soldiers. Legions were from now on commanded by equestrian *praefecti legionis*, and *vexillationes* by equally equestrian *praepositi*. In this way, Gallienus improved the military quality of his officer corps. Senators had been suitable for administering military camps during the era of the *Pax Romana*, but did not have the practical military and logistical training that was required in wartime situations. Equestrian officers, on the contrary, had been trained in a series of military middle cadre functions. By this radical change in appointment policies, Gallienus broke with a tradition of ages. During the Republic, senators had contributed greatly to Roman warfare in responsible positions. However, under the Principate, and especially during the third century, even before 260, not all senators had done so. N. Hächler has made clear that patrician senators seldom fulfilled military functions such as the military tribunate and the command of a legion.¹⁷

Yet another original, untraditional measure that Gallienus took, regarded his relations with the military cadre of his new army. He began to give the title *protector* to his most important officers, the centurions, and higher cadre of his mobile army, which suggested a personal relationship.¹⁸ The emperor himself was the protector of the entire Empire, and they were his.¹⁹ Gallienus took some untraditional administrative emergency measures too. In most provinces the emperor appointed equestrian governors (*praesides*). From

Ausgewählte Studien (1972–2003), (Stuttgart 2005), 396–98; P. Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems in der römischen Kaiserzeit. Die Entstehung einer 'personalen Bürokratie' im langen dritten Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2005), 341–56; P. Cosme, 'À propos de l'édit de Gallien', in: O.J. Hekster, G. de Kleijn and D. Slootjes, eds., *Crises in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 20–24 June 2006* (Leiden/Boston 2007), 97–109; Idem 2009, op. cit. (n. 8), 234–8; Geiger 2013, op. cit. (n. 8), 336–41; W. Eck, 'Die Neuorganisation der Provinzen und Italiens unter Diokletian', in: W. Eck and S. Puliatti, eds., *Diocleziano e la frontiera giuridica dell'impero* (Pavia 2018), 117–31; Hächler 2019, op. cit. (n. 7), 21–126, esp. 124–6; De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 190–6; idem 2022, op. cit. (n. 5).

17 Hächler 2019, op. cit. (n. 7), 114.

18 Until then *protector* had not been a regular title. On these *protectores* see M. Christol, 'La carrière de Traianus Mucianus et l'origine des *protectores*', *Chiron* 7 (1977), 394–408; Cosme 2009, op. cit. (n. 8), 234; I.A.M. Mennen, *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, AD 193–284* (Leiden/Boston 2011), 227–31.

19 See *CIL* XIV 5334 (Ostia, Gallienus' sole reign, about 262): "Invicto Gallieno exsuperantisimo Augusto, protectori imperii Romani omniumque salutis ... universi cives Ostienses decennii voti compotes. (To the unconquerable emperor Gallienus, surpassing all others, protector of the Roman empire and of the welfare of all. ... all citizens of Ostia, at the occasion of good wishes at the ten-years jubilee)".

the period of Septimius Severus onwards, every now and then experienced equestrian *praesides* had been appointed provincial governors instead of less experienced senators. These equestrian governors received the title *agens vice praesidis*, although not all of them were stand-ins for deceased or departed senatorial governors. After 260 most provinces were governed by *equites* who were called *virī perfectissimi agentes vice praesidis* or just *praesides*. Asia, Africa, and Achaëa were the only provinces, which continued to be ruled by senators.²⁰ By implementing this change, Gallienus again broke with Roman tradition, making an end to the long-standing senatorial involvement in the majority of Roman provinces. That Asia and Africa were excluded from Gallienus' reforms is because the governorships of Asia and Africa belonged to the top of a senatorial career. Leaving these to the senate undoubtedly meant to please the most important and high-status senators, who had the means and connections to start rebellions. But why Achaëa? This is likely to be sought in the fact that Gallienus was an admirer of Greek *paideia*. In 264, in between a lot of fighting, Gallienus found time to go to Athens, become an *archon* there, and have himself initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.²¹ Gallienus and his wife Salonina also, along with some senators, belonged to the coterie that venerated the Platonic philosopher Plotinus, who in those times resided in Rome.²² Appointing civilized senators to the proconsulship of Achaëa may have been a gesture to leading Greek and philhellenic circles. An indication is given by Philostratus', where the author argues that men who are appointed to be governors of provinces should be in sympathy with the provincial population.²³ A proconsul of

20 Eck 2018, op. cit. (n. 16), 117–31. See also Hächler 2019, op. cit. (n. 7), 118–24.

21 *HA Gall.* 11.3–6: “Cum tamen sibi milites dignum principem quaerent, Gallienus apud Athenas archon erat, id est summus magistratus, vanitate illa, qua et civis adscribi desiderabat et sacris omnibus interesse. Quod neque Hadrianus in summa felicitate neque Antoninus in adulta fecerat pace, cum tanto studio Graecarum docti sint litterarum ut raro aliquibus doctissimis magnorum arbitrio cesserint virorum. Areopagitarum praeterea cupiebat ingeri numero contempta prope re publica. (Just, however, when the soldiers were looking for a worthy prince, Gallienus was holding the office of archon – chief magistrate, that is – at Athens, showing that same vanity which also made him desire to be enrolled among its citizens and even take part in all its sacred rites – which not even Hadrian had done at the height of his prosperity or Antoninus during a long-established peace, and these emperors, too, were schooled by so much study of Greek letters that in the judgement of great men they were scarcely inferior to the most learned scholars. He desired, furthermore, to be included among the members of the Areopagus, almost as though he despised public affairs)”. See L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden 1976), 146; Goltz and Hartmann 2008, op. cit. (n. 11), 272.

22 See Porph., *Plot.*, 7. 29–46.

23 *Vita Apollonii* 5.36.

Achaëa, reputedly the most Hellenic of all Greek-speaking provinces, should know Greek, which senators of those days invariably did.

After 260 the procuratorial system gradually disappeared. From now on most governors were *praesides* who combined the judicial tasks of former governors with the duties of former procurators. In their areas they could, with the help of experienced *caesariani* and military men, more effectively seize remaining stores of food and other commodities, and more efficiently control local governments. Military men, called *duces*, *praefecti*, *praepositi*, or *correctores* commanded the armed forces at different levels of command, although governors were not formally excluded from doing this. Military and political powers were not systematically divided from one another.²⁴

Gallienus took far-reaching measures to ensure the levying of food and commodities, which his armies were needing. Armies could not rely completely on supplies coming from far away. This would have taken too much time and probably also too much cargo space, and it would have been risky as well. Banditry had never gone away but was now becoming endemic and widespread again. In times of widespread warfare, such as the third quarter of the third century, bands of brigands attracted deserters, fugitives, impoverished farmers, and even remaining invaders who had left their units.²⁵

So armed forces also needed provisioning from nearby communities or imperial storehouses, which were situated in the neighborhood. To organize the levying of taxes, food, and commodities in difficult regions the emperors needed personnel that was well-acquainted with the areas where they were employed. Such personnel was at hand on the imperial domains, which were by now almost omnipresent in the Empire. These men were called *caesariani*, and were imperial freedmen as well as freeborn administrators.²⁶ Together with traditional personnel of the governors and military men, who had been seconded from military camps to become members of the governor's staff, the 'emperor's men' began to constitute a kind of personal bureaucracy of the governors.²⁷ This personal bureaucracy was better equipped to extort money

24 See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 190–6.

25 Banditry could even escalate to warfare, especially after a prolonged period of war. This happened in Gaul and the adjacent Danube provinces at the end of the second century and in Italy under Septimius Severus. See Th. Grünewald, *Räuber, Rebellen, Rivalen, Rächer* (Stuttgart 1999), 157–95; O.J. Hekster, *Commodus: An Emperor at the Crossroads* (Amsterdam 2002), 45 n. 32, and 65–7. The emperor Probus had to wage a war against bandits in Isauria. See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 92.

26 See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 155–59 (imperial domains) and 205.

27 See Eich 2005, op. cit. (n. 16), 350–70. The term 'personal bureaucracy' was borrowed from his work.

and commodities from impoverished landed proprietors and their farmers than old-style governors had been who had just had a small staff of assistants and soldiers, and had been more dependent on the cooperation of town-councils, which knew where to get commodities and food. Many *caesariani* may have been equally well-informed about this.

As to the senatorial reaction to Gallienus' innovations, we are unfortunately lacking in contemporary literary sources. Extant fragments of the Athenian author Dexippus, who must have died just before the end of the 270s, do not give us a clue. In the *Caesares* written by Aurelius Victor, in the later fourth century, there is some information on opinions about Gallienus at the end of the emperor's life in 268. In *Caesares*, the author tells us that the senate, having heard of Gallienus' demise, decreed that his relatives and followers should be cast down the Gemonian stairs. He also mentions that a high fiscal functionary, called *patronus fisci*, got his eyes put out, and that an enraged populace of Rome cursed the deceased emperor.²⁸ Senators as well as members of the lower populace may have hated Gallienus and his fiscal functionaries because they had had to contribute heavily to the emperor's war efforts. More than ever before Italy (and Rome) must have been taxed to supply the armed forces that resisted invaders and usurpers.²⁹ Northern Italy had had to sustain sizeable armies, and often enough the imperial court as well, and had endured actual fighting in 259–260 and 267–268, and the remainder of Italy had become its logical logistical hinterland.

However, we do not hear anything about opposition against Gallienus' administrative measures. On the contrary, the same Aurelius Victor reproaches the senators of Gallienus' times for their meek and cowardly behavior. The author tells us that they acquiesced in their loss of power, as long as they could enjoy their riches and good life undisturbed.³⁰ He may have had a point; many senators may have been glad that their careers now began to be like patrician ones. They lost risky functions in the armies and provinces but gained an ever stronger position in Rome and Italy.³¹ Some high-status senators had to serve as the emperor's deputies for legal matters, *iudices vice Caesaris*. Other senators became *iuridici* in Italy. During the third century, senators more often than before acted as *curatores rei publicae*, especially in Italy, which gave them the opportunity to strengthen their ties with Italian local elites. In the city of Rome the senate became more important because many emperors hardly visited the city as they had to fight enemies in other parts of the Empire.

28 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 33.31.

29 See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 150f.

30 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 37.5–7.

31 See De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 196–8. See also Hächler 2019, op. cit. (n. 7), 124–25.

Later on, in the second half of the fourth century, Gallienus was indeed censured in the works of senatorial historiographers. The author of the *Historia Augusta*, a work probably written at the end of the fourth century, writes: "Such was the life of Gallienus, which I have briefly described in writing, who, born for his belly and his pleasures, wasted his days and nights in wine and debauchery and caused the world to be laid waste by pretenders about twenty in number, so that even women ruled better than he".³² The author subsequently, in chapters 16 and 17, describes Gallienus' pitiable skills in growing plants and flowers, and his extravagant clothes and jewelry. Nonetheless, in the preceding chapter this writer tells us that Gallienus was popular among his soldiers, who called him a *necessarius, fortis et efficax imperator*.³³ The *Historia Augusta* also mentions the emperor's literary skills, his wit, and his love for Greek culture, but adds that in those times such pastimes were superfluous and unnecessary. In Aurelius Victor's *Caesares*, Gallienus is portrayed as a lazy impostor who falsely tells the people that everything is peaceful and all right.³⁴ In *Breviarium*, Eutropius says that Gallienus was good in the first part of his reign, at ease in the following period, and debauched and lazy during the last years of his rule.³⁵

Senators may have started to hate the emperor in the later fourth century, when it became clear what ousting senators from the armed forces had done to their power within the Roman system. Nonetheless, it remains odd that reactions to Gallienus' radical breaks with tradition were not more vehement, at least as vehement as the reactions to his fiscal policy. A solution may be that the emperor successfully made his reforms palatable for important senators, the people who would have left the biggest mark on historiographical writing. As noted above, two governorships that remained in the hands of senators were the proconsulships of Africa and Asia, which belonged to the very top

32 *HA Gall.* 16.1: "haec vita Gallieni fuit, breviter a me litteris intimata, qui natus abdomini et voluptatibus dies ac noctes vino et stupris perdidit, orbem terrarum viginti prope per tyrannos vastari fecit, ita ut etiam mulieres illo melius imperarent".

33 *HA Gall.* 15.1.

34 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 33.15

35 Eutr., 9.8. The *Historia Augusta* was probably written by one author, probably a senator at Rome, between 395 and 399 CE. See C. Bertrand-Dagenbach, *Alexandre Sévère et l'histoire Auguste* (Brussels 1990), 7. S. Aurelius Victor, a senator who became *praefectus urbi* at Rome in 389, c.361 CE wrote his *Liber de Caesaribus*, which contained short biographies of Roman emperors from Augustus to Constantius II. On his life and career see PLRE I 960, nr 13; K.-P. Johné, Th. Gerhardt and U. Hartmann, eds., *Deleto paene imperio Romano. Transformationsprozesse des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert und ihre Rezeption in der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart 2006), 126. Eutropius wrote between 369 and 371 CE his *Breviarium ab urbe condita* when he was a *magister memoriae*, and he dedicated the work to the emperor Valens. On these authors see also De Blois 2019, op. cit. (n. 4), 33 notes 122–124.

of a traditional senatorial, or even patrician career. Similarly, the urban prefecture and a second consulship (eventually together with the emperor) also remained restricted to the highest senators. Besides, by this time few patricians still served with the military, as they were rarely appointed as military tribune or legionary legate. In other words, the careers of the most important senators remained unaltered.³⁶ Apparently Gallienus did not want to completely estrange himself from the nucleus of the senate, and there was practically no risk in leaving Asia and Africa to the senators, for these provinces had only small if any Roman garrisons. In this way, he could appease the nucleus of the senate, the group which resided in Rome, had much property in Italy, and was important in governing the main logistical hinterland of the emperor's army in the Po Valley. So he broke with administrative traditions but did so in a clever way, respecting the interests of the high-status inner circle of the senate.

Was Gallienus motivated by the need of the time, or did he care less about traditions anyway? To answer this question, we have to look at other aspects of his reign, specifically at his imperial representation, and his monetary policy. In his monetary policy, Gallienus recklessly favored the military, undoubtedly to keep their loyalty. More so than his predecessors, he decentralized the imperial mint and consistently founded mints in the vicinity of important military sectors. He also donated large gold and silver *multipla* to favored military personnel.³⁷ Gallienus' monetary policy is not entirely untraditional, though; his third-century predecessors on the throne also reacted to financial and military pressures by reducing weights and silver contents of *denarii* and *antoniniani*.³⁸

In his imperial representation on coins Gallienus focused mainly on victory slogans and images, and on divine associations. This was not new. Gallienus did so, however, in a more intense and extravagant way, in some cases breaking with existing traditions. To begin with, Gallienus had portrayed himself as being protected by a range of gods who all became his *comites* and *conservatores*.³⁹ Those deities appeared on coin types struck during both his joint and sole reigns. During the emperor's joint reign with his father,

36 Mennen 2011, op. Cit. (n. 18), 51; Hächler 2019, op. Cit. (n. 7), 118. Cf. Leunissen 1989, op. cit. (n. 7), 34–41.

37 E. Manders, *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, AD 193–284* (Leiden/Boston 2012), 270.

38 See R. Bland, 'From Gordian III to the Gallic Empire', in: W.E. Metcalf, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (Oxford 2012), 514–521.

39 On Gallienus' ideology and imperial representation, especially on coins, see De Blois 1976, op. cit. (n. 21), 120–174; Manders 2012, op. cit. (n. 37), 269–297, and Geiger 2013, op. cit. (n. 8), 200–247.

Valerian, both Jupiter and Apollo assumed the function of *conservator*. These gods appear on the majority of the coins struck for Gallienus during the dual reign with the title *conservator*.⁴⁰ Other deities represented on Gallienus' coins during the joint reign with his father were Mars (nine types), Sol (five types), and four female deities, Diana, Vesta, Juno, and Venus. During Gallienus' sole reign more deities were added: Neptune, Minerva, Liber Pater, Aesculapius, Serapis, Hercules, Mercury, Janus, and Vulcanus each appeared on the coins issued in the period 260–268. Apparently, the emperor wished to represent a good part of the existing pantheon on his coins as his helpers, in order to strengthen his position amidst the many troubles of his times.⁴¹ Many of the *conservator*-coins were part of the 'animal series', a series of coins on which gods were represented by animals.⁴²

Gallienus also identified himself with certain deities. He presented himself as an almost superhuman being with divine traits, attributes, and qualities.⁴³ As we read: *Invicto imperatori pio felici Gallieno Augusto, dis animo voltuque compari* ("to the unconquerable pious and divinely favored emperor Gallienus who is like the gods in his mind and countenance").⁴⁴ In competition with Postumus, Gallienus presented himself as a hero and savior such as Hercules, on a few bronze coins he posed as *genius populi Romani*, and on some *aurei* he even identified himself with the goddess Demeter/Ceres.⁴⁵ These gold coins carried the legend *Gallienae Augustae* and showed the emperor with traits and attributes of Ceres on the obverse and the legends *Victoria Augusti* or *Ubique Pax* on the reverse.⁴⁶ If anything, this was original and untraditional.

40 See Manders 2012, op. cit. (n. 37), 283 with note 66, referring to *RIC V Gallienus* 76, 77 143, 189, 215–8, and 440 (Jupiter), from Gallienus' joint reign, and *RIC V Gallienus* 125–7, 129, 205, 206, 251, 261–3, 374, 416, and 425 (Apollo), equally from Gallienus' joint reign.

41 See Manders 2012, op. cit. (n. 37), 286f.

42 See De Blois 1976, op. cit. (n. 21), 160–4; Manders 2012, op. Cit. (n. 37), 287–91. R. Göbl, *Die Münzprägung der Kaiser Valerianus I./ Gallienus/ Saloninus (253/268), Regalianus (260) und Macrianus/ Quietus (260/262)* (Vienna 2000), 94 says: "Diese Emission ist wohl die bekannteste des Gallienus. Die Reverse bringen ein ganzes Pantheon von Schutzgöttern des Kaisers mit zugeordneten Tieren aus Zoo und Fabel: Diana führt, gefolgt von Apollo".

43 See De Blois 1976, op. cit. (n. 21), 170–73; Geiger 2013, op. cit. (n. 8), 248–55.

44 *ILS* 550.

45 See De Blois 1976, op. cit. (n. 21), 149–59; idem, "Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in Third-century Views of Empire, Emperorship, and Practical Politics," *Mnemosyne* 47, 2 (1994), 174.

46 *RIC V Gallienus* 74 (*aureus*); Göbl 2000, op. cit. (n. 42), 92; Geiger 2013, op. cit. (n. 8), 226 and 259f. In his article in *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies (GRBS)* 40.3, (1999),

To interpret this remarkable coin type rightly, one should consider its numismatic context. On a gold medallion from the mint of Rome the same legend *Ubique Pax*, with a Victory in a biga galloping left (reverse), was combined with an obverse carrying the legend *Conservatori Orbis*, with an image of Gallienus crowned with reeds, not so different from the image on the *Gallienae Augustae*-obverse.⁴⁷ This suggests that on the latter coin type the goddess of cereals is portrayed as typically Gallienic, characteristic of this emperor's reign and with a promise of all-encompassing peace and abundance. On the gold medallion Gallienus is propagated as the *conservator* of the Empire, which fits in well with Gallienic representation. The *Gallienae Augustae*-coins may indicate that the emperor identified himself in an androgynous way with genderless divinity, but may as well – or at the same time – point to the combination of victory, omnipresent peace, and an abundance of food through the emperor's special relation with Ceres. Again, this is untraditional and even extravagant, but not a total break with existing imperial propaganda.

In conclusion, Gallienus implemented some radical military and administrative reforms, thus breaking with traditional administrative policies. He did so to cope with overwhelming problems, not because he wished to break with existing traditions altogether. He left intact the top of the traditional career of the most important senators, the patricians, the inner circle of the senate in Rome. In his imperial representation and his monetary as well as religious policies, this emperor did indeed some extravagant things, yet without breaking through the limits of the existing system. Gallienus had no problem in seeking boundaries, without being a revolutionary on the throne. Late in the fourth century his policies were perceived in a negative way. Senatorial historiographers then began to see what Gallienus' reforms had done with the power of senators within the administrative system.

233–39, MacCoull suggests that this *Gallienae Augustae* coin legend points at an identification of the emperor with Allat, an important deity at Palmyra. On pp. 235f. he approvingly quotes my monograph about Gallienus (De Blois 1976, op. cit. (n. 21), 157) but on that page I suggest that Gallienus may have identified himself on one of his coins with Minerva. In Palmyrene contexts Minerva or Athena regularly denote Allat; Minerva is the *interpretatio Romana* of Allat, not Ceres.

47 *RIC V* Gallienus (joint reign) 15.

The Role of Tradition for the Negotiation and Legitimation of Imperial Rule in the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires

Nikolas Hächler

The Gallic and Palmyrene Empires appear as significant components of the so-called Crisis of the Third Century.¹ Notions of tradition were used by individual regents of both separatist states in the representation and political organization of their reign by adapting behaviours, idea(l)s, and institutions, which were already well-established in the central Empire. In doing so, they attempted to justify and simultaneously stabilize their usurped rule when they addressed their subjects, among whom members of the army and local elites as well as parts of the urban populations played a decisive role.² The strategy of adapting existing notions of successful rulership resulted in complex and sometimes experimental expressions of imperial ideology and in some instances leaned into the realm of so-called ‘invented traditions’ as coined by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger.³

The present contribution asks what role the use of ‘tradition’ played for the stabilization and legitimization of usurped rule in the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires, how it was expressed and what its limitations were. In addition, it will

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- 1 On the emergence, significance and impact of the *Imperium Galliarum* and the Palmyrene Empire see I. König, *Die gallischen Usurpatoren von Postumus bis Tetricus*. Vestigia 31 (Munich 1981); J.F. Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire*. Historia Einzelschriften 52 (Stuttgart 1987); R.J. Bourne, *Aspects of the Relationship between the Central and Gallic Empires in the Mid to Late Third Century and with Special Reference to Coinage Studies* (Oxford 2001); U. Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich. Oriens et Occidens* 2 (Stuttgart 2001); U. Hartmann, ‘Das palmyrenische Teilreich’, in: K.-P. Johné, U. Hartmann, T. Gerhardt, eds., *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser I* (Berlin 2008), 343–378; A. Luther, ‘Das gallische Sonderreich’, in: Johné, Hartmann, Gerhardt 2008, op. cit. (n. 1); 325–341; T. Fischer, ed., *Die Krise des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. und das Gallische Sonderreich*. ZAKMIRA-Schriften 8 (Wiesbaden 2012).
 - 2 E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich* (Frankfurt am Main/New York 2019, 2nd ed.).
 - 3 E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983), i.e., alleged traditions constructed in their respective present but projected back into a presumed past as conscious creations to fulfill strategic functions within the context of contemporary political and military deliberations.

examine to what extent specific expectations of parts of the imperial population were met through the continuation of selected public traditions in both realms. These goals will be realized through an in-depth analysis of documentary sources, among which coins and inscriptions are of greatest significance. The evidence will be supplemented by a critical study of literary sources, such as the *Historiae abbreviatae* by Aurelius Victor or the (infamous) *Historia Augusta*, despite the problems associated with these texts when studying the history of the Roman Empire between 235–284 CE.⁴ The present case study will first focus on the organization of public institutions of the Gallic Empire as well as on the representation of its rulers on coins. In a second part, the paper will examine the reign of the rulers of the Palmyrene Empire, especially regarding their imperial titles and their relationship to local civic communities. A brief comparison between the two realms will bring the analysis to an end, followed by a conclusion about the use of tradition and its impacts on the stability of separatist realms, which differed greatly from one another in spatial, political, and cultural terms.

1 Notions of Tradition in the Gallic Empire

The name *Imperium Galliarum* is a modern term for the separatist state that existed from 260–274, based on a passage in Eutropius on the reign of Victorinus (269–271).⁵ The *Historia Augusta* depicts its rulers as defenders of the Roman Empire (*adsertores Romani nominis*), thereby mockingly criticizing Gallienus for his lack of military achievements.⁶ At the peak of its power under Postumus (260–269) the separatist state controlled the territory of the Roman provinces Germania superior, Germania inferior, Raetia, and possibly the Alpine provinces as well as all regions of Gallia, Britannia, and Hispania (Figure 14.1).⁷ Its history began with the violent usurpation of Postumus after disputes with Saloninus, Gallienus' son, and the *praefectus praetorio* Silvanus in Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (modern Cologne) due to unsolved

4 On the problems connected to the study of the history of both separatist states based on literary sources alone, see, for instance, Hartmann 2001, op. cit. (n. 1), 17–39; B. Manuwald, 'Das Gallische Sonderreich in literarischen Quellen', in: Fischer 2012, op. cit. (n. 1), 13–27.

5 Eutr., 9.9.3: *Victorinus postea Galliarum accepit imperium, vir strenuissimus*. The most recent overview over modern scholarship is presented by Eck, 'Stand der Forschung', in: Fischer 2012, op. cit. (n. 1), 63–83.

6 *HA Trig. tyr.* 5.5. On Gallienus and the military, see also De Blois in this volume, pp. 229–240.

7 Eck 2012, op. cit. (n. 5), 69–70.

conflicts about the distribution of loot.⁸ The revolt was not only supported by the military but also by many of Gaul's senators. It can be assumed that local elites wanted the presence of their own imperial leader *in situ*, so that he could deal with the impending military threats directly. This may be related to the imminent danger of attacking barbarians at the Empire's borders, as hinted at in the *Historia Augusta*.⁹ Furthermore, members of these elites wished perhaps to interact directly with their emperor in Gaul and subsequently deal with local and regional matters especially with regard to administrative and jurisdictional matters without detours via Rome. The emergence of the *Imperium Galliarum* can thus perhaps also be understood as a consequence of the gradual formation of specific "Gallic" interests and needs, which differed from the ones of the central Empire.¹⁰

Remarkably, Postumus limited himself to exercising power only in the West, thus preventing the outbreak of an open civil war between him and Gallienus. His decision may have been prompted by internal political instabilities that had first to be overcome, a relative lack of military strength of the separatist realm compared to the central Empire or continued attacks by Germanic *gentes*, which tied his own troops to the Empire's northern frontier.¹¹ After a comparably long rule, Postumus was killed by his soldiers near Mogontiacum (modern Mainz) in spring 269. After that, the Gallic Empire became more and more unstable. Finally, in the fall of 273 Aurelian set out to reconquer the Empire's West, having already succeeded in doing so in the East. The decisive battle took place in February or March 274 near modern Châlons-sur-Marne. After that, the *Imperium Galliarum* ceased to exist, as its provinces once again came under control of the central government in Italy.¹²

Regarding structures of government and administration, there were many attempts to either continue or at least mirror traditional political institutions of the central Empire.¹³ Military significant provinces of the *Imperium Galliarum*, whose boundaries and divisions remained unchanged to our knowledge, were administrated by governors from the senatorial order: the *vir clarissimus*

8 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 33.8, Eutr., 9.9, Zos., 1.38.2, Zon., 12.24.

9 *HA trig. tyr.* 3.3.

10 König 1981, op. cit. (n. 1), 53–57; Drinkwater 1987, op. cit. (n. 1), 239–256.

11 K. Dietz, 'Zum Kampf zwischen Gallienus und Postumus', in: Fischer 2012, op. cit. (n. 1), 29–62.

12 A. Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century* (London – New York 1999), 89–98; E. Cizek, *L'empereur Aurélien et son temps* (Paris 2004, 2nd ed.), 117–122.

13 R. Ziegler, 'Rom und die Germanen am Niederrhein zur Zeit der Reichskrise des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.', in: D. Geuenich, ed., *Kulturraum Niederrhein*, Bd. 1 (Essen 1996), 11–26.



FIGURE 14.1 Map of the Gallic Empire at the peak of its power under Postumus (258–268 CE)
BY AUTHOR

Octavius Sabinus acted as *praeses Britanniae inferioris* between 261/262–266.¹⁴ The *beneficiarius legati legionis* Mascellio and the *immunis legati Augusti pro praetore Germaniae inferioris* Iulius Lupulus both served under an unnamed *vir consularis*, who acted as governor of the lower Germanic province between

14 *CIL* VII 287 = *RIB* 605 = *ILS* 2548 (Lancaster).

261/262–266.¹⁵ This is remarkable insofar as senators played only a minor role in governing provinces with military significance under Gallienus,¹⁶ hinting at a symbiotic relationship between Postumus and the senatorial elite of his Empire and perhaps at the comparatively strong standing of Gaul's senators in general. Regarding its provincial administration, the *Imperium Galliarum* thus appears to have been even more traditional than the central Empire. In addition, it had its own consuls, as we know from epigraphic evidence:¹⁷

Years	Name of the consuls	Sources
260	Postumus and Honoratianus	<i>AE</i> 1993, 1231.
Between 261/ 262–267	Apr(–) and Ruf(–) Dialis and Bassus Censor II and Lepidus II	<i>CIL</i> VII 802 = <i>ILS</i> 4722 = <i>RIB</i> 1956. <i>CIL</i> XIII 3163. <i>AE</i> 1930, 35; <i>CIL</i> XIII 6779; <i>CIL</i> VII 287 = <i>ILS</i> 2548 = <i>RIB</i> 605.
268	Postumus IV and Victorinus	<i>CIL</i> II 5736.

It is possible that Gaul's senators met in Cologne, which perhaps functioned as a temporary imperial center,¹⁸ to form a notables' assembly in reminiscence and imitation of Rome's senate, without, however, ever officially bearing the name 'senatus' of the Gallic Empire.¹⁹ As for the possible origins of such a body, M. Christol pointed out that there existed a public council already under Gallienus and Saloninus in Cologne.²⁰ Starting with Postumus, this convention could have conferred powers and corresponding titles to the emperor, advised him, and served as a pool for suitable candidates for leading functions in the *Imperium Galliarum*. At first, the assembly probably served only in a transitional manner to support Postumus' claims to power, but later as

15 *AE* 1930, 35 (Bonn).

16 On the political appointment of senators under Gallienus see L. De Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden 1976), 57–82. Also see De Blois in this volume, pp. 229–240.

17 Eck 2012, op. cit. (n. 5), 70–72.

18 See Luther 2008, op. cit. (n. 1), 339–340, who also emphasizes, however, that the *Imperium Galliarum* had no official capital as far as we know.

19 Luther 2008, op. cit. (n. 1), 340–341. Compare Eck 2012, op. cit. (n. 5), 72–73, who rightfully remains sceptical that such an assembly was ever treated as a senate in its own right. König 1981, op. cit. (n. 1), 187 argues in a similar fashion.

20 M. Christol, 'Réflexions sur le provincialisme galloromain', in: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, ed., *Centralismo y descentralización* (Madrid 1985), 95–96.

a more stable institution of the separatist state.²¹ It was likely the same body of senators that decided about the divinization of Victorinus.²² The assembly probably also conferred imperial titles to Postumus, who is known as *Imperator Caesar M. Cassianus Latinius Postumus pius felix invictus Augustus, pontifex maximus*, holder of the *tribunicia potestas, consul, pater patriae* and *proconsul*.²³ In accepting these titles, Postumus presented himself as a regular ruler of a legitimate state with all the encompassing political powers and authority. On December 10, 261, the honorific *Germanicus Maximus* was added for the first time, thereby showing him as a successful defender of Gaul from invading Germanic *gentes* in 260 and 261.²⁴ Quite naturally, Postumus' successors presented themselves with similar titles.²⁵ In addition, a praetorian guard was established in Treveris (modern Trier), thus copying yet another well-established institution from the central Empire.²⁶

Finally, the continuation of road building projects and their upkeep as well as the construction and re-use of milestones – often with traditional Celtic *leuga* for informing travellers about distances to their next destination – remained important projects for the stability of the Gallic Empire and allowed emperors to represent their own rule publicly. While Postumus was primarily active in this regard in Britain, the central and the eastern parts of modern France as well as Spain, his successor Victorinus focused on Britain and the

21 Ziegler 1996, op. cit. (n. 13), 20; R. Ziegler, 'Kaiser Tetricus und der senatorische Adel', *Tyche* 18 (2003), 230–231.

22 D. Kienast, W. Eck, and M. Heil, *Römische Kaisertabelle* (Darmstadt 2017, 6th ed.), 237.

23 See, for instance, *CIL* VII 1161 = *CIL* VII 1162; *CIL* XVII 1, 85; 202; *CIL* XVII 2, 150; 331; 334; 464; 491; 538; 615; *AE* 2002, 1061; *AE* 2004, 983. By tradition, the senate's approval legitimized an emperor's claim to power through a formal investiture. This remains true despite the fact that almost every imperial decision-maker was *de facto* designated by his predecessor or acted as an usurper backed by military power, see R. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton 1984), 354. The fact that the emperor was formally granted his powers by the senate becomes clear, for instance, when studying the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* (*CIL* VI 930 = *CIL* VI 31207 = *ILS* 244; Tac., *Hist.* 4,3,3), which likely preserves parts of a *senatus consultum* passed to recognize Vespasian at Rome in December 69 CE as legitimate ruler of the Roman Empire, see P. Brunt, *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, *JRS* 67 (1977), 95–116; A. Pabst, "... ageret faceret quaecumque e re publica censeret esse" Annäherung an die *lex de imperio Vespasiani*', in: W. Dahleim, ed., *Festschrift für Robert Werner zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*. *Xenia* 22 (Konstanz 1989), 125–148; L. Capogrossi Colognesi, E. Tassi Scandone, eds., *La "Lex de imperio Vespasiani" e la Roma dei Flavi. Atti del convegno, 20–22 novembre 2008*. *Acta Flaviana* 1 (Rome 2009). It is possible that the mentioned notables' assembly played a similar role in the Gallic Empire, thereby legitimizing their emperors' claims to rule.

24 Kienast, Eck, Heil 2017, op.cit (n. 22), 235.

25 Kienast, Eck, Heil, op. cit. (n. 22), 236–240.

26 See *CIL* XIII 3679 = *ILS* 563 (Trier); *CIL* XIII 8267a–b = *AE* 2014, 907 (Cologne).

northern parts of Gallia while Tetricus I and Tetricus II primarily looked after the western parts of France.²⁷

After Postumus' rebellion against Rome, the *Imperium Galliarum* was largely cut off from the influx of freshly minted coins. This forced him and his successors to produce their own coinage, for instance, to pay their soldiers. The process of coin production was conceived as a process of intensive negotiations between the emperor and his advisors, as well as those individuals active in the minting sites. Against this backdrop, it was not uncommon for the choice of subjects, especially regarding the portrait of the emperor, to fall back on earlier examples and to subsequently develop new forms depending on political intentions, artistic skill and contemporary tastes.²⁸

The mints of the Gallic Empire were located in Trier, Cologne, probably Mainz, and temporarily in Milan.²⁹ Note that it is still a matter of discussion whether Cologne or Trier served as the main mint of the Empire.³⁰ Coin portraits of individual emperors produced characteristic features that must be studied in detail for each ruler, especially regarding the question of the significance of tradition for the staging of political power. It can be assumed that the design of coins in general and of imperial portraits in particular were carefully deliberated between each regent and the mint masters, thereby at first consciously reverting to already existing modes of representation. This becomes clear when examining Postumus' coins, whose depiction differs strongly from that of earlier soldier emperors (Figure 14.2a): we recognize a snub nose, a domed forehead, fleshy cheeks, hair divided into strands, that reaches his neck, and a full beard tapering to a point. This representation is understood by D. Boschung as a deliberate and direct reference to the Antonine rulers and to

27 Bourne 2001, op. cit. (n. 1), 19–24.

28 J. Wienand, 'Der Kaiser als Sieger. Metamorphosen triumphaler Herrschaft unter Constantin I', *Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte. Beihefte. Neue Folge* 19 (Berlin 2012), 43–57; J. Mairat, *The Coinage of the Gallic Empire*, unpublished PhD thesis in two volumes, University of Oxford 2014, I, 148–152.

29 See Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 23–50 on the topic. The author prefers Trier to be seen as the Empire's main mint.

30 G. Elmer, 'Die Münzprägung der gallischen Kaiser von Postumus bis Tetricus in Köln, Trier und Mailand', *Bonner Jahrbücher* 146 (1941), 1–106; J. Lafaurie, 'L'Empire gaulois. Apport de la numismatique', in: H. Temporini, ed., *ANRW II 2* (Berlin – New York 1975), 853–1012; B. Schulte, *Die Goldprägung der gallischen Kaiser von Postumus bis Tetricus* (Aarau 1983); Drinkwater 1987, op. cit. (n. 1), 132–147; H.-J. Schulzki, *Die Antoninianprägung der gallischen Kaiser von Postumus bis Tetricus* (AGK). *Antiquitas* 3,35 (Bonn 1996); Bourne 2001, op. cit. (n. 1), 25–29; Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I. For the coin production in Trier see Bourne 2001, op. cit. (n. 1), 30–31; W. Knickrehm, *Offizielle und lokale Münzprägstätten des Gallischen Sonderreiches in und um Trier* (Trier 2014).

Septimius Severus in particular.³¹ B. Berressem, though, argues that Postumus actively adapted Gallienus' portraits (Figure 14.2b), who in turn had based his own portrayal on the style of the Antonines and Severans.³² Competitive interactions between the two rulers are also reflected in their dealings with the representation of deities and abstract personifications on coins, which is of particular importance in the case of Hercules, as E. Manders and O. Hekster point out.³³ In doing so, both Postumus and Gallienus attempted to distance themselves from earlier soldier emperors, such as Maximinus Thrax, and to emphasize a return to the state's former glory.

Subsequently, Postumus' coinage influenced his successors since it allowed them to present their own identity as emperors in the context of already adapted traditions of the central empire. Accordingly, the usurper Laelianus appears to have continued the style of imperial representation established under Postumus (Figure 14.2c). Note, however, that in his case there was no time for fundamental adjustments of the imperial portrayal since he ruled for only a few months in 269.³⁴ Iconographic differences between Marius (269) and his predecessors are then again striking (Figure 14.2d). Although the profile line and the general treatment of the hair around the emperor's forehead still reminisce of Postumus' and Laelianus' portraits, Marius' general hairstyle and his beard deviate strongly from them. It seems that he oriented himself towards Claudius II Gothicus (Figure 14.2e), who himself sought to distance himself from Gallienus. Marius' representation on coins was therefore inspired by developments in the central Empire, thereby participating in contemporary trends in Roman ruler iconography. However, by retaining basic physiognomic features of Postumus' iconography, he also placed himself within the same line of tradition founded by the first emperor of the *Imperium Galliarum*.³⁵ The portrait of Victorinus (269–271) should be interpreted as a reference to the portrait of Postumus as well, due to the abundant hairstyle and the shape of the beard

31 D. Boschung, 'Zur Portraitdarstellung der Kaiser des Gallischen Sonderreichs', in: Fischer 2012, op. cit. (n. 1), 88–95. On the iconographic depiction of Postumus see also Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 52–78; 103–152.

32 B.N. Berressem, *Repräsentation der Soldatenkaiser*. Philippika 122 (Wiesbaden 2018), 264–266.

33 O. Hekster – E. Manders, 'Kaiser gegen Kaiser', in: K.-P. John, T. Gerhardt and U. Hartmann, eds., *Deleto paene imperio Romano* (Stuttgart 2006), 141; E. Manders, *Coining Images of Power*. IMEM 15 (Leiden/Boston 2012), 113–114. See also M. Horster, 'The emperor's family on coins (third century)', in: O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn, D. Slootjes, eds., *Crises and the Roman Empire* (Leiden – Boston 2007), 300–302.

34 Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 79–80.

35 Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 80–82.

(Figure 14.2f).³⁶ Postumus' depiction had thus become a focal point of formal identification for the rulers of the *Imperium Galliarum*. Tetricus (271–274), too, embraced this by now traditional form of imperial representation, thus presenting himself as a true successor to Postumus and as a legitimate ruler of the Gallic Empire. Regarding forms of imperial representation on coins, a new pictorial standard had therefore been established towards the end of the Empire's existence, which differed significantly from those of the central Empire.³⁷



FIGURE 14.2A

Obverse of *antoninianus* of Postumus, 260–268 CE, Lyon (*RIC V* Postumus 75 or 315). Image: Clothed and armoured bust of Postumus with radiate crown, facing to the right. Legend: IMP C POSTVMVS P F AVG

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FIGURE 14.2B

14.2b Obverse *antoninianus* of Gallienus, 258–259 CE, Lyon (*RIC V* Gallienus (joint reign) 56). Image: Armoured bust of Gallienus with radiate crown, facing the right side. Inscription: GALLIENVS P F AVG

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36 Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 82–85.

37 Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 86–95, 153–197; Berressem 2018, op. cit. (n. 32), 267–278.



FIGURE 14.2C

Obverse of *denarius* of Laelianus, 269 CE, Trier (*RIC V* Laelianus 6). Image: Armoured bust of Laelianus facing the right side with radiate crown and cuirass. Inscription: IMP C LAELAINVS P F AVG

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FIGURE 14.2D

Obverse of *denarius* of Marius, 269 CE, Cologne (*RIC V* Marius 6). Image: Armoured bust of Marius facing the right side with radiate crown and cuirass. Inscription: IMP C MARIVS P F AVG

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FIGURE 14.2E

Obverse of *denarius* of Claudius II Gothicus, 268 CE, Rome (*RIC V* Claudius Gothicus 13). Image: Armoured bust of Claudius II Gothicus facing the right side with radiate crown and cuirass. Inscription: IMP C CLAVDIVS P F AVG

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FIGURE 14.2F

Obverse of *antoninianus* of Victorinus, 269–271 CE, Cologne (*RIC V* Victorinus 117).

Image: Armoured bust of Victorinus facing the right side with radiate crown and cuirass. Inscription: IMP C PIAV VIC[TOR]INVS P F AVG

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Also on the reverse of their coins, the emperors of the *Imperium Galliarum* for the most part used traditional themes and legends. There are, however, instances when specific local and regional identities were emphasized, as highlighted by L. Claes.³⁸ This can be seen, for instance, on an *antoninianus* from Postumus, depicting on its reverse a personification of the river Rhine, with the inscription *Salus provinciarum*.³⁹ This refers to the intended protection of the provinces of Gallia and Germania against invading forces as well as to their hoped prosperity under Postumus' dominion. Other coins depict the emperor as restorer of the Gallic provinces (*restitutor Galliarum*).⁴⁰ In addition, Postumus focused on messages concerning political *Concordia*, military *Fides*, imperial *Laetitia* and *Salus* as well as *Victoria* and *Virtus* of the emperor, thereby emphasizing his ties to the military and reacting to expected prospects of general prosperity under his leadership. Regarding the gods, he most often was associated with Hercules as well as Jupiter and – to a lesser extent – with Minerva and Neptune. The most important deity for Postumus, Hercules, also referred to local religious traditions, such as the cult of Hercules Deusoniensis, who appeared on his coins as an athletic man armed with a club and wearing a lion's skin.⁴¹ The choice of Hercules Deusoniensis allowed Postumus to

38 L. Claes, 'Coins with power?', *Jaarboek voor Munt- en Penningkunde* 102 (2015), 24–41.

39 *RIC V* 2, 87. Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 104–105.

40 *RIC V* 2, 82.

41 *RIC Supp.* 91. G. Moitreaux, *Hercules in Gallia* (Paris 2002), 261–262 (see also the discussion in O. Hekster, 'Gallic images of Hercules', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 17 [2004], 674); Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 106–107; Berressem 2018, op. cit. (n. 32), 266. It is usually accepted in current scholarship that the name "Deusoniensis" is derived from a toponym, i.e., a place named "Deuso" or "Deusone". In the historical tradition of Late Antiquity, such a place name is mentioned in Jerome's *Chronicon* in connection with a battle in the

express military prowess (*virtus*) and to react to local cults, by incorporating its protagonists in his idealized public imagery. This made him not only an ideal Roman ruler in times of military unrest, but also an emperor of and for the people of Gaul in particular. His portrayal was thus oriented on the one hand towards the central Roman iconography of emperors. On the other hand, it offered notions of legitimization based on local (religious) traditions.

Surprisingly, Postumus' successors were hardly associated with local cults. Victorinus often had themes minted on his coins that created a connection between him and his empire's legions. Additionally, there are representations of the *Pax*, *Salus*, *Victoria* and *Virtus Augusti*.⁴² The coins of Tetricus and his son also had no room for specific local identities of the Gallic Empire.⁴³ The reasons for these developments are not clear and must therefore remain hypothetical. It is possible that Postumus had a personal connection to the cult of Hercules Deusoniensis, which he emphasized accordingly in his imperial representation. Furthermore, rulers after him were possibly less keen on highlighting local traits of Gaul to justify their government and instead sought to present themselves as emperors within the framework of already established numismatic typological repertoires. Tetricus in particular might have been interested in staging himself together with his son in order to stress the dynastic notion of his rulership.

2 Notions of Tradition in the Palmyrene Empire

The Palmyrene Empire was a short-lived separate state that existed from 270–273 CE. Named after its capital city, Palmyra, it briefly controlled the provinces of Syria Palaestina, Arabia, and Aegyptus, as well as parts of Asia Minor (Figure 14.3) and was led by Septimius Vaballathus and his mother Septimia Zenobia, the wife of Septimius Odaenathus. Due to his military experience, the latter became exarch of Palmyra and was incorporated into the Roman

year 373 and the defeat of an army of the Saxons in the settlement area of the Franks (2389: *Saxones caesi Deusone in regione Francorum*). A precise localization of this place is, however, not possible, see B.H. Stolte, 'Deusone in regione Francorum', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 70 (1957), 76–86.

42 Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 163–181.

43 Instead, numerous coins are known with representations of the *Comites Augustorum*, *Fides Militum*, *Hilaritas Augustorum*, and *Laetitia Augustorum*. In addition, there are representations of *Pax Augustorum*, *Pietas Augustorum*, *Salus Augustorum*, *Spes Augustorum*, *Victoria Augustorum* and *Virtus Augustorum*, see Mairat 2014, op. cit. (n. 28), I, 182–197.



FIGURE 14.3 Map of the area of influence of the Palmyrene Empire (270–273 CE)
BY AUTHOR

senate in the middle of the third century CE.⁴⁴ Under his command, the city prevailed against Persian attacks in 257/258. He was subsequently honoured as *vir consularis*,⁴⁵ meaning that he officially served as Rome's governor of Syria Phoenice.

After the capture of Valerian I, the usurpers Quietus and Macrianus rebelled against Gallienus in Syria. Odaenathus nominally remained loyal to the emperor and defeated both insurgents in 261. In recognition of his achievements, he received the titles *dux Romanorum*, *imperator*, and *corrector totius Orientis*, thus strengthening his position in Syria as an imperial representative.⁴⁶ While

44 Gawlikowski 1985, 257, Nr. 13 (April 252); *CIS* II 3944 = *PAT* 90 (October 251); *PAT* 2753 (around 250).

45 See, for instance, the bilingual inscriptions *CIS* II 3945 = *PAR* 291 (April 258).

46 *HA. Gall.* 1,1; 3,3; 10,1, *Zos.*, 1,39,1, *Synk.*, 466,25–26, *Zon.*, 12,23–24; *CIS* II 3946 = *PAT* 292. On the notion of the *corrector totius Orientis* see S. Swain, 'Greek into Palmyrene. Odaenathus as *Corrector totius Orientis*', *ZPE* 99 (1993), 157–164.

the conferring of the consular title is to be considered an outstanding, though not unusual and to a certain extent even traditional, honorific practice during the Principate, the bestowal of the latter positions is sensational and highlights the exceptionally strong position of Odaenathus. In addition, he accepted the titles *rās Tadmor* (prince of Palmyra) and *rex regum*, which mirrored the Persian titlature *shahanshah* (king of kings).⁴⁷

Following his death in 267, Odaenathus was succeeded by his minor son with Zenobia, the ten-year-old Vaballathus, who inherited his father's titles, i.e., *rex regum*, *corrector totius Orientis* and probably also that of *dux Romanorum*. Under the guidance of his mother Zenobia, he rapidly conquered most of the Roman East in 270, subsequently taking the title *imperator*, while his mother was proclaimed *clarissima pia regina*.⁴⁸ A bilingual inscription from Palmyra in Greek and Semitic Palmyrene from July/August 271 is of interest in this context. It shows the commanders Septimius Zabdas and Septimius Zabbaios honoring their queen (βασιλισσα/mlkt') Zenobia:⁴⁹

Σεπτίμιαν Ζηνοβίαν τὴν λαμ-
προτάτην εὐσεβῆ βασιλίσσαν
Σεπτίμιοι Ζάβδας ὁ μέγας στρα-
τηλάτης καὶ Ζαββαίος ὁ ἐνθάδε
στρατηλάτης, οἱ κράτιστοι τὴν
δέσποιναν, ἔτους βπφ' μηνεὶ Λωῶ.

To Septimia Zenobia, *clarissima pia regina*,
Septimii Zabdas, the great commander,
and Zabbaios, the commander acting
here, the most excellent to
the queen, in the year 582 in the month
of Loos.

slmt sptmy' btzby nhyrt' wzdqt'
mlkt' sptmyw' zbd' rb hyl'
rb' wzby rb hyl' dy tdmwr qrtstw
'qym lmrthwn brh 'b dy snt 582.

Statue of Septimia Zenobia, *clarissima pia regina*. Septimii Zabdas, the great commander, and Zabbaios, the commander of Palmyra, the most excellent set up for their queen. In the month of Ab of the year 582.

The almost word-for-word concordance between the two texts is remarkable, starting – unsurprisingly – with the names of the honoured (Σεπτίμιαν Ζηνοβίαν – sptmy' btzby; Σεπτίμιοι Ζάβδας [...] καὶ Ζαββαίος – sptmyw' zbd' [...] wzby)

47 Hartmann 2008, op. cit. (n. 1), 354–355; Kienast, Eck, Heil 2017, op. cit. (n. 22), 230.

48 CJS II 3947 = PAR 293 (August 271).

49 CJS II 3947 = IGLS XVII/1, 57: “Sur un fût de colonne de la travée sud, au sud-est du tétrapyle (section B). Six lignes de grec, puis quatre d'araméen. 57 × 60 cm; h.l.: 4 cm”.

and followed by the Roman titles in Greek, which are also transferred (almost) *sensu strictu* into Palmyrene (τὴν λαμπροτάτην εὐσεβῆ βασιλίσσαν – nhyrt' wzdqt' mlkt'; ὁ μέγας στρατηλάτης – rb hyl' rb'; ὁ ἐνθάδε στρατηλάτης – rb hyl' dy tdmwr). Still, there are minor differences: while in Greek the reference to the statue donated by the commanders is missing – as is common practice in Greek epigraphy – it is highlighted in Palmyrene at the beginning of the text (slmt). In addition, the Greek text briefly references the role of Septimius Zabbaios as 'the commander acting here [in Palmyra]' (ὁ ἐνθάδε στρατηλάτης), while the Palmyrene specifies his position as 'commander of Palmyra' (rb hyl' dy tdmwr). Finally, the name of the month, in which the monument was erected is presented according to the Macedonian calendar (Ἀῶρος) in Greek and in the Babylonian calendar (⁴b) in Palmyrene, referring to the time between July and August. Additionally, the splitting of lines differs in the two versions due to fewer letters needed to express the inscription's content in Palmyrene. The text stands *pars pro toto* for comparable bilingual documents in which parts of Palmyra's population and thus varying (acceptance) groups with their specific linguistic and cultural backgrounds were to be addressed.⁵⁰ Palmyra's leaders traditionally had to present themselves to all these parties and were addressed by their subjects in both languages.⁵¹ On the one hand, this practice created a connection between Palmyra and the whole Roman Empire via the preservation and presentation of information in Greek. On the other hand, it greatly contributed to Palmyra's own political and cultural identity. Note that a neighbouring column was dedicated posthumously to Odaenathus to strengthen the notion of a dynastic continuity.⁵² Both monuments should be seen as a conscious staging of the imperial family by the two military commanders Septimius Zabdas and Zabbaios, who in turn could express their own loyalty towards the young dynasty and subsequently strengthen their own position in Palmyra by using traditional media of public honours and representation.⁵³

50 See, for instance, *CIS* II 3945; 3971.

51 Hartmann 2001, op. cit. (n. 1), 45–64; 76–85; 108–128.

52 *CIS* 3946: šlm' sptmyws 'dy[nt] mlk mlk' / wmtqnn' dy mdnh' klh sptmy' / zbd' rb hyl' rb' wzbdy rb hyl' / dy tdmwr qrtst' 'qym lmrhwn / byrh' 'b dy šnt 582. = Statue of Septimius Odaenathus, king of kings and *corrector totius Orientis*. Septimius Zabdas, great commander, and Septimius Zabbaios, commander of Palmyra, the most excellent dedicated this to their master, in the month of Ab in the year 582.

53 Both commanders are also known due to literary sources, *HA. Aurel* 15.2–3 (Septimius Zabbaios tried to defend Palmyra against Aurelian); *Claud.* 11.1 (Septimius Zabdas was responsible for the conquest of Egypt, see also *Zos.*, 1.44.1; 51.1).

The effort to address different groups, whose support was relevant for Vaballathus' government, is also found in the ruler's pastiched titulature: on papyri and milestones between 270–271 he appears as *vir clarissimus rex consul imperator dux Romanorum* (“τοῦ λαμπροτάτου βασιλέως αὐτοκράτορος στρατηγού Ῥωμαίων”) – sometimes abbreviated as VCRIMDR – and always together with the emperor Aurelian.⁵⁴ Coins from Antioch and Alexandria show the senior Augustus on the obverse and Vaballathus on the reverse, thereby additionally highlighting differences in rank (Figure 14.4). Note, however, that contemporary viewers of a coin, who did not necessarily know the distinction between obverse and reverse, might get the impression that they were dealing with two equal rulers when looking at the coin, at least at first glance.⁵⁵ Details like the differing crowns – Aurelian wears a radiant crown, while Vaballathus has a laurel wreath –, the diverging representation of age (Aurelian usually has a beard, while Vaballathus does not) or varying imperial titles clearly indicate, however, differences in authority and rank between the two rulers.



FIGURE 14.4 Obverse and reverse of *denarius* of Aurelian, 270–271 CE, Antioch (*RIC V Aurelian* 381). Obverse image: Armoured bust of Aurelian facing the right side with radiate crown and cuirass. Obverse legend: IMP C AVRELIANVS AVG. Reverse image: Armoured bust of Vaballathus facing the right side with laurel wreath. Reverse legend: VABALATHVS VCRIMDR
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54 T. Fleck, 'Das Sonderreich von Palmyra', *Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten* 199 (2000), 245–252, 247; Hartmann 2008, op. cit. (n. 1), 362–363; R. Bland, 'The Coinage of Vabalathus and Zenobia from Antioch and Alexandria', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 171 (2011), 133–186.

55 See on this effect on Roman coins, for instance, A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Image and authority in the coinage of Augustus', *JRS* 76 (1986), 66–87, 71–72. I would like to thank Sven Betjes for this observation.

In presenting himself in such a manner, Vaballathus consciously merged aspects of traditional Hellenistic kingship with his extraordinary position as Rome's representative in Syria, while simultaneously blurring the boundaries between his own position and that of Aurelian, without, however, placing himself clearly above the latter. With the title *rex (regum)* he primarily addressed his own subjects, while the mention and depiction of Aurelian should convince the central Empire that its supremacy was still accepted by its Palmyrene allies. Furthermore, Vaballathus legitimized his rule before Roman officials and legions by using Roman titles like *imperator* and *dux Romanorum*. It can also be assumed that the Palmyrene Empire, like the *Imperium Galliarum*, attempted to imitate traditional political institutions of the central Empire. Whether this included the creation of a notables' assembly in Palmyra, for instance, which functioned as a board for the legitimization of and for political advice for the young emperor and his mother, must remain hypothetical. It is clear, though, that Vaballathus acted as a traditional builder and took care of the realm's infrastructure, as various milestone findings in the region clearly indicate.

The military situation changed drastically in March and April 272, when Aurelian prepared his conquest of Palmyra. Against this backdrop, Zenobia and Vaballathus were forced to usurp the imperial power for themselves, thus directly opposing Aurelian. Vaballathus appears now as a traditional emperor: papyri, coins, and inscriptions show him as *Imperator Caesar L. Iulius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus Athenodorus Persicus maximus Arabicus maximus Adiabenicus maximus pius felix invictus Augustus*, while his mother is presented as *Septimia Zenobia Augusta*.⁵⁶ However, there was no time for a complete consolidation of their claim to imperial power in the East due to Aurelian's rapid military successes.⁵⁷ While we can observe the formation of political and representative structures in the *Imperium Galliarum* until its downfall in 274 based on local (religious) realities and already well-established political and military practices of the central Empire, the Palmyrene Empire was still in the early stages of adapting Roman traditions of government and imperial self-representation against the backdrop of its own heritage and public structures of government. There was apparently not enough time between 270–272 for a fully realized formation and portrayal of a stand-alone political and cultural identity of the young separatist state, the basis for which was created by Odaenathus' victories against the Persians.

56 See, for instance, *RIC* v.2, 5, corr.; *RIC* v.2, 2 var; *ILS* 8924 = *AE* 1904, 60 = *AE* 1904, 76 = *AE* 1904, 91. See also Kienast, Eck, Heil 2017, op. cit. (n. 22), 231–233.

57 Watson 1999, op. cit. (n. 12), 70–88; Cizek 2004, op. cit. (n. 12), 103–117.

3 Conclusion: Comparing Notions of Tradition in the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires

Emperors of the Gallic Empire were concerned with appearing as legitimate rulers and as true protectors of the Roman world against invading Germanic forces. Adherence to traditional structures of government and administration proved to be a useful tool for achieving this goal and to additionally create stability for their usurped reign. Furthermore, it masked their radical insurrections against the central Empire with which they constantly competed and which they simultaneously tried to mirror as much as possible. In doing so, these emperors were not mere vassals of Rome but claimed (temporary) sovereignty in the territories they controlled as saviours of the *Imperium Romanum*. By merging well-established forms of government and imperial self-representation with local traditions, they also responded to specific Gallic needs and interests as well as to regional (cult) practices and expectations regarding imperial representation. Of fundamental importance was Postumus' reign, which created the foundation for subsequent successful portrayals of Gaul's emperors, thus contributing to the establishment of new traditions in the *Imperium Galliarum*.

Initially, Palmyra's rule in the Near East began at the behest of Valerian and Galienus after Odaenathus defended Rome's borders against the Sasanids. The following years saw the establishment of Odaenathus' reign in Syria based on his military victories and his charismatic leadership, which found its expression in the assumption of the title *rex regum*, while he retained all Roman positions with Gallienus' approval. The inheritance of many titles and functions by Vaballathus was an important step towards the formation of an adapted form of Hellenistic kingship in Syria with corresponding dynastic concepts in mind. Zenobia and Vaballathus initially acted under the guise of providing stability in the East on behalf of the central Empire. After 270, however, the situation escalated, resulting in a possibly rushed attempt to establish a new imperial dynasty by force. The claim to rule as an independent leader in the East is clearly illustrated by Vaballathus' assumption of the titles *Imperator* and *Augustus*. Palmyra thus saw the early stages of a fusion of various ruling traditions based on models of Hellenistic kingship as well as Roman, Persian and specifically local notions of successful leadership. Due to Aurelian's military successes, however, it was not possible to firmly establish a finalized amalgam of these varying traditions of rule.

Adhering to traditions allowed the rulers of both separatist states to defend their usurped claims to power on an ideological level at least for some time. It resulted in a temporary stabilization of their reign, which in turn served

to secure contested boundaries of the *Imperium Romanum*. While the Gallic Empire succeeded in establishing its own traditions on the borders towards the Germanic *Barbaricum*, Palmyra was still in the process of creating independent traditions of rulership in its precarious position between Rome and Persia when it was subjugated by Aurelian.

This leads to final remarks on the limitations of the use of traditions in terms of securing imperial power, since for successful and long-term rule, the firm control over public structures of government and administration as well as the army were in fact much more important: as is known, Tetricus and his son as well as Zenobia and Vaballathus were defeated by Aurelian in war, regardless of their ideological positions and adaptive imitations of traditional notions of imperial power. Even if the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires quickly vanished as a consequence of Aurelian's victories, they were remembered, though, by subsequent generations also because they contributed to the preservation of the *Imperium Romanum* when the central Empire was arguably weakened.

Stylites on Pillars versus Sanctuaries on Summits

The Conquest of Traditional Cult Sites by Christian Ascetics in Northern Syria

Johannes Hahn

Mountains are not only conspicuous landmarks that shape landscapes in a striking way, they also uniquely represent the connection between heaven and earth. Thus, they play a prominent role in the cosmologies of many different cultures, are regularly privileged points of reference for religious ideas and places of ritual acts, and are also religiously revered as such to varying degrees.

On the one hand, neither the Greek nor the Roman religions – despite the Greek idea of Mount Olympus as the seat of the gods – attribute a key religious significance to mountains as such.¹ On the other hand, summit and mountain sanctuaries claim a prominent place in Bronze Age Crete.² Above all, however, it is in the regions of the Near East, especially Anatolia, Syria, and northern Mesopotamia, where mountain sanctuaries house the main deities of the cultures, namely mountain, storm, and weather gods. Many of these sanctuaries also represent supra-regionally highly significant cult sites, and the mountains themselves are considered sacred.³

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- 1 M.K. Langdon, 'Mountains in Greek Religion', *Classical World* 93 (2000), 463–470; K. Sporn, "Der göttliche Helikon". Bergkulte oder Kulte auf den Bergen in Griechenland?, in: R. Breitwieser, M. Frass, and G. Nightingale, eds., *Calamus: Festschrift für Herbert Graßl zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden 2015), 465–77. See also J. Maringer, 'Der Berg in Kunst und Kult der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 32 (1980), 255–258; R. Buxton, 'Imaginary Greek Mountains', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112 (1992), 1–15. A. Belis, *Fire on the Mountain: a Comprehensive Study of Greek Mountaintop sanctuaries* (2 volumes), PhD dissertation, Princeton University 2015 offers a valuable overview of the Greek evidence. See on Mount Olympus now A. Lichtenberger, *Der Olymp. Sitz der Götter zwischen Himmel und Erde* (Stuttgart 2021).
 - 2 A.A.D. Peatfield, 'The Topography of Minoan Peak Sanctuaries', *Annual of the British School of Athens* 78 (1983), 273–280; A.A.D. Peatfield, 'Minoan Peak Sanctuaries. History and Society', *Opuscula Atheniensi* 18 (1990), 117–131; K. Nowicki, 'Some Remarks on New Peak Sanctuaries in Crete', *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 122 (2007), 1–31.
 - 3 A.R.W. Green, *The Storm God in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 8) (Winona Lake, IN 2003); B. Jacobs, 'Bergheiligtum und Heiliger Berg. Überlegungen zur Wahl des Nemrud Daği-Gipfels als Heiligtums- und Grabstätte', in: J. Hahn and C. Ronning, eds., *Religiöse Landschaften* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 301) (Münster 2002), 31–47; M. Blömer, 'Der Mons Argaios und andere göttliche Berge in römischer Zeit', in: B. Engels,

The continuity not only of the cult sites but also of the ancient mountain and weather gods into Hellenistic-Roman times is a striking feature of the religious history of the eastern Mediterranean. They have an unbroken connection with the main Greek god Zeus and maintain, at the same time, their identity by being worshipped under their local names.⁴

At the latest with the legalisation of Christianity, these sanctuaries also came under the scrutiny of the Church and its efforts to comprehensively Christianise the Empire, which included its rural regions. Christianity, as an essentially city-based religious movement, barely reached the rural population until the Constantinian shift. Only with the dynamic development of monasticism in the fourth century did it become possible to reach rural territory. Before that, in the first three centuries, missionary efforts in the hinterland of the cities had taken place only rarely.⁵

At the same time, the mountain shrines posed a special challenge because of the Old Testament tradition, where the word of God says:

S. Huy and C. Steitler, eds., *Natur und Kult in Anatolien* (BYZAS 24) (Istanbul 2019), 253–282. On the ancient Near Eastern tradition of deifying mountains see also J. Aliquot, *La vie religieuse au Liban sous l'Empire romain* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 189), Beyrouth 2009, 20–23. One important example of continuously revered sacred mountains in the Iron Age and in antiquity is Dülük Baba Tepesi in Commagene where the old storm god of Doliche and his sanctuary evolved into the mediterranean-wide worshipped Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman period: E. Winter, 'The Cult of Iupiter Dolichenus and its Origins', in: S. Nagel et al. eds., *Entangled Worlds. Religious Confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire. The Cults of Isis, Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus* (Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 21), Tübingen 2017, 79–95; E. Winter, ed., *Vom eisenzeitlichen Heiligtum zum christlichen Kloster. Neue Forschungen auf dem Dülük Baba Tepesi* (Dolichener und Kommagenische Forschungen 9 = Asia Minor Studien 94), Bonn 2017.

4 A. Wiznura and C.G. Williamson, 'Mountains of Memory. Triangulating Landscape, Cult and Regional Identity through Zeus', *Pharos* 24 (2018–2020), 77–112 as well as the bibliography in the preceding note.

5 For Syria see P.-L. Gatier, 'La christianisation de la Syrie. L'exemple de l'Antiochène', *Topoi. Orient-Occident* 12 (2013), 61–96, for Palestine D. Bar, 'Rural Monasticism as a Key Element in the Christianization of Byzantine Palestine', *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005), 49–65. The tradition for earlier systematic efforts is problematic. A striking example – and at the same time an exception – is the work of Gregory Thaumaturgos (c.210–c.270 CE) in the Pontus region, if we may believe his *vita* – actually a panegyric – from the pen of Gregory of Nyssa, written only four generations later, around 380 CE, which already unfolds a retrospective-programmatic agenda and exaggerates the successes of the missionary work. When Gregory arrived, he found an area with just 17 Christians, but at his death only 17 pagans were still living there (Greg. Nys., *V. Greg. Thaum.* PG 46. 920a, 909b–c). On the problem of tradition see R. van Dam, 'Hagiography and History. The Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus', *Classical Antiquity* 1 (1982), 272–308; R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London 1987), 528–539; S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. II: *The Rise of the Church* (Oxford 1993), 53–57.

You shall destroy all the places wherein the nations that you shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: and you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and you shall destroy their name out of that place.⁶

In the wake of Judaism, Christianity as a monotheistic religion denied any other gods and cults the right to exist and in late antiquity also repeatedly took violent action against pagan shrines, destroying temples and cult statues.⁷ At the same time, it must be immediately emphasised, the new religion lacked a concept of sacred space and holy places. Since the days of the apostle Paul, it vehemently rejected any such ideas. Only with Constantine and his religious innovations in the Church – church building including sacralisation of the church space, discovery of the holy land, etc. – did the conceptual preconditions develop to finally, in the fourth century, accept and shape spatial, topographical, and material holiness in the Christian sphere.⁸

Thus the subject of this study, the fate of the mountain sanctuaries in the Late Antique Roman Near East in the course of Christianisation, is necessarily also embedded in a much broader, fundamental theme: namely, that of the Christian development and profound transformation of the established sacred landscape in the Roman East in Late Antiquity. This perspective is taken up in the concluding part of the paper to be re-examined here with a new thesis:

6 *Dtn* 7, 12. In summary on the significance of mountains in antiquity, in particular in Judaism and Christianity, E. Stommel and M. Kloepfel, 'Berg', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 2 (1954), 136–138.

7 B. Caseau, 'The Fate of Rural Temples in Late Antiquity and the Christianisation of the Countryside', in: W. Bowden, L. Lavan and C. Machado, eds., *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside* (Leiden 2004), 105–144; H. Saradi, 'The Christianization of Pagan Temples in the Greek Hagiographical Texts', in: J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter, eds., *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 163) (Leiden 2008), 113–143; U. Gotter, 'Thekla gegen Apoll. Überlegungen zur Transformation regionaler Sakraltopographie in der Spätantike', *Klio* 85 (2003), 189–211. Comprehensive on religiously motivated violence in late antiquity J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Klio-Beiheft 7) (Berlin 2004); M. Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ. Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39) (Berkeley 2005); T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity. Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia 2009), and most recently contributions in J. Dijkstra and C. Raschle, eds., *Religious Violence in the Ancient World* (Cambridge 2020).

8 J. Hahn, 'Wie können Orte Christen heilig sein? Konstantins Kirchenbau, die „Entdeckung“ des Heiligen Landes und die Anfänge einer christlichen Sakraltopographie', in: R. Achenbach, ed., *Heilige Orte der Antike* (Münster 2018), 236–263.

that stylites, a new extremely rigoristic movement in late antique Syrian asceticism, were the key agents in the conquest of the formerly pagan world of the mountains by Christianity.

When one looks at the available sources, it becomes clear that such an investigation can only be made within geographical limits. In view of the abundant source material, this will be, in the context of this contribution, the region of northern Syria. More precisely, the investigation must be limited to the Antiochéne, the territory and hinterland of the Greek metropolis of Syria, Antioch (Figure 15.1).

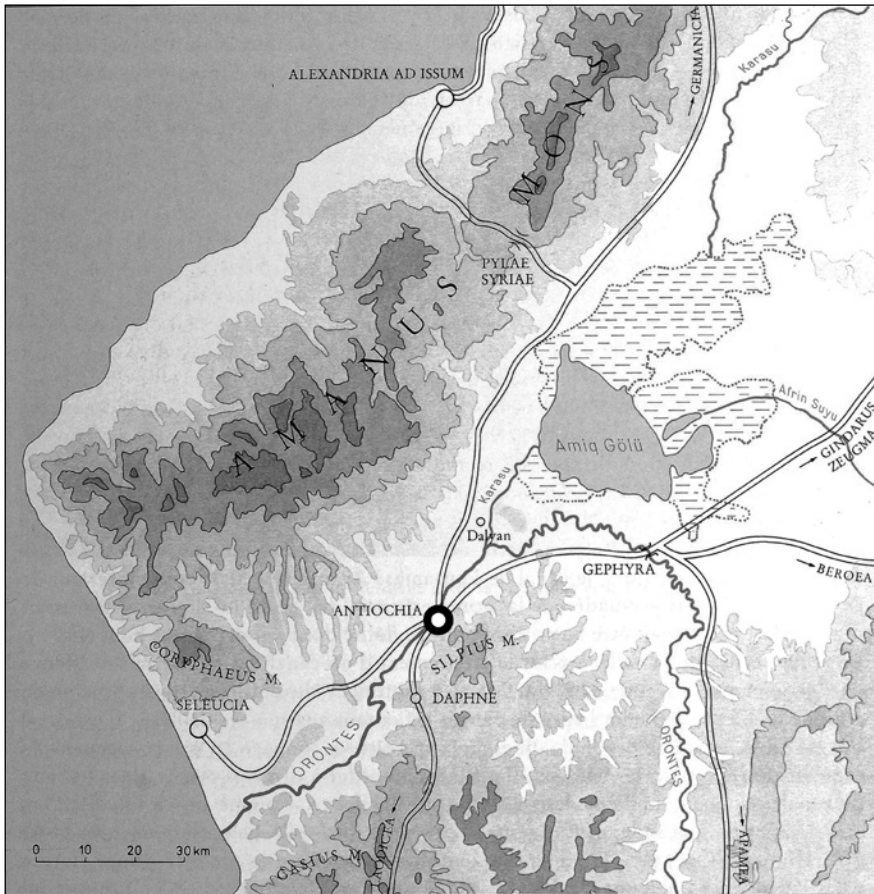


FIGURE 15.1 Map: Surroundings of Antioch with the Amanus mountain range in the north and Mount Kasios in the south (left). On the right edge of the picture below, the north-western foothills of the limestone massif
 © D. VAN BERCHEM, 'LE PORT DE SÉLEUCIE DE PIÉRIE ET L'INFRASTRUCTURE LOGISTIQUE DES GUERRES PARTHIQUES', BONNER JAHRBÜCHER 185 (1985), 67 (LVR-LANDESMUSEUM BONN, AUSFÜHRUNG JÖRN KRAFT)

This area, especially the limestone massif, experienced an enormous demographic and economic boom in the fourth-sixth centuries. Hundreds of sites flourished. In fact, these so-called 'Dead Cities' of northern Syria can still be partially seen today in the mountainous karst landscape criss-crossed by valleys and plains. The unique archaeological situation (the region became deserted from the seventh century onwards due to military and seismological events) has been systematically recorded in a famous French survey, undertaken since the late 1930s.⁹ This gives a striking view into the life of the Late-Antique rural population and at the same time into the process of Christianisation – and by extension, into the end of paganism and that of the most important mountain shrines of the region.

Pagan contemporaries who followed the process of Christianisation in the territory of Antioch had a clear, albeit biased, judgement about the role of the monks. The sophist Libanius, himself a respected citizen of Antioch and a large landowner in the surrounding area, deplored the actions of those ascetics with the following words:

But this black-robed tribe, who eat more than elephants, ... hasten to attack the temples with sticks and stones and bars of iron, and in some cases, disdainingly these, with hands and feet. Then utter desolation follows, with the stripping of roofs, demolition of walls, the tearing down of statues and the overthrow of altars, and the priests must either keep quiet or die. After demolishing one, they scurry to another, and to a third, and trophy is piled on trophy, in contravention of the law. Such outrages occur even in the cities, but they are most common in the countryside. ... So they sweep across the countryside like rivers in spate, and by ravaging the temples, they ravage the estates, for wherever they tear out a temple from an estate, that estate is blinded and lies murdered. Temples are the soul of the countryside: they mark the beginning of its settlement, and have been passed down through many generations to the men of today.¹⁰

One should not attach too much weight to this highly rhetorical – and here much abridged – polemic. But it does sharpen the view for the interpretation

9 G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord. Le Massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, I–III (Paris 1953/58); G. Tate, *Les campagnes de la Syrie du Nord du II^e au VII^e siècle: un exemple d'expansion démographique et économique à la fin de l'Antiquité* (Paris 1992).

10 Liban., *Or.* 30 (*Pro templis*), 8 (trl. A.F. Norman). On the meaning and significance of this much-quoted speech, see the interdisciplinary contributions in the volume edited by H.-G. Nesselrath et al., *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz. Libanios' Rede für den Erhalt der heidnischen Tempel* (SAPERE 18) (Tübingen 2011).

of the following findings, which are of an archaeological nature and focus on genuine mountain sanctuaries. At the same time, Libanius' condemnation raises the question of the precise role of the northern Syrian ascetics in the transformation of Antioch's hinterland, i.e. of their instrumental, even violent, role in the transformation of the religious landscape of northern Syria. Particularly significant is the role of the ascetics for the end of the pagan cults and sanctuaries on the one hand, and their contribution to the shaping of a Christian-determined rural space on the other, i.e. a landscape in which the ancient sacral traditions and cult practices were not only suppressed or repressed, but actually replaced. Indeed, new places and forms of worship emerged and came to fruition, which were able to satisfy the spiritual and cultic needs of contemporary society.

The study must start with an analysis of the significance of the pagan hill-top sanctuaries in northern Syria (Figure 15.2) and their fate in the course of the Christianisation of the rural area close to the Mediterranean coast. Here, Mount Kasios or Jebel al-Aqra is the highest peak in northern Syria (1728 m) (Figure 15.3); it is indisputably the most important mountain in the entire region, not only geographically but also religiously and historically.

Rising steeply from the Mediterranean coastline with a prominent peak and still densely forested in antiquity, it was the focus of continuous cultic worship from as early as the second millennium BCE onwards. The site was regarded as the seat of a powerful mountain and weather god not only by the surrounding population, but also by the changing state powers of the region, from Anatolia as well as Mesopotamia. The Ugarites in the south worshipped this deity as the storm god Sapani, the Hurrians and then the Hittites in the north as Shamin or Teshub, and referred to Mount Kasios as the seat of this

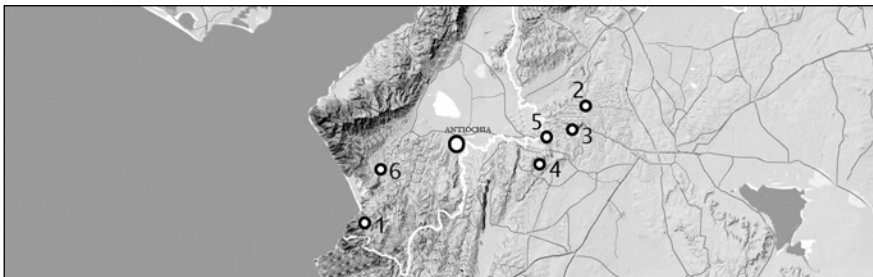


FIGURE 15.2 Map: Antioch (Antakya), the Orontes plain, and the northern limestone massif with marking of the location of the sanctuaries dealt with in the text: 1. Mount Kasios – 2. Sheikh Barakat – 3. Qal'at Sim'an – 4. Srir – 5. Kafr Daryan – 6. Wondrous Mountain

© GOOGLE MAPS



FIGURE 15.3 Jebel al-Aqra (Kel Dağı/Berg Kasios), seen from the site of ancient Seleucia Pieria

JULIEN ALIQUOT 2009 © CNRS HISOMA_IGLS

Ba'al under the name Hazzi.¹¹ A huge ash altar of 55 m in diameter and 9 m high on the summit, whose fire must have been visible from afar, both sea- and landwards, testifies to the uninterrupted cultic use of this sacred mountain. Its aura in the Middle East is also reflected in the Old Testament where it is mentioned as Mount Zaphon. The Greeks, in turn, took over the summit sanctuary on the peak and worshipped their father of the gods here as Zeus Kasios. In Greek mythology, Mount Kasios is associated with the great cosmic battle that took place between Zeus and his greatest enemy, the storm monster Typhon, as they fought for supremacy. After having his tendons cut, Zeus was eventually able to defeat Typhon with his thunderbolt. In worshipping Zeus Kasios, the Greeks drew on the imaginary world of the existing cult tradition and saw in this Zeus above all a protector of navigation and in Mount Kasios a point of reference for astronomy and meteorology. The extraordinary importance of Zeus Kasios

11 A. Salac, 'Zeus Kasios', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 46 (1922), 160–189; K. Koch, 'Hazzi-Şafön-Kasion. Die Geschichte eines Berges und seiner Gottheiten', in: B. Janowski, K. Koch and G. Wilhelm, eds., *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* (Orbis biblicus et orientalis 129) (Freiburg 1993), 171–223.

in Hellenism and at the same time his profile as the weather and storm god of the eastern Mediterranean manifested itself in the establishment of further cult sites, primarily in the port city of Pelusium in Egypt, and in the spread of votives in ship and anchor form dedicated to Zeus Kasios throughout the Mediterranean.¹²

No less important was the significance of the holy mountain for the ruler cult in Hellenism, especially for the Seleucids. The establishment of the Syrian *tetrapolis*, i.e. the founding of Seleucia (within sight of Kasios), Laodicea, Antioch (32 km northeast of Kasios, on the Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean at the mountain's foot) and Apamea, and thus at the same time of Seleucid rule in this region, is associated in later tradition – our sources come from Late Antiquity – with the cult of Kasios. Seleucus I is said to have received a sign on Mount Kasios during a sacrifice to Zeus, and then an eagle showed him the way to the site of his future capital, Seleucia. The king had thereupon founded another summit sanctuary on nearby Mount Silpios for the thunder god (Zeus Keraunios). The Olympian Zeus, *archegetes* of the Seleucid dynasty, was thus specifically linked to the Syrian mountain world.¹³ The mountain sanctuaries, and their specific connection with weather events, were therefore claimed in the Late-Antique tradition, which is based on sources or legends that we can no longer grasp, as characteristic of Greek cult practice in the northern Syrian region. Indeed, they were directly linked to the founding myths of the important poleis and of Seleucid rule as a whole.

Under Roman rule, these religious ideas were preserved. Above all, the legitimation potential associated with the Zeus Kasios cult was now also used by the new rulers: Trajan and Hadrian sought out the summit shrine to sacrifice there. It is said that a local lightning miracle indicated to the latter his future

12 E.W. Reed, 'Creating the Sacred Landscape of Mount Kasios', in: R. Häussler and G.F. Chiaï, eds., *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity. Creation, Manipulation, Transformation* (Oxford 2020), 87–94; A. Collar, 'Sinews of Belief, Anchors of Devotion. The Cult of Zeus Kasios in the Mediterranean', in: E.H. Seland and H.F. Teigen, eds., *Sinews of Empire. Networks and Regional Interaction in the Roman Near East and Beyond* (Oxford 2017), 23–36; A. Collar, 'Movement, Labour and Devotion: a Virtual Walk to the Sanctuary at Mount Kasios', in: A. Collar and T. Myrup Christensen eds., *Pilgrimage and Economy in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 192) (Leiden 2020), 33–61. For recent results of the excavation of a temple of Zeus Kasios in the ancient city of Pelusium see *The Jerusalem Post* of April 22, 2022 (online <https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-705259>).

13 Malal., *Chron.* 8, 12 (p. 198f.) is the main source. On the Seleucid foundation myths D. Ogden, *The Legend of Seleucus. Kingship, Narrative and Mythmaking in the Ancient World* (Cambridge 2017), especially 107–109.



FIGURE 15.4 Coinage under Trajan, Seleucia Pieria, 114–116 CE, (*BMC* 41), Æ 26 mm, 11.1 g. Image obverse laureate head right. Image reverse: cult stone (*baitylos*) of Zeus Kasios within tetrastyle shrine surmounted by eagle, beneath ZEYC KACIOC FROM PRIVATE COLLECTION

rule.¹⁴ The old aniconic conception of the deity is also preserved undiminished in Hellenistic and Roman times. The urban coinage in northern Syria shows lightning bundles, eagles, *baityloi* (cult stones), and mountains as symbols (Figure 15.4).¹⁵ Anthropomorphic cult objects, including cult statues, are however not known.

The significance of the striking continuity and vitality of the montane religious imagination, deeply rooted in popular belief, and the continuous worship of the ancient weather and storm deity in the summit sanctuary on Mount Kasios under changing names, now as Zeus Kasios, is easily overlooked. Yet impressive numismatic findings underline the eminent identity forming function of this cult for the Greek poleis of the region deep into the Roman imperial period, at least until the extinction of provincial coinage in the third century. Emperor Julian also visited the summit sanctuary in 362 CE to perform a hecatomb sacrifice on the huge altar.¹⁶

The sources are silent about the circumstances under which the cult of Zeus in the summit sanctuary came to an end in Late Antiquity. Perhaps the

14 Trajan is said to have sacrificed to Zeus Kasios, “Lord of the black clouds” (*kelainephés*), to obtain a battle victory; Anth., *Pal.* 6, 332. On this as well as on the other evidence Reed 2020, op. cit. (n. 12), 91.

15 K. Erickson, *The Early Seleucids, Their Gods and Their Coins* (London 2019). For Antioch and now R. McAlee, *The Coins of Roman Antioch* (Lancaster 2007) and now K.M. Neumann, *Antioch in Syria: A History from Coins (300 BCE–450 CE)* (Cambridge 2021).

16 Amm. Marc., 22, 12, 6.

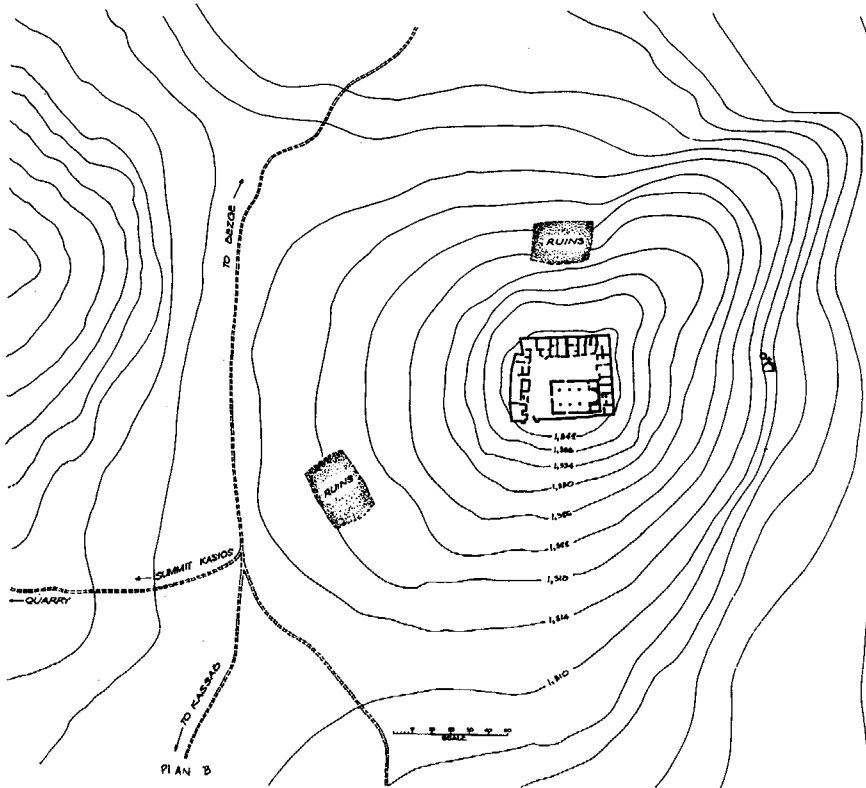


FIGURE 15.5 Map: St. Barlaam, location of the monastery on Mount Kasios (Jebel al-Aqra (Kel Dağı)); the path to the main summit with the fire altar is marked on the lower left

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undoubtedly then still-existing building structures were also destroyed during the process, or subsequently. What is certain is that the place of worship did not simply become obsolete. The eventual occupation of the holy mountain by the Antiochian Church is reflected in a tradition whose written version dates to the eleventh century: the *vita* of the ascetic Barlaam, who may have lived as late as the fourth century, attributes to him the foundation of the monastery that arose on the lower second peak of Mount Kasios and the church of which seems to date to the first half of the sixth century (Figure 15.5).¹⁷ According to the *vita*, Barlaam climbed Mount Kasios with exorcistic intentions and established his monastic settlement. He is said to have died there at the age of 80. It

17 For dating based on the assessment of architectural details, cf. W. Djobadze et al., *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und Christlichen Archäologie 13) (Stuttgart 1986), 25–27.

cannot be ruled out that the monastery was built on the site using components of a pagan predecessor complex, but this cannot be verified architecturally. A temple to Zeus Kasios, which undoubtedly existed in the vicinity of the ash altar on the summit, could not be found, and a new examination is out of the question in the foreseeable future, as the summit is a restricted military area.

Mountain sanctuaries are furthermore above all attested in the limestone massif to the east (Figure 15.2). The systematic exploration of the region carried out by G. Tchalenko from 1934 to 1948 led to the identification of almost a dozen presumed summit shrines, which occupied important peaks and thus dominated the landscape.¹⁸ In individual cases, the archaeological and partly epigraphic findings as well as literary testimonies allow for more detailed discussion and conclusions about developments between the fourth and seventh centuries, even if certainty, especially with regard to the exact chronology and the relevant actors, can hardly be achieved. A selection of significant findings will be presented here, followed by a new perspective on the process of Christianisation of the traditional sacred landscape with its summit shrines.

The most important sanctuary in the northern limestone massif, a temple to Zeus Madbachos and Selamanes, is located at an altitude of 870 m on top of Jebel Sheikh Barakat, the only real mountain in the limestone massif (Figure 15.6).¹⁹ It occupied an impressive artificial terrace of 68 m side length, which overlooked the whole northern plain of Dana. The Corinthian temple built in its centre in Roman times, measuring 16.50 m × 11.50 m with an east-facing porch, was a complex enclosed on all sides by porticos (Figure 15.7). The shrine can be traced back to a Hellenistic predecessor complex. In addition to the form of the building, the decoration also shows strong Hellenistic influences. The consecration of the temple to Zeus Madbachos and Selamanes – again much older local Semitic Ba'al cults, which merged into a Zeus cult here and

18 The results of the surveys and excavations are presented in his monumental work *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord. Le Massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, I–III, Paris, 1953/58. Cf. also Tate 1992, op. cit. (n. 9). On Tchalenko's biography and achievements, see now E.L. Leeming and J. Tchalenko, eds., *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites at Qal'at Sim'an* (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 12) (Leiden/Boston 2019), particularly 1–26. On the mountain shrines see also O. Callot and J. Marcillet-Jaubert, 'Hauts-lieux de Syrie du nord, temples et sanctuaires', in: G. Roux, ed., *Temples et sanctuaires* (Lyon 1984), 185–202.

19 For this shrine see, with the older bibliography, Callot and Marcillet-Jaubert 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 190 and K.S. Freyberger, 'Zur Nachnutzung heidnischer Heiligtümer aus Nord- und Südsyrien', in: H.-G. Nesselrath et al., *Libanios. Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz* (SAPERE 18) (Tübingen 2011), 179–226: 180–181.



FIGURE 15.6 Sheikh Barakat, ruins of the sanctuary, seen from the north
 © GATIER 2013, OP. CIT. (N. 5), FIG. 7

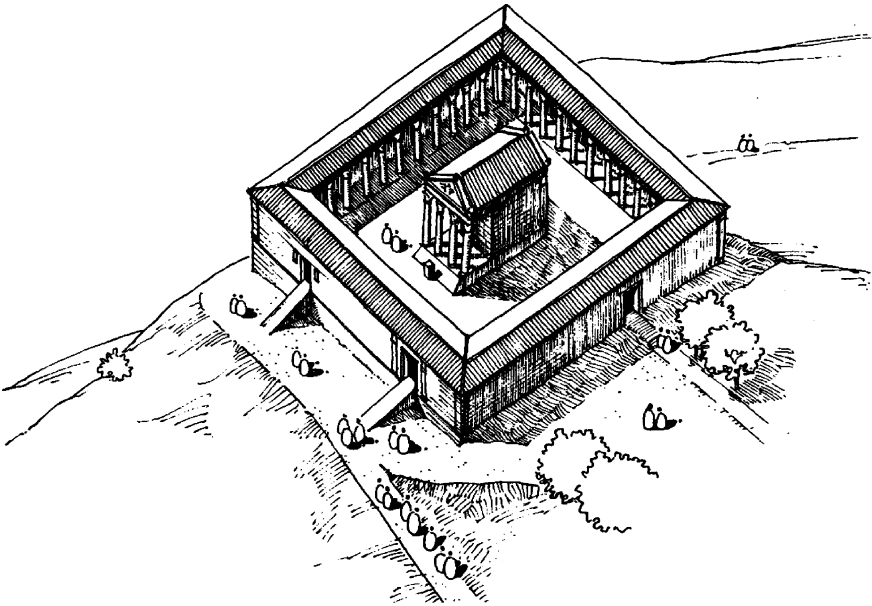


FIGURE 15.7 Sheikh Barakat, condition in the imperial period (1st–4th c. CE)
 (reconstruction)
 © CALLOT 1997, OP. CIT. (N. 21), FIG. 1

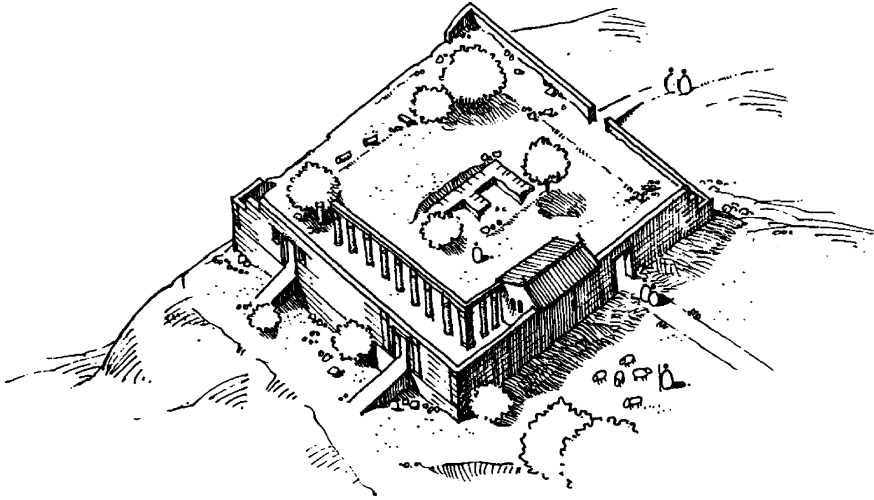


FIGURE 15.8 Sheikh Barakat, condition in late antiquity (4th–7th c. CE) with built in small church (reconstruction)

© CALLOT 1997, OP. CIT. (N. 21), FIG. 2

are thus also expressly designated as ‘ancestral’ gods²⁰ – is attested by numerous inscriptions from the *peribolos* as well as by its construction already between 80 and 150 CE.

In the late fourth or early fifth century, the sanctuary seems to have been converted to Christianity (Figure 15.8).²¹ The archaeological evidence, however, does not allow us to determine the circumstances of the end of its original use, or of its abandonment, or even of a violent destruction of the pagan cult building.²² Above all, it is not possible to determine how long the cult had been practised in the sanctuary before the structural transformation. Whether it ceased at a certain point in time or had been officially abandoned, perhaps after state intervention, further private worship at the site, which was now presumably abandoned to decay, can by no means ruled out and may also have been

20 For the etymology and meaning see F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, Mass./London 1993), 254–255. He points out that Zeus Madbachos is equivalent to Zeus Bomos in the nearby Burj Baqirha, meaning ‘Zeus (the) altar’. The Semitic god Selamanes can even be traced back to the second millennium BC.

21 O. Callot, ‘La christianisation des sanctuaires romains de la Syrie du Nord’, *Topoi. Orient-Occident* 7.2 (1997), 735–750: 737–738.

22 Freyberger 2011, op. cit. (n. 19), 180 n. 6; B. Ward-Perkins, ‘The End of the Temples: an Archaeological Problem’, in: J. Hahn, ed., *Spätantiker Staat und religiöser Konflikt. Imperiale und lokale Verwaltung und die Gewalt gegen Heiligtümer* (Millennium Studien 34) (Berlin 2011), 187–199.

tolerated by the authorities. An immediate, even aggressive Christian takeover, including conversion and new religious use, is in any case unlikely, considering the practice of Christian action against pagan sanctuaries elsewhere. Even after violent Christian occupation or destruction, pagan sanctuaries, apart from symbolic acts, were not, contrary to what the hagiographic tradition claims or suggests in a triumphalist perspective, immediately converted into Christian sacred places nor churches rebuilt in their place, but, if not used for profane purposes, first left to their fate after an initial targeted desacralisation. Only after a longer period of time, after years or decades, did people usually dare to dedicate those former dwellings of demons to Christian worship and to build churches on the ground and, if necessary, in the existing walls or using the building material available.²³ Only then was the Christianisation of a formerly pagan place of worship completed, and its conversion or transformation to a Christian place of worship finally accomplished.

In fact, in the case of the sanctuary of Jebel Sheikh Barakat, this process of transformation and its conditions can be understood even more closely through the literary tradition. It seems beyond doubt that Theodoretus, bishop of Cyrrhus, in whose diocese this section of the limestone massif fell, had precisely this mountain in mind in his account – the so-called *historia religiosa*, a kind of monastic history written around 440 CE – of the work of important monks in his area of authority when he described its occupation by Christian ascetics:

Lying east of Antioch and west of Beroea, there is a high mountain that rises above the neighbouring mountains and imitates at its top-most summit the shape of a cone. It derives its name from its height, for the local inhabitants are accustomed to calling it “peak” (*koryphē*). On its very peak there was a precinct of demons much revered by those in the neighbourhood. ... Here one Ammianus built a philosophical retreat (*phrontistērion*). ... There are very many other ascetics whom the

23 See the contributions in: J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter, eds., *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 163) (Leiden/Boston 2008) as well as A. Busine, ‘Introduction’, in: ead., ed., *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th–7th cent.)* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 182) (Leiden/Boston 2015), 1–18; J. Hahn, ‘Public Rituals of Depaganization in Late Antiquity’, in A. Busine, ed., *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th–7th cent.)* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 182) (Leiden/Boston) 2015, 115–140. Also informative is the regional study by R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (BAR Intern. Series 1281) (Oxford 2004), especially 58–64.

monk-father Eusebius trained in this way and sent to be teachers in other wrestling-schools, who have filled all that holy mountain with these divine and fragrant pastures.²⁴

There is little to suggest that at the time the ascetics took possession of the mountain – Ammianus may be dated to the middle of the fourth century – a cult was still practised on its summit.²⁵ Only demons, with whom Ammianus disputed this place through his settlement, are still wreaking havoc there – if they had not already abandoned it and the active worship of the local pagan population had become a thing of the past. The entire mountain, certainly by the time of Theodoretus several generations later, is evidently already occupied by ascetics, the spiritual control of the sacred landscape taken over by these Christian protagonists.²⁶

The archaeologically ascertainable remodelling of the sanctuary at the turn of the fourth/fifth century is thus not to be interpreted as a destruction that took place in the context of an open religious conflict, as evoked by Libanius in his polemic quoted at the beginning. Rather, it must have been a later dismantling or spoliation. The temple was indeed dismantled down to the foundations. Only a few structural elements, such as column shafts, remained on site, but these were not very suitable for profane reuse. In any case, other components were used to construct houses in the neighbouring villages.²⁷

The modest chapel built in the ruins on the north side of the *peribolos* late in the fifth or sixth century cannot be considered as a serious Christian successor to the pagan temple. Unlike other abandoned sanctuaries, the temple terrace on Jebel Sheikh Barakat remained largely unused in Late Antiquity. Instead, a styliite column was erected only a few hundred metres west of the plateau in the direction of the nearby village of Qasr al-Hadid. Its significance will be discussed in more detail below.²⁸

From the perspective of religious history, however, the significance of the structural development on Sheikh Barakat in late antiquity almost completely

24 Theodoret., *Hist. Rel.* 4, 1 and 13 (trl. R.M. Price).

25 Millar 1993, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 255f.

26 On the struggle with demons as an archetypal moment in the life of ascetics, see D. Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk. Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge 2006), 3–22. M. Hoskin, 'The Close Proximity of Christ to Sixth-Century Mesopotamian Monks in John of Ephesus' *Lives of Eastern Saints*, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69 (2018), 262–277: 272 highlights the special role of ascetics in taking possession of mountain shrines.

27 Here and in the following paragraph I consider primarily the architectural survey and interpretation of Freyberger 2011, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 181.

28 See pp. 284–285.

recedes into the background in view of something that happened only a few kilometres away as the crow flies, actually in view of the ancient sanctuary of Zeus. For on the high ground opposite the plateau of Sheikh Barakat, which borders the great fruit plain of Dana to the southwest (Figure 15.2), in the fifth century a place of worship was built, which within a few decades became the most important place of worship and pilgrimage in northern Syria (Figure 15.9). This was Qal'at Sim'ān, the place where the first stylite of Late Antiquity, Symeon Stylites (the Elder) (c.390–459 CE), took up his previously unknown asceticism of pillar-standing: undoubtedly the most extreme form of ascetic practice originating in Syria, which was truly not lacking in rigorous religious innovations. The voluntary retreat to a metres-high pillar and remaining on it for many years soon became the much admired characteristic of the 'living' Christian sacred landscape that was forming in northern Syria. Quite a few ascetics in the region followed the example of Symeon, whose secluded holiness found a tremendous echo in the rural population, but also in the cities of the region. Symeon's column – the last of the *stelae* erected by disciples of this holy man had a height of 18 m – on the ridge near the village of Telanissos became a prime destination for Christian believers during the saint's lifetime and soon a supra-regional pilgrimage centre of rapidly increasing importance (Figure 15.10).²⁹

This is not the place to trace the impact of Symeon's stylitism, which found literary expression in no less than three contemporary biographies and, with the veneration of a living holy man, gave rise to new forms of Christian religiosity and popular devotion.³⁰ It is, however, important that a place of worship and an impressive Christian sanctuary was established on the ridge of the (later so-called) Jebel Sim'ān (Figure 15.11). Its church complex, constructed under the patronage of Emperor Zeno within 15 years after Symeon's death, included

29 J.-P. Sodini and J.-L. Biscop, 'Qal'at Sim'ān et Deir Sem'an: naissance et développement d'un lieu de pèlerinage durant l'Antiquité Tardive', in: J.-P. Spieser, ed., *Architecture paléochrétienne* (Paris 2011), 11–59. On Symeon and the archaeology of Qal'at Sim'ān, see most recently, with rich bibliography, Leeming and Tchalenko 2019, op. cit. (n. 18).

30 On the tradition cf. H. Lietzmann and H. Hilgenfeld, *Das Leben des Heiligen Symeon Stylites* (Berlin 1908), 197–228; R. Doran (trl.), *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Cistercian Studies 112) (Kalamazoo, MI 1992). On religiosity and popular piety around Symeon cf. S. Ashbrook Harvey, 'The Sense of a Stylite. Perspectives on Simeon the Elder', *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 376–394. Fundamental to the phenomenon of the *Holy Men* remains P. Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–100 with idem, 'Arbiters of the Holy: the Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity', in idem, *Authority and the Sacred. Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge 1995), 55–78; idem, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity 1971–1997', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6:3 (1998), 353–376.



FIGURE 15.9 Qal'at Sim'ān, aerial view, taken September 16, 1936
 © INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DU PROCHE-ORIENT, NO. IFPO 22655 (LICENCE
 OUVERTE 1.0)

the largest Christian church of the time, which was only to be surpassed by the construction of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople under Justinian in 537 CE. The centre of the complex and at the same time the centre point of the cruciform Symeon's church was the column of the deceased stylite (Figure 15.12).³¹

Far away from the urban settlements of the coast and of the Syrian interior, a Christian sacred place now existed, deep in the northern Syrian limestone massif, on a mountain height, visible from afar. It outshone the nearby pagan sanctuary on Sheikh Barakat, which had been so important before, and caused it to sink into final insignificance – if it had not already been abandoned long ago, as discussed above.

There are, however, other pagan sacred sites in the area that, according to archaeological evidence, were taken over by Christians in Late Antiquity. South of the plain of Dana, about 15 km as the crow flies from Jebel Sheikh Barakat with its Madbachos and Selamanes sanctuary and from the pilgrimage centre of Qal'at Sim'ān, on an artificial terrace, near the ancient village of Tilokbarein

31 H.C. Butler, *Syria: Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909, Division II: Architecture, Section B: Northern Syria* (Leiden 1920), 281–294; D. Krencker, *Die Wallfahrtskirche des Simeon Stylites in Kal'at Sim'ān* (Berlin 1939); Tchalenko 1953, op. cit. (n. 9), 205–276.



FIGURE 15.10 Symeon Stylites (?), altar rail panel, basalt, 84 × 76 × 18,5 cm, 260 kg, (5th–6th c. CE)

© BODE-MUSEUM, BERLIN. PICTURE BY AUTHOR

(today Tell Aqibrin) on the summit of a 560 m high mountain, Jebel Srir, there was a temple of 7 m × 6 m in size built in the first half of the second century CE. It was dedicated to Zeus Tourbarachos and it received, in the course of an extension in 150 CE, a *pronaos* of 8.80 m × 5 m, which was also enclosed by a *peribolos*. In front of the temple was a monumental altar (Figure 15.13).³²

32 Callot and Marcillet-Jaubert 1984, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 192–195 and O. Callot and P.-L. Gatier, 'Étude du sanctuaire du Djebel Srir', *Chronique archéologique en Syrie* 1 (1997), 153–155. Compare also Millar 1993, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 253f. and Freyberger 2011, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 181f.

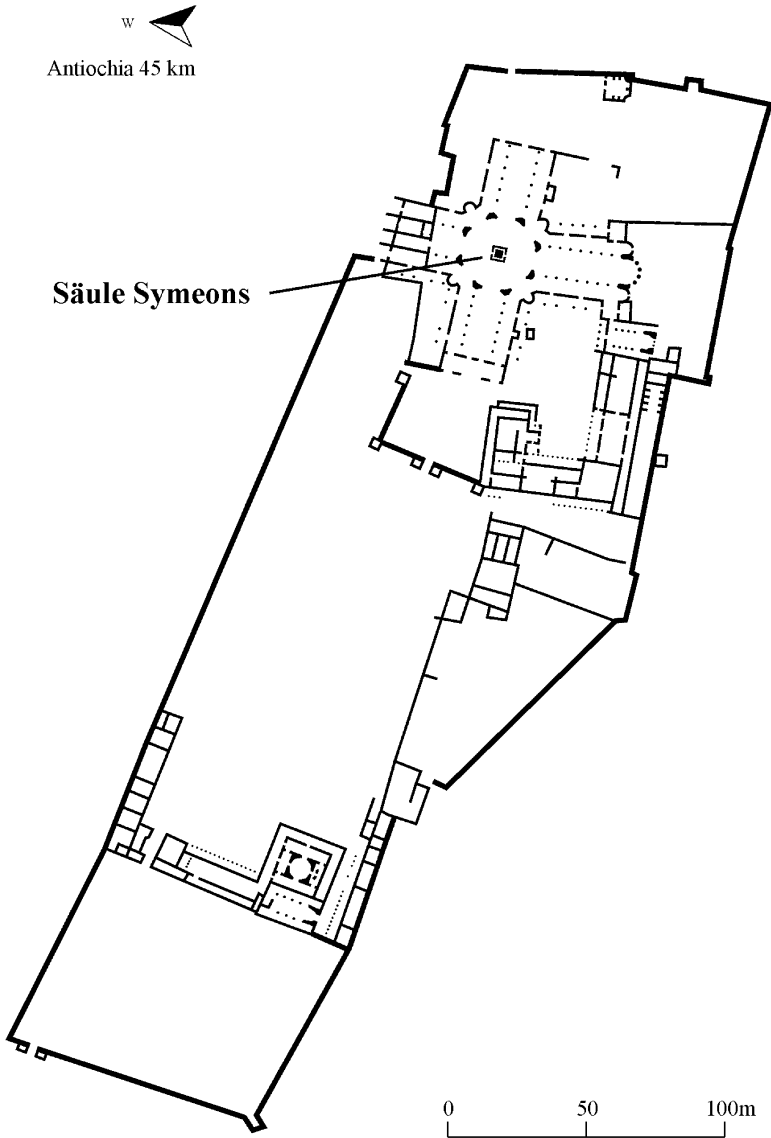


FIGURE 15.11 Qal'at Sim'an, ground plan of monastery complex
 © J.-L. BISCOP – J.-P. SODINI, 'TRAVAUX À QAL'AT SEM'AN', IN: ACTES
 DU XI^E CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL D'ARCHÉOLOGIE CHRÉTIENNE 1986,
 VOL. 2, CITTÀ DEL VATICANO (1989), 1676, FIG. 1



FIGURE 15.12 Qal'at Sim'an, view of octagon with remains of Symeon Stylites' column
 © ARIAN ZWEGERS, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS CC)

The complex was converted into a convent in Late Antiquity. However, as in the case for the sanctuary of Jebel Sheikh Barakat, the question must remain unanswered as to how long the pagan cult building remained in use and under what circumstances its Christian takeover took place. The affixing of two Christograms on column shafts of the *pronaos* may indicate that the occupation was initially provisional. Whether the temple also served temporarily as a Christian chapel, as K. Freyberger considers conceivable, is doubtful, as it would contradict the otherwise tangible Christian restraint with regard to an immediate conversion. What is more decisive is that directly below the small temple terrace, but still in the walled *temenos* of the sanctuary, an approximately 12 m high stylite column was erected and buildings of a modest monastery complex were constructed directly around it (Figure 15.14).

The former temple, on the other hand, was remodelled while retaining substantial parts of its masonry, and a tower, possibly a recluse tower, was erected above its *adyton*, while the former *pronaos* now served as a courtyard. A small single-nave church, on the other hand, was built in the south-eastern area of the sanctuary precinct in front of the stylite column. The church had an underground chamber inside, which may have been used as a collective tomb for

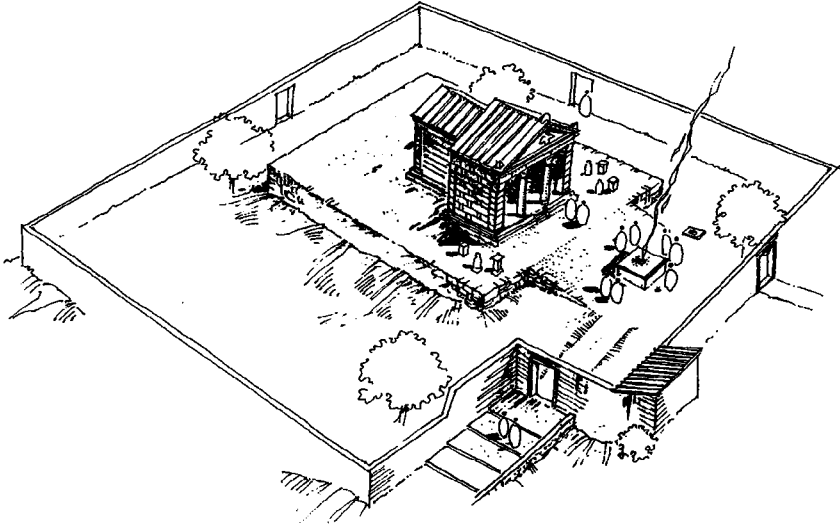


FIGURE 15.13 Srir, Zeus Tourbarachos-sanctuary with temenos-wall, temple und altar (2th–4th c. CE) (reconstruction)

© CALLOT 1997, OP. CIT. (N. 21), 746, FIG. 5

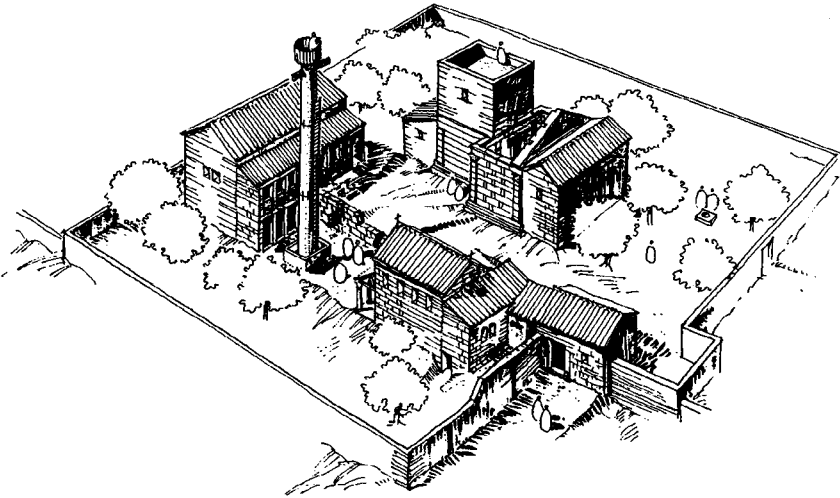


FIGURE 15.14 Srir, Christianised sanctuary with stylite, church and pilgrims' hostel (4th–7th c. CE) (reconstruction)

© CALLOT 1997, OP. CIT. (N. 21), FIG. 6

the monks. A large building on the opposite side of the stylite column with a portico on its eastern façade probably served to house the monks.

The former sanctuary district was thus filled with a church and functional buildings in addition to the column, while the former temple was pragmatically adapted and expanded to new needs while largely preserving the wall features. The original entrance to the district was also retained, but a small gateway was added. A more precise chronological determination of the structural developments and the religious use of the complex in Late Antiquity does not seem possible. It should be noted that the stylite column signified the new focus of the entire complex, and represented the spiritual centre of the monastery. Its erection also preceded the construction of the buildings immediately surrounding it. The latter were aligned with the column and added afterwards.

Other mountain shrines in the immediate vicinity were also taken over by Christians in the period of interest here and permanently secured as ascetic seats and monasteries for the new faith. Ten kilometres southwest of Jebel Sheikh Barakat, on a hilltop, lie the foundation walls of the small convent of Kafr Daryan (Figure 15.15). It was dominated by a stylite column that still remains toppled in the middle of the sanctuary (Figure 15.16). Right next to the foundations of the column, against the wall of the convent, is a single tomb: undoubtedly that of the deceased stylite(s) who were the religious reference point of the community.³³

Twelve kilometres northeast of Jebel Sheikh Barakat, above the village of Kalota, to which, 600 m east of the sanctuary, a road was the only access, there was a sanctuary measuring 59 m × 48 m with two temples with small porticoes. They had been built and dedicated to Zeus Seimios and Symbetylos in the second century CE according to a preserved building inscription. Older enclosure walls indicate the existence of at least one predecessor building. Here too, of course, as indicated by the double *epiclesis* of the deity, existed a cult tradition going back a long way.³⁴ The cross in deep relief on the lintel of the larger temple indicates that the pagan sacred buildings were first symbolically

33 Tchalenko 1953, op. cit. (n. 9), 171–172, 278–279; J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie: essai sur la genèse, la forme et l'usage liturgique des édifices du culte chrétien, en Syrie, du III. siècle à la conquête musulmane* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, Institut français de Beyrouth 42), Paris 1947, 277–279.

34 For the findings see Butler 1920 (op. cit. n. 31), 318–320; Callot and Marcillet-Jaubert 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 198–202; P.-L. Gatier, 'Villages et sanctuaires en Antiochène autour de Qalaat Kalota', *Topoi* 7 (1997), 751–775; Callot 1997, op. cit. (n. 21), 743f. and Freyberger 2011, op. cit. (n. 19), 184–186, on whose summary analysis I base myself here above all.



FIGURE 15.15 Convent of Kafr Daryan with base of the styliite column from east with fragment of column shaft in background
 © FRANK KIDNER COLLECTION, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC (CREATIVE COMMONS)

desacralised, but remained undestroyed for the time being.³⁵ It was only at an indeterminable later date, perhaps still in the fifth century, that a large basilica with three naves was built in their place. Large sections of the walls of the pagan predecessor buildings were included in the new construction: namely the east wall of the smaller of the two temples and the entire north side as well as part of the east wall of the larger temple. Numerous structural elements of both buildings were also used for the decoration of the new church, while unusable elements were broken up and used as a gravel surface around the

35 Perhaps the most striking example of this practice is found on the southern frontier of the Empire, where the important temple of Isis on the Nile island of Philae, active until Justinian times, was desacralised under Bishop Theodoros and, to this end, elaborately ornamented crosses were placed in plain view at various key points in the ancient Egyptian structure, in one case with the explanatory inscription “The cross has triumphed. It will always be victorious!”. See the findings of P. Nautin, ‘La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne’, *Cahiers archéologiques* 17 (1967), 1–43 and J. Hahn, ‘Die Zerstörung der Kulte von Philae. Geschichte und Legende am ersten Nilkatarakt’, in: J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter, eds., *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 163) (Leiden/Boston 2008), 203–242, in particular 213–215.

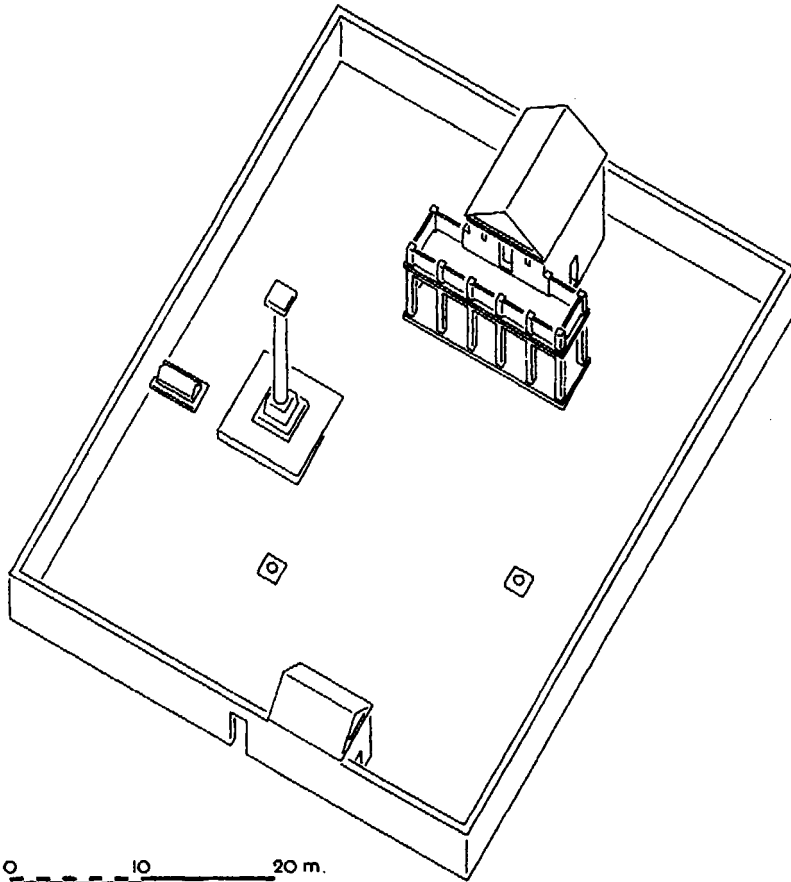


FIGURE 15.16 Convent of Kafr Daryan with stylite column and stylite grave (left) (reconstruction)
© TCHALENKO 1953, *OP. CIT.* (N. 9), VOL. II, PL. CLXXXIV

basilica. Later construction measures, probably dating to the sixth century, suggest that the complex now housed a monastic community. This church is indeed, as H.C. Butler noted already in 1920, “the only example in all Northern Syria of a Christian church in which there are incorporated considerable portions of a pagan temple”.³⁶

A similar finding is made with regard to the summit sanctuary at Burdj Baqirha, which is situated on a 558 m high hill that dominates the western

36 Butler 1920, *op. cit.* (n. 31), 319.

foothills of the plain of Dana, the plain of Sermada.³⁷ A dedicatory inscription to Zeus Bomos, dating to 161 CE, is carved on the monumental portal of the *peribolos*, while other inscriptions attest to construction work up to 238 CE. In view of the name of the deity worshipped in the sanctuary, 'Zeus Altar', at least one Hellenistic predecessor cult may have existed here as well. Of the temple, a four-columned *prostylos* of Corinthian order and sections of wall of 10 m high have survived. However, the building does not seem to have been put to new cultic use in late antiquity, but to have served other purposes through the addition of storeys. The scant archaeological evidence related to the situation in Late Antiquity, however, does not permit any reliable interpretation, not even of the time of the 'end' of the temple.

At this point, an interim conclusion is possible. The rise in demographic and economic prosperity of the mountainous landscape of northern Syria in late antiquity, which had been characterised by important sanctuaries since ancient times and whose cult tradition had continued without interruption in the Hellenistic and Roman period, was accompanied by a sustained Christianisation. This is visible in the extensive hinterland of the Syrian cities of the region, above all through the archaeological evidence. The end of the old pagan sanctuaries, however, unlike what the pagan rhetor Libanius so eloquently suggested towards the end of the fourth century, did not occur as a result of systematic attacks and fanatical destruction by Christian monks. Rather, the archaeological and literary evidence suggests that those sanctuaries had regularly been abandoned and were perhaps still sporadically venerated in private, without us being able to pinpoint the time of their extinction. There is no doubt that ascetics played a decisive role in the 'conquest', which was certainly mostly peaceful; their settlement in places of retreat suitable for asceticism meant the Christian appropriation of this landscape, which resulted in the successive conversion of the rural population. Summit and mountain shrines were, it seems, popular places for the establishment of ascetic dwellings and settlements of (individual) monks. The occupation by monastic communities, now also in the abandoned buildings of mountain shrines, marked the next phase, which was accompanied by the conversion and structural adaptation of these buildings. These became Christian sanctuaries, new sacred places.

It is worth emphasising that stylites played a special role in this process of Christianisation in northern Syria. Following the example of the first stylite, Symeon the Elder, who had climbed his column on a ridge within sight of the temple complex on Sheikh Barakat and had successively ascended to higher

37 Callot and Marcillet-Jaubert 1984, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 195–198; Callot 1997, *op. cit.* (n. 21); Freyberger 2011, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 183.

and higher columns donated by believers, stylites built and ascended their columns on mountain summits, often in the midst of or in close relation to former pagan sanctuaries. In this way, they took possession of the old sacred sites and visibly disempowered them by their sheer proximity and religious practice. The stylites can therefore justifiably be addressed as the ascetic spearhead in the Christian appropriation of the pagan landscape of northern Syria.

Their spectacular ceaseless asceticism in the open air, regardless of heat, rain and cold, and assisted by disciples who took over their care (and soon formed monastic communities), visibly demonstrated their closeness to God and made them, as undeniably holy men, objects of requests and worship. Believers sought them out for healing and help through their prayers and intercession. The swelling stream of pilgrims gave rise to the erection of pilgrims' hostels and, particularly impressive in the case of Telanissos, to extensive pilgrimage centres. In addition to the Christian infrastructure of buildings and personnel, the constant influx and presence of pilgrims ensured an increasingly Christian appearance of the northern Syrian landscape, which accompanied the Christianisation of the rural population.

The special relationship of the stylite to the sky, and thus also the choice of the location of his column on a hilltop or mountain peak, was perceived, indeed experienced, by every visitor on his or her ascent to the place of worship – especially when early morning fog covered the slopes or still filled the valley depressions and the view of the column with the lonely ascetic only opened up in the course of the ascent. It must have been no less impressive for the pilgrim who had toiled up the mountain to encounter abandoned lower columns, which the stylite (on Christ's orders, as it was told) had left to climb a higher monument erected by worshippers and disciples, finally measuring about 18 m.

The site of the younger Symeon on the rocky spur which overlooked the road from Antioch to the Mediterranean was popularly called Wondrous Mountain because of the many miracles the stylite worked at this site (Figure 15.17). The pilgrimage centre, which was built on the hilltop within a decade (Figure 15.18, Figure 15.19) and completed in 551 CE,³⁸ offers a remarkable finding. The

38 Djobadze 1986, op. cit. (n. 17), 57ff. contains a concise and reliable historical and archaeological overview with documentation of the architectural features of the monastery complex including the stylite column. More recently, A. Belgin-Henry, *The Pilgrimage Centre of St. Symeon the Younger: Designed by Angels, Supervised by a Saint, Constructed by Pilgrims*, PhD dissertation, University of Illinois 2015, has presented a detailed discussion of the archaeological evidence on the shrine. An excellent historical analysis of the hagiographical tradition is provided by F. Millar, 'The Image of a Christian Monk in Northern Syria: Symeon Stylites the Younger', in: C. Harrison et al., eds., *Being Christian in Late Antiquity*.



FIGURE 15.17 Map: Location of the Wondrous Mountain above the Orontes between Antioch and Mediterranean coast (with Mount Kasios in the south)
 © BERCHEM 1985, OP. CIT. (FIG. 15.1), 67 (LVR-LANDESMUSEUM BONN, AUSFÜHRUNG JÖRN KRAFT)

central construction with the octagon and the column in its centre took architectural account of the spiritual character of stylitism. While the naves converging on the central building were roofed, the column itself, enclosed by the

A Festschrift for Gillian Clark (Oxford 2014), 278–295. A compilation of dedicatory inscriptions and pilgrim tokens (*eulogiai*) has been published by Paweł Nowakowski in the Oxford project *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity*: <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E01648>. See now also L. Parker, *Symeon Stylites the Younger and Late Antique Antioch. From Hagiography to History*, (Oxford 2022), in particular 113–125.

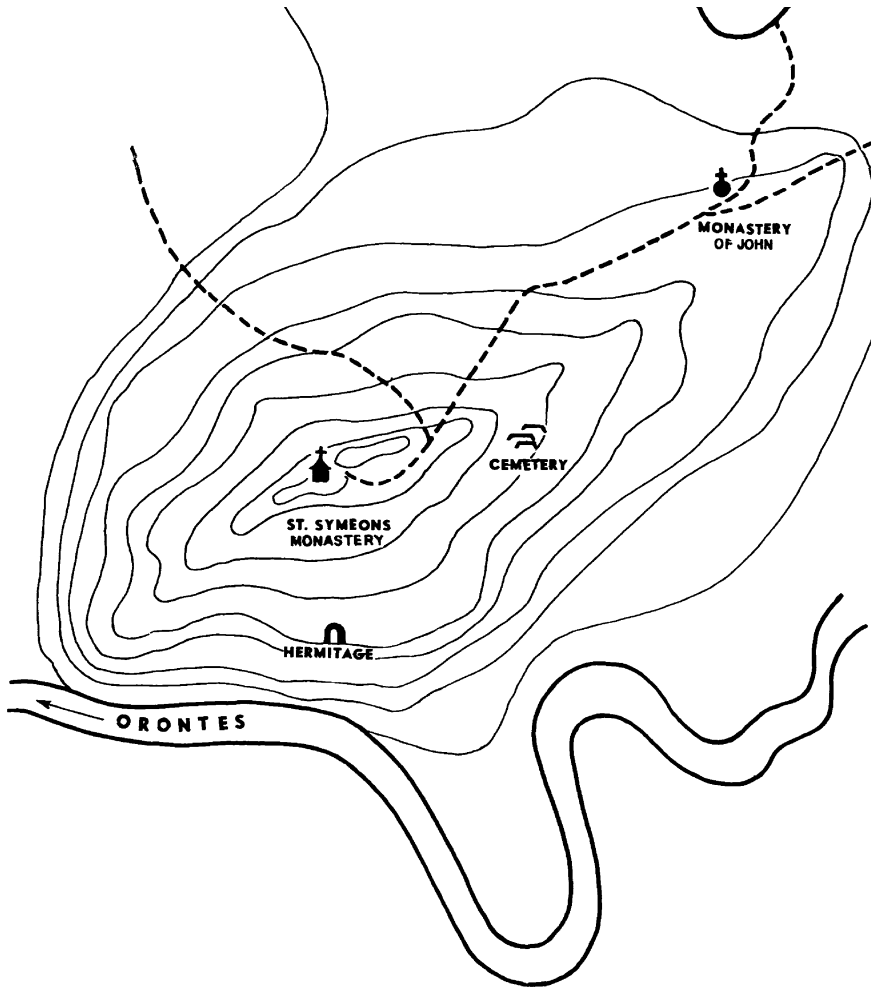


FIGURE 15.18 Map: Location of the monastery of Symeon the Younger on the rocky spur of the Wondrous Mountain above the Orontes plain
 © DJOBADZE E.A., *OP. CIT.* (N. 17), PLAN G

octagon, stood free; it must have towered far above the complex (Figure 15.20, Figure 15.21). With its platform, it offered the pillar-stander an open-air home exposed to wind and weather for 41 years (Figure 15.22). Pilgrims seeking help later explained that at the moment of their healing they had seen the heavenly grace obtained by Symeon as a flash of lightning. The idea of the ancient weather deity thus manifesting its power is unmistakable. However, Symeon's teaching, of which we have some evidence in the form of sermons and letters,



FIGURE 15.19 Aerial View of the monastery of Symeon the Younger on the Wondrous Mountain near Antioch, above the Orontes
 © DJOBADZE E.A., *OP. CIT.* (N. 17), FIG. 111

does not relate to any such ideas; it focuses, conventionally, upon uncompromising moral standards and presents the stylite as an experienced combatant with demons.³⁹

The overwriting of earlier pagan sites of worship on mountains and hills by monastic complexes is to be understood, as previously explained, as a deliberate destruction, displacement, and permanent replacement. It represents the eradication of the traditional sacred landscape by a Christian one. The pillars of the stylites, however, occupy a position of their own here, and contain a special semantics. All are located in highly visible places; we have discussed several of the monuments located on mountains and their pagan predecessors. Indeed, stylite columns are placed on some of the highest elevations of the limestone massif, as was the case at Jebel Srir and Jebel Sheikh Barakat. The column of the first stylite, the elder Symeon, above the village of Telanissos, is spectacularly located, with a sweeping view across the Dana plain in the northern limestone massif, directly across from one of the most important pagan Syriac sanctuaries of all, the temple of Zeus Madbachos and Salamanes. After

39 Parker 2022, *op. cit.* (n. 38), 55–112.

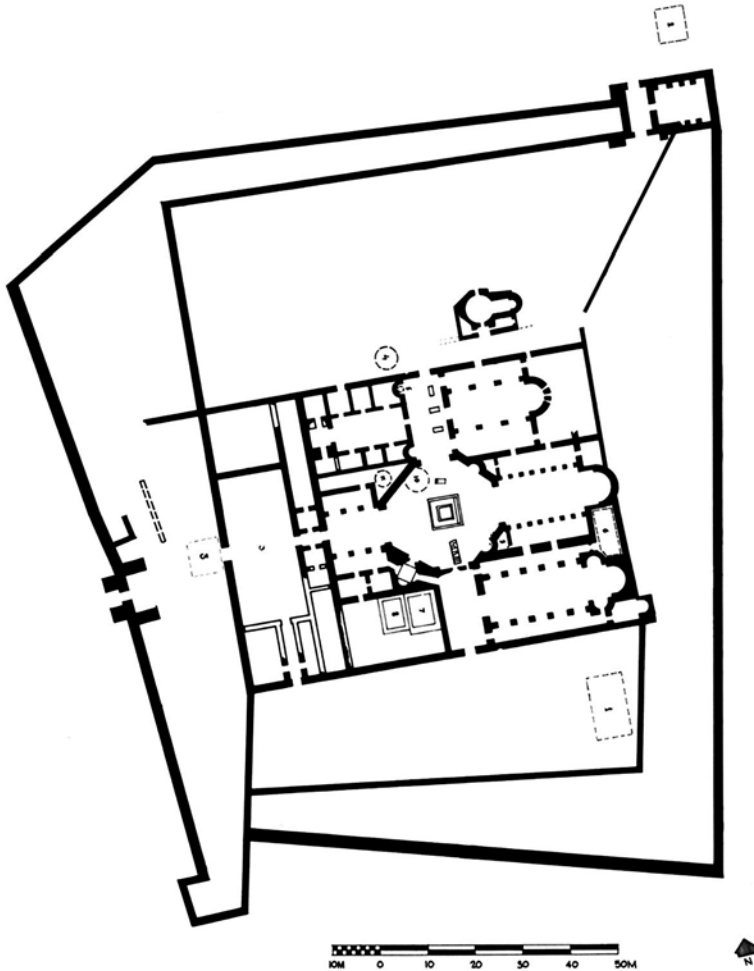


FIGURE 15.20 Monastery of Symeon the Younger, ground plan of the condition in the 6th–7th c. CE

© DJOBADZE E.A. 1986, OP. CIT. (N. 17), PLAN F

the death of the great stylite in 459 CE and the subsequent construction of the massive pilgrimage complex between 476 and 490 CE, the new Christian sanctuary and the column of Symeon preserved in its centre finally trumped the nearby sanctuary of the ancient weather god both visually and religiously.

The stylite columns did not only function as simple *foci* of piety for the rural population of the surrounding area. They were also living landmarks of enormous charisma, visible from afar, which spiritually charged their wider spatial surroundings. They gave the landscape a specific Christian imprint – negating



FIGURE 15.21 Monastery of Symeon the Younger on the Wondrous Mountain near Antioch: the Octagon with the remains of the column and (front left) the massive basis for the ladder to climb the column. In the background the mountain range beyond the Orontes plain
© JOSH RYVERS

earlier pagan shrines and hilltop sanctuaries. Stylites became key elements of the new Christian rural geography.

Since these monuments were not only located on ground elevations, but regularly at the same time next to or close to important overland routes, the holy men on their pillars visually and spiritually dominated the main arteries of life in northern Syria (Figure 15.23, Figure 15.24).⁴⁰ Travellers from Antioch to Chalkis or Beroia, or even to Cyrrhus in the north, were always within sight of stylites, passing a holy man on his pillar every hour (Figure 15.25).

Stylites and their columns thus embodied, I argue, a completely new type of 'high-altitude sanctuary'. They realised a religious Christian presence which,

40 L.A. Schachner, 'The Archaeology of the Stylite', in: D.M. Gwynn and S. Bangert, eds., *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity* (Late Antique Archaeology 6) (Leiden 2010), 329–400: 366–375, who examines in detail the spatial-geographical dimension of stylitism in the northern Syrian region. See also J.-P. Sodini, 'Les stylites syriens (v^e–vi^e siècles) entre cultes locaux et pèlerinages « internationaux »', in A. Vauchez, ed., *Le Pèlerinage de l'Antiquité à nos jours. Actes du 130^e Congrès National des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques*, La Rochelle 2005 (Paris 2012), 5–23; Sodini and Biscop 2011, op. cit. (n. 29), 11–59.

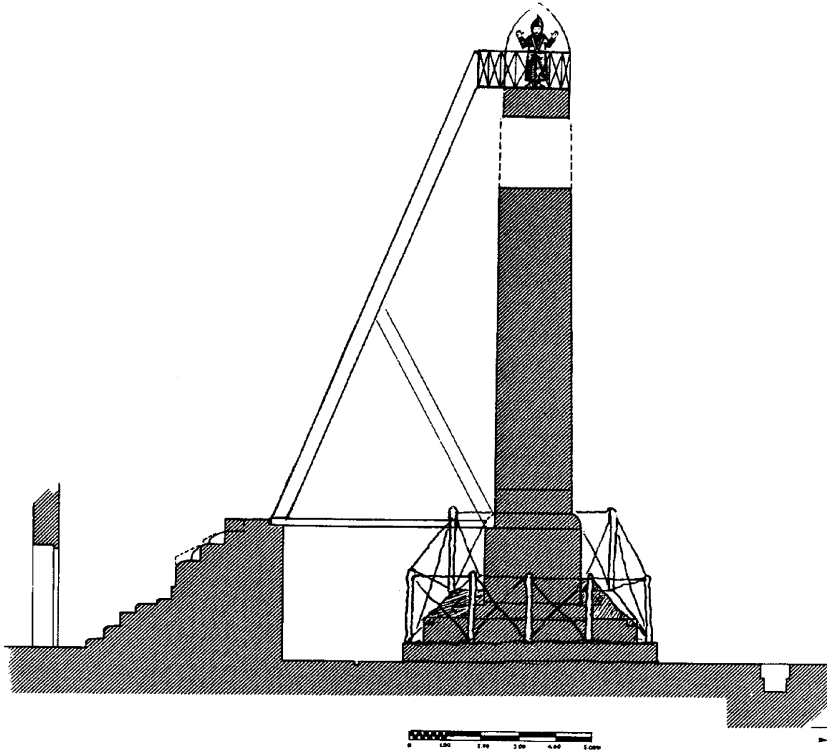


FIGURE 15.22 Reconstruction of the column of Symeon the Younger
 © DJOBADZE E.A. 1986, *OP. CIT.* (N. 17), FIG. XXI

if we may believe contemporary sources, left its mark on the reality of life for wide circles of the population.

The impact of the stylites was not limited to their immediate surroundings, despite their strict localisation, not to say their statuary immobility. Stylites contributed to the new faith's penetration of the Syrian hinterland through their ceaseless preaching and constant interventions.⁴¹ Even nomadic Arab tribes were converted by them, according to tradition. But visitors and pilgrims also came from all the cities of Syria, and from all the eastern provinces. The body of the elder Symeon was taken from the limestone mountains to Antioch immediately after his death, then by imperial order to Constantinople. Emperor Zenon himself commissioned and financed the construction of the pilgrimage complex of Qal'at Sim'ān. The stylites cultivated their extreme asceticism on their pillars in the Syrian hinterland year after year, decade after decade; their

41 Sodini 2012, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 5–23.

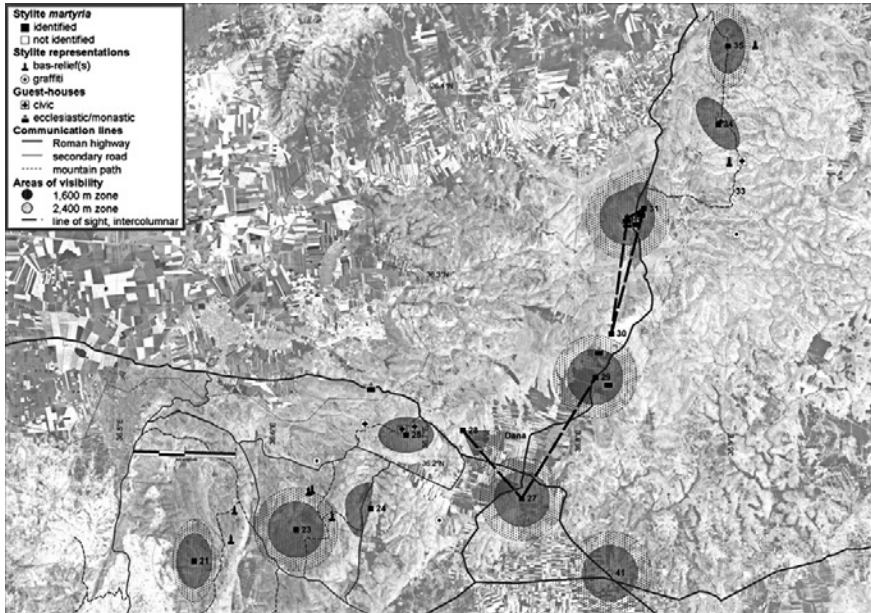


FIGURE 15.25 Map: Stylite-martyria and their visibility in the limestone massif in northern Syria
© SCHACHNER 2010, OP. CIT. (N. 40), FIG. 15

fame and spiritual impact transcended all borders, and was felt in the urban societies of the area and beyond, even influencing the great religious disputes of the time.⁴² In their deliberately chosen seclusion and their exclusiveness, stylites in Christian Late Antiquity paradoxically contributed to overcoming the contrast between city and country.

The stylites themselves, meditating on their pillars, climbed and realised the 'mountain of virtue'. From this, similar to Moses, they drew their charisma and power. With their proximity to heaven, they imitated the Old Testament lawgiver and probably also evoked the image of the ladder to

42 E. Soler, 'La figure de Syméon Stylite l'Ancien et les controverses christologiques des V^e-VI^e siècles en Orient', in: S. Crogiez-Pétrequin, ed., *Dieu(x) et Hommes. Histoire et iconographie des sociétés païennes et chrétiennes de l'Antiquité à nos jours. Mélanges en l'honneur de Françoise Thelamon* (Rouen 2005), 187-210; H.C. Brennecke, 'Wie man einen Heiligen politisch instrumentalisiert. Der Heilige Simeon Stylites und die Synode von Chalkedon', in H.C. Brennecke, U. Heil, A. Stockhausen and J. Ulrich, eds., *Ecclesia est in re publica. Studien zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte im Kontext des Imperium Romanum* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 100) (Berlin 2008), 291-335.

heaven in the beholder.⁴³ The pillar marked the vertical connection of God's heavenly realm of residence with the earthly holy place where the ascetic was praying day and night, thus able to impart divine salvation to his fellow human beings.

In this respect, the pillar and the mountain were indispensable for the mission of the stylites, and the place of their asceticism constitutive for their identity, their specific *angelikòs bíos*, and for their claim to be ordained by God to teach and instruct their fellow men. At the same time, the mountain and the ascent to it, as well as to the pillar, were sacralised, and the formerly pagan world of the mountains was occupied by Christianity through the pillar-standers. In the perception of Christian contemporaries, the ascetics fought here with the devil and his demons (Figure 15.26). Stylites seized this liminal world from the satanic powers that sought their retreat in this wilderness to escape the triumph of the cross. In the words of the Syrian theologian Jacob of Sarug about the incarnation of Jesus, his epiphany on earth:

On the tops of the mountains He builds monasteries in place of the temples of Fortuna, and on the hills He builds places of worship in place of idolatrous sanctuaries, and on the abandoned ruined sites He establishes dwellings for the hermits. Everywhere where the lying demons used to chant, He establishes worship. ... In every corner ... his light penetrates.⁴⁴

To conclude, the mountain heights and hilltops on which stylites practised their asceticism became a prominent space of communication and nature that had previously been completely alien to Christianity and which now gained its own significance and theological dignity. Only with these developments was the transformation of the pagan mountain world and its shrines into a Christian sacred landscape completed: a sacred landscape formed by a dense network of monasteries, hermitages, stylite shrines, and a constant stream of pilgrims (Figure 15.27).

43 *Gen.* 28, 10–22.

44 P. Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis III* (Leipzig 1910), Nr. 101, 795 sqq., quoted in S.P. Landersdorfer, 'Gedicht über den Fall der Götterbilder' (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter 2. Reihe, Band 6: *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter Cyrillonas, Baläus, Isaak von Antiochien und Jakob von Sarug*) (Kempten/München 1913), 419 (171) (trl. by the author). Jacob of Sarug, incidentally, also wrote a sermon on Symeon Stylites; on this S.A. Harvey, 'Jacob of Serug. Homily on Simeon the Stylite', in: V.L. Wimbush, ed., *Ascetic Behavior in GrecoRoman Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis 1990), 15–28. For the writings, work and Christology of Jacob of Sarug cf. comprehensively P.M. Forness, *Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East. A Study of Jacob of Serugh* (Oxford Early Christian Studies) (Oxford 2018).



FIGURE 15.26 Symeon Stylites, gilded silver ex voto, 26,9 × 25,5 cm, church treasure of Ma'aret, Noman (Syria), (end of 6th c. CE) (Louvre)

© WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



FIGURE 15.27 Symeon Stylites in landscape, (Aleppo) icon (second half 17th c.)
 © WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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PART 4

*The longue durée of Tradition and Power
in Roman Discourse*



Mos Maiorum and *Res Novae*

How Roman Politics Have Conceived Tradition, Transformation, and Innovation, from the Second Century BCE to the Fourth Century CE

Stéphane Benoist

Underlying the notion of “Traditional structures of power in the Roman Empire”, is a fundamental question: how have Roman politics conceived tradition, transformation and innovation – often at the same time – to ground evolution within political society? This apparently simple question allows us to consider our evidence, our profession as historians, and above all our responsibilities in the present debates within a civil society that is often at a loss of bearings and confronted with the wavering foundations of our rationality. Even though *mos maiorum* and the respect of tradition in Roman political society have been studied at some length during the last decades, the conception and significance of *res novae* and innovation are still undervalued.¹ From the huge corpus of evidence, this paper will select a few documentary dossiers that range from the first century BCE to the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries CE, focusing on the context of the last decades of the *res publica* and the first three centuries of the Principate.

1 Introduction: History, Historians, Memory, Tradition, and Innovation

As a starting point to this subject, we should question our practices and certain discursive biases, which punctuate the reflections of historians, particularly in France: ‘permanence and change’, ‘continuity and rupture’, ‘tradition

1 E.g. about tradition, *exempla*, *auctoritas senatus* and *mos maiorum*: J.-M. David, ‘*Maiorum exempla sequi: l'exemplum historique dans les discours judiciaires de Cicéron*’, *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 92/1 (1980), 67–86; A. Graeber, *Auctoritas Patrum, Formen und Wegen der Senatsherrschaft zwischen Politik und Tradition* (Berlin 2001); G. Zecchini, *Cesare e il mos maiorum* (Stuttgart 2001); and for the conception of *res novae*: a few elements in A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge 2010); and C. Moatti, *Res publica. Histoire romaine de la chose publique* (Paris 2018), on the Ciceronian reflexions about the crisis of the *Res publica*, but without a specific interest to *res novae* (2nd part: ‘Le nom de la chose’, 157–248).

and novelty'.² A small selection of publications may illustrate this point. J. Liebeschuetz's pioneering work, which has not received the attention it deserves, deals with the above-named dynamic in a specific framework, Roman religion, and quite rightly so, particularly in its chapter 2 devoted to the "Augustan revival" (55–100), which deals with religious and moral reforms. But he also analyses the issue in the fifth and final chapter on the Late Empire, "Towards the later empire", which devotes a section to the 'Diocletianic revival' (235–252).³ A next dynamic enquiry questioning the forces of change or re-foundation can be found in two companions on Roman religion published two decades later. Both study ritual practices and organisation of cults in Rome (and the Roman world) and have left their mark on historiography. In the same year, 1998, textbooks by J. Scheid and by M. Beard, J. North & S. Price were published: the first one followed up a first approach to this theme in an essay entitled 'Religion and Piety in Rome', J. North having dealt with 'conservatism and changes in Roman religion' before in a paper published in 1976.⁴ The conclusive observation was to underline the driving role of the emperor as the main source of innovation, even if some princes could express a clearer refusal of foreign cults (Augustus or Hadrian), others like Claudius fed on the past, e.g. by creating the ritual of the jubilees on the basis of the *ludi saeculares*, at the risk of being mocked by his contemporaries.⁵ This field was propitious as illustrated by the, quasi-conclusive, last chapter of J. Scheid's *Romulus and his brothers*, devoted to the reform/restoration of the Arvals brotherhood under Augustus, a 'political' element if ever there was one, associating the defeated and the victors, the Romulean tradition and the figure of the new founder.⁶

A different approach was taken by O. Hekster, who emphasised the importance of a dynastic construction of memory in his book devoted to the emperors and their memorial policy, through the use of ancestral links. Regarding Tetrarchic innovation and the constraints of tradition he noted: 'The ways

2 About French Historical approaches, two recent collective enquiries: C. Gauvard & J.-F. Sirinelli, eds., *Dictionnaire de l'historien* (Paris 2015), and Y. Potin & J.-F. Sirinelli, eds., *Généralisations historiennes XIX^e–XXI^e siècle* (Paris 2019).

3 J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford 1979).

4 J. Scheid, *La religion des Romains* (Paris 1998); Id., *Religion et piété à Rome* (Paris, 2001² [1985]), about 'Restoration and Re-foundation of Pious Rome'; M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1. *A History*; 2. *A Sourcebook* (Cambridge 1998); J. North, 'Conservatism and change in Roman religion', *Papers of the British School of Rome* 44 (1976), 1–12.

5 S. Benoist, *Rome, le prince et la Cité. Pouvoir impérial et cérémonies publiques (I^{er} siècle av.–début du IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.)* (Paris 2005), chap. VII "Jeux séculaires et jubilés de la Rome éternelle".

6 J. Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères. Le collège des frères arvaies, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des empereurs* (Rome 1990), 'La restauration augustéenne', 679–732.

in which ancestors are commemorated will always be embedded in a society's (regularly changing) socio-cultural framework'. Vespasian's or Septimius Severus' choices could illustrate the wealth of the options considered: from fictitious adoption to the Augustan nomenclature and a privileged relationship to a predecessor, such as Galba, in imperial monetary issues.⁷

Currently, attention to memory constructions abounds, and to the way in which they can be received and assimilated by what we usually call the 'collective/social/cultural memory'.⁸ The 'memory turn' of the last few decades, to which I have been able to contribute through analysing the risks of imperial memory (condemned, rehabilitated, diverted),⁹ has nourished our studies through the contributions of anthropology, sociology, philosophy and, of course, history. I only mention the names of P. Connerton, P. Ricoeur, K. Galinsky, and finally K.-J. Hölkenskap who has embraced this field of contemporary research in order to renew our conceptions of the Roman Republic and its modes of operation.¹⁰ A passage from K.-J. Hölkenskap's work suffices to explain his angle of approach, especially when compared with M. Halbwachs' definitions: "The remarkable omnipresence of the multidimensional, and often quite ambiguous, *exempla maiorum* – which were designed to 'exemplify' (in a specific sense of the word) and affirm values, 'role models', ideal standards, expectations, and patterns of desirable behaviour in an

7 O. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors. Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford 2015), 322; about Septimius Severus' politics, 209–217, and Vespasian's choices, xxxviii–xxxii & 55–56.

8 M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris 1997 [1950 posthumous]), 94–95, quoted by S. Gensburger, 'Halbwachs' studies in collective memory: A founding text for contemporary "memory studies"?, *Journal of Classical Sociology* 16–4 (2016), 396–413, 401: "If collective memory derives its force and duration from a group of individuals, these are after all individuals who remember as members of a group. The common memories in this mass are interdependent, and it is not always the same memories that will seem strongest to each group member. We suggest that each individual memory represents a point of view on the collective memory. This point of view changes, depending on the place I occupy, and the place I occupy changes depending on the relations I pursue with other milieus. Thus it is not surprising that not everyone makes the same use of a common tool. In trying to explain this diversity, however, we always return to a combination of influences that are, by nature, social."

9 A conclusive volume of the collective research program "The victims of *abolitio memoriae*' (VAM) will be published next year: S. Benoist et al., *L'Abolitio memoriae à Rome et dans le monde romain (1^{er} av. n. è.–IV^e de n. è.). Réflexions méthodologiques et études de cas* (Villeneuve d'Ascq).

10 P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge 1989); P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago & London 2004); K. Galinsky, ed., *Memory in Ancient Rome and Early Christianity* (Oxford 2016) and K.-J. Hölkenskap, *Reconstructing the Roman Republic. An Ancient Political Culture and Modern Research* (Princeton & Oxford 2010).

intricate web-like (sub)text – can now also be fitted into the wider (con)text of the Republican political culture”.¹¹

2 *Mos (maiorum)/Mores and Consuetudo*¹²

Two Ciceronian quotations, one from *de Oratore* and one from his *In P. Vatinius Testem Interrogatio* form perhaps the best illustration of what behaviour in society, in private as well as in public, implies in a political face-to-face society; one of collective control made of observations, compromises, and taboos, but also one in which deviations of norms are collectively managed, leading to a co-construction of what is acceptable as collective norm.¹³ These two quotations place us in *medias res* in the perspective of a late-Republican conception of tradition, of the ancients’ custom which likens usage or usages to a *consuetudo*:

Nor again, Crassus, am I greatly troubled by those histrionics of yours, the favourite medium of philosophers, setting forth that by the spoken word no man can kindle the feelings of his hearers, or quench them when kindled (though it is in this that the orator’s virtue and range are chiefly discerned), unless he has gazed into the depths of the nature of everything, including human characters and motives: in which connexion the orator must needs make philosophy his own; and in this pursuit we see that whole lives of most talented and leisured persons have been consumed. The copiousness of their learning and the wide range of their art I am so far from despising that in fact I ardently admire these: yet for ourselves, busied in the public life of this community, it is enough to know and give

11 K.-J. Hölkeskamp, *Reconstructing the Roman Republic*, op. cit. (n. 10), 66–67.

12 M. Bettini, ‘*Mos, mores, und mos maiorum*. Die Erfindung der „Sittlichkeit“ in der römischen Kultur’, in M. Braun, A. Haltenhoff & F.-H. Mutschler, eds., *Moribus antiquis res stat Romana. Römische Werte und römische Literatur im 3. und 2. Jh v. Chr.* (Munich 2000), 303–352; C. Bur, ‘*Auctoritas et mos maiorum*’, in J.-M. David & F. Hurlet, eds., *L’auctoritas à Rome. Une notion constitutive de la culture politique* (Pessac 2020), 65–89; and a series of papers about ‘the conflicts of *ethos*’ dealing with *mos maiorum* and *consuetudo*, *Revue historique*, 705–707 (2023).

13 I refer to Catherine Baroin’s analyses of in an essay to be published by the University Press of Rennes on *Habitus, gestus, incessus. Normes du corps et de la présentation de soi dans le monde romain*, dissertation University of Lille 2019.

expression to such things concerning human characters as are not alien to human character.¹⁴

And I wish also to know this from you, with what design or with what intention you attended at the banquet given by Quintus Arrius, an intimate friend of mine, in a black robe? who you ever saw do such a thing before? who you ever heard of having done such a thing? What precedent had you for such conduct, or what custom can you plead for it? [...] Were you ignorant of the usual practice on such occasions? had you never seen a feast of the sort? had you never, when a boy or young man, been among the cooks? had you not a short time before satisfied your ancient voracity at that most magnificent banquet of Faustus, a noble young man? And when did you ever see the master of a feast and his friends in mourning, and in black robes, while sitting at a feast? What insanity took possession of you, that you should think, that, unless you did what it was impious to do, unless you insulted the temple of Castor, and the name of a feast, and the eyes of a citizen, and ancient custom, and the authority of the man who had invited you, you had not given sufficient proof that you did not think that a properly decreed and formal supplication?¹⁵

The first passage is from the *de Oratore* (which is dated 55 BCE) and explicitly deals with *hominum mores*, which is not surprising for a text from the *homo politicus*, who is engaged with the people in the forum. The second passage,

14 Cic., *De or.* 1.219: *Neque uero istis tragoediis tuis, quibus uti philosophi maxime solent, Crasse, perturbor, quod ita dixisti, neminem posse eorum mentis, qui audirent, aut inflammare dicendo aut inflammatas restinguere, cum eo maxime uis oratoris magnitudoque cernatur, nisi qui <rerum omnium> naturam et mores hominum atque rationes penitus perspexerit, in quo philosophia sit oratori necessario percipienda; quo in studio hominum [quoque] ingeniosissimorum otiosissimorumque totas aetates uidemus esse contritas. Quorum ego copiam magnitudinemque cognitionis atque artis non modo non contemno, sed etiam uehementer admiror; nobis tamen, qui in hoc populo foroque uersamur, satis est ea de motibus animorum et scire et dicere quae non abhorrent ab hominum moribus.* (transl. E.W. Sutton, Loeb no. 348).

15 Cic., *Vatin.* 30 & 32 *passim*: *atque etiam illud scire ex te cupio, quo consilio aut qua mente feceris ut in epulo Q. Arri, familiaris mei, cum toga pulla accumberes? quem umquam uideris, quem audieris? quo exemplo, quo more feceris? [...] hunc tu morem ignorabas? numquam epulum uideras? numquam puer aut adulescens inter cocos fueras? Fausti, adulescentis nobilissimi, paulo ante ex epulo magnificentissimo famem illam ueterem tuam non expleras? quem accumbere atratum uideras? dominum cum toga pulla et eius amicos ante conuiuium? quae tanta (te) tenuit amentia ut, nisi id fecisses quod fas non fuit, nisi uiolasses templum Castoris, nomen epuli, oculos ciuium, morem ueterem, eius qui te inuitarat auctoritatem, parum putares testificatum esse supplicationes te illas non putare?* (transl. R. Gardner, Loeb no. 309).

from his 56 BCE speech against Vatinius, condemns the latter's wearing of a dark mourning toga in a festive setting, at a public banquet. This is enough to exclude Vatinius from the practice inherited from an ancestral usage, from that *mos uetus* which should be clear to everyone, even if some rules are implicit and not governed by law. In his accusatory rhetoric, Cicero notes how his memory fails when searching in vain for an *exemplum* that could justify such behaviour. There is, he argues, no precedent that would allow a public validation of Vatinius' attitude. I will return *in fine* to this collective construction of normed behaviour and to the need – in order to free oneself from certain rules – to 're-found' practices through more or less implicit references, using a biased reading of ancient customs, or at least through an *a posteriori* reconstruction of traces of a collective memory, acceptable to all.¹⁶ It is then that these constitutive links between tradition and innovation are expressed, which most often implies apprehending the forms taken by the transformation. This is why it is appropriate to take account at greater length of what these '*res novae*' could be. We have selected three aspects of them, which structure a collective reading of the new, as considered in the practices of politics in Rome; a city confronted with the pitfalls of dysfunction and bloody confrontations since the middle of the second century BCE.

3 *Res novae* Conceived as 'Ethnic' Characters

As a starting point for the first stage, two passages from Caesar and Horace allow us to consider what novelty, change, and even – in some Modern translations – 'revolution' can mean in our late-Republican sources. It seems to me that the judgements that can be found in these two passages, which focus on peoples and their customs, the Gauls, the Greeks, and 'us' the Romans, make them appear real ethnic traits. In the words of Caesar:

Now Dumnorix had very great weight with the Sequani, for he was both popular and open-handed, and he was friendly to the Helvetii, because from that state he had taken the daughter of Orgetorix to wife; and, spurred by the desire of the kingship, he was anxious for a revolution,

¹⁶ About the notion of traces (tracks ...), the conference we organized with Beate Dignas in Oxford on 12–13 November 2021 (Somerville College and Maison française d'Oxford), to be published next year.

and eager to have as many states as might be beholden to his own beneficence.¹⁷

He knew well enough that almost all the Gauls were bent on revolution, and could be recklessly and rapidly aroused to war; he knew also that all men are naturally bent on liberty, and hate the state of slavery. And therefore he deemed it proper to divide his army and disperse it at wider intervals before more states could join the conspiracy.¹⁸

Caesar was informed of these events; and fearing the fickleness of the Gauls, because they are capricious in forming designs and intent for the most part on change, he considered that no trust should be reposed in them.¹⁹

Similarly, Horace noted, “Whereas if novelty had been detested by the Greeks as much as by us, what at this time would there have been ancient?”²⁰

It is clear that the echoes of the behaviour of the Gauls in their conquerors’ society, as noted by Caesar form part of negative definition of their character. There is a reproving tone towards any practice that is not rooted in a past that would legitimise it, nor in any collective validation, whether forced or not. The same applied to the ‘sacred’ union of the Greeks and Romans against the new, as addressed by Horace in his letter to Augustus, who is also questioning the relationship between the two peoples, culturally and politically – it is in this long missive which compares the behaviour of the Greeks and of the Romans that we find the famous verse: ‘Subdued Greece subdued her fierce conqueror, and carried the arts into rustic Latium’. J. Kennedy has taken stock of the uses of the word *res* in his thesis on the ‘Imperial Republic’ in this context, and notes: “Propre aux Gaulois, étrangère aux Romains, la nouveauté est assimilée à l’indécision ainsi qu’à une forme d’instabilité qui trouve ses origines dans

17 Caes., *Gall.* 1.9.3: *Dumnorix gratia et largitione apud Sequanos plurimum poterat et Heluetiis erat amicus, quod ex ea ciuitate Orgetorigis filiam in matrimonium duxerat, et cupiditate regni adductus nouis rebus studebat et quam plurimas ciuitates suo beneficio habere obstrictas uolebat.* (transl. H.J. Edwards, Loeb no. 72).

18 Caes., *Gall.* 3.10.3: *Itaque cum intellegeret omnes fere Gallos nouis rebus studere et ad bellum mobiliter celeriterque excitari, omnes autem homines natura libertati studere et conditionem seruitutis odisse, prius quam plures ciuitates conspirarent, partiendum sibi ac latius distribuendum exercitum putauit.* (transl. H.J. Edwards, Loeb no. 72).

19 Caes., *Gall.* 4.5.1: *His de rebus Caesar certior factus et infirmitatem Gallorum ueritus, quod sunt in consiliis capiendis mobiles et nouis plerumque rebus student, nihil his committendum existimauit.* (transl. H.J. Edwards, Loeb no. 72).

20 Hor., *Epist.* 2.1.90–91: *Quodsi tam Graecis nouitas inuisa fuisset / quam nobis, quid nunc esset uetus?*

l'immoralité, voire dans les lacunes intellectuelles des Gaulois. Cette grille de lecture est systématiquement employée par César pour déconsidérer les entreprises politiques et militaires de certains chefs gaulois, à l'instar de Dumnorix le Séquane".²¹ We shall see how this specific type of denigration developed in a strictly Roman political context. We can glimpse the scope of these judgements over a longer period of time, noting how a veritable construction takes on through the second, third and fourth centuries CE, which with a few notable exceptions within imperial discourse, holds strictly negative connotations, illustrating rejection.

4 *Res novae* and 'Politics' within the City: Practices and Historical Discourse

To analyse the next stages of the long-term construction of a discourse using novelties in a dynamic reprobation, the process can be usefully compared to similar imperial celebrations of tradition, such as transformations presented as 're-foundation' of the *res publica* (the so-called *r.p. restituta*), like the cults or the ancient *mores* praised by Augustus and some of his successors.²² It is worth noting that, in this discursive elaboration, the same logic of behavioural observance makes it possible to denigrate the bad princes, these 'exemplary' figures of tyrants and/or usurpers that the biographical sources, from Suetonius to the *Historia Augusta*, will gradually impose.²³

The copious documentary record, drawn from witnesses, historians and biographers, starts with Caesar and Velleius Paterculus and leads us to the *Historia Augusta* and Eutropius; i.e. from the *imperatores-dictatores* Sulla²⁴

21 J. Kennedy, *Une res publica impériale en mutation. Penser et pratiquer le pouvoir personnel à Rome, de Sylla à Trajan* (Ceyzérieu 2023), chap. 1.5 'Penser les mutations du politique: perceptions romaines de la nouveauté'.

22 See F. Hurllet & B. Mineo eds., *Le principat d'Auguste. Réalités et représentations du pouvoir. Autour de la Res publica restituta* (Rennes 2009); and C. Moatti 2018, op. cit. (n. 1), 251–269.

23 E.g. S. Benoist, 'Trahir le prince: lecture(s) de l'*Histoire Auguste*', in: A. Queyrel Bottineau, J.-C. Couvenhes & A. Vigourt, eds., *Trahison et traîtres dans l'Antiquité* (Paris 2013), 395–408; 'Usurper la pourpre ou la difficile vie de ces autres "príncipes"', in: Id. & C. Hoët-van Cauwenberghe, eds., *La vie des autres. Histoire, prosopographie, biographie dans l'Empire romain* (Villeneuve d'Ascq 2013), 37–61; 'Nomina, tituli et loci: en quête d'une définition des *personae* du princeps', in: P. Le Doze, ed., *Le costume de prince. Vivre et se conduire en souverain dans la Rome antique d'Auguste à Constantin* (Rome 2021), & 'Boni et mali príncipes, un empire en jeu(x): discours, figures et postures impériales', *Kentron* 36 (2021), 183–206 (<https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03561723>).

24 Vell. Pat., 2.19.1: *Tum Sulla contracto exercitu ad urbem rediit eamque armis occupavit, duodecim auctores nouarum pessimarumque rerum, inter quos Marium cum filio et P. Sulpicio, urbe exturbavit ac lege lata exules fecit.*

and Caesar,²⁵ to Hadrian, Trebonianus Gallus, Hostilianus, and Volusianus,²⁶ according to our sources of the last third of the fourth century, or the very beginning of the fifth century. The Antonine and Late-Antique sources unanimously and uniformly identify *res nouae* with revolts or revolutions. As early as Tacitus and Suetonius, who both deal with the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians, plots and conspiracies embody a model of contestation of imperial power, whether the events concern Rome or e.g. the Kingdom of Armenia, the focus of Roman and Parthian quarrels and schemes (about Mithridates, betrayed by his nephew²⁷). This link between *res novae* and revolution legitimises the detestation of all new things, as Horace once claimed. I will not comment in detail on the various examples, which a fairly exhaustive inventory has enabled me to establish, retaining for this purpose the Latin sources that are closest to the realities that concern us.

I insist on taking into account the context of some events presented as ‘revolutionary’, and to pay particular attention to the only positive echo that we find in Claudius’s speech to the senators to a *res nova*, considered as the driving force of Roman history. Both Sylla in Velleius (*supra* n. 24) and Caesar in his *pro domo* plea (*supra* n. 25) envisage in the same terms those who oppose their power, *auctores nouarum pessimarumque rerum*, and those at the origin of *noui generis imperia*, who go so far as to question the normal functioning of institutions, in relation to these *iura magistratuum commutari*. Such a presentation of the successive contexts of the Civil Wars, and the establishment of dictators with constituent powers within a *res publica* that some might consider endangered by their own actions, is systematised in a new institutional framework in which the powers of the *Imperator Caesar Augustus* cannot be satisfied with any contestation. This is the case for the *res nouae* which are

25 Caes., *Civ.* 1.85,8: *Omnia haec iam pridem contra se parari; in se noui generis imperia constitui, ut idem ad portas urbanis praesideat rebus et duas bellicosissimas prouincias absens tot annis obtineat; in se iura magistratuum commutari, ne ex praetura et consulatu, ut semper, sed per paucos probati et electi in prouincias mittantur; in se etiam aetatis excusationem nihil ualere, cum superioribus bellis probati ad obtinendos exercitus euocentur; in se uno non seruari, quod sit omnibus datum semper imperatoribus, ut rebus feliciter gestis aut cum honore aliquo aut certe sine ignominia domum reuertantur exercitumque dimittant.*

26 Eutr. 9,5: *Mox imperatores creati sunt Gallus Hostilianus et Galli filius Volusianus. Sub his Aemilianus in Moesia res nouas molitus est; ad quem opprimendum cum ambo profecti essent, Interamniae interfecti sunt non completo biennio.*

27 Tac., *Ann.* 12.44,5: *ita Radamistus simulata aduersus patrem discordia tamquam nouercae odiis impar, pergit ad patrum, multaque ab eo comitate in speciem liberum cultus primores Armeniorum ad res nouas inlicit, ignaro et ornante insuper Mithridate.*

identified with the conspiracies that challenge the dynastic legitimacy studied by I. Cogitore.²⁸

I can give a few examples: under Tiberius, Libo Drusus, and Seianus,²⁹ or discussion about Cornutus' innocence;³⁰ under Nero, Rubellius Plautus,³¹ and during the 68–69 crisis Montanus facing Civilis,³² or Lucius Piso in Africa;³³ and finally under Domitian, the *consulares* Civica Cerealis, Salvadius Orfitus, and Acilius Glabrio, who were all eliminated by the prince.³⁴ The account of the elimination of Crassus, by a procurator of Hadrian, but *iniusso eius*, could be seen as very similar in this respect.³⁵ The mention of revolts and revolutions occurs throughout the *principates* (as under Nero or Domitian). It is specifically clear at moments of accession, when all potential opponents to the new prince were suppressed.

Claudius's valorisation of novelty (*nova res*)³⁶ in a rereading of Roman history *ab Vrbe condita* takes a different view. It should be ultimately put in relation

28 I. Cogitore, *La légitimité dynastique d'Auguste à Néron à l'épreuve des conspirations* (Rome 2002).

29 Tac., *Ann.* 2.27.1: *Sub idem tempus e familia Scriboniorum Libo Drusus defertur moliri res nouas*. Suet., *Tib.* 65.1: *Seianum res nouas molientem, quamvis iam et natalem eius publice celebrari et imagines aureas coli passim uideret, uix tandem et astu magis ac dolo quam principali auctoritate subuertit*.

30 Tac., *Ann.* 4.28.3: *adseuerabatque innocentem Cornutum et falso exterritum; idque facile intellectu si proderentur alii: non enim se caedem principis et res nouas uno socio cogitasse*.

31 Tac., *Ann.* 13.19.3: *illa, spe ultionis oblata, parat accusatores ex clientibus suis, Iturium et Caluisium, non uetera et saepius iam audita deferens, quod Britannici mortem lugeret aut Octauiae iniurias euulgaret, sed destinauisse eam Rubellium Plautum, per maternam originem pari ac Nero gradu a diuo Augusto, ad res nouas extollere coniugioque eius et imperio rem publicam rursus inuadere*.

32 Tac., *Hist.* 4.32.3: *ad ea Ciuilis primo callide: post ubi uidet Montanum praeferozem ingenio paratumque in res nouas, orsus a questu periculisque quae per quinque et uiginti annos in castris Romanis exhausisset, 'egregium' inquit 'pretium' laborum recepi, necem fratris et uincula mea et saeuissimas huius exercitus uoces quibus ad supplicium petitus iure gentium poenas reposco*.

33 Tac., *Hist.* 4.38.1: *Interea Vespasianus iterum ac Titus consulatum absentes inierunt, maesta et multiplici metu suspensa ciuitate, quae super instantia mala falsos pauores induerat, descuissse Africam res nouas moliente L. Pisone; 49.2: is crebris sermonibus temptaueritne Pisonem ad res nouas an temptanti restiterit, incertum, quoniam secreto eorum nemo adfuit, et occiso Pisone plerique ad gratiam interfectoris inclinauerunt*.

34 Suet., *Dom.* 10.2: *Complures senatores, in iis aliquot consulares, interemit; ex quibus Ciuicam Cerealem in ipso Asiae proconsulatu, Saluidienum Orfitum, Acilium Glabrimonem in exilio, quasi molitores rerum nouarum; ceteros leuissima quemque de causa*.

35 HA, *Hadr.* 5.6: *quamvis Crassum postea procurator egressum insula, quasi res nouas moliretur, iniusso eius occiderit*.

36 CIL 13.1688 (ILS 212), Ludgunum: *Equidem primam omnium illam cogitationem hominum, quam / maxime primam occurruram mihi prouideo, deprecor, ne / quasi nouam istam rem*

with the Augustan reading of the *mos maiorum*, and addresses the variety of *formas statusque res p(ublica) nostra*. My master, A. Chastagnol, insisted, in *Le Sénat romain à l'époque impériale*, on reading this passage of the *tabula* in those terms:

La première colonne nous fournit ensuite un récit un peu confus d'événements historiques: l'empereur étale son érudition pour réfuter deux objections qui ont été faites au projet qu'il soutient. Il veut démontrer en effet que l'histoire de Rome, depuis ses origines, n'a été qu'une suite d'innovations successives, façon comme une autre de présenter sa proposition et de répondre en même temps aux critiques conservatrices qui ont été formulées contre ses vues. L'analyse de l'évolution permet en outre de signaler au passage que les Romains, dès l'époque la plus ancienne, se sont toujours montrés accueillants aux étrangers, et même que des rois étrangers ont gouverné excellemment la ville: l'étruscomane Claude ne saurait trouver meilleur exemple, pour illustrer son propos, que le souverain étrusque Servius Tullius, dont il raconte la légende pour notre plus grand profit; il s'ensuit que le Sénat ne doit pas avoir peur de s'ouvrir largement aux provinciaux.³⁷

5 *Res novae* and Social Behaviour

It is useful, recalling K.-J. Hölkenskamp's comments on the political culture of the Roman Republic quoted above, to take two great *nobiles*, Stoic philosophers and eminent actors in the politics of their time, Cicero and Seneca, as witnesses in their common disapproval of *res novae*, in two letters addressed to friends, in one case to Lucius Luceius in 56, in the other to Lucilius in 63–64:

And if I can induce you to undertake what I suggest, you will, I assure myself, find a theme worthy even of your able and flowing pen. From the beginning of the conspiracy to my return from exile it seems to me that a fair-sized volume could be compiled, in which you will be able to make use of your exceptional knowledge of civil changes, whether in

introduci exhorrescatis, sed illa // potius cogitetis, quam multa in hac ciuitate nouata sint, et / quidem statim ab origine urbis nostrae in quo<d> formas / statusque res p(ublica) nostra diducta sit.

37 A. Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain à l'époque impériale. Recherches sur la composition de l'Assemblée et le statut de ses membres* (Paris 1992), 80–81; a decade earlier, I had witnessed the shaping of his ideas during his seminars in 1983–1984.

disentangling the causes of the revolution or suggesting remedies for its calamities, while you reprehend what you consider blameworthy, and justify what you approve, setting forth your reasons in either case; and if you think you should treat the subject with exceptional freedom of speech, as has been your habit, you will stigmatize the disloyalty, intrigues, and treachery of which many have been guilty towards me.³⁸

If you would obtain a mental picture of that period, you may imagine on one side the people and the whole proletariat eager for revolution – on the other the senators and knights, the chosen and honoured men of the commonwealth; and there were left between them but these two – the Republic and Cato. I tell you, you will marvel when you see ‘Atrous’ son, and Priam, and Achilles, wroth at both’. Like Achilles, he scorns and disarms each faction.³⁹

Cicero, in his text, addressed the person who took on the task of writing a favourable version of his actions as consul of 63 BCE, when Cicero was confronted with Catilina’s *coniuratio*, then driven into exile, and finally returned back to the city of Rome after the destruction of his house. In the passage, Cicero militates in favour of the expression of a *scientia ciuiliū commutationum* (as a “science of the mutations of political regimes”) that could elucidate the causes of this revolution and propose remedies to what is presented as a disease, *incommodae*. As for Seneca, who explains in a long letter motivated by his state of health what adversity really is: he takes the example of Cato who comes to embody the *res publica* between a people – who are similar to the crowd (*uulgum* rendered here in this very connoted English translation as ‘proletariat’) and are in search of new things – and the members of the *ordines* who are presented as *sancti et electi*. Cato is praised by Nero’s tutor for his courage and steadfastness. Seneca emphasises how he finally embodies freedom

38 Cic., *Fam.* 5.12.4: *Quod si te adducemus, ut hoc suscipias, erit, ut mihi persuadeo, materies digna facultate et copia tua; a principio enim coniurationis usque ad reditum nostrum uidetur mihi modicum quoddam corpus confici posse, in quo et illa poteris uti ciuiliū commutationum scientia uel in explicandis causis rerum nouarum uel in remediis incommodorum, cum et reprehendes ea, quae uituperanda duces, et, quae placebunt, exponendis rationibus comprobabis, et, si liberius, ut consuesti, agendum putabis, multorum in nos perfidiam, insidias, prodicionem notabis.* (transl. W. Glynn Williams, Loeb no. 205N).

39 Sen., *Ep.* 104.31: *Si animo complecti uolueris illius imaginem temporis, uidebis illinc plebem et omnem erectum ad res nouas uulgum, hinc optumates et equestrem ordinem, quidquid erat in ciuitate sancti et electi, duos in medio relictos, rempublicam et Catonem. Miraberis, inquam, cum animaduertes ‘Atriden Priamumque et saeuom ambobus Achillem’ [Verg., *Aen.* 1.458] utrumque enim inprobat, utrumque exarmat.* (transl. R.M. Gummere, Loeb no. 77).

in an enslaved homeland against those – Caesar, Pompey, Crassus – who are responsible for the distressing situation of the civil wars. This portrayal of a versatile people, sympathetic to all kinds of protests, can be usefully compared to Tacitus' portrayal a few decades later of the *Urbs* during the 68–69 CE crisis, filled with spectators of urban violence. It adds to the previous approach, directed by the reading of the revolutions that take place in the face of the different *principes*; a social dimension consistent with an identification of the *nobiles* as the guarantors of a certain tradition.⁴⁰ However, Seneca's construction of this *imago* of past times suggests another understanding of late-Republican political society, since the *res publica* and Cato are at the centre of the demonstration; the two 'extremes', the people and the elites, seeming from then on to be unable to embody, either one or the other, the Roman state, its values, its traditional heritage, this *mos (maiorum)* to which we have devoted this investigation!

6 Epilogue: Dealing with *mos maiorum, restitutio*, and Innovation

At the end of this survey, it seems to me that the Augustan discourse,⁴¹ partly carried by the theme of the so-called *res publica restituta*, which has been widely discussed in recent years, but also by the prince's own words in his *Res gestae diui Augusti (RG)*, can shed light on this finely staged dialectic between tradition and *res novae*, from the end of the Republic proper until the turn of the Christianisation of the Empire and the last fires of senatorial historiography. It is useful to compare chapter 6 of the *RG* with the famous *aureus* published by J.W. Rich and J.H.C. Williams in 1999, which continues to supply debates among historians of Roman law and of the institutions and practices of politics in Rome, from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE:

[*consulibus M(arco) V(in)icio et Q(uinto) Lucretio*] et postea *P(ublio) Lentulo et Cn(aeo) L(entulo et terti)um [Paullo Fabio Maximo] e[t Q(uinto)*

40 About the 68–69 crisis in Rome, S. Benoist, 'Le prince, la cité et les événements: l'année 68–69 à Rome', *Historia* 50.3 (2001), 279–311; *Ibidem*, *Le pouvoir à Rome: espace, temps, figures (I^{er} s. av.–IV^e s. de notre ère), douze variations (scripta varia)* (Paris 2020 2nd edition), 55–86; and about the Tacitean reading of Roman crowd, the pioneering study by Z. Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (Oxford 1969), French translation by M. Sissung, with addenda: *La plèbe et le prince: foule et vie politique sous le haut-empire romain* (Paris 1984).

41 A few developments about reforms and innovation: Y. Rivière ed., *Des réformes augustéennes* (Rome 2012); A. Marcone, *Augusto. Il fondatore dell'Impero che cambiò la storia di Roma e del mondo* (Rome 2015).

Tuberone senatu populoq]u[e Romano consentientibus] ut cu[rator legum et morum summa potestate solus crearer, nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi.

In the consulship of Marcus Vinicius and Quintus Lucretius [19 BC], and later of Publius Lentulus and Gnaeus Lentulus [18 BC], and thirdly of Paullus Fabius Maximus and Quintus Tubero [11 BC], even though the senate and people of Rome were in agreement that I should be appointed on my own as **guardian of laws and customs** with supreme power, I accepted no magistracy conferred upon me that contravened **ancestral custom**.⁴²



FIGURE 16.1 Obverse and reverse aureus of Augustus 18 BCE–16 BCE (BM 1995,04011). Obverse image: Laureate head of Octavian r. –. Obverse inscription: IMP · CAESAR · DIVI · F · COS · VI. Reverse image: Octavian, togate, seated left on *sella curulis*, holding out scroll in right hand; *scrinium* on ground to left. Reverse inscription: LEGES · ET · IVRA · P · R · RESTITUIT.

Note: For this coin, also see J.W. Rich & J.H.C. Williams, '*Leges et Iura P. R. Restituit*: A New Aureus of Octavian and the Settlement of 28–27 BC', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 159 (1999), 169–213.

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42 A. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge 2009). (RG 6.1).

The whole *monumentum* of Ancyra plays with temporalities, the legitimization of the acts of the so-called saviour of the *res publica* facing a *factio*, the repository of a *potestas* equal to that of all magistrates but endowed with an *auctoritas* unlike any other.⁴³ In fact, the text is a subtle presentation of innovation under the guise of the strictest respect for tradition. Is it not the key word for the cults, the monumental adornment of the city, the relations with the client kingdoms, and finally the whole of recent Roman history? The *princeps* embodies this *restitutio* which is at work in the monetary issue of 28, when the changes to come, in 27 on the one hand, and in 23 on the other, are being prepared. The legend *Leges et iura populi Romani* or *populo Romano* shows the affirmation of an apparent respect for the norms of the *res publica*, after the turmoil of the civil wars. There is no *res nova* here, but rather a reverence for the *mos maiorum* recalled in connection with the curatorship of laws and morals. The one who presents his family and his behaviour as exemplary (even if disastrous events in the family or military sphere came to darken the perfect image of the re-founder of the *urbs*), can embody the *mos*, give a definition to be followed by both the members of the *ordines* as the *populus Romanus*. Both groups must celebrate a providential man, this privileged intermediary between men and gods, on a daily basis, as he officially asserts through his *tria nomina*. As we have seen, only Claudius deviated from this pattern to claim a completely different Roman history, made up of multiple innovations that ensured the City's universal destiny. But the *exemplum* of some and counter-example of others both participate in the fixing of a narrative,⁴⁴ of a gesture claiming Eternity, from the founder celebrating recreated *ludi saeculares* to the innovative heir delivering to the successors a model for the commemoration of the *dies natalis Urbis*. It seems to me that the fate reserved in provincial epigraphy for the celebration of all kinds of municipal and imperial (milestones) *refecit*, which translates attention to the past but glorifies the present, is the best illustration of the dynamic dialectic linking tradition and innovation.⁴⁵

43 About the conception of Augustus' *auctoritas*, the debate between G. Rowe, 'Reconsidering the *Auctoritas* of Augustus', *Journal of Roman Studies* 103 (2013), 1–25, and K. Galinsky, 'Augustus' *auctoritas* and *Res gestae* 34.3', *Hermes* 143 (2015), 244–249, with F. Hurler as moderator in: 'De l'*auctoritas senatus* à l'*auctoritas principis*. À propos des fondements du pouvoir impérial', in: David & Hurler eds. 2020, op. cit. (n. 12), 351–368.

44 To deal with biography, autobiography and conception of history and memory, S. Benoist, 'Biography, History, and Memory. About some Imperial Figures', *BICS* 60–1 (2017), 49–62.

45 Even if I acknowledge the juridical importance of the *refecit* mention in Roman and provincial inscriptions, about which see M. Horster, *Bauinschriften römischer Kaiser. Untersuchungen zu Inschriftenpraxis und Bautätigkeit in Städten des westlichen Imperium Romanum in der Zeit des Prinzipats* (Stuttgart 2001).

I borrow from J-M. David words to conclude, provisionally, what, from the tribunes of the plebs to the holders of the *tribunicia potestas*, seems to account for a successful agreement under the gaze of men and gods between the scrupulously preserved heritage of the past and its permanent reinvention:

Ainsi fonctionnait d'acte en acte, ou de geste en geste, l'innovation en matière politique. Un modèle était imité, mais il était aussitôt enrichi par l'adjonction d'un comportement nouveau. Le paradigme était tout à la fois conservé et transgressé. [...] *L'exemplum* était donc là qui, par sa capacité d'identification métaphorique, autorisait la reproduction d'un comportement et l'identification à quelque grand prédécesseur, mais qui était également susceptible d'être enrichi par l'invention d'un trait nouveau qui viendrait alors renforcer et renouveler sa puissance émotive. C'est à ce compte finalement, et sous réserve que l'innovation fût acceptée par une opinion publique que nécessairement elle provoquait, que l'on imagine que les aristocrates romains aient pu par la manipulation d'une topique constamment renouvelée prétendre tout à la fois conserver et élargir un *mos maiorum* qui n'était fait au fond que de comportements accumulés.⁴⁶

46 J.-M. David, 'Conformisme et transgression: à propos du tribunat de la plèbe à la fin de la République romaine', *Klio* 75 (1993), 219–227, quotation from 224–225.

Justinian, the Senate, and the Consuls

A Rhetorical Memory of the Old Constitution

Francesco Bono

In his “The constitution of the Later Roman Empire”, published in Cambridge in 1910, the historian J.B. Bury famously raised the question of the form of government of the Roman Empire.¹ From the very first pages of the essay, the Cambridge professor defined the Late Roman Empire as an example of absolute monarchy. According to Bury, the Roman Empire was theoretically a Republic from its outset and during its first three centuries. On paper, the Republican magistracies, such as the consuls, and assemblies, including the senate, were retained.² The senate in particular coexisted with the emperor and had an authority independent of him. As time went by, however, the emperor took away one by one the functions that the senate exercised. The result of this erosion was that, by the end of the third century, there was no longer a second state power.

As is easy to guess, the highest Republican magistracy, the consulate, had undergone a similar evolution during its history. The appointment of consuls had indeed become a prerogative of the emperor. Moreover, the consuls had lost many of the powers they had during the Republic, yet they continued to preside over the senate and exercise judicial functions.³ The erosion of the powers of these institutions by the emperor had caused the disappearance of the checks and balances that had kept the constitutional structure of the

1 J.B. Bury, *The constitution of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge 1910).

2 On the consuls: F. Pina Polo, *The Consul at Rome. The Civil Functions of the Consuls in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge 2011); H. Beck, A. Duplá, M. Jehne, F. Pina Polo, eds., *Consuls and “Res Publica”. Holding High Office in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge 2011); R.S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S.R. Schwartz, K.A. Worp, *Consuls of the later Roman Empire* (Atlanta 1987), 1–12; G.A. Cecconi, *Lineamenti di storia del consolato tardoantico*, in: M. David, ed., *Eburnea diptycha. I dittici d'avorio tra Antichità e Medioevo* (Bari 2007), 109–127. On the senate: A. Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain à l'époque impériale. Recherches sur la composition de l'Assemblée et le statut de ses membres* (Paris 1992); E. Gabba, ed., *Il senato nella storia I* (Roma 1998); A. La Rocca, F. Oppedisano, *Il senato romano nell'Italia ostrogota* (Roma 2016); C. Radtke, *The Senate at Rome in Ostrogothic Italy*, in: J. Arnold, S. Bjornlie, K. Sessa, eds., *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy* (Leiden 2016), 121–146.

3 R.J.A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton 1984), 21–22.

Roman Empire in equilibrium. The consequence was the inevitable transformation into an absolute and despotic state, where the emperor controlled every administrative apparatus and every political decision.

The changed paradigm of the state emerges clearly from Late Antique sources. For the age of Justinian, the absolutism of the monarchy is magnificently depicted in the dialogue *De scientia politica*, which can be described as a genuine treatise on political theory.⁴ The unknown author draws on the classical philosophical tradition, in particular Cicero, and dedicated Book 5 to the exposition of the ideal constitution. The starting principle is that imperial power has a divine origin and that the emperor has God himself as a model for his actions. The political model is therefore hierarchical because it must imitate the divine order, which has at its apex the divinity itself.

From this same time of absolutism, there are several texts in which the Justinianic legislator commemorates Rome's past, speaking of the Republican constitutional bodies in a historical perspective. This paper focuses on two of these texts: the preambles of *Novella* 62 and 105. Both texts show the emperor intervening in two official roles strongly linked to the Republican power structure. The first targets senators, the second the consuls.

While both the senate and the consuls were hallmarks of Republican power, their nature had changed considerably from the early to the late Empire. In Constantinople, a senate was created on the model of the one in Rome.⁵ The consuls retained their prestige, and the office was granted as a reward at the end of an administrative career or as a recognition for people of particularly high social origin, economic capacity, and/or political influence. For instance, Hilary of Arles in his biography of Saint Honoratus (composed around 430) could evoke the consulship as being "desirable and almost supreme in worldly reality".⁶ At the same time, the consuls only exercised honorary functions, or, as Mamertinus observed, had "honos sine labore".⁷

4 C.M. Mazzucchi, *Menae patricii cum Thoma referendario De scientia politica dialogus. Iteratis curis quae exstant in codice Vaticano palimpsesto* (Milano 2002); P.N. Bell, *Three political voices from the age of Justinian* (Liverpool 2009), 49–79, 123–188; O. Licandro, 'Il trattato περί πολιτικῆς ἐπιστήμης, ovvero del princeps ciceroniano nell'età dell'assolutismo. Concezioni e dibattito sull'idea imperiale e sulle formae rei publicae alla corte di Giustiniano (Vat.Gr. 1298)', *Iura* 64 (2016), 183–256; O. Licandro, *Cicerone alla corte di Giustiniano: 'Dialogo sulla scienza politica' (Vat. Gr. 1298): concezioni e dibattito sulle 'formae rei publicae' nell'età dell'assolutismo imperiale* (Roma 2017).

5 G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris 1985), 117–210.

6 Hil., *Vita Honorat.* 4,2.

7 *Pan. lat.* (III) XI, 2.2: *Nam in administrationibus labos honori adiungitur, in consulatu honos sine labore suscipitur.* The panegyric, known as *Claudii Mamertini Gratiarum actio de consulatu suo Iuliano*, is declaimed to the Emperor Julian in Constantinople in 362 CE.

The ancient Republican power structures, even if they were maintained, were profoundly innovated, and the innovation did not stop, because it was Justinian himself who wanted to change these institutions. Therefore, two parallel planes existed in the political panorama of Constantinople at the beginning of the sixth century. On the one hand, there was the authoritative and inescapable legacy of the Roman political system. The institution of the senate was not abolished, and neither was the consulate, despite the profound changes the Roman world had seen.⁸ In 541, Anicius Basilius sat in the curule chair,⁹ but after him Justinian interrupted the old-established custom of appointing consuls.¹⁰ On the other hand, there was a substantial change in the role and functions that these ancient institutions entailed due to the power that the emperor acquired over time. The senate and the consulate were emptied almost completely of their powers and could no longer act as a check on the political initiatives of the emperor, who had in fact become an absolute ruler.

The texts that I will present therefore allow us to see how a late antique legislator, in this case Justinian, looked at these institutions, and viewed the transition from the Republic to the imperial system. It will also allow us to gauge how the same legislator, while fully conscious of the profound changes over the centuries, recalled and celebrated the illustrious past of these institutions to create a link with the present.

1 *Novel 62*

In late antiquity, the senate had ceased to be a constitutional body and started to play a consultative function. The emperor rarely resided in the West and only occasionally visited Rome. There were, therefore, few occasions when the emperor turned to the senators for their opinion. In the East, on the other hand, as the emperor lived more consistently in Constantinople, the senate

8 The consulship was abolished by law under the reign of the emperor Leo VI the Wise: see *Nov.* 94.

9 A. Cameron, D. Schauer, 'The Last Consul. Basilius and His Diptych', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982), 126–145; M. Meier, 'Das Ende des Konsulats im Jahr 541/42 und seine Gründe. Kritische Anmerkungen zur Vorstellung eines „Zeitalters Justinians“, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 138 (2002), 277–299.

10 Justin II restored the tradition of assuming the consulship on the first January after his accession (566 CE). This event is attested in Corippus' panegyric (II.35): *ditabo plebes opibus, nomenque negatum | consulibus consul post tempora tanta novabo | gaudeat ut totus Iustini numere mundus.*

seemed to be more active, serving a number of roles.¹¹ First, the senate played a role when an emperor was elected¹² or when he received ambassadors. Second, it had jurisdictional powers, both as a high court of justice, as a court reserved to judge senators, and as a court of appeal.¹³ Finally, the senate appointed the *curator* if a *furiosus* was of noble origin,¹⁴ appointed the university professors in Constantinople and elected the praetors.¹⁵

Novel 62, drafted in Latin, was issued in December 537 and is the only imperial constitution that deals specifically with the senate and senators.¹⁶ Justinian decided both to increase the number of members of the *pars vacantium senatorum* and to increase their duties.¹⁷ Consequently, the emperor proceeded with an extraordinary recruitment of senators.¹⁸ Furthermore, he decided that the

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- 11 L.P. Raybaud, *Essai sur le Sénat de Constantinople* (Paris 1963), 65–69; A.H.M. Jones, *Il tardo impero romano (284–602 d.C.) I* (Milano 1973), 404–409.
- 12 The senate retained the attribution of giving its consent to ensure the original arrangement of the election (*electio*) of the new ruler: Raybaud 1963, op. cit. (n. 11), 60–64; G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le césaropapisme byzantin* (Paris 1996), 88.
- 13 Raybaud 1963, op. cit. (n. 11), 57–60.
- 14 C. 5.70.7.6.
- 15 C. 1.15.1 (= *CTh.* 6.21.1); C. 1.39.2.
- 16 On this *Novel*, F. Burgella, *Il Senato di Costantinopoli*, in Gabba 1998, op. cit. (n. 2), 398–437; P. Garbarino, *Contributo allo studio del Senato in età giustiniana* (Napoli 1992); M. Kruse, *The politics of Roman memory. From the fall of the western empire to the age of Justinian* (Philadelphia 2019) 106–107; S. Puliatti, *Innovare cum iusta causa. Continuità e innovazione nelle riforme amministrative e giurisdizionali di Giustiniano* (Torino 2021), 146–150. The *Novel* is attested in a papyrus in a fragmentary manner, PSI XIII 1346: S. Corcoran, ‘Two Tales, Two Cities: Antinoopolis and Nottingham’, in: J. Drinkwater, B. Salway, eds., *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected. Essays presented by colleagues, friends, and pupils* (London 2007), 193–209. Garbarino 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 181–192 suggests that Justinian consciously chose to use the Latin language to weave a dialogue with the senate of Rome. Indeed, the war against the Goths led by Belisarius would have given rise to discontent within the senatorial ranks. Justinian therefore intended to prepare an official recognition of this institution’s role when the reconquest of Italy took place. D.J.D. Miller & P. Sarris, *The Novels of Justinian I* (Cambridge 2018), 470 n. 1 believe that the use of the Latin “was deemed most appropriate to the antiquity and dignity of the senatorial order”. The date is incomplete due to the falling number before *kal. Zachariae* (R. Schoell, G. Kroll, *Novellae* [Berolini 1912], 333) proposes to insert the number *V*, so that this *Novel* would be issued on the same day as *Novel* 105.
- 17 By means of this expression, the *Novella* intended to refer to those senators who were not in administrative positions. This category is contrasted with senators who were *administratores*, because they were actively engaged in the administration. The latter are in fact expressly mentioned in the *praefatio*; they had both military and civil duties: *et militiae sub eis constituerentur et cetera eorum dispositionibus oboedirent*.
- 18 *Nov.* 62.1.1. In particular, Justinian admitted to the senate men outstanding for their noble origin and very high repute (*homines nobilitate et summa opinione egregii*).

senators must be convened for hearing trials brought on appeal to the imperial consistory together with the *proceres*.¹⁹ At the same time, Justinian regulated the hierarchy among senators. The *praefectus urbi* was to hold the presidency of the senate and to have primacy of place that came with it; the *senatores patricii*, the *consulares*, the *praefecti*, and the other *viri magnifici illustres* come after him, in a precise order.²⁰

Justinian justified his decision by the desire to put an end to the current decay of the senate.²¹ Indeed, the portion of the senate not employed in administrative affairs had undergone a decrease in members and a major downsizing in the importance of the tasks entrusted to it.

The present poor situation contrasted with the glorious past of this institution, clearly evoked in the poem:²²

Antiquissimis temporibus Romani senatus auctoritas tanto vigore potestatis effulsit, ut eius gubernatione domi forisque habita iugo Romano omnis mundus subiceretur, non solum ad ortus solis et occasus, sed etiam in utrumque latus orbis terrae Romana ditione propagata: communi etenim senatus consilio omnia agebantur. Postea vero quam ad maiestatem imperatoriam ius populi Romani et senatus felicitate reipublicae translatum est, evenit ut

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- 19 The constitution states that such trials must be taken by both orders of the senators: [*non*] a solis senatoribus, sed ab utroque ordine, huiusmodi litibus exercendis. This means that the *senatores in quiete degentes* and the *administratores* (engaged in administrative posts) were called upon to perform these jurisdictional functions. Garbarino 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 62–63; Puliatti 2021, op. cit. (n. 16), 148; *Nov.* 62.1.2.
- 20 *Nov.* 62.2. This section of the Novella closes with the concession to all the *illustres* to obtain the patriciate. Justinian thus repealed an earlier provision of Zeno (C. 12.3.3), which allowed only the *consulares* and the *praefectorii* to receive this title. With this in mind, the emperor decreed that previous concessions, obtained against Zeno's law, should be remedied and that there should be no consequences or prejudice against the beneficiaries. Finally, the emperor resumed the already mentioned reduction to one-third of the fees (*sportulae*) due for the concession of a high imperial office (*dignitas*), if this is conferred with the intention of allowing entry into the senate.
- 21 By contrast, Justinian's intentions are not reflected in the contemporary testimony of Procopius (*Anecd.* 14.8). Indeed, in his highly polemical tone, the Byzantine writer describes the senate meetings as a pure formality, because they were only convened to save appearances and ancient traditions. Moreover, senators did not speak on any issue. According to Procopius, the cause of this situation was Justinian's despotic power.
- 22 The first chapter of the Novella in fact speaks of *in praesenti*, while the preamble begins with *antiquissimis temporibus*.

*ii, quos ipsi²³ elegerint et administrationibus praeposuerint, omnia facerent quae vox imperialis eis iniunxisset.*²⁴

The constitution concerns the senate of Constantinople, but the *praefatio* begins by recalling the importance of the senate in the Republican period. The tone is strongly rhetorical and aims to amplify the greatness of this body: this is evident when the text states that Roman jurisdiction extends not only *ad ortus solis et occasus, sed etiam in utrumque latus orbis terrae*.

The text then speaks of the *auctoritas* of the senate that would become a true *potestas*. The first question to be asked is whether the term *auctoritas* is used in this context in a technical sense. As we know, in fact, there was the *auctoritas patrum*, which is the ratification by the *patres* of the resolutions taken by the popular assembly on the proposal of a magistrate. However, this meaning does not seem to correspond perfectly with that of *Novel* 62.

The *Novel* in fact seems to allude to an *auctoritas* in which all the constitutional prerogatives of the senate are included. For example, in addition to legislative power, which took the form of issuing *senatus consulta*, the senate had important foreign policy tasks (signing peace agreements and treaties, receiving submissions from foreign peoples; sending ambassadors to resolve disputes or make suggestions, or imposing orders). The description of the role played by the senate is therefore more linked to the image of its power, which is then reflected in its powers from a constitutional point of view. This is also confirmed by terminological research. In the Justinianic sources, *auctoritas*

23 The pronoun *ipsi* raises some difficulties in interpretation. Biener (*Geschichte der Novellen Iustinians* [Berlissn 1824], 495.3) proposes that *ipsi* is an abbreviated form of *imperatores*. However, this hypothesis meets not only the objections already pointed out in Schoell-Kroll's critical apparatus, but also the fact that from a palaeographic point of view such an abbreviation is not possible. Garbarino 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 7–10, also suggests that the pronoun indicate the figure of the emperor, and recalls other examples of *Novellae* in which a construction according to the sense is attested (*Nov.* 53.5.1; *Nov.* 54.2pr.). Instead, M. Bretone, *Tecniche e ideologie dei giuristi romani* (Napoli 1982), 48; A. Pertusi, *La concezione politica e sociale dell'impero di Giustiniano*, in: L. Firpo, ed., *Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali* 2.1 (Torino 1985), 574–575; Puliatti 2021, op. cit. (n. 16), 147–73, consider that it refers to *populus et senatus*.

24 *Nov.* 62praef. Transl. (Bono): In the most ancient times the authority of the Roman senate shone out in such force of power that by means of the governance being conducted both at home and abroad, the whole world was subjected to the Roman yoke, and Roman domination spread not only where the sun raised and set, but even to both sides of the globe: everything indeed was conducted by the common counsel of the senate. But after the legal authority of the people and the senate was transferred to the imperial majesty for the sake of the happiness of the *respublica*, it came about that those, whom they themselves had elected and had appointed to the various offices of the administration, did everything that the emperor's command required of them.

is used to indicate the emperor (*nostra auctoritas*) but also imperial officials (*illustris auctoritas*).²⁵

The *praefatio* continues by stating that the *ius* of the senate, together with that of the people, then passed to the emperor. It has been argued that “Justinian’s account of the transition from Republic to Empire is studiously vague, referring only to a transfer of the legal authority (*ius*) of the senate and people to the imperial majesty”.²⁶ However, if we look at the text more closely, the reference to the transfer of power is precisely to be found in the *lex de imperio*.²⁷ One can therefore compare the text of the *Novel* with other legal texts:²⁸

*Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem: utpote cum lege regia, quae de imperio eius lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat.*²⁹

*Sed et quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem, cum lege regia, quae de imperio eius lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit.*³⁰

*Cum enim lege antiqua, quae regia nuncupabatur, omne ius omnisque potestas populi romani in imperatoriam translata sunt potestatem.*³¹

These texts describe the transition of power from the people to the emperor; this takes place through a specific legal act, the *lex de imperio*. Although this law is not explicitly mentioned in the *Novel*, it is clear that Justinian’s chancery has the same procedure of power’s transmission in mind.³²

25 *Ex multis*, C. 5.13.1.5, C. 4.29.23.2, C. 5.37.28.3, *Nov.* 17pr, *Nov.* 75pr.

26 Kruse 2019, op. cit. (n. 16), 106–107.

27 Other sources mention that the emperor receives his power from a *lex*: Gai., 1.5, Cass. Dio, 53.32. 5–6.

28 F. Burgella, *Il senato di Costantinopoli*, in Gabba 1998, op. cit. (n. 2), 402; Bretone 1982, op. cit. (n. 23), 48–49; Garbarino 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 21–23; A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge 2015), 101 and n. 46.

29 Ulp., *lib. pr. instit.* D. 1.4.1pr.: Whatever seems good to the emperor and is approved has the force of law, for the people confer on him, and in him, all their power and authority, by the royal law that is passed on his power.

30 *I.* 1.2.6: Whatever seems good to the emperor has also the force of law; for the people, by the *lex regia*, which is passed to confer on him his power, make over to him their whole power and authority.

31 *Deo auctore* 7: All the power and the laws of the Roman people had been transferred to the emperor by an ancient law known as “royal law”.

32 Although the text of *Novel* 62 refers to the *lex de imperio*, it also adds the senate to the people, to whom sovereignty belonged in the ancient Republic. This is certainly a difference

In the light of what has been said so far, the question remains as to what emerges from this *praefatio*. A first consideration concerns the silence of the text about the other Republican magistracies, which together with the senate exercised power. However, the reason for this absence lies in the rhetorical purpose of the prologue, which serves to introduce the imperial measure on the senators. The legislator's interest is not to describe in true and faithful terms what the Roman constitutional setup was in the Republican era. In fact, the emperor only wants to introduce his decision concerning the senate alone.

Even with this limitation, the prologue makes it possible to present the emperor as the direct heir to the role previously played by the senate; the emperor's apex position has its justification and historical antecedent in the position of the senate. The legislator thus shows continuity between the past and the present, between the Republican and imperial eras. However, this continuity only serves to legitimize the current political situation, in which the emperor is now the head of the Roman state. If before it was the Republican organs that constituted the centre of political action, the advent of the emperor has indeed maintained the Republican structures but not the balance of power, since it is now the emperor who holds power.

2 *Novel 105*

We have seen that *Novel 62* distinguishes between the period before and after the *translatio* of the *ius* of people and senate to the emperor. A similar conception of time can be found in the preamble of *Novel 105*, titled *De consulibus*. Before turning our attention to this, it must be said that the consulate is also mentioned in other Novels of Justinian. *Novel 13* remembers that in ancient times the consuls presided over the highest council.³³ In *Novel 24*, the consuls become the model for the *praetor Pisidiae*: in fact, they took provinces by lot, gradually built up the Roman name, and made it so great that God did not grant this success to any other state.³⁴ *Novel 38* says that only the highest ranks, including the consulship, can be freed from the burdens of city councils.³⁵

from the legal sources referred to here. However, the mention of the senate is again justified by the argument of the imperial constitution, which concerns the senators, and not a historical reconstruction of the Roman past.

33 *Nov. 13.1.1*. On this law, see E. Franciosi, *Riforme istituzionali e funzioni giurisdizionali nelle Novelle di Giustiniano. Studi su Nov. 13 e Nov. 80* (Milano 1998); Puliatti 2021, op. cit. (n. 16), 138–146; Kruse 2019, op. cit. (n. 16), 92–96.

34 *Nov. 24.1*.

35 *Nov. 38praef.3*.

Novel 47 fixed a new system of dating official documents and legal proceedings: the consulship is preceded by the regnal date of the reigning emperor.³⁶ In *Novel* 81, after again mentioning that the consuls give their name to the year and are the only ones honoured with the *codicilli consulares*, the emperor states that the consuls *ordinarii*, who are subject to authority, become independent at the moment when that rank is granted to them.³⁷

These references to the consulship and its past are episodic, while *Novel* 105 deals explicitly with this magistracy. Specifically, the constitution regulates one of the main functions that the consul assumed from the fifth century onwards. This was the honour of providing games,³⁸ which involved contributing to the cost of their organisation.³⁹

Novel 105 was issued on 28 December 537, when the Gothic War was underway, and was addressed to Strategius, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*.⁴⁰ A copy was explicitly made for John, *praefectus praetorio* of the East, and Longinus, *praefectus urbi*. This *Novel* introduced innovations into the consulship that concerned its functions rather than its constitutional position.⁴¹ Justinian placed

36 *Nov.* 47praef.; 1.

37 *Nov.* 81praef.; 1pr.

38 Imagery of the games are very diffused on the consular diptychs of the sixth century: J. Engemann, 'Die Spiele spätantiker senatoren und Consulen, ihre Diptychen und ihre Geschenke', in: G. Bühl, A. Cutler and A. Effenberger, eds., *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke in Diskurs* (Wiesbaden 2008), 53–77; C. Olovdotter, *The Consular Image. An Iconological Study of the Consular Diptychs* (Oxford 2005), 123–127; A. Cameron, 'The Origin, Context and Function of Consular Diptychs', *Journal of Roman Studies* 103 (2013), 179–185.

39 The costs of the celebrations could be very high. Procopius (*Anecd.* 26.12) states that those invested with the office of consul had to pay more than 2000 pounds of gold. This high sum was only covered to a small extent by one's own wealth, while the most came from the emperor. For the expenses of the consulate, A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey* II (Oxford 1964), 539; M.H. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300–1450* (Cambridge 1985), 192–193; Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, Worp 1987, op. cit. (n. 2), 9.

40 On this *Novel*, E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* II (Paris-Bruges 1949), 461–462; Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, Worp 1987, op. cit. (n. 2), 10–12; Meier 2002, op. cit. (n. 9), 279–281; Ceccconi 2007, op. cit. (n. 2), 123–125; M. Kruse, 'Justinian's laws and Procopius' Wars', in: C. Lillington-Martin, E. Turquois, eds., *Procopius of Caesarea: literary and historical interpretations* (Basingstoke 2017), 186–200; Kruse 2019, op. cit. (n. 16), 112–113. The *Authenticum* places the promulgation of this law at 28 December 536: Schoell, Kroll 1912, op. cit. (n. 16), 507; *PLRE* II, 1034–1036.

41 There is debate about the reasons for this law. For Bury (J.B. Bury, *History of the later Roman empire from the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian (a.D. 395–a.D. 565)* II [London 1923], 347), Justinian attempted to "rescue the endangered institution". For Stein (Stein 1949, op. cit. (n. 40), 461–462), the law was enacted to favour the consulship of John of Cappadocia, who assumed the magistracy on 1 January 538. The latter would have had

limits on the activities of this office. The emperor was responsible for regulating the role of the consuls in the running of the games. Justinian complained that consular subjectivism had drifted dangerously, since a competition of excessive ostentation had been created and the costs of organizing the games were now out of control. Recalling a constitution of his predecessor Marcian, who forbade consuls from carrying out *sparsiones* of money,⁴² Justinian lashed out at those who had transgressed it by being excessively prodigal when scattering money in public.

In order to draw a line under such immoderate behaviour, the emperor decreed that consuls may only celebrate their appointment through seven public appearances throughout their year of office.⁴³ The first procession was to take place on the Kalends of January, the day on which the consuls entered office; the second celebration was a chariot-race called *mappa*; the third the “theatre-hunt” of wild beasts; the fourth the so-called “one-day-only” (μονημερίον), at which men fought animals; the fifth a procession to be held in the theatre, where comedians, tragic actors, and choruses went on stage; the sixth another chariot-race; and the last the festival when the consul laid down the office.

Furthermore, Justinian decided to amend the constitution of Marcian, not only removing the ban on honouring the people with *sparsiones*, but also clarifying that the emperor was not compelling anyone to do so. The consul was free to determine if he wanted to scatter money during the celebrations of his appointment, and the amount to be distributed. In any case, the consul could only distribute gifts in silver,⁴⁴ as the emperor reserved the privilege of scattering gold for himself alone.⁴⁵

a personal interest in introducing this reform, because he would have obtained a significant reduction in the costs he had to face. Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, Worp 1987, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 10–11, believe that Justinian acted to counter the growing popularity of Belisarius. In fact, his consulship had been conferred after his victory over the Vandals, and had been celebrated with much munificence, as there had been distributions of gold, later banned by *Novel* 105.

42 C. 12.3.2.

43 Miller & Sarris 2018, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 690 n. 11, translate in this way the Greek word *πρόοδοι*, because, even if normally it refers to processions, in this context it indicates all kind of celebrations; *Nov.* 105.1.

44 Justinian allowed the consuls to scatter *miliaresia* (silver coins), but also *kaukia* (silver cups), *tetragonia* (square coins or hacksilver) and *mela* (whose meaning is unclear); see *Nov.* 105.2.1.

45 *Nov.* 105.2 §§1–3.

While the constitution is dealing with a particular aspect of the consuls' duties, it nevertheless features a very solemn preamble, in which the supreme authority of the consulate in ancient times is proclaimed:⁴⁶

Τὸ τῆς ὑπατείας ὄνομά τε καὶ πρᾶγμα τοῖς μὲν πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις πρὸς τὴν τῶν πολέμων ἐπενοήθη χρεῖαν, κὰν ταῖς ψήφοις, ἃς αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῇ χειροτονίᾳ τὸ κοινὸν ἐδίδου τῆς πολιτείας σχῆμα, διελάγγχανον [γὰρ] εὐθύς τὰς ἐπαρχίας ἐν αἷς Ῥωμαίοις πόλεμος ἦν, καὶ κατ' αὐτὰς ἐκκληροῦντο τὰς ῥάβδους ὕστερον δὲ ὁ χρόνος εἰς τὴν τῶν εὐσεβεστάτων αὐτοκρατόρων μεταστήσας τὸ πολεμεῖν τε καὶ εἰρήνην ἄγειν ἐξουσίαν εἰς φιλοτιμίαν μόνην τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῖς ὑπάτοις μετέστησε καὶ ταύτην σῶφρονα καὶ τεταγμένην καὶ τὸ μέτρον οὐκ ἐκβαίνουσαν.

Consulatus nomen et causa priscis quidem Romanis adversus hostium adinventum est utilitatem, et in decretis, quae eis in ordinatione communis dabat reipublicae figura, sortiebantur repente provincias in quibus Romani bellum habebant, et secundum has sortiebantur fasces; sequens vero tempus in imperatorum piissimorum transponens bellandi et pacificandi potestatem ad largitatem solam causam consulibus mutavit et hanc temperatam et ordinatam mensuramque non excedentem.

The emperor is well aware not only of the Republican origin of the consulship but also of its almost thousand-year existence.⁴⁷ However, in the proem the recourse to history becomes more intense. The legislator refers to the foundation of the Republic (τοῖς μὲν πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις/*prisci Romani*) and the creation of this magistracy.

The emperor states that the consul's name and activity were linked to the military sphere.⁴⁸ Now, this etymology could raise some perplexity, and a com-

46 *Nov. 105praef.* Transl. (Bono): The name and origin of the consulate were conceived by the ancient Romans for the needs of war and in the deliberations, that the shared structure of government gave them on their election, they immediately drew lots for the provinces in which the Romans were at war, and for those they received *fasces*. Later, time transferred the power of war and peace to the authority of the most pious emperors, and transformed the consuls' role into an office of honours, which was moderate, controlled and didn't exceed the limit.

47 *Nov. 105praef.*: ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ὀρώμεν κινδυνεῦον διαπεσεῖν τὸ τῶν ὑπάτων ὄνομα, ὅπερ ἐκ χρόνων οὕτω μακρῶν καὶ εἰς χιλιεστὸν σύνεγγυς ἔτος ἔλθον τῇ τῶν Ῥωμαίων συνήκμασε πολιτεία. Lat.: *quia igitur videmus periclitari consulum nomen, quod ex temporibus ita prolixis et ad millesimum prope annum veniens cum Romanorum republica pullulavit.*

48 The attribution of both civil and military powers during the Republican period is instead granted to the praetors. This appears in these texts, with which Justinian instituted the new governors of Pisidia and Lycania: *Nov. 24praef.*; *Nov. 25praef.*

parison with what John Lydus reports in his *De magistratibus* strengthens this impression.⁴⁹ The Byzantine author says: “a ‘hider of one’s thoughts’ is called *consul* from the fact that he takes forethought and is vigilant, pondering by himself on behalf of the common good”.⁵⁰ Despite this, Lydus is by no means silent about the military competence of the consuls. He mentions it when he recalls the appointment of Brutus and Publicola in the first year of the Roman Republic, but not only there.⁵¹ Lydus, in fact, identifies three different forms of government during the history of Rome: *basileia*, tyranny and the power of the Caesar (or *αὐτοκράτωρ*). Precisely when speaking of this third form, he juxtaposes the Republican magistracy and the imperial figure because both receive the title of *imperator*, which indicates command over the army.⁵² In Lydus’ vision, therefore, there is a clear evolution of the political system in Rome: the royal tyranny in the archaic age gives way to the long season of freedom of the consulate. Supreme power, or *imperium*, consists in the power to solve problems affecting the common good and to command the army in war. This power passed from consulship to the Principate, while Diocletian brought about a drastic change, assuming a despotic, if not tyrannical, attitude.

The imperial proposal of linking this magistrate to his military activity can be considered a widely diffused and common idea among the elite of Constantinople. But the connection can also be found in many ancient sources throughout Roman history, including Polybius, Cicero, and Cassiodorus. In his reflections on the Republican constitution, Polybius gives a detailed description of the consuls and their tasks.⁵³ On the one hand, they lead out their legions since they are commanders-in-chief of the Roman army; their power is almost uncontrolled as regards preparation for war and the general conduct of operations in the field. On the other hand, they exercise authority in Rome over all public affairs. Cicero says in *De legibus*: “Let there be two of them of

49 U. Roberto, ‘Giovanni Lido sul consolato. Libertà, sophrosyne e riflessione storico-politica a Costantinopoli (metà VI–inizio VII secolo)’, *Lexis* 36 (2018), 384–404.

50 Lyd., *Mag.* 1.30: καὶ κώνσουλ ὁ κρυψίνους ἀπὸ τοῦ προνοεῖν καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν σκεπτόμενον ἀγρυπνεῖν; A.C. Bandy, ed., *Ioannes Lydus, On powers or the magistracies of the Roman State* (Philadelphia 1983), 46–47.

51 Lyd., *Mag.* 1.33; Bandy 1983, op. cit. (n. 50), 51.

52 Lyd., *Mag.* 1.4; Bandy 1983, op. cit. (n. 50), 13–15.

53 Plb., 6.12. See, on this magistracy, also: Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* II (Leipzig 1887), 74–140; W. Kunkel, R. Wittmann, *Staatsordnung und Staatspraxis der römischen Republik* (Munich 1995), 311–337; A.W. Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford 1999), 104–107.

royal power, and let them be called praetors, judges, and consuls from leading, judging and advising. Let them have the supreme military power".⁵⁴

Military power also appears in the *consulatus formula* that Cassiodorus quotes in his *Variae*. Even if the senator at the court of Theodoric the Great claims that *consul dictus est a consulendo*, above all he describes consuls as the supreme commanders of the Roman army. For example, the consul rightly held power over all the citizens because he defended the homeland from enemies.⁵⁵ But the prosperity and the largesse of Rome also came from his right hand, which so copiously spilled the blood of the enemy.⁵⁶

The idea that connects the consuls' power with their military role would outlive the Justinianic Age itself. In a fragment of the *Historia chroniké*,⁵⁷ recovered in the Byzantine encyclopaedia known as *Suda*, John of Antioch agrees with Lydus. He sees the consulate as the guarantor of freedom, and, besides reminding that the lictors carry the *fasces* with the axe, assigns the consuls command over the army.⁵⁸

Whatever the source which the imperial chancellery used, it is important to note that the chancellery itself created a direct link between the magistracy and military power. The chancellery's formulation does not speak of the annual duration of the consul's office, it does not speak of the *sella curulis*, nor of the collegial exercise of power. Instead, it has chosen a particular aspect of *imperium*, a power that includes both military and civil command, the administration of the city and the administration of justice.

In *Novel* 105 the focus is on the *imperium militiae*. From the origins of the *Respublica*, the consuls in fact had supreme military power, which includes command in war, the formation of the army by conscription, the appointment of officers, and the imposition of taxes for the needs of war. However, declaration of war was not a direct responsibility of the consuls, because the centuriate assembly, summoned by the consuls, issued the *leges de bello indicendo*. The proem,⁵⁹ then, seems to refer to the fact that the provinces used to be

54 Cic., *leg.* 3.8: *Regio imperio duo sunt ique praeuendo iudicando consulendo praetores iudices consules appellamino. Militiae summum ius habent nemi parento.*

55 Cassiod., *Var.* 6.1.2: *Merito pridem genus habebatur imperii: merito supra omnes cives poterat, qui ab hoste patriam vindicabat.*

56 Cassiod., *Var.* 6.1.4: *Hinc tanta largitas profluebat, ut illa dextera, quae sanguinem copiose fuderat hostium, vitae auxilium civibus manaret irriguum.*

57 U. Roberto, ed., *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta ex Historia chronica* (Berlin-New York 2012).

58 Sud., s.v. "Υπατοι: ὁ γὰρ νῦν ὑπὸ πελέκεσί τε καὶ ῥάβδοις δορυφοροῦ μένος καὶ στρατοπέδων ἐξηγούμενος.

59 *Nov.* 105praef.: *in decretis, quae eis in ordinatione communis dabat reipublicae figura sortiebantur repente provincias.* The verb *sortiebantur* seems to recall one of the ways by which

decreed and assigned by the senate after the election of the consuls.⁶⁰ The *praefatio*, furthermore, recalls that the consuls were to act using their *imperium* in a particular geographical area not yet pacified or where military operations are needed to be continued.⁶¹

Justinian's account focuses on the role of the consuls in situations of war but omits their domestic political services. Yet despite this choice, the constitution does not minimize the origin of this magistrate.⁶² From a rhetorical point of view, it would indeed make no sense to play down the role of this magistracy from the very beginning of the *Respublica*. In fact, the function of the Justinianic description is the opposite, namely to celebrate the important past and then allow the excesses of the present to be stigmatized.

Military power, the *praefatio* continues, then passed into the hands of the emperor, transforming the magistracy of the consuls as well. Compared to *Novel 62*, there is no mention of any *lex de imperio*. But the chronological framework is much the same: the Republican period, and then the imperial period. In this case, as in the previous one, the passage of military power from the consuls to the emperor took place in full continuity, without trauma, without upheaval. In this way, Justinian can consider himself the legitimate holder of this power.

As seen above, the same interpretation of the transition from Republic to Empire is found in Lydus. Justinian's contemporary reads imperial power as a transfer of authority from consuls to emperor.⁶³ This bureaucrat's reflection is not confined to the past. Rather, expressing his own judgement on the present, he celebrates Justinian's interpretation of his role as ruler as if he were a consul himself.⁶⁴ Now, the concept of the emperor as consul is placed also at the end of the *Novel 105*: "the Sovereign has a permanent consulship ... thus the Sovereign's consulship will also be concomitant of his sceptre".⁶⁵ In fact, both sources refer to a tradition that, from Pliny the Younger to Pacatus, admits continuity between the consulship and the imperial monarchy.⁶⁶

the provinces were assigned: *sortitio* is by lot. The other possibility is that consuls decide the province assigned by mutual agreement, *comparatio*.

60 *Ex multis*, Liv., 30.1; 32.8. The distribution of the provinces is also connected to the procedure for waging war: see Liv., 36.1.4–6; 36.2.1.

61 It is sufficient to remember what Livy says about *Sardinia*, Liv., 41.8.2: *ea propter belli magnitudinem provincia consularis facta est* (= by reason of the gravity of the war, was made a consular province).

62 Similarly so Kruse 2017, op. cit. (n. 40), 187–188.

63 Lyd., *Mag* 1.4.3–5.

64 Lyd., *Mag*. 2.8.3.

65 The translation is from: Miller & Sarris 2018, op. cit. (n. 16), 695.

66 Plin., *paneg.* 55.6 s, *Pan. lat.* (II) XII.20.5 s; Roberto 2018, op. cit. (n. 49), 399.

3 The History in Rhetoric

After reading the two texts, it only remains to make a few brief concluding remarks. *Novel* 62 and 105 provide us with an important testimony of how Justinian recovered the past of important Republican institutions, such as the senate and consuls, even when these traditional structures of power had lost their original function.

The two texts have a very similar expository structure. In both cases, the proem divides the past in two periods, a before and after. Before, there were the senate and the consuls who exercised power. Afterwards, this power passed into the hands of the emperor. In a few lines, the legislator draws a line of continuity and legitimization between Republic and Empire.

A common element in the perspective of our sources is the contrast between the honorary character of the senate and the consulship and their past history full of concrete responsibilities at a political and military level. Whereas previously the senate governed the whole world, or the consuls led the wars, now it is the emperor who holds these prerogatives.

The proems have an introductory function. In the case of *Novel* 62 and *Novel* 105, the legislator has chosen to use historical language. Among the prologues in the *Novellae*, those of a historical nature are of great importance.⁶⁷ These constitutions are reforms of the peripheral administration. Examples are *Novel* 24, *De praetore Pisidiae*, and *Novel* 25, *De praetore Lycaoniae*.⁶⁸ These *Novellae* establish new local governorships, who are given the names of ancient magistracies (*praetor* or *proconsul*), and assign them military and civil powers. These were necessary measures to counter the military threat to the northern and eastern frontiers of the Empire in the years 535–536. This is why these *Novellae* are considered a manifestation of Justinian's classicism.⁶⁹

However, as we have seen for *Novel* 62 and 105, it is a story that is told not in truthful but in rhetorical, and therefore somewhat modified, terms. The texts are doubly rhetorical. On the one hand, there is the rhetorical work that the *praefatio* is expected to do, which must introduce the imperial text and

67 H. Hunger, *Prooimion. Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* (Wien 1964), 173–179.

68 Other examples are: *Nov.* 26 *De praetore Thraciae*, *Nov.* 29 *De praetore Paphlagoniae*; *Nov.* 30 *De praetore Cappadociae*, *Nov.* 103 *De proconsole Palaestinae*, *Nov.* 104 *De praetore Siciliae*.

69 M. Maas, 'Roman History and Christian Ideology in Justinianic Reform Legislation', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 40 (1986), 17–31; C. Pazdernik, 'Justinianic Ideology and the Power of the Past', in: M. Maas, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 185–214; Puliatti 2021, op. cit. (n. 16), 1–14.

prepare the reader for the imperial decision. On the other hand, the content is also fundamentally rhetorical. The chancellery used historical data to describe a reality, in this case that of the senate and consuls, which has changed a great deal: they were only a vestige of the old Republican constitution.

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TRADITION AND POWER IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

This volume focuses on the interface between tradition and the shifting configuration of power structures in the Roman Empire. By examining various time periods and locales, its contributions show the Empire as a world filled with a wide variety of cultural, political, social, and religious traditions. These traditions were constantly played upon in the processes of negotiation and (re)definition that made the empire into a superstructure whose coherence was embedded in its diversity.

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