LEADERS, LANDSCAPES, POWER AND MEMORY

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INTRODUCTION

Ρώμην δ', ὠκεανῷ περιτέρμονα πάντοθεν, αὐτὸς

πρῶτος ἀνερχομένῳ σφράγισαι ἠελίῳ.

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> Be the first to make Rome, bounded by the Ocean on all sides,
>
> sealed by the rising sun.
>
> (*Greek Anthology* 9.297.5–6)

In a recent article exploring nationcraft and territory in Middle Byzantium N. Matheou identifies characteristics crucial to understanding territorial production in pre-modern societies. Embedded within debates in Byzantine studies on the anachronism of seeing the Roman empire of this period between an imperialist or nation state, Matheou cuts through to a bedrock of political economy (N. Matheou, *Past and Present* [2025], 3–4).[1] Empires and states produce legible space in order to exploit and control lands under their control. 'Territory is that locale made accessible, representable, and so exploitable, for the operation of the particular *regime of accumulation* the institutional apparatus functions to (re)produce' (Matheou [2025], 11).

Political economy becomes a maxim, therefore, that can change depending on historical contingency. This view places a premium on different forms of power relation and their consequences, such as the surveying and counting of lands and people to tax, which is the 'regime of accumulation'. No form of territorial (re)production needs to look the same, but it alerts us to the historical process of exploitation that allowed pre-modern states to read and understand resources, be it human or natural, at their disposal.

This process is ultimately relational, between rulers and ruled, and it manifests itself in the development of institutions and ideologies seeking to make a plurality of spaces understandable and more cohesive. Such a theme is true of any society and still allows for historical particularities to take shape, be it changes in political and administrative structures such as the development of the Roman monarchy, its subordinates, and their development through time in the shifting ideological and administrative landscape.

This process is also food for thought for earlier epochs of Roman history, though the empire in this period is not conceived to be a 'nation' or even have strict bounded territory as part of understanding its geography (N. Purcell, *JRS* 80 [1990], 180). Indeed, Roman hegemony has seemed to be more haphazard and fluid, with Roman imperialism reserving the right to boundless power, with ever changing levels of oversight and exploitation in the various hierarchies of organisation across the Roman world. Such views might encompass the provincial systems of imperial government, networks of city-states, the placement and logistical challenges of standing legions across the Roman empire, which the tax systems and its officials bankrolled; all these themes have received their due attention in scholarship.

An instructive text sheds light on this long process, historically situated at a time of great change in the Roman world: 14 CE and the death of Augustus.

> opes publicae continebantur, quantum civium sociorumque in armis, quot classes, regna, provinciae, tributa aut vectigalia, et necessitates ac largitiones. quae cuncta sua manu perscripserat Augustus addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii, incertum metu an per invidiam.
>
> Its [sc. the booklet's] contents were the public resources, what numbers of citizens and allies under arms, how many fleets, kingdoms and provinces, taxes and revenues, and also necessary expenses and lavishments – all of which Augustus had listed in his own hand, and had added the counsel of confining the empire within its boundaries (whether in dread or through resentment being uncertain).
>
> (Tac. *Ann*. 1.11.3–4; trans. Woodman)

[1]Cf. C. Ando, 'The Ambitions of Government: Sovereignty and Control in the Ancient Countryside', in: H. Flower and B.D. Shaw (edd.), *Empire and Religion in the Roman World* (2021), for an attempt to map the tendrils of Roman power into the countryside (pp. 81–2) and the blind spots for Roman historians on life outside cities (p. 74).

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Long taken as a perceived shift in Roman policy, Augustus' directive is often said to mark the moment of the slowing down of Roman expansionism. However, the context of the passage requires a closer look to the meaning of this crucial line. The immediate context is the reading of the elusive *libellus* in the Senate, which showed the personal care of Augustus alongside his directive of 'confining the empire', as A.J. Woodman's translation has it.

The booklet's contents, however, should help with a more natural reading of the Latin *coercendi*: 'to confine' or 'to restrict'. What Augustus wrote down with his own hand are numbers of people, resources and expenses across the Roman empire. This information is a sort of territorial production made legible. In Matheou's parlance, this directive marks a shift from absolute territorial production (i.e. conquest) and relative territorial production (the systematisation of resource information). Augustus means to *coercere* those within Roman power and to make those already under Roman power subject to the extractive power of the Roman empire. This directive therefore is less a moving away from conquest and more a greater exercise of *imperium*.[2] The following comment 'whether in dread or through resentment' shows a keen interest in control, rather than overt concern for foreign intervention.

Moreover, the place of the emperor in this equation is striking. Augustus, as commander, is at the head of this accumulation of data. Accordingly, we have the creation of territorial space along an Augustan mode, which emphasises a relationship between the emperor and the exploitative capacities of the Roman empire and its inhabitants. His power is made manifest through the lines of communication between himself and provincial administration and communities.

Figuring out this process, which might focus on the role of the Roman emperor and the manifestation of Roman power, is, in broad terms, the uniting theme of the books under review. How might we describe territorial production in the Roman empire of the first five centuries CE? How has the scholarship and understanding of the Roman emperor shifted through centuries of change? How do we digest the several centuries of dialogue between different eras of understanding power? How are tradition and innovation interpreted in fields of expansion, political action, ideological display and religious change, especially in a Roman world that was consciously in dialogue with its past?

This review article is bound together by these processes of production, and the changes through time of imperial 'assemblages' that inform the presentation and understanding of Roman power structures, particularly revolving around emperorship.[3] The breadth of topics treated in each of these books is immense, and spans from the memory and reception of female power in the early Republic to the modern reception of the emperor Augustus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the development of the Roman emperorship through tetrarchic ideology and the rise of the *magister militum* in the western Roman empire in between.

[2]The discussion by S. España-Chamorro lines up with this view of Augustan territorial administration, in *Law and Power*, p. 192: 'One such multiple change was the reterritorialisation of the Empire, replacing the republican model of colonial management with a more modern model of territorial administration entailing a different model of management that promoted clear geographical divisions and a massive expansion of the way in which geographical space was measured and apportioned'. For a different, though complementary take, on burgeoning Augustan statehood, see C. Lundgreen, 'Statualità e principato Augusteo', *Politica Antica* 9 (2019), esp. pp. 102–9.

[3]I borrow the term 'assemblages' from the theoretical discussion in Carlà-Uhink and Rollinger's introduction to *Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 18, which applies the term of F. Guatarri and G. Deleuze's thought in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

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Such an *essai de synthèse* is a crucial exercise. For instance, it is important to understand power and an institution such as the Roman emperorship over a long period of time. Dialogue with various iterations of the position and the manifestation of its power can only enrich the complexity of our understanding (cf. O. Hekster, *Caesar Rules* [2023]). Considering together, say, the nature of succession politics and its changes throughout many centuries of Caesars (see B. Waldron's and Carlà-Uhink's chapters in *Tetrarchy as Ideology*) alongside studies on portrait busts of Antinoos as a Gorgon (E. Strazdins, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 97–9) and what either say about the perceptions of the emperor give us both specific evidence and information on more general attributes of the expectations placed on rulers.

Moreover, the work on display in these volumes indicates the wealth and depth of the evidence and impact of the Roman emperor on time, space and memory, and all are conscious of the long history and impact of Roman power structures on the history of empire and its institutions. Such activities point the way forward to the future of scholarship that is ultimately and necessarily collaborative. While not a full appreciation of the over 40 scholars involved, this review article will create an angle of reading that elevates recent trends in the study of Roman history.

PLACE AND TERRITORIAL PRODUCTION

Territorial production had an impact on territorial control. Perhaps an obvious, if crucial, example of such a process is the alteration of toponyms as Roman power expanded, particularly visible in the Roman conquest of Hispania during the Republic. The change of name hides the forced movement of population, which often effaces indigenous ways of knowing (S. España-Chamorro, *Tradition and Power*, pp. 101, 109), and places emphasis on the victorious general whose name is often commemorated in such foundations. Territory is understood, therefore, at least partly, through the creation of space and settlement in the long history of competitive imperialism in the Roman republic, which develops further when *cognomina* shift to bear the names Caesar and Augustus during the early imperial period (for the maintenance of earlier Latinised toponyms, in contrast, see pp. 95–7).

This process is at times opaque. The confusing nature of the evidence of the *quattorviratus* in Hispania is a good case study, in the context of the Romanisation of political and administrative structures through *coloniae* and *municipia* in Hispania from the Republic into the Empire. In a word, it is inconsistent: the spread and nomenclature of top magistracies, both in Italy and in the provinces, makes the study of the origin and development of these positions difficult (D. Espinosa Espinosa, *Law and Power*, pp. 63–4).

The institutional history of *Hispania* in part reaches a dead end of sorts (p. 86; Espinosa's careful discussion, though, works through the evidence and provides plausible conclusions, p. 85). This problem might be divided between expectations of Rome's limitless power and the evidence of a plurality of governmental forms, even in communities labelled as Roman.[4] Part of the problem, therefore, comes from assumptions on the reach of Roman power to create uniformity, which thereafter creates confusion when seemingly stable institutions appear inconsistent.

The long history of territorial production had its impact on the landscape. Lines of communications concerning money (i.e. taxation) and military infrastructure are worth

[4]As described by C. Ando, 'The Ambitions of Government' [2021], p. 76: 'Rome resolved this problem on an ideological level by advancing *de jure* claims to sovereign authority across many domains, all the while bracketing *de facto* conditions of pluralism'.

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charting in the evidence. A couple of illuminating chapters on internal borders and division in Baetica and Mauretania demonstrate the problems of locating places.

The long history of interaction between landscape and Roman power seems to be one of conquest and control, though some details remain unclear. The separation between Numidia and Mauretania is stated by Pliny the Elder (and others) as the Ampsaga river, at the mouth of which was Tucca (Plin. *NH* 5.3.21), though the Tabula Peutingeriana and the anonymous cosmography of Ravenna have Paccanis Matidiae/Pacianis there, with Tucca described elsewhere. The scanty epigraphic evidence does not help its location. España-Chamorro's discussion (*Law and Power*, pp. 199–200) is full of vacillations between certainty and uncertainty in the stop–start conquest and colonisation of North Africa into late antiquity. The story is one of the consolidation of settlements on the coast and the slow colonisation of the highlands: 'The finalisation of the socio-urban network of the north and in-depth knowledge of the indigenous populations thanks to recent explorations made possible the agricultural colonisation of this area. Even so, it is striking that in the great plateau of Sétif, the process of creating and consolidating rural settlements took so long' (pp. 215–16).

Connected here are an ideological and a mythological understanding of space and communication. The *Via Augusta* and the *Via Iulia Augusta* showed that Roman land was measured through roads and centuriation (Betjes, *Tradition and Power*, p. 113). The conceit was not only to display a control of space through measuring miles from Rome to Gades, as beautifully shown on the Vicarello cups (p. 126). The effort was to surpass Hercules, associated with the journey to the Gades and a civilising mission (pp. 123–4).[5] Hercules and the past were figures to emulate and surpass, writ large through the road networks across the Roman world.

The emperor's presence could be fraught, too. The mythologically coded emperor Tiberius had a planetary pull to his location, particularly during his self-imposed exile on Capri and his oscillating trips to Campania and even Rome. The metaphor of Tiberius' eccentric orbit around Rome like an asteroid or comet (Tac. *Ann*. 6.15; R. Ash, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, p. 56) has important historical implications, as being too close or too far might be fraught with danger. The perilous presence of the emperor suggests the delineation of space in concentric circles outwards from the central node that he was, or as he was perceived.

Imperial space is created around the emperor. This is a theme of some relevance, particularly in the elaborate court ceremonial of the Tetrarchy. Distance and obeisance developed a new language of monarchy, describing interactions between the tetrarchs and the senatorial aristocracy (Rollinger, *Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 113; cf. Aur. Vict. 39.2–4). Rollinger outlines the complex dynamic of change and continuity with other forms of obeisance to monarchy in antiquity without losing sight of a contextual reading of court ceremony. This applies also to F. Guidetti's chapter in the same volume, which focuses on the display of harmony and hierarchy in imperial ceremony. Galerius' subordination to Diocletian is accentuated in 297 in Syria, where the Caesar dressed in purple ran in front of the carriage of the Augustus (pp. 124–6, with discussion of relevant sources). This reading matches the performance of hierarchy and harmony in the Vatican porphyry group, where two separate embraces, one between the two *Augusti* and the other between the *Caesares* accentuate their distinction in rank alongside their appearance as a collective (p. 131). The language of closeness and distance remains relevant throughout imperial history.

One aspect of the growing creep of the emperor's power concerns the political and civic life of the Roman empire. Studies on the *polis* nonetheless describe the vitality of civic life,

[5]The richness of the argument cannot be covered here, though the connection of Hercules and Augustus with Hor. *Od*. 3.14.1–4 is intriguingly discussed (pp. 128–9).

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albeit in a more aristocratic and hierarchical manifestation (see J. Ma, *Polis* [2024]; L. Tacoma, *Roman Political Culture* [2020]). So, how do we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory trends (civic life; court politics), especially over a long period of time where the *communis opinio* is still that civic participation was waning slowly?[6]

The two parts of the equation are ideological and a form of territorial production. It is well known that political participation, or the semblance of it, was crucial to the ideology of Augustus' principate. The growing 'stateness' of the Roman empire (i.e. the greater degree of codification of civic participation and entry/comportment requirements of the aristocracy) might mean a greater focus on process and institutional frameworks. In this case, as C. Bruun indicates in a study on distinct instantiations of electoral politics in the Roman empire (Bruun, *Tradition and Power*, p. 140), the existence of regular and ritualised practice in civic institutions such as liturgies, festivals and (yes) elections should be seen as normal, rather than exceptional, in the early years of the Roman principate. From that point one can map more readily civic and political boundaries of *coloniae* and *municipia* in the Roman empire, which suggests the continuation of contested elections, alongside images of benefaction and euergetism that feel more familiar in the life of cities in the Roman empire.

This dynamic is also true of Hadrian's commitment to cities across the empire enjoying their own 'laws and customs'. J.-M. Cortés-Copete describes the feedback loop between emperor and provincial communities, where tradition and antiquarianism are used as ways to gain favour from the imperial centre. The example of Naryca is striking (Cortés-Copete, *Tradition and Power*, p. 172): Naryca's poetic pedigree triggers the emperor to recognise it as a legitimate city, thus setting it apart from its neighbours. What follows is a discussion of evidence that places Hadrian as an ultimate arbiter of law and its various pasts in Greek cities, particularly Athens and Cyrene (pp. 176–80). Territoriality is as performatively Homeric as it is imperial; and recognition not only measures facts on the ground, but also imagined, fictional and temporal landscapes.[7]

The point is to appreciate the tension between the nascent and growing gravity pull of court politics surrounding the Roman emperor *and* the focus on civic life and participation in the cities across the Roman empire; a dynamic seen also in Strazdins's discussion of Herodes Atticus. There was competition over space and time: the competitive construction of monumental space between Atticus and Hadrian, particularly the former's Marathon estate and the latter's benefactions in Athens, suggests a dialogue between emperor and prominent euergetist on where, what, when and with which vernacular place and time are commemorated (Strazdins, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 92, 107).[8] These larger-than-life figures in the Greek east chose to emulate and even surpass their imperial counterparts, as argued by G. Mitropoulos (*Tradition and Power*, pp. 187–207). Both emperors and imperial elites give shape to the civic and political spaces citizens and

[6]Cf. F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* [1977], p. 302; Cass. Dio 37.28; 58.29, with C. Bruun, *Tradition and Power*, p. 143.

[7]This theme can be observed in recent appraisals of imperial Greek poetry. For more, see E. Greensmith (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Epic* [2024], especially chapters by E. Greensmith, S. Goldhill and R. Hunter.

[8]See in particular Strazdins's analysis comparing the choice of portrait busts (emperors, classical orators and statesmen, Hellenistic philosophers) with location, namely the sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Brexiza and the sanctuary of Nemesis at Rhamnous. The tension of the pairings is well teased out by Strazdins, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, p. 107: 'The interpretation of the triad as honouring or warning the emperors depends on how one receives and prioritizes the orator/politician/ philosopher models of Herodes' own image'.

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communities circulated in; and the representation of court life and the elevation of the Roman emperorship add another dynamic to this picture.

However, such images and ideologies can often mask long-term processes. An example is E. Daalder's instructive chapter on Caracalla and his rescript writing, a case study in the long history of an emperor as legislator. Here the binary of 'good' and 'bad' emperor is collapsed through the focus on rescripts (Daalder, *Tradition and Power*, p. 218; for a related topic of fictionality and the emperorship see J.H.D. Scourfield, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, esp. pp. 297–9). These show Caracalla as a prudent legal mind careful not to allow the fiscus to overstep the mark, despite Cassius Dio's explicit discussion of Caracalla's greediness with respect to taxation (Cass. Dio 77[78].9.2–5). An instructive discussion concerns the protection of property from a shipwreck, property that should remain with its owners rather than be confiscated by the *fiscus* (*Cod. Iust*. 11.6.1). An article by L.P. Eberle ('Fiscal Semantics in the Long Second Century', in: C. Ando and M. Lavan [edd.], *Roman and Local Citizenship in the Long Second Century* CE [2022], pp. 97–9), cited by Daalder, presses the idea of a specifically Severan concept of taxation that was about creating a community of Roman citizens bound by their tax obligations. *Pax* is something Romans paid for, and with the *Constitutio Antoniniana* many more were made to buy in. The Augustan tradition of fiscality is therefore developed further by Caracalla's proliferation of Romans across the empire. Empire was about accumulating knowledge and delineating levels of belonging.

Imperial control is imagined as beneficial. Under the tetrarchy the consequence of defeating barbarians reverses depopulation and makes land productive again (*Pan. Lat*. 8.[5].9.3). A common theme in Roman history is reassembled to accentuate the collegiality of the Tetrarchy and an overt emphasis on martial prowess (p. 260; cf. M. Tipold, *Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 279). In this case power was about economic production being restored (A. Omissi, *Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 252), which gives an emperor's power in praise literature an economic bend, mirroring Augustus' interest in counting statistics. Power was about extracting resources. Also interesting in Omissi's discussion is the seemingly unconscionable description of the *bacaudae* as peasants who masqueraded as enemies. Putting aside the question of the identity of these *bacaudae*, there seems to be a refusal to think that these peasants might have a reason to revolt (pp. 257–9, on *Pan. Lat.* 10[2].4.3).

IDEOLOGY AND ITS FRAYED EDGES

Ideology and control can manifest in a variety of ways, particularly in how the geographical reach of the Roman empire is displayed through conspicuous consumption. This process includes the curation and display of marble from all over the empire in the *Traianeum*, the temple of Trajan in Italica (D. Bercerra Fernández, *Law and Power*, p. 140). Marble was a manner to show favour and prestige in communities and another manner of displaying wealth and luxurious reach, directly in commemoration of the Roman emperor. Hence, the proliferation of the use of marble in Italica coincided with the rise of fortune of its emperors, Trajan and Hadrian. Proximity to the emperorship was crucial, as it gave access not only to imperial quarries but also to the know-how to work the marble in the *statio serrariorum Augustorum*. Here the power and the reach of the emperor govern monumental and economic favour, which may provide plenty and boom in times of direct attention, but also allow for economic busts once the attention dissipates and local euergetism cannot replace it (p. 152).

Slow death of ways of knowing can be revealed in case studies, for instance in the necropolis of the Buchis bull and his Mother in Hermonthis under the Tetrarchy. The slow

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decline of regnal dating introduced by the idiosyncrasies of tetrarchic titulature showed the difficulties of describing tetrarchic hierarchy using the traditional descriptions of Egyptian kingship, which privileged describing one king rather than many at the same time. For N. Barbagli (*Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 235) the slow death of the cult is attributed not to the rise of Christianity, but rather to the slow burn of pharaonic absence from the cult practice, which saw the emperor as an ever more distant figure temporally and ritually. Here there is, therefore, the potential for failed or incomplete uptake of ideological messaging, which suggests different understanding of the Roman emperorship (or lack thereof) as it developed into the third and fourth centuries CE. In this case the connection between the Roman Emperor and the Egyptian Pharaoh slowly splits, leading to the latter's ultimate ritual demise.

Botched transitions are a crucial part of the long development of imperial ideology and commemoration. Successes and failures are seen particularly in the knotty problem of imperial succession. Despite the willingness for emperors to implement a dynastic principle, this was difficult to do, and there were different forms of experimentation in different ages of imperial history. Still, emperors were designated as fathers of sons (adopted or not) and of the community. E. Cowan's chapter on fatherhood is a case in point, where the notion of fatherhood is examined in the early age of the Roman principate. Both positively and negatively, Julio-Claudian emperors were thought of as fathers, and were praised and criticised accordingly. The metaphor of the family is extrapolated more widely in that people across the empire mourned the demise of the young men of the *domus Augusta* as if they were their own, which, as Cowan argues, is observed in the epigraphy of the age such as the *Tabula Hebana*, Pisan cenotaphs and the *Senatus Consultum de Pisone Patre* (Cowan, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 73–4; Suet. *Cal*. 13.1 for familial terms of endearment for Caligula; cf. Tac. *Hist*. 1.15: *unius familiae quasi hereditas fuimus*, though the meaning also strays towards another set of familial relationships, that of the enslaved). Familial language was part of the thought-world of the Roman emperorship, which governed relationships and perceptions across the empire.

Carlà-Uhink's crucial intervention (*Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 29) makes the creation of a dynasty a 'language, not a system', which is a more flexible model for understanding the forging of fictive kinships under the Tetrarchy. Here we see masculine families created, a change of names without formal adoption processes, and the metaphor of virtuous military brotherhood, as described in Waldron's chapter (pp. 54–61). For emperors chosen families need not necessarily have been legal (Carlà-Uhink, *Tetrarchy as Ideology*, pp. 29–35).

Further botched transitions may involve the re-etching of a cameo to the purposeful erasure of names in an inscription. Though a seemingly common thread in Roman imperial history, *damnatio memoriae* (to use its modern descriptor) comes under renewed scrutiny in the imperial assemblage of the tetrarchy. The collegiality of the emperorship did not last far into the fourth century, and this dynamic was manifested in the purposeful erasure of imperial images and names, with the effect of subverting tetrarchic harmony, the exact opposite of the intended message of togetherness. R. Usherwood (*Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 311) masterfully discusses instantiations of commemorated disgrace, notably the erasure of Maximian in the imperial cult complex in Luxor. Out of all the emperors present, the act of carefully scratching away his whole image shows a striking attention to detail, which ultimately serves to undermine the collective image of imperial harmony. In this scenario political instabilities resonate downstream and alter encounters with the imperial image in a myriad of local contexts.

This applies also to evidence of more popular encounters of the Roman image, which range from terracotta cake moulds depicting imperial victories to the use of weights, lamps and talismanic coins. L. Grig (*Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 118–27) brings these

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examples together in an impressive collection of more popular items that point the way to wider perceptions of the Roman emperorship. One can imagine the wide array of potential encounters with an imperial image, given how they could be both portable and edible (p. 119), which adds further complexity to the knotty issues of the sacredness of the imperial image and issues of *maiestas*.

Another strand of a narrowing of ways of knowing comes in the form of the imperial cult. As F. Lozano and E. Muñiz Grijalvo argue (*Tradition and Power*, pp. 26–32), the imperial cult both mapped a new world of commemorative networks and shut down older cultic honours for magistrates. Such an 'imperial monopoly on access to divinity' meant that commemoration and communication were channelled towards the Roman emperor (and his family) at the expense of others. This process is the other side of the coin to the claim of divine support by powerful men, and in particular Roman emperors, as described by A. Gartrell (*Tradition and Power*, p. 16) and echoed in A.H. Chen's chapter on tetrarchic insignia (*Tetrarchy as Ideology*, p. 67). Paullus Fabius Maximus' intervention in the Asian Calendar of 9 BCE evinces a more top-down understanding of the imperial cult, where the emperor's close confidant was hands on in the most appropriate ways to commemorate Augustus (Lozano and Muñiz Grijalvo, *Tradition and Power*, p. 37). Such actions change landscapes of ritual that incentivised cities to privilege commemoration of the Roman emperor.

A similar process can be seen in a different time and set of evidence: the 'conquest' of mountains as ritual spaces by late antique Syrian Stylites (J. Hahn, *Tradition and Power*, p. 263). The long process shows the proliferation of pillars on hilltops that represented 'the eradication of the traditional sacred landscape by a Christian one' (p. 288). For Hahn the process betrays an active struggle between past and present, pagan and Christian: 'They [the pillars of the stylites] were also living landmarks of enormous charisma, visible from afar, which spiritually charged their wider spatial surroundings' (p. 289).

Hilltop sanctuaries were thus places to project power and control over a landscape. Notable is the ritual space of Mt Kasios, atop of which stood an altar 55m in diameter and making the mountain a further 9m higher than its 1728 metres. This 'landscape' anchor was seen from afar rising up from the Antiochene shore of the eastern Mediterranean and underwent various forms of cultic activity between the second millennium BCE and the first CE (pp. 265–7; cf. A. Collar, 'Sinews of Belief; Anchors of Devotion', in: E.H. Seland and H. Teigen [edd.], *Sinews of Empire* [2017], p. 32). Relevant here is the curious epigram attributed to the emperor Hadrian about Trajan's exploits against the Dacians and Parthians, which tells of Trajan dedicating ritual spoils to Zeus Kasios for success in his Parthian campaigns (Hahn, *Tradition and Power*, pp. 267–8; *AP* 332), which pairs nicely with the Emperor Julian's sacrifice on the mountain before his Persian campaign in 363 CE (Amm. Marc. 22.14.4; as opposed to 12.6, cited in the text, though Hahn refers to Julian's sacrifice, described in the cited passage). Weather, travel and projections of power are connected in this transitional space between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia. Careful attention to developing Christianisation of the spaces show a stop and start process of abandonment/destruction before such ritual spaces became Christian (p. 273).

To add complexity, recalibration of religious spaces shows a dialogue with their past uses. The sanctuary of Zeus Torbachos is a case in point. Here, no exact transposition happens. Instead, the stylite column is built within the temenos wall of the sanctuary, around which a church and a pilgrims' hostel were constructed; the temple was repurposed, not destroyed or replaced (p. 279) Other hilltop sanctuaries betray a similar process: a stylite column reorientating space towards it, around which ascetic communities were settled (e.g. Kafr Daryan, pp. 281–3). The 'conquest' was slow and jagged; it did not replace like for like, and it reorientated rather than replaced channels of divine communication.

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False starts and developments are also crucial themes, as they can show the development and rehashing of ideological assemblages through time. The reign of Galerius points to various developments in imperial administration, particularly the replacement of senatorial governors with equestrians, a featured change in the administration of the late Roman empire. As L. de Blois argues (*Tradition and Power*, pp. 236–7), this development seems to be less resisted by the senatorial aristocracy than accepted, despite the material reduction in the power senators could wield, which means such changes were piecemeal and only drastic in hindsight. The Gallic empire also seems to be reactive to too much change; though this shadow empire does not appear to institute its own senate, its emperor and administrative apparatus seems to be 'traditional' insofar as it recognisably imitates Roman imperial forms, as N. Hächler argues (*Tradition and Power*, pp. 246–52).

The fleshing out of positions and groups in their various forms and in different political and geographical locations is a major theme throughout these works. This perspective looks at the position of emperor in the *longue durée* (Davenport and Malik, *Representing Rome's Emperors*) through the development of female social groups in memory and mediation from the late republic and beyond. This includes *matronae* and women represented as interventionist in the early and middle Republic (D. León Ardoy, *Law and Power*); the place of women in mediation and diplomacy in the age of Augustan peace (E. Torregaray and T. Ñaco del Hoyo, *Tradition and Power*); the empress Plotina's matronly comportment as a way to exercise influence (M. Carucci, *Tradition and Power*); and women creating funerary space through building and benefaction in Ostia and Portus (F. Cidoncha-Redondo, *Law and Power*).

Using three distinct historical tools, Bendle shows the growing development and power of the *magister militum* in the fourth century CE, one of these crucial positions in understanding Roman history. His is the story of court politics and networks, and the seemingly zero-sum game of imperial power that shifted from the emperorship to the *magister militum*, a crucial theme in charting power distribution through the ages (*The Office of* Magister Militum, p. 203). Through rather intricate narrative descriptions of the words and deeds of *magistri*, Bendle intends to approach the institution as it was embedded in its varied political and social relationships. Chapter 3 is especially effective in charting cabals jockeying for position in the tumultuous political and military environment of the age (p. 147), and Chapter 4 explores the dynamics of being Roman or barbarian in a *magister*'s career progression. The argument is that the proportion of barbarian *magistri* increased over the fourth century, as did their influence, in a position that acted as a hard ceiling as they could not accede to the purple (p. 199). The 'assemblage' of imperial ideology still accentuated military prowess at a time when child-emperors could not take the field, which meant that such expectation was delayed into the projected future of their reigns (M. McEvoy, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 152–9). Instead, the security of the state depended on their piety (p. 161). The realities and projections of power are on view where the tension between actual and displayed power opens space for roles such as the *magister militum*.

Another set of offices in tension is the consulship with the emperorship. Consulships remained a crucial mark of favour in the fourth century (Bendle, *The Office of* Magister Militum, p. 15) As we move forward in time to the sixth century, the consulship is seen as a historiographical marker of a different time in Roman history in contradistinction to that of the emperor. In a tight discussion of Jordanes' *Getica* and *Romana*, the political degeneration of the Roman emperorship is shown to be inversely proportional to the Goths picking up the slack of virtue, and it was in fact the time of the consuls when Rome had reached its peak greatness (Jord. *Rom.* 111–12; M.S. Bjornlie, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, p. 179). The same applies to the reception of the consulship and the senate in

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Justinian's *Novels* 62 and 105, which F. Bono focuses on (*Tradition and Power*, p. 330). Here there is a sense of the duties of the senate and the power of the consul ultimately shifting to the emperorship. Such an argument is rhetorical flourish, important for its political context, yet a snapshot of the long history of reception of Roman institutions and offices (cf. M. Kruse, 'Justinian's Laws and Procopius' *Wars*, in: C. Lillington-Martin and E. Turquois [edd.], *Procopius of Caesarea: Literary and Historical Interpretations* [2017]).

Indeed, dialogue between the past and the future of the emperorship is a major theme throughout all these works, though more consciously the focus of study in Malik and Davenport's volume, the introduction of which is worth digesting: the malleability of representation of emperors, the choices and blind spots introduced by modern and ancient historians, the fragmentary nature of the evidence, even for Roman emperors and the different forms of that evidence. All these perspectives are mediated through the representations and their receptions, both contemporary and 'post-classical'. Tiberius as an archetypal tyrant comes at least in part from Tacitus and its seventeenth-century rediscovery (Davenport and Malik, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, p. 23).

Images taken for granted, such as the views of Justinian and Theodora as seen in Procopius' *Anecdota*, also only rediscovered in the seventeenth century, come to dominate subsequent 'reception'. In Carlà-Uhink's description (*Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 199–200) such a veneer gets to obscure the rather ambiguous reception of both Justinian and Theodora in subsequent tradition, which included a positive Monophysite tradition for Theodora and the negative portrayal of both Justinian and Theodora in the *Liber Pontificalis* as heretical (pp. 202–3). The richness and variety of such receptions points the way forward for the study of the emperorship. For instance, Malik's deft description of Montesquieu's less historical and more political philosophical view of Rome written in a Tacitean mode focuses on how Montesquieu created a 'virtual history' where the principate was an age of impotence and decline as the Romans no longer engaged in warfare. This change in 'spirit' was a warning for his own times (Malik, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 256–60). So, a philosophical argument about emperors can be fashioned to be applied in contemporary political analysis or to inform a particular world view.

Emperors are good to think with. Nonetheless, as a final note, P. Goodman shows the ebb and flow of Augustus' centrality to questions of European identity as a father figure. His place as a unifying civiliser is a leitmotif that comes and goes depending on the utility of claiming him as an originator of Western civilisation. Here, Augustus is a marker of European imperialism, which makes his appeal wane as we move farther away from the apogee of Europe's empires (Goodman, *Representing Rome's Emperors*, pp. 289–90). It is perhaps telling that commemorations of the bimillennial of his death were effectively confined to Western Europe, even if such events were widely spread (pp. 284–7). Rome is no longer sealed by the rising sun, and we enter new possibilities of reception and study for the better.

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