CONTESTED MONARCHY

Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD

EDITED BY

JOHANNES WIENAND

Contested Monarchy

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Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD

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Eine Krone ist nur ein Hut, in den es hineinregnet

Frederick the Great

Preface and Acknowledgments

The idea for this volume goes back to a conference held in spring 2009 in southern Germany—in Konstanz specifically, a city the Romans had turned from a rather insignificant settlement and small naval base located on the shores of beautiful Lake Constance into a proper fortress called Constantia during the late third and early fourth centuries AD. This measure was taken when, yielding to external pressure and internal strain, the imperial administration gradually abandoned the territory east of the Rhine. Lake Constance, through which the Rhine flows, thus became a vibrant frontier and contact zone between the empire and what is commonly called *barbaricum*.

The fortress was an impressive landmark, indicative of large-scale administrative reorganization in times of conflict and change, and it was meant to serve as a symbol of imperial strength and determination. Its name Constantia not only stood for firmness and perseverance, expressing the emperors' devotion to security and peace, it also recalled the name of its founder Constantius, who—as a co-ruler within the Diocletianic Tetrarchy and father of the first Christian monarch Constantine the Great—stood at the threshold between the Principate and Late Antiquity.

It was a fitting coincidence that when the Roman fortress was rediscovered in 2003 and excavated over the following years, a group of ancient historians at the University of Konstanz was conducting a research project on the quest for legitimacy and stability of the continually contested Roman monarchy. From 2006 to 2010, I pursued my PhD thesis within this larger research group, focusing on the transformation of triumphal rulership during the Tetrarchic-Constantinian era. The conference held in 2009 was meant to widen the scope of my research, and the present volume, in turn, takes the endeavor of the conference one step further.

The aim of this volume is to reappraise the wide-ranging and lasting transformation of the Roman monarchy between the Principate and Late Antiquity. The focus lies on the period from Diocletian to Theodosius I and thus on a major phase of the development of the Imperium Romanum. During this period, the stability of the empire depended heavily on the mobility of the emperors along the Roman frontiers, on collegial or dynastic rule, and on the military resolution of internal political crises. At the same time, profound religious changes altered the premises of political interaction and symbolic communication between the emperor and his subjects, and administrative and military readjustments changed the institutional foundations of the Roman monarchy. These basic conditions provided the framework for specific social and political cleavages that necessitated intense effort on the part of the ruler to integrate and legitimize the monarchic regime.

This volume focuses on the measures taken by the Roman emperor to cope with the changing framework of his rule. It seeks to analyze the imperial struggle for political and cultural integration within a communicative framework characterized by the interplay of the imperial administration, the performance of monarchic leadership, and religious policy. The contributions to this volume analyze the contested monarchy of the late third and fourth centuries along the lines of these three distinct, yet interconnected fields: Administering the Empire (Part One), Performing the Monarchy (Part Two), and Balancing Religious Change (Part Three). Each field possesses its own historiography, methodology, and analytical concepts. As a result, they have traditionally been treated separately. However, the role of the Roman monarch in a geographically extensive transcultural empire—an empire of enormous social diversity, shaken by severe political and military crises, and undergoing far-reaching religious changes—can be understood properly only if the mutual interdependence of the historical dynamics shaping these fields is taken into account. This volume intends to make a timely contribution to the increasing scholarly efforts toward bringing these different fields of research together.

This unification can only be achieved by transcending the chronological boundaries of traditional historiography: The period from Diocletian to Theodosius has hitherto been examined primarily within the confines of individual reigns or imperial dynasties. Accordingly, most available studies focus on the Tetrarchy, on Constantine, on the Constantinian dynasty, on Julian, on the Valentinian dynasty, or on the Theodosian dynasty. The contributions to this volume intend to demonstrate how important it is also to examine the longue durée of the institutional framework, imperial representation, and religious policies. Overcoming traditional methodological and heuristic boundaries

fosters synergies between complementary approaches to the Roman monarchy, which—at least so I hope—allow us to gain deeper insight into the historical dynamics at work, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this complex development.

Most of the authors assembled in this book had the opportunity to discuss these issues in the Konstanz conference. Nevertheless, this volume is not a conference proceedings in the strict sense. The authors who participated in the conference have substantially reworked their papers, while other authors who did not attend the conference have contributed chapters to fill thematic gaps. I am particularly delighted that this volume brings together a wide range of European and American scholars, both established and junior, in the field of Late Antiquity. The international range of contributors allows for a fruitful academic exchange between different scholarly traditions.

This volume will certainly not win a prize for the fastest published conference proceedings ever, but it hopefully is a good book nonetheless. Kind friends and colleagues have contributed to pursue this aim. First of all, my gratitude and thanks go to the Series Editor, Ralph Mathisen, for his constant guidance, support, and patience throughout the editing process. Huge thanks must then go to Stefan Vranka, Classics editor for Oxford University Press, his assistants Deirdre Brady and Sarah Pirovitz, and the staff of Newgen Knowledge Works for their excellent editorial work in preparing this volume for publication. I also am very grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful and constructive comments, which have improved the volume considerably.

Nadine Viermann and Christoph Heinrich helped me to prepare the manuscript for print; Carsten Binder drew the map on pp. xx–xxi; Hubert Lanz helped me find the medallion depicted on the book cover (cf. Figure 20.1), the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg provided the image, and Ilse Zwicker generously granted reproduction rights. They all deserve my most profound thanks. I would also like to thank the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Center "Norm and Symbol. The Cultural Dimension of Social and Political Integration" for covering the translation costs. My special thanks go to John Noël Dillon, Stephen Lake, and Noel Lenski, who did a wonderful job translating the non-English papers, and to Lisa-Maria Wichern for additional language editing.

Above all, I would like to thank the authors for their dedication, enthusiasm, and patience, which made this volume possible in the first place.

Johannes Wienand
Jerusalem, March 7, 2013

Contents

Part Two   Performing the Monarchy

Part Three   Balancing Religious Change

Epilogue

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

The following list assembles the most common bibliographical abbreviations used in this book. For abbreviations of journals and periodicals, see the bibliography.

ACO	Acta Conciliorvm Oecvmenicorvm
AE	Année Épigraphique
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca
BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina
BM	British Museum
Brev.	*Breviarium*
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
Chron.	*Chronicon*
Chron. min.	*Chronica minora*
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CNG	Classical Numismatic Group
Cod. Iust.	*Codex Iustinianus*
Cod. Theod.	*Codex Theodosianus*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Dig.	*Digestae*
Ep./Epp.	*Epistula/epistulae*
FHG	Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum
FIRA	Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani
Fr.	*Fragment*
Hist. eccl.	*Historia ecclesiastica*
I.Cret	Inscriptiones Creticae

ICUR	Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae
IK	Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
NAC	Numismatica Ars Classica
Or.	*Oratio/orationes*
Pan. lat.	*Panegyricus Latinus*
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PLRE	Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire
RIC	Roman Imperial Coinage
SNG	Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum
Vit. Const.	*Vita Constantini*

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Eboracum

Lindum

Corinium
Londinium

BRITANNIAE

Colonia
Agrippinensis

Mogontiacum

50°

Durocortorum
Rotomagus
Augusta
Treverorum

PRAEFECTURA ITALIA

GALLIAE

Augusta
Vindelicum
Ovilavis

Virunum

Savaria

Ataricum
Vesontio

Forum Claudii
Vallensium

VIENNENSIS
Lugdunum

**ITALIA
ANNONARIA**

Aquileia

Siscia

PRAEFECTURA GALLIAE
Burdigala

Vienna/
Constantina
Segusio
Mediolanum

Eburodunum

Ravenna
PANNONIAE

Elusa

Florentia

Salona

Narbo
Aquae Sextiae

**ITALIA
SUBURBICARIA**

Bracara Augusta

Aleria
Roma

Beneventum
Barium

Capua

Tarraco

40°

HISPANIAE
Palma

Carales

Augusta Emerita

Rhegium

Corduba
Carthago Nova

Cirta
Carthago

Syracusae

Tingis
Caesarea
Sitifis

Hadrumetum

Lambaesis

AFRICAE

Leptis Magna

30°

Map of the Roman Empire
in the 4th Century AD

——————— Defined borders
— — — — Undefined borders
—·—·—·— Prefecture borders
··············· Diocesal borders
- - - - - - Provincial borders

● Siscia   Provincial Capitals

AFRICAE   Diocese

*PRAEFECTURA
ITALIA*   Prefecture

0   150   300   450   600

Kilometres

wellem

0°   10°

Aquincum

Sirmium
Viminacium
Ratiaria

PRAEFECTURA
ILLYRICUM

Tomi

Markianupolis

THRACIAE

Scodra
Serdica
Scupi
Dyrrhachion
Philippopolis
Hadrianopolis
Konstantinopolis
Germanikopolis
at Gangra
Amaseia

Thessalonike
Traianopolis
Herakleia
Nikomedia
Neokaisareia

MOESIAE
Kyzikos

Nikopolis
Larisa

ASIANA
Ankyra
PONTICA
Sebasteia

Sardeis
Kaisareia

Ephesos
Synnada

Korinthos
Laodikeia
Antiocheia

Aphrodisias
Seleukeia

Rhodos
Tarsos
Hierapolis
Edessa
Nisibis

Patara
Antiocheia

Gortyna
Paphos
Emesa

Tyros
ORIENS

Darnis
Kaisareia

Kyrene
Jerusalem

Alexandreia
Pelusion

PRAEFECTURA ORIENS
Petra

Arsinoe

Antinupolis

20°
30°
40°

INTRODUCTION

The Cloak of Power

Dressing and Undressing the King

JOHANNES WIENAND

To prussian king frederick the great, a crown was merely a hat that let the rain in. Alas, it is not that simple! Pomp and circumstance are essential to monarchic rule, and a crown is far more than a hat, even still more than just a symbol of political power: a crown is a medium in the communicative processes between the ruler and the ruled—a medium (among others) through which sovereignty itself is carved out in the first place.

The idea that a king might just as well do without his regalia (or take off his crown as if it were just a curiously shaped hat) rests on the implicit assumption that the constitutional substructures of political power provide legitimacy in and of themselves. This, however, is a fiction of early modern political theory. A king is not just a private person who occasionally wears a crown to indicate his constitutional right to govern a given polity. Rather, a king is the sum of the social roles he assumes to negotiate ways of exercising his rule when encountering his subjects. To put it differently, there is no such thing as the king's two bodies: analytically speaking, it makes no sense to differentiate a ruler into his human reality, on the one hand (the body natural), and his social functions, on the other (the body politic)—notwithstanding all the folk tales that reflect precisely the desire to strip the ruler of his insignia, if not of his clothes altogether.

A naked king, though, is not a king at all! A king cannot be undressed; he can only be undone. Body natural and body politic are inseparably intertwined. The Libyan Tuareg author Ibrahim al Koni has put this insight at the core of his brilliant Arabic novel *Al Waram* (literally *The Tumor*): a desert leader named Asanay gradually becomes one with the cloak of power—a magnificent leather garment, braided with gold thread, which slowly fuses with the flesh of its bearer. The cancerous cloak of power is a fitting allegory for earthly rule: the individual is inseparable from his public appearances as a ruler, most prominently, his roles as a law-giver and judge, as a victor, and as a religious leader: "The jacket is nothing but a garment made of leather. . . . Whatever power it has comes solely from wearing it. And what matters is how you wear it" (al Koni, *Al Waram*, transl. E. Colla).

A crown, then, is not an item that symbolizes the king's body politic; it is a set of communicative acts superimposed on a particular material object, embedded in a dense texture of performances and discourses from which monarchy itself emerges as a highly complex social system. While in al Koni's novel what matters is how the desert leader wears the cloak of power, what matters in history is how the king utilizes his public roles as instruments of sovereignty; representations of virtue, honor, glory and the like—values a crown can stand for—serve as communicative reference points for fostering subjects' identification with the political order. A crown, then, can provide nodes of legitimacy, just as other acts and symbols may contribute to the general acceptance of the king's claim to sovereignty.

Thus, the most obvious element of earthly command, the availability of coercive force, or *power* ("Macht" in Weberian terms), is tranformed into *rule* ("Herrschaft") not by constitutional sleight of hand, but by *legitimacy*—in the sociological, not the legal, understanding of this concept. In his book *On China*, Henry Kissinger expresses this idea of the interdependency of rule and legitimacy with admirable clarity: "Almost all empires were created by force, but none can be sustained by it. Universal rule, to last, needs to translate force into obligation. Otherwise, the energies of the rulers will be exhausted in maintaining their dominance at the expense of their ability to shape the future, which is the ultimate task of statesmanship. Empires persist if repression gives way to consensus" (p. 13).

Kissinger's notion of societal consensus rests on the basic idea that the continuing success of rule depends on the ruler's ongoing ability to win the loyalty, commitment, and allegiance of his subjects. This can be seen not only in the history of China, but also particularly clearly in the political systems of pre-modern societies of the Mediterranean world: in the Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian monarchies, in the Hellenistic dynasties, in the Roman and Byzantine empires, and in the medieval kingdoms. In countless episodes full of drama and tragedy (occasionally entailing twists of comedy), the historical record exhibits the same pattern again and again: the way in which a pre-modern sovereign encountered his subjects directly affected his options of winning acceptance, which in turn had a direct effect on the success or failure of his rule. A ruler could quickly lose the support of important and influential interest groups, with fatal consequences for himself and his supporters. Latent potential for political disintegration existed even when administrative institutions were sufficiently robust to survive largely unscathed the downfall of a single ruler, and even when, on the contrary, the political system was embodied almost completely in a charismatic leader, as was the case in the early Roman Principate, a system that has duly been characterized as a series

of monarchs lacking a proper monarchy: the notion of *l'État, c'est moi!* in its purest form.

However, the "consensus" of which Kissinger speaks is not easily achieved in a domain as vast as the Roman empire of the fourth century—stretching from the moors of Britain to the deserts of Egypt, and from the Strait of Gibraltar to the streams of Mesopotamia. The political system spanning these vast lands and encompassing a population characterized by huge social, economic, cultural, and religious differences had to be held together by a comparably small administrative elite under pre-modern conditions of mobility and communication. The emperor had to meet the greatly diverging and changing demands of social groups as different and idiosyncratic as the court society and the central administration of the empire, the various strata of the military machine, the wealthy landowning aristocracy, powerful regional interest groups, the Church, and other social and political subgroups of the Roman population.

The most demanding historical challenge is to understand how this peculiar mixture of more or less cohesive social subunits converged in an era of substantial cultural change to build a sufficiently functional social and political hierarchy centered around a leading figure who sometimes sooner, sometimes later, would be replaced by a successor. This question can be answered properly only if the phenomenon of rule is studied from below: by looking at how the ruled (despite all the centrifugal forces at work) could develop what Kissinger has called "obligation." To talk about the emperor is thus to talk about the empire, which again means talking about its inhabitants and their multifarious relations with the ruler, his chief representatives, and subordinate actors within the imperial administration.

To understand sovereignty and legitimacy in pre-modern monarchies in general, therefore, a timely form of political history is needed, one that integrates on a very basic level the central arenas of reciprocal social interaction between the sovereign and his subjects. In the case of the fourth century AD, these are three distinct but mutually interrelated fields: civil and military administration, ceremony (or monarchic representation), and religion. Each of the three parts of this book is dedicated to one of these fields. All three sections refer back to the problem of legitimacy, and although they differ significantly in the ways they consider this phenomenon, they all seek to provide a proper understanding of how these three fields coalesce into a functionally differentiated, complex political system clustering around the central figure of the monarch. To explain how the three parts of this book approach the contested monarchy of the fourth century AD and how they relate to one another, this introduction will give brief outlines of their aims and methods and introduce the corresponding chapters.

The sociopolitical developments of the fourth century created a need to redefine the complex relationship between the emperor, on the one hand, and powerful interest groups such as local aristocracies, imperial elites, and the military, on the other. The first two contributions in this section start from an investigation of the changes in the self-understanding and internal stratification of the Roman aristocracy, analyzing the corresponding implications for the relationship between the emperor and the urban elites of Rome.

In his chapter, "Domesticating the Senatorial Elite: Universal Monarchy and Transregional Aristocracy in the Fourth Century AD," John Weisweiler explores the ways in which the formation of the late Roman monarchy redefined cultural and social conceptions of the elite and consequently transformed the relationship between emperors and senators as well. In public speeches and official monuments, senators presented themselves no longer as a Republican elite, whose identity was defined by the traditional magistracies of the Roman city-state, but as a global and monarchical class, whose authority derived from their selection by a sacred ruler. Weisweiler shows that the emergence of a new language of power had far-reaching social consequences. It gave the emperor new opportunities to involve senators in competition against each other and made it more difficult for them to articulate resistance against the monarchy. Like the fiscal and administrative reforms introduced by the emperors of the late third and early fourth centuries, the development of new forms of imperial ideology made a crucial contribution to the domestication of the power of the largest landowners in the Roman empire.

In consequence, the growth of the imperial administration in the provinces and the level of central control over their resources also led to a redefinition of the relationship between the imperial center, on the one hand, and members of the imperial and provincial administration, on the other, as John Noël Dillon shows in Chapter 3, "The Inflation of Rank and Privilege: Regulating Precedence in the Fourth Century AD." His analysis of imperial laws concerning elite ranks issued in the fourth century exposes the intriguing dynamics of imperial conferment of privileges and honors on individuals and elite groups. The emperor was central to all decision-making processes; he was able to control elite competition and to define the closeness of elite members to the imperial court, a power he wielded efficiently and to great effect. As Dillon shows, the fourth century saw a peak in the conferment of rank and privileges, by which status and influence of elite members were regulated. At the same time, the emperor deliberately avoided creating formal criteria for rank advancement. This lack of systematization in the conferment of ranks

and honors allowed the emperor to retain a crucial means of controlling the processes of hierarchy formation within the aristocracy on a case-to-case basis. As a detrimental side effect, however, the proliferation of rank and privilege weakened the authority of the imperial and provincial administration vis-à-vis the provincial population.

In Chapter 4, "Ostentatious Legislation: Law and Dynastic Change, AD 364–365," Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner analyzes imperial legislation as a medium for promoting monarchic rule in moments of political crisis. Schmidt-Hofner focuses on the crisis of the years 364–365, out of which (after the death of Julian and the brief reign of Jovian) the Valentinian dynasty would emerge as the new *domus divina*. A remarkably extensive body of legal texts survives from this period, the communicative function of which was to encourage loyalty and allegiance among the subjects toward the new regime. Starting from a close analysis of this corpus of texts, Schmidt-Hofner offers general observations on the communicative function of late Roman legislation and arrives at the conclusion that a majority of what we typically consider everyday late-antique legislation served primarily to convey and represent the authority of the emperors and their concern for the population of the vast empire.

The remaining contributions to the first section examine the relationship between the emperor, on the one hand, and the army and local elites, on the other. In Chapter 5, "Emperors and Generals in the Fourth Century," Doug Lee explores the relationship between the center of monarchic rule and the military. The civil wars and regional fissures of the mid-third century revealed just how fatally vulnerable emperors could be to rival claims on the allegiances of the military. Fourth-century emperors took particular care to try to win and retain the loyalty of the rank and file with symbolic rituals and gestures as well as with material incentives. However, the most serious danger was ambitious generals seeking to divert the affections of the troops under their command. To counteract and neutralize this potential threat, emperors developed a variety of strategies, an investigation of which is the primary concern of Lee's chapter. These strategies ranged from ensuring that generals received appropriate recognition and material rewards to marginalizing and even eliminating them. Beyond this, Lee examines how emperors took steps to promote an image of military experience and competence.

In some provinces the presence of the emperor himself had a strong impact on the social, cultural, and political development of the region, which again affected power relations within the empire, especially in times of shared rule. In the fourth century, the most important region of the western part of the Roman empire was Gaul (i.e., the *dioeceses Galliarum* and *Viennensis*), which Joachim Szidat explores in Chapter 6, "Gaul and the Roman Emperors of the Fourth Century." A rich variety of sources gives closer insight into the civil and

military administration, the sphere of the imperial court, the cities, and various local interest groups. Szidat concludes on the basis of a close analysis of this material that the strategic situation of the region transformed fourth-century Gaul into one of the most significant imperial residences and prefectural territories. The need to defend the frontier led to the stationing of a substantial part of the field army in Gaul. Usurpations were facilitated by proximity to free barbarian tribes, which presented an extremely useful recruiting ground for the army. Gaul thus was one of the most important and the most dangerous centers of power at the time. The region was so important for the stability of the monarchic order, that virtually every emperor who could not personally be present in the region installed members of the imperial house there as co-rulers with limited powers to administer the region so as to reduce the threat of usurpations. The withdrawal of the imperial court from the northern frontier by the end of the century dramatically changed the geopolitical importance of Gaul and led to a considerable decline of the region.

In "Regional Dynasties and Imperial Court," Michael Kulikowski analyzes the gradual integration of late Roman regional elites into the imperial administration, tracing strong continuities that span the traditional division between Principate and Late Antiquity. Kulikowski argues that it was mainly the creation of multiple imperial residences and the necessary reliance of the court on regional aristocracies that prompted the inclusion of provincial elites into the imperial administration on an unprecedented scale. Kulikowski argues that regions along the *limes* but physically beyond its notional line should be considered as analogous to those within the *limes*, hence allowing us to interpret the Gallic, Syrian, or Anatolian elites of the fourth century according to the same criteria, and as part of the same historical patterns, as Moorish, Frankish, or Alamannic elites.

Performing the Monarchy

The chapters of the first section are concerned with the structure, the functions, and the gradual transformation of the institutional foundations and administrative resources of the Roman monarchy in the fourth century; the contributions to the second section focus specifically on the role of symbolic forms of communication and ritualized forms of interaction between the sovereign and his subjects. The first set of contributions to this section deals with the impact of usurpation and civil war on the Roman monarchy, one of the most important driving factors in the history of the fourth century AD.

With his chapter "Emperors, Usurpers, and the City of Rome: Performing Power from Diocletian to Theodosius," Mark Humphries analyzes the role

of civil war in shaping the relationship between the emperor and the political elite of Rome. Humphries starts from an analysis of imperial visits to the city of Rome, which regularly occurred in the aftermath of civil wars in which members of the Roman aristocracy had supported the defeated emperor, and retraces the characteristic patterns of these episodes. He suggests not only that usurpation constituted an important dynamic for the interaction of Rome with the imperial court, but also that civil war significantly influenced the way imperial power was articulated and received in the city.

In my chapter "'*O tandem felix civili, Roma, victoria!*' Civil-War Triumphs From Honorius to Constantine and Back," I offer a complementary investigation, starting from a close analysis of two well-documented late Roman triumphal processions: Constantine's triumph over Maxentius in 312 and Honorius' triumph over Priscus Attalus in 416. These victory performances mark the beginning and conclusion of a series of triumphs in the city of Rome that deliberately included dramatic representations of martial achievements in civil war. I argue that the need to celebrate a civil-war victory with performances, monuments, and narratives that were formerly restricted to external victories (e.g., a triumphal procession, a triumphal arch, a battle frieze) resulted, on the one hand, from significant structural changes of the Roman monarchy in the third and fourth centuries and, on the other, from the fierce rivalry between emperors in the period of late Tetrarchic collegial rule, a situation in which a massive display of the emperor's military achievements was an important prerequisite for the cultivation of loyalty and obedience within the *apparatus imperii.*

The next two chapters also center around the topic of civil war. Christianization had a significant impact on internal conflicts. In Chapter 10, "Coping with the Tyrant's Faction: Civil-War Amnesties and Christian Discourses in the Fourth Century AD," Hartmut Leppin explores the impact of Christianization on the way emperors treated victories in civil wars. Christianization deeply affected how the emperor portrayed his role as a commander and victor in civil war. Triumphal processions were reformulated without reference to pagan deities; triumphal imagery merged with Christian concepts; Christian prayers became an integral part of the ruler cult in the army, and warfare and military conflicts were increasingly viewed in terms of Christian conceptions of heavenly and earthly rule. One significant aspect of this development not analyzed closely thus far is the treatment of enemy soldiers after their defeat in civil wars. Leppin's detailed examination of this phenomenon sheds light on the impact of religious change on the military representation of the emperor. Leppin focuses on three test cases: first on Magnentius' soldiers and their treatment by Constantius II in 352/353, then on the supporters of Procopius and

their treatment by Valens in 366, and finally on the adherents of Maximus and their treatment by Theodosius I in 388. These cases highlight how the Christianization of the Roman monarchy led to a Christian reformulation of acts of mercy as an innovative means of expressing clemency, humanity, and Christian piety.

While Christianity played an increasing role in the relations between emperors and soldiers, panegyric served as one of the most effective media for creating and sustaining consensus between the aristocracy and the emperor: its political significance was especially pointed after political ruptures, such as those that repeatedly resulted in civil wars during the third and fourth centuries. Starting with the Gallic orator Drepanius Pacatus, who delivered a panegyric to Theodosius in Rome in 389—shortly after the defeat of Magnus Maximus in civil war—Christopher Kelly devotes Chapter 11, "Pliny and Pacatus: Past and Present in Imperial Panegyric," to the figure of the panegyrist, one of the most important intermediaries in encounters between members of local aristocracies and the emperor in the ceremonial setting of the imperial court. Kelly illustrates in detail how, under the restrictive conditions of the ceremonial setting and with the topical use of earlier exempla of the genre (especially Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus*), the orator plausibly demonstrates his change of loyalties among the aristocracy.

The increasing relevance of ruler colleges made necessary the development of new strategies for establishing and maintaining coherence and stability within the imperial *domus*. In Chapter 12, "Born to Be Emperor: The Principle of Succession and the Roman Monarchy," Henning Börm explores the impact of imperial dynasties on the stability of the Roman monarchy in the fourth century. The dynastic principle was an important means of organizing imperial succession from the earliest phase of the Roman monarchy onward. However, the principle of dynastic succession competed with the meritocratic principle throughout the Principate. Börm argues that the rule of Constantine marked an important change in this respect. Constantine's focus on the dynastic principle resulted from the need to outweigh the normative force of Tetrarchic ideology. Therefore, the idea of a hereditary monarchy was spelled out explicitly and in great detail in the panegyrics, in Eusebius, and also later in the writings of the emperor Julian. From Constantine onward, imperial colleges composed of biological relatives were the standard option of monarchical rule. This, however, reinforced disputes and conflicts over rank, authority, and competence, since all members of a dynastically legitimized ruler college could claim an equal share in power. The resulting conflicts, in turn, could only be resolved by a gradually increasing territorial demarcation of the individual dominions.

Representations of imperial power are not merely ephemeral phenomena of monarchical rule: symbols, rituals, and narratives in fact structure the processes of political negotiation between the sovereign and his subjects and define the conditions of their success or failure. In "Performing Justice: The Penal Code of Constantine the Great," Christian Reitzenstein-Ronning examines this political dimension of symbolic communication through an analysis of ostentatious acts of inclusion or exclusion primarily in the sphere of criminal proceedings. In these performances the late Roman monarchy delineated and reinforced with a fine-grained scale of distinction the social stratification of its subjects. Reitzenstein-Ronning observes both an intensification of public performances of punishment and an expansion of criminal law to cover a continuously growing range of offenses. This amounted to an increase in the "dramatic" quality of such monarchic performances. Reitzenstein-Ronning raises the question of how these acts contributed to integrating the political and social system of the late Roman empire. He argues that the strength of this legal system lay in the very fact that criminal proceedings provided the Roman emperor with an arena for self-portrayal and self-description as the ultimate reference point of punishment and mercy—that is, of justice.

Balancing Religious Change

The contributions to the first two sections occasionally broached the topic of religion. The third section systematically examines the emperor's role in religious change and religious conflict. In Chapter 14, "Speaking of Power: Christian Redefinition of the Imperial Role in the Fourth Century," Harold Drake sets the stage for analysis of this theme, opening up a broad panorama of the changes that slowly but surely transformed the fraught relationship between the Christian religion and the Roman state and fundamentally redefined the status of the emperor himself. Drake's study starts from a close examination of Eusebius' Tricennial Oration, the earliest surviving imperial panegyric presented before the emperor by a Christian bishop. As Drake observes, Eusebius' consensual portrait of the emperor as a quasi-divine figure suffered an unfortunate fate in subsequent Christian discourse. Later Christian thinkers such as Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, John Chrysostom, or Ambrose of Milan contested the emperor's claim to have a special relationship with the divine and to possess a corresponding pre-eminence in questions pertaining to church affairs. John Chrysostom even observed that kings were inferior to Christian monks. This discourse centered on the question of privileged imperial access to the divine and resulted in a gradual deconstruction of the emperor as the final arbiter in the world: in a Christian empire, final judgment

rested with the Christian God. The idea of a Roman emperor as part of the divine sphere, inherited from the imperial ideology of the Tetrarchic era, was gradually reformulated to correspond to Christian cosmology. Drake examines how the development and intensification of these Christian discourses ultimately also affected the emperor's self-portrayal.

The next two chapters in this section focus on the role Rome and Constantinople played in imperial representation and religious policy in the Constantinian transformation of the Roman monarchy. In Chapter 15, "Constantine, Rome, and the Christians," Bruno Bleckmann calls for a reappraisal of the traditional view that Constantine's conversion was the driving force behind his way of dealing with the city of Rome. Bleckmann proposes to reverse the burden of proof and to regard the Constantinian ideology of Rome as the primary parameter underlying the changes in imperial representation after the victory at the Milvian Bridge. Bleckmann's detailed analysis of the material remains and the literary sources is the backdrop for his interpretation of Constantine's "Romprogrammatik," which locates the Constantinian building program, the imperial imagery on coins and other monuments, and the relationship with the divine sphere within an ideological context that merged aspects from both the Tetrarchic tradition and Constantine's rivalry with Licinius.

With Chapter 16, "Constantine and the Tyche of Constantinople," Noel Lenski shifts attention from Rome to Constantine's new residential capital and examines the religious and political function of Constantine's rededication of the cult of the city goddess Constantinopolis. In a detailed analysis of a Constantinian coin series depicting Constantinopolis and of literary sources on the imperial festivals and monuments of Constantinople, Lenski argues that Constantine cautiously remodeled the centuries-old pagan tradition of the Tyche of Byzantium, showing how wrong Eusebius was to have believed that Constantine founded Constantinople as a tabula rasa in terms of imperial and religious semantics. The Tyche can thus be understood as yet another example of the religious experimentation so characteristic of Constantine that helped him to bridge the gap between the empire's pagan past and its Christian future.

In Chapter 17, "A Vain Quest for Unity: Creeds and Political (Dis)Integration in the Reign of Constantius II," Steffen Diefenbach analyzes the political impact of the religious policy of Constantius II. First, Diefenbach argues that Constantius' active enforcement of an empire-wide, uniform creed must be understood as an imperial endeavor that was not driven primarily by pragmatic considerations. Based on this observation, Diefenbach investigates the disintegrative and integrative potentials of this policy from the viewpoint of the local and regional levels. He argues that conflicts within the church during

that time were not essentially triggered by Constantius' "Bekenntnispolitik." Rather, the stasis-like conditions that can be observed in some cities resulted from the enhancement of the status of members of the clergy, which increased and intensified the formation of factions at both the local and regional levels.

A particularly contentious aspect of Christianization is religious violence, which also had a strong impact on the interaction between the emperor and his subjects, as discussed by Johannes Hahn in Chapter 18, "The Challenge of Religious Violence: Imperial Ideology and Policy in the Fourth Century." Hahn analyzes the role played by the emperor in religious conflicts between Christians and non-Christians as well as in conflicts between Christians of different denominations. The Constantinian revolution, with its strong support of a religious minority, implied a desacralization and delegitimization of the emperor in the religious field: the imperial cult, instrumental for relations with local elites and subjects in the provinces, vanished, as did sacred elements in imperial propaganda. While imperial religious legislation soon paid tribute to tireless Christian lobbying, imperial pragmatism mostly favored traditional local structures and eschewed interventionism. However, the growth of the church and its powerful organization, as well as occasional militant Christian action, could lead to polarization and bitter conflicts in cities and the countryside. While often simply veiling battles for political and economic power, endemic internal Christian struggles and anti-pagan or anti-Jewish violence were (though often unabashedly illegal) regularly justified in religious terms and difficult to counter by imperial fiat. Thus, widespread religious conflict and violence not only seriously endangered public order but also presented a major challenge to imperial peace, ideology, and policy.

Rita Lizzi Testa's contribution, "The Famous 'Altar of Victory Controversy' in Rome: The Impact of Christianity at the End of the Fourth Century," reassesses the theory of a pagan reaction against the Christianizing tendencies of the Roman emperors. Her reconstruction of the "altar of Victory controversy" reveals that a complete rejection of the thesis, as is common in recent scholarship, fails to account for the fact that even politically influential citizens were able to retain a pagan identity up to the fifth century. Lizzi Testa uses the particularly well-documented episode of the altar of Victory controversy to show that such a reaction declared itself in a much less overt manner than claimed by contemporary Christian authors. Nevertheless, the polarity between Christianity and pagan traditions influenced the organization of senatorial pressure groups in political decision-making processes; it also shaped the processes of negotiation between groups from differing religious affiliations, and consequently also between the Roman aristocracy and the emperor.

The epilogue to this volume casts a concluding glance at the medallion depicted on the book cover (and again as Figure 20.1). Seen in context, this exceptional coin gives instructive insight into the contested monarchy of the fourth century AD and brings into focus one last time the diverse themes discussed in this volume.

In sum, the social, political, and religious changes of the fourth century profoundly affected the role of the Roman monarch within the highly complex political system of the empire. The transformation of the Roman world from the Principate to Late Antiquity went hand in hand with a substantial reformulation and adaptation of imperial strategies for retaining the loyalty and allegiance of the *apparatus imperii*, the military sector, powerful regional interest groups, the church, and other social and political subgroups of the Roman population. These processes can be traced in the changing interaction between the emperor, on the one hand, and the military and civil elites as well as civic populations, on the other, in innovations in the field of monarchic self-representation, and in the emperor's intervention in religious affairs.

Administering the Empire

Domesticating the Senatorial Elite

Universal Monarchy and Transregional Aristocracy in the Fourth Century AD

JOHN WEISWEILER

In the first three centuries AD, the governing elite of the Roman empire was a small group of officeholders, living in one city.[1] There were around six hundred senators, and all of them were legally required to establish their residence in Rome.[2] But since the 320s, membership in the senate expanded massively. In the course of the fourth century, senatorial rank was conferred on ever-larger groups of officeholders. Around the year 400, total membership in the senate had increased almost sevenfold, to more than four thousand. Most of the new senators did not come from Rome, nor did they relocate there after their acquisition of senatorial rank. The governing elite of the Roman empire transformed from a face-to-face society, based in Rome, into a trans-regional aristocracy, whose members were dispersed throughout the provinces of the Mediterranean World.[3]

Several excellent studies have elucidated the administrative reforms that made possible this far-reaching reorganization of the imperial ruling class. In particular, important works by Andre Chastagnol, Wolfgang Kuhoff, and Peter Heather have mapped the distinctive institutional structure of the late-antique elite.[4] Also the economic impact of the new configuration of power has come into sharper focus. Fine studies by historians such as Domenico Vera, Chris Wickham, and Jairus Banaji have delineated the ways in which the formation of new fiscal and monetary systems reshaped local economies throughout the Mediterranean World in ways conducive to the interests of the new

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1 Brilliant accounts of the institutional structure of the early-imperial senate are offered by Talbert 1984; Hopkins/Burton 1985; Chastagnol 1992, 1–242; Eck 2000.

2 The classic treatment of the senatorial residence requirement is Chastagnol 1977. The links of senators to their hometowns are explored by Eck 1997.

3 The transformation of the senate into a trans-regional elite is traced by Jones 1964, vol. 2, 552–554; Löhken 1982, 103–107; Chastagnol 1992, 312–314.

4 Kuhoff 1983; Chastagnol 1992; Heather 1994; Heather 1998.

trans-regional ruling class.[5] By contrast, we know much less about the set of ideas that motivated the late-antique expansion of the imperial ruling class. On which understandings of aristocratic authority could emperors and senators rely to make sense of and justify the formation of a trans-regional aristocracy in the fourth century?[6]

This cultural foundation of integration is the subject of this chapter. It sketches the shape of the ideas that made possible the expansion of the imperial aristocracy in the fourth century. I suggest that the formation of a trans-regional aristocracy was the product of a significant shift in Roman understandings of monarchical power. In Late Antiquity, emperors presented themselves no longer as Republican monarchs, whose power derived from legal acts by the Roman senate and the Roman people, but as sacred kings of the earth, chosen by divine powers to safeguard the welfare of the entire human species. I propose that this transformation in Roman understandings of monarchical power had far-reaching repercussions on the ways senatorial authority was conceptualized. In the same way the emperor had become a universal monarch, whose care extended not merely to the Roman city-state but to the entire world, so also the senate transformed into a global elite, which united the best men of the inhabited earth and whose authority derived from their selection by a divinely ordained monarch.

Remarkably, this new conception of the senate as a monarchical elite was adopted not only by the thousands of former small-town notables who in the fourth century for the first time became members of the senate. It also was endorsed by the highest stratum of the aristocracy, the *nobilitas*, the select circle of families who claimed descent from senior officeholders of previous generations. The new idea of the senate as an international and monarchical elite helped to motivate the inclusion of ever-wider groups into the senate, and to instill a sense of unity and common interest among the members of a geographically dispersed, socially heterogeneous, and religiously divided aristocracy.

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5 Vera 1995; Wickham 2005; Banaji 2007. In an earlier paper, I explored the bonds of economic dependence that tied the trans-regional landowners in the Late Roman senate to the institutions of the Roman state: Weisweiler 2011.

6 In seeking to define the self-understandings of the Later Roman senate in greater detail, this chapter draws on a wide range of excellent studies of aristocratic culture in the later Roman empire. I particularly admire Matthews 1990; Salzman 2002; Brown 2012. What is distinctive about the approach outlined here is that I seek to expose the surprising extent to which the self-understandings of Late Roman senators were reshaped by the late-antique changes in imperial ideology.

THE DIVINE KING OF THE WORLD

To trace the contours of the self-understandings of the senate in the fourth century, it is necessary to look more closely at the ways in which the formation of the Late Roman state had redefined the public image of emperors. In the first two centuries of the Roman monarchy, modes of interaction between rulers and imperial aristocracy were deeply shaped by the ideology of Republican monarchy.[7] The emperor fashioned himself as *princeps*, first citizen among equals. Statues put up for living monarchs normally showed them as human individuals with distinctive personal traits. Latin honorific inscriptions also staked out a claim that emperors were senatorial officeholders: they contained their name, followed by the public offices and titles conferred upon them by the senate and the people of Rome. The ideology of the Principate was not merely a meaningless fiction but had far-reaching consequences on the ways senators and emperors conducted their relationship. By claiming that they were the first magistrates of a restored Republic, Augustus and his successors pledged that they would treat members of the old ruling class of the empire not as subjects but as friends. This expectation was largely fulfilled by early imperial monarchs. In the first two centuries AD, senators not only monopolized the highest-ranking government posts in the empire. They were also the largest recipients of imperial gifts and the most influential brokers of imperial patronage.[8]

But in the late second and early third centuries, the intimate relationship between emperor and aristocracy was disrupted. External invasions and civil wars forced emperors to spend increasing periods of time with their armies in the frontier regions of the empire. The fact that they now spent most of their reigns away from Rome made it easier for monarchs to evade long-standing expectations of accessibility and open-handedness toward senators.[9] Institutional transformations further enhanced the bargaining power of the emperor vis-à-vis the imperial aristocracy. Faced with the urgent need to raise new revenues to ensure the loyalty of the legions, the monarchs of the third century enhanced the fiscal and administrative capacities of the Roman state. Long-standing tax exemptions fell into disuse, and the private administration

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7 The sociocultural shape of the Principate is brilliantly elucidated by Wallace-Hadrill 1982; Winterling 1999; Rowe 2002; Winterling 2009. Ando 2011, 81–114 exposes the far-reaching ways in which the Republican tradition was influenced by its implication in the project of Republican monarchy.

8 Bang 2008, 98–104, highlights the economic profits derived by imperial aristocrats from the social constellation of the Principate. Duncan-Jones 1982, 143ff., offers a useful list of senatorial fortunes attested in early imperial literary sources. Saller 1982 maps the central role played by senators in the early imperial economy of patronage.

9 Halfmann 1986, 50–64, and Barnes 1982, 47–65, trace the itineraries of third-century emperors.

of the emperor's household gradually evolved into a centralized, salaried, and much-enlarged imperial administration. The absence from Rome and the formation of a more robust fiscal and administrative apparatus increased the ability of emperors to disregard senatorial sensibilities.[10]

The public image of the emperor expressed the shifting balance of power between monarchy and imperial aristocracy. As Carlos Noreña has recently shown, already under the Severan dynasty (193–235), commissioners of monuments for emperors began to experiment with new representations of monarchical power.[11] During the permanent warfare of the middle decades of the third century, the pace of ideological change accelerated. The traditional role of the emperor as Roman magistrate lost in importance, and divine and martial aspects of his persona received heightened emphasis.[12] Several rulers made important contributions to the formation of a new imperial style, but it is the host of art and panegyric produced during the long reigns of the emperor Diocletian (284–305) and his three co-rulers from which the outlines of the new monarchical image can be traced most clearly. In public monuments and official speeches, the Tetrarchs were depicted as invincible military leaders, who had been chosen by Jupiter and Hercules to vanquish the empire's enemies. The rulers of the empire were seen no longer as senatorial magistrates, whose legitimacy derived from elections by the senate and the people of Rome, but as civilizational heroes who had been selected by divine powers to defend the empire against the forces of barbarism.[13]

Artists and panegyrists working at the court of the emperor Constantine (306–337) drew on many of the central themes of Tetrarchic ideology. For example, the large eyes of the emperor, conveying notions of imperial omniscience and divine knowledge, are reminiscent of representations of Diocletian and his co-rulers. Similarly, the relentless celebration by Constantine's panegyrists of the cosmic origins of the emperor's power recalls forms of imperial representation pioneered by the Tetrarchs and earlier emperors of the third century. But despite important continuities in the deep structure of imperial ideology, the art and oratory produced at Constantine's court was deliberately designed to create the appearance of a break with his predecessors. Whereas most

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10 Kelly 2004, 107–185; Eich 2005; Bransbourg 2008 outstandingly analyze the Late Roman strengthening of state capacity.

11 Noreña 2011a magisterially maps the beginnings of the process by which the traditional ideology of rulership slowly dissolved. Rowan 2012 analyzes the divine guardians of Severan emperors.

12 The self-representation of third-century emperors is traced by Potter 2004, 215–298; Berrens 2004; Manders 2012.

13 On Tetrarchic portraiture, see L'Orange et al. 1984, 3–36; Smith 1985, 180–183; Kolb 1987; Rees 2004; Boschung 2006.

emperors of the late third and early fourth centuries had presented themselves as middle-aged imperial generals, wearing full uniform and military stubble, Constantine appeared to his subjects clean-shaven and in youthful beauty. He looked upward to heaven and was surrounded by rays of sunlight. After 325, Constantine wore a diadem, an unambiguous symbol of monarchical power, which had deliberately been avoided by all of his predecessors.[14] As Jonathan Bardill has recently shown, the most immediate precedents for these symbols of authority are found in the Hellenistic World. Significantly, diadem, upward gaze, and solar imagery are typical features of representations of Alexander the Great and his successors. These Hellenistic symbols of kingship communicated a model of monarchy that differed in important regards from that current in Rome. Greek political philosophers of the Hellenistic period asserted that there was a precise correspondence between worldly and divine forms of authority. Just as in heavens the highest god ruled the universe in perfect rationality, so on earth he had appointed a divine king who governed humankind through his supreme justice.[15] It was this care of the good king for the world that was expressed by the imagery deployed by Hellenistic monarchs. By adopting these tactics of self-presentation, Constantine inserted himself into this tradition of sacred rulership. Gaze, solar imagery, and diadem suggested that he wished to be seen as a divinely ordained king in the Hellenistic tradition: "he was the solar deity's chosen king on earth, imitating that god and reflecting divine light on his subjects to ensure their freedom, security and salvation."[16]

The new image of rulership developed at Constantine's court was immensely influential. It was closely followed by almost all emperors of the fourth century.[17] Official representations of rulers showed them as divine youths, beardless, and endowed with Constantine's jeweled diadem. Indeed, images of later fourth-century emperors resemble each other so closely that the identity of individual rulers can often no longer be recognized. As R. R. R. Smith observes, the uniform appearance of different emperors conveys a new understanding of monarchical power. The ruler of the Roman world was no longer perceived as a human being, with idiosyncratic personal characteristics, but as the unchanging embodiment of divine energy.[18] The same image of the monarch as a sacred

14 The meaning of Constantine's image is excellently surveyed by Smith 1985, 215–221; Smith 1997, 185–187; Elsner 2006, 260–264.

15 Of the raft of outstanding work on Hellenistic kingship ideology, I single out Gehrke 1982; Walbank 1984; Ma 2003.

16 Bardill 2012, quoted at p. 42. The complex links between Christianity and the emperor's solar religion are carefully traced by Wallraff 2013.

17 On post-Constantinian portraiture, see the outstanding treatments by L'Orange et al. 1984; Zanker/Fittschen 1994, no. 120–127.

18 Smith 1985, 220.

ruler was communicated by imperial epigraphy. Whereas honorific inscriptions from the early empire normally recorded the precise list of the legal authorities conferred upon the emperor by the senate and the people of Rome, commissioners of late-antique inscriptions employ a new religious language to describe the imperial office. They depicted the emperor no longer as "consul" and "holder of tribunician powers," but as "savior of the human species," "liberator of the earth," or "invincible master." Significantly, these new divine epithets could be applied interchangeably to different rulers. Already in the third century, these unofficial titles had begun to supplement the traditional titulature of emperors; in the post-Constantinian period, the old Republican titles almost completely disappear.[19] Like changes in the visual representation of emperors, so also the emergence of a new epigraphic vocabulary pinpoints a crucial shift in Roman understandings of monarchical power. The emperor had transformed from a Republican magistrate, elected by the institutions of the Roman city-state, into a divine king, whose authority derived from larger cosmic processes.

Divine Monarchy and Republican Aristocracy

But whereas the public image of the Roman monarchy radically changed in the late third and early fourth centuries, senators initially remained remarkably unaffected by the transformations of the period. In line with the political ideology introduced by Augustus, the military rulers of the period allowed members of the ancient ruling class of the Roman empire to conduct their lives as if the Republic had never ended. Several times a month, they assembled in the curia on the western side of the Forum Romanum. At senatorial meetings, they wore the same dress and conducted the same rituals as their Republican predecessors. Also the structure of their political careers remained largely unchanged. The internal hierarchy of the senate was still defined by the same five magistracies that had determined the worth of its members since the third century BC: quaestor, tribune, aedil, praetor, and consul. As in the time of Augustus, so also in the early fourth century senators maintained their identity as a Republican elite, whose lives were framed by the institutions of the Roman city-state.[20]

19 On the new epigraphic vocabulary, see Chastagnol 1988; Cameron 2011, 52–55; Weisweiler 2012a, 326–329.

20 Excellent treatments of the history of the senate in the third and early fourth centuries are offered by Dietz 1980; Jacques 1986; Chastagnol 1992, 206–258. These studies show that there was a remarkable amount of continuity in social composition and institutional structure across this period.

And yet, the outward appearance of continuity obscures the subtle ways in which the abandonment by emperors in the later third century of the ideology of Republican monarchy destabilized the place of the senate in the structures of empire. By highlighting the superhuman origins of their power, late-antique rulers weakened the legitimacy of the traditional institutions of the Roman city-state. If emperors no longer derived their right to rule from elections by Republican institutions but from larger cosmic processes, how much honor could senators still hope to derive from their traditional role as an assembly of Republican magistrates? From this perspective, there was a price to be paid by senators for their participation in a pre-monarchical political culture. As a self-consciously Republican elite, they lacked the opportunity to tap into some of the new cosmic sources of legitimacy that had been unlocked by the emperors of the later third and early fourth centuries.

Administrative changes carried out by the rulers of the period posed another threat to the social standing of the senate. Whereas in the early empire the most powerful governorships in the empire (those of the large military provinces in which armies were stationed) had been reserved for ex-praetors and ex-consuls (holders of the two highest senatorial magistracies), since the early third century AD these posts were increasingly held by equestrians (members of the second-highest status group in the Roman empire). Since the reign of the emperor Gallienus (260–268), senators were formally excluded from the government of provinces in which armies were stationed.[21] This not only meant that the political careers of senators became much shorter and less profitable than in previous centuries. The removal of military commands also had the consequence that in practice they no longer participated in the choice of emperors. Due to the near complete loss of Latin literature produced in the third century, no contemporary accounts on the effects of Gallienus' reform survive. But when in 361 the senatorial historian Aurelius Victor reflected on the long-term historical effects of the measure, he interpreted the inability (or unwillingness) of senators to win back their previous responsibilities as a symptom of a disgraceful loss in civic virtue:

> Henceforth, the power of the army increased, and until our time, the senators lost their sovereignty and the right to elect emperors. It is unknown whether they did so out of their own wish (because of indolence or cowardice), or because they wanted to avoid civil wars. For even though

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21 Christol 1986 offers the most detailed analysis and interpretation of the evidence on Gallienus' reform. Ando 2012, 176–200, explores the ideological background to the third-century transformations in governmental structure.

senators lost military commands through the edict of Gallienus, they could have won them back under the reign of Tacitus, when the legions graciously allowed it. In this case, Florianus would not have ruthlessly taken power. Nor would another emperor (even a good one) have been elected by the soldiers, if the greatest and most distinguished order had still been present in the military training grounds. While senators relished their absence from high office and feared for their riches (whose enjoyment they considered a greater good than winning lasting achievements), they paved the way for soldiers and near barbarians to rule as masters over themselves and over their descendants.[22]

It is highly doubtful whether senators indeed enjoyed the opportunity, as Victor claims, to reverse Gallienus' reform. Nor should we take seriously his assertion that after the death of the emperor Tacitus (275–276) they were offered the choice to elect a new emperor. Still less do we need to endorse Victor's suggestion that senators did not further engage in politics because they "relished their absence from high office and feared for their riches" (*oblectantur otio simulque divitiis pavent*). Even so, the fact that Victor interprets the drop in political participation as symptom of moral decay highlights the threat posed to the collective honor of the senate by Gallienus' measure. Like the adoption by emperors of new ideologies of divine kingship, so also the removal from key government posts posed a challenge to the self-esteem of the ancient ruling class of the Roman empire.

The reforms of the senate undertaken by the emperor Constantine may usefully be situated in this context. They were designed to resolve the contradictions generated by the coexistence of a divine monarch with the ancient Republican aristocracy of the Roman state. In the early 320s, while preparing for war against his last surviving rival Licinius, the ruler over the western provinces of the Roman empire radically reorganized social structure and public image of the senatorial order. The reform had two main components. On the one hand, Constantine conferred full senatorial rank on the most influential equestrian officeholders, such as praetorian prefects (the emperor's chief judicial, fiscal, and administrative officials) and governors of the most important nonsenatorial provinces. Henceforth, all holders of these posts automatically became senators.[23] On the other hand, by upgrading the rank of many formerly equestrian offices, Constantine made them again accessible to long-standing

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22 Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 37.6–7. Bird 1984 offers a useful study of this underestimated historian.

23 The effects of the Constantinian reforms of the senatorial order are traced by Stein 1949, vol. 1, 117–122; Jones 1964, vol. 1, 106–107; vol. 2, 526–527; Chastagnol 1982, 172–175; Kuhoff 1982, 275–278; Heather 1998, 185–186; Kelly 2006, 197.

members of the senate. As a result, members of old Roman families obtained exciting new opportunities for patronage and enrichment.[24]

But at stake in Constantine's reform was more than merely a series of administrative reorganizations. The fact that a senatorial career now involved serving the emperor in offices that had no Republican precedents, but which had evolved out of the private administration of the imperial household, changed what it meant to be a senator. In the wake of the Constantinian reforms, the internal hierarchy of the senate was no longer defined by the five ancient magistracies of the Roman state but by senior posts in the monarchical administration. Only the consulate maintained its role as the splendid apex of an officeholding career. But even this post had strongly monarchical connotations. Already in the first century AD, unlike other traditional magistracies, this office had been seen as an imperial office; as Fergus Millar observes: "The very prominence of the consulate as the crown of the regular senatorial career, and the function of the consulate *ordinarius* in giving a name to the year, meant that it passed rapidly and completely into imperial gift."[25] Otherwise, the top ranks in the new order of precedence were held by executive posts filled by direct imperial appointment. The most important among them were the praetorian prefects (the emperor's chief administrative, judicial, and fiscal official) and the urban prefects (his direct representative in Rome and later in Constantinople, who also chaired meetings of the senate). They bore the title *iudices vice sacra,* delegates of the emperor's sacred authority.[26] The next tiers in the new pyramid of honors were occupied by a variety of medium-ranking officials, such as the proconsuls (the highest-ranking governors) and the *vicarii* (subordinates of the praetorian prefects). By contrast, the traditional Republican magistracies of quaestor and praetor, elected by the senate, held the lowest ranks in the new hierarchy.[27]

These changes in the order of precedence involved more than merely questions of protocol. As John Lendon has shown, Rome was an "empire of honor," in which the formal rank of aristocrats defined not only their legal status but also their life chances and economic opportunities.[28] In this sense, the dominant role played by monarchical offices in establishing the pecking order of

24 The profits derived by leading *nobiles* from the Constantinian reforms are explored by Novak 1979; Löhken 1982, 112–134; Marcone 1993; Lizzi Testa 2009d, 120–123.

25 Millar 1977, 306–309, cited at 309.

26 Jones 1964, vol. 1, 481; vol. 3, 1204. The emergence of the title is elucidated by Peachin 1996, 188–207.

27 On senatorial elections to the quaestorship and praetorship, see CIL 6.1708 = 41318 = ILS 1222, with Seeck 1884.

28 Lendon 1997; Schmidt-Hofner 2010 explores the legal regulation by late-antique emperors of the aristocratic society of honor.

senatorial society expresses a significant shift in Roman conceptions of aristocratic power. Constantine had transformed the senate from a Republican aristocracy, in which rank was decided by the traditional magistracies of the Roman city-state, into an explicitly monarchical elite, in which the worth of an aristocrat depended on his imagined closeness to a divine emperor.

The Best Men from All the Provinces

A text produced some months after the beginnings of the reforms is suggestive of the ways in which the reorganization of the imperial aristocracy redefined the public image of the senate. On March 1, 321, in the curia in Rome, the Gallic orator Nazarius gave a speech of praise on the emperor Constantine.[29] Occurring no more than a couple of months after the first stages of the reform of the senatorial order had taken effect, it offers the precious opportunity to glimpse an attempt by a well-informed contemporary to make sense of the recent changes in the social composition of the imperial aristocracy. While most of the text is taken up by a retelling of Constantine's liberation of Rome from the tyranny of Maxentius, in the final section of the speech Nazarius turns to an exploration of the peacetime benefactions lavished by the emperor on his subjects:

> It would be tedious to enumerate the benefactions of the emperor. They shine forth unceasingly, returning upon the earth without interruption in unison with his benevolence. They are so infinite in number and bring so many benefits that neither the multitude of them all nor the usefulness of individual ones will ever draw a veil of oblivion over our gratefulness. You experienced, Roma, that at last you were the citadel of all nations and of all lands the queen, now that you were promised the best men from all the provinces for your city-council, so that the dignity of the senate was no more illustrious in name than in fact, since it consisted of the flower of the entire world.[30]

In important regards, Nazarius' praise of Constantine's decision to include "the best men from all the provinces" (*ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros*) into the senate draws on long-established understandings of aristocratic authority in the Roman world. Already in the middle Republic, the senate had conceived

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29 On the context of the speech, see Nixon/Rodgers 1994, 334–342 and Wienand 2012, 281–287 with further literature. On the identity of Nazarius, see Barnes 2011, 183–184.

30 *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).35.1–2. This translation is a modified version of the excellent rendering by B. S. Rodgers in Nixon/Rodgers 1994, 380.

of itself as an aristocracy of virtue: according to the *Lex Ovinia,* a law passed by the popular assembly sometime between 339 and 312 BC, senators should be recruited from "the best men from all ranks."[31] In the early empire, similar ideas of the senate as an open elite legitimized the admission into the senate of growing numbers of men who had been born in the provinces. In Book XI of Tacitus' *Annals,* the emperor Claudius gives a speech in which he argues in favor of allowing select members of the elite of the provinces of Gaul to participate in elections for senatorial magistracies:

> My ancestors (whose progenitor Clausus was a Sabine who was admitted both to Roman citizenship and to the patriciate) encourage us that we make similar decisions for the Republic and transplant to us from anywhere whatever is excellent. For I am well aware that the Iulii come from Alba, the Coruncani from Camerium, the Porcii from Tusculum and (not to explore archaic times any further) others from Etruria, Lucania and the whole of Italy, and finally that the country itself was advanced to the Alps so that not only single individuals but lands and peoples might unite in our name. . . . Everything, conscript fathers, which is now believed most ancient was new: plebeian magistrates came after patrician, Latin after plebeian, those of the other peoples of Italy after the Latin. This too will grow old, and what today we defend by examples will be amongst the examples.[32]

Like the claim in the *Lex Ovinia* that "the best men from every social order" should become senators, so also the assertion by Claudius in Tacitus' *Annals* that it is a long-standing habit in Rome to "transplant to us from anywhere what is excellent" (*transferendo huc quod usquam egregium fuerit*) expresses an understanding of the senate as a group whose qualification for membership was not descent, but superior moral capacity. By praising the emperor for his decision to include the "best men from all the provinces" into the senate, Nazarius displays his adherence to long-standing ideas of the senate as a meritocracy, which united all the best citizens of the imperial state.

But the similarities that Nazarius' account of Constantine's reforms shares with earlier depictions of the senate must not be allowed to overshadow highly innovative features of his text. In Tacitus' version of Claudius' speech (as in the fragmentary original that survives on an inscription from Lyon), the emperor draws on Republican *exempla* to justify the expansion of the senatorial order: "what today we defend by examples will be amongst the examples"

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31 Festus p. 290 s.v. *praeteriti senatores* with Hölkeskamp 1987, 144–145, and Cornell 1995, 369–370.
32 Tac. *Ann.* 11.24.1–2 and 7. The translation is a modified version of Woodman 2004, 207–208.

(*et quod hodie exemplis tuemur, inter exempla erit*).[33] By contrast, Nazarius presents the expansion of the senate as a decision that was motivated by the cosmological role played by the imperial monarch. Interestingly, the narrative of the senatorial reforms is preceded by a depiction of Constantine as a solar ruler. Like the rays of the sun, so Constantine's benefactions "shine forth unceasingly, returning upon the earth without interruption in unison with his benevolence" (*quae in orbem sine modo redeuntia contexta eius benignitate fulserunt*). The expansion of the senate is depicted as one of countless good deeds carried out by the sacred ruler of the world for the benefit of all the earth's inhabitants. The fact that Nazarius presents Constantine's reforms not as a political, but as a cosmological act, is important. It enables the orator to put forward a strikingly new image of the senate. Nazarius' panegyric is the first text in which the senate is portrayed not merely as the aristocracy of the city of Rome but as the elite of the entire world. Nazarius claims that Constantine's reforms transformed the senate into an aristocracy consisting of "the best men from all the provinces" (*ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros*) and "the flower of the entire world" (*ex totius orbis flore*). The planetary imagery is significant. In the same way the emperor has become a global ruler, who had been ordained by superhuman forces as guardian of the entire world, so the senate has become a global aristocracy, which unites the finest men from all regions of the inhabited earth.[34]

Similar ideas are invoked by Claudian in the verse panegyric given on the consul Mallius Theodorus, an Italian small-town notable who in 399 was appointed to the highest office of the Roman state. The poem was performed in the presence of the emperor Honorius and his highest officials in the imperial palace in Milan. In the preface to the text, the poet celebrated the varied origins of the men assembled in his audience.[35] When Jupiter wished to know the size of his realm, he had to send out two eagles who traveled across the entire universe. By contrast, the emperor can simply gauge the size of his empire by looking at the high officeholders assembled in the imperial palace:

> He does not need eagles to know the extent of his lands;
> Through you he measures the size of the empire with greater accuracy:

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33 On the speech and its relationship to the Lyon Tablet (CIL 13.1668 = ILS 212), see Syme 1999, 90–133; Isaac 2004, 418–420; Osgood 2011, 165–167.

34 Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.1 also depicts the expansion of the senate as an expression of Constantine's care for the entire world: he "was persistently providing repeated and continuous good works of every kind for all the inhabitants of every province alike." The close resemblance to Nazarius' rhetoric is noted in the commentary by Cameron/Hall 1999, 310.

35 On the context of the speech, see Cameron 1970, 125–127; Döpp 1980, 150–157.

Through this assembly I calculate the magnitude of the globe,
Here I see gathered what shines everywhere.[36]

In Claudian's poem, the divine counterpart to the emperor's power is not the life-giving force of the sun but the power of the highest god Jupiter. In other ways, however, the picture of the imperial aristocracy presented by the poet from Alexandria precisely replicates that given by Nazarius in his account of Constantine's senatorial reforms. Again, cosmological imagery is deployed to describe the relationship between the divine ruler of the world and his aristocracy, and again the senate is pictured as a trans-regional elite, which assembles men from all regions of the inhabited earth: "Through this assembly I measure the magnitude of the globe, here I see gathered what shines everywhere" (*quidquid ubique micat*).

The same analogy between the rule of the supreme god in heavens and the government of the emperor on earth is drawn in the opening lines of Rutilius Namatianus' epic poem *De Reditu*, describing a journey from Rome to Gaul undertaken by the author in autumn 417.[37] When Rutilius bids farewell to Rome, he praises the openness of its aristocracy to foreigners:

The pious senate is open to foreign ability,
It does not consider those as strangers which should be its own.
They share the power of their class and of their peers
And they partake in the Genius whom they revere,
in the same way as from one pole of the earth to another
extends the assembly of the highest God.[38]

At first sight, the praise of the senate as a group which was "open to foreign ability" (*patet peregrinae curia laudi*) is reminiscent of Republican conceptions of the senate as an aristocracy of virtue. Significantly however, as in Nazarius' and Claudian's texts, the origins of the trans-regional nature of the senate are situated not in an earthly but in a cosmic context. According to Rutilius, the senate is no less international as a group than the assembly of the gods on Olympus. And in the same way as the gods partake in the majesty of Jupiter, so senators partake in the veneration of the emperor—"the Genius whom they revere."[39] Like Nazarius and Claudian, Rutilius articulates a new vision of the

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36 *Panegyricus dictus Manlio Theodoro consuli,* Praefatio, quoted at 17–20.

37 The date of the journey is conclusively proven by Cameron 1967. The author's religious orientation is incisively discussed by Cameron 2011, 207–218.

38 1.13–18.

39 As Gavin Kelly points out (personal communication), the parallel to the proem to Claudian's panegyric on Theodorus, discussed earlier, suggests that the *genius* in question is that of the emperor,

senate as a planetary aristocracy, whose sociocultural shape can only properly be understood from a cosmic perspective.

The emergence of this new idea of the senate as a world aristocracy is suggestive of the shape of the ideas which motivated the late-antique expansion of the senatorial order. The abandonment by emperors of their traditional image of Republican monarchs made possible the development of a new conception of aristocratic authority. The senate was seen no longer as a Republican aristocracy of Rome, whose authority derived from the institutions of the Roman city-state, but as a global class, which encompassed the best men of the entire earth and whose social composition was decided by the divine ruler of the world. It was this new image of the senate as a post-Republican aristocracy which provided the justification for the reforms undertaken by Constantine and his successors.

The Virtues of the New man

But not only emperors profited from the new ideological constellation. The new idea of the imperial élite as a global class also afforded advantages for senators. By redefining themselves as an explicitly monarchical elite, they were able to participate in the emperor's celestial charisma. On January 1, 379, in the imperial palace in Trier, the new consul Decimius Magnus Ausonius gave a *Gratiarum actio*—a speech of thanks—to the emperor Gratian. The speech was given before an empty throne. Less than five months earlier, the ruler of the eastern half of the Roman empire, Valens, had died in a battle against Gothic forces fought near the city Adrianople in Thrace (modern Edirne in Turkey). When Ausonius gave his speech to commemorate the inauguration of his consulate, Gratian was still on his way back from the eastern front.[40]

If the absence of the emperor neatly encapsulates the emergence of a new mobile monarchy in the later Roman empire, the person of Ausonius appropriately symbolizes the changes in the composition of the imperial aristocracy

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not the city of Rome, pace the commentaries by Doblhofer 1977, 25ff. and Wolff 2007, 49 n.10. On the idea of senators forming part of the emperor's body, see also *Cod. Theod.* 9.14.3pr. . . . *senatorum etiam, nam et ipsi pars corporis nostri sunt . . .*

40   The date of the *Gratiarum Actio* is debated. Peiper 1886, ciii, and Sivan 1997, 199, assume it was given on 1 January 379; Green 1991, 537–545, and Matthews believe Ausonius delivered it later in the year after Gratian had arrived in Trier. The text is contradictory: 7.34 *Treveri principis beneficio et mox cum ipso auctore beneficii* implies that the emperor was still away, while 18.80 suggests that he was present at the delivery of the speech. Most likely, the incongruity derives from the reworking of the oral version into a published text: as Coşkun 2002, 82–87, observes, different parts of the speech may have been delivered at different occasions.

brought about by the Constantinian reforms of the senate. Born into the municipal elite of Burdigala (Bordeaux), Ausonius spent the beginning of his career as professor of rhetoric in his hometown. But after his appointment by Valentinian I as teacher of his son and co-emperor Gratian, Ausonius experienced a swift rise to high office. Under the reign of Valentinian I, he was *quaestor sacri palatii,* responsible for the drafting of imperial constitutions; in the early years of Gratian, in 377 and 378 he served as praetorian prefect (senior fiscal, judicial, and administrative official) of Gaul, and from 378 to 379, his area of administration was extended to encompass Italy and Africa as well. When Ausonius gave his speech of thanks for his appointment as consul, he was the most powerful civilian official in the western half of the Roman empire.[41]

Ausonius used this occasion to justify the swift pace of his political career. Remarkably, most of the published version of the speech does not consist of praise of the achievements of the emperor Gratian who had appointed him. Rather, Ausonius squarely focused on a celebration of his own attainments. In important ways, the justification offered by the new consul for his rise to the top of imperial hierarchies of honor was entirely traditional. Ausonius took the persona of the virtuous "new man" (*homo novus*). A "new man" was the opposite of a *nobilis:* a senator who did not have any senior officeholders among his ancestors.[42] The classic embodiment of the "new man" was Gaius Marius, son of a municipal family from Arpinum in Latium and victor against the Cimbri and Teutones in 105 BC. In the *Jugurthine War* of the late Republican historian Sallust, Marius is given a famous speech in which he contrasts his own masculine virtue with the effeminate decadence of *nobilis* families. In his *Gratiarum actio,* Ausonius quotes this classic work, and then gives a detailed account of his own *virtus*:

> "I am unable to display ancestor-masks as proofs of character," as Marius says in Sallust. I cannot unroll a pedigree to show my descent from heroes or that I am of the lineage of the gods, nor boast immeasurable wealth and estates dotted all over the kingdoms of the world. However, I can mention without bragging advantages which are less fanciful. I can mention my home-town, a city not unrenowned; my family, of which I need not be ashamed; my unblemished home, my lifestyle passed of my free will without a spot; my scanty means (though enriched with books and learning); my simple yet not stingy tastes; mind and soul of a

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41 PLRE 1, Ausonius 7. On his career, see Matthews 1990, 69–87; Sivan 1993; Coşkun 2002.

42 The distinctive outlines of the cultural image of the *homo novus* are explored by Hellegouarc'h 1972, 472–483; Wiseman 1971; Dugan 2005.

> free man; the unpretentious sophistication of my diet, my dress and the
> appointments of my house; so that, if anyone should think me worthy of
> comparison with those famous consuls of past days (excluding from the
> comparison those war-like qualities which then flourished), let him deny
> me their wealth without belittling my industry.[43]

Ausonius asserts that although he does not descend from an ancient Roman
officeholding family, his supreme ethical capacities qualify him for leadership
positions in the Roman state. His education, lifestyle, diet, and modest wealth
prove that he has the capacities for self-control that, according to ancient social
theory, were the crucial prerequisites for rulership over others. As explained
earlier, the idea of the senate as an aristocracy of virtue had long been conven-
tional in the Roman world. By presenting himself as a new Marius, whose sole
qualifications for membership in the imperial aristocracy were his self-control
and masculine virtue, Ausonius displays his adherence to ideals of aristocratic
power that reached back at least to the middle Republic.[44]

By contrast, other aspects of the speech are strikingly new. Three features of
Ausonius' self-presentation seem particularly noteworthy. First, the new con-
sul rejects Republican ideals of collective decision making and openly endorses
a monarchical political order:

> I became consul without undergoing the ordeal of the hustings, the
> Campus Martius, the canvassing, the registration, the gratuities; I have
> not had to shake hands, nor have I been so confused by crowds of people
> pressing to greet me as to have been unable to call my friends by their
> proper names, or to have given them names which were not theirs: I have
> not had to visit the *tribus*, to flatter the *centuriae*, I have not trembled
> as the *classes* were called upon to vote. I have made no deposit with a
> trustee, nor given any pledge to a financial agent. The Roman people, the
> Field of Mars, the Equestrian Order, the Rostra, the hustings, the Senate
> and the Curia—Gratian alone was all of these for me.[45]

Ausonius proudly proclaims that to secure his election he did not have to under-
take hustings among a corrupt citizen population. According to him, the only
appropriate judge of the attainments of the new consul is the emperor himself.
The fact that he has been personally chosen as consul by Gratian guarantees
that it was neither the well-targeted deployment of his patronage connections

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43 Auson. *Grat. act.* 8.36–40, citing Sall. *Iug.* 85.29. The translation is a modified version of the
Loeb version by White 1921, 239.

44 See the discussion in the preceding section with n. 31 above.

45 Auson. *Grat. act.* 3.13. The translation is adapted from White 1921, 227.

nor the mobilization of his financial resources, but solely his superior virtue that had been the reason for his election to the highest office of the Roman state. This theme of the superiority of autocratic modes of decision making over democratic deliberation by a citizen population is notably absent from the most famous early imperial model for a consular speech of thanks, Pliny's *Panegyricus,* but is frequently deployed in speeches by senior officeholders of the Late Roman state.[46] The evanescence of the political order of the Republic was no longer concealed, but celebrated—indicative of the gap that separates early imperial and late-antique ideas of a just political order.

A second feature of the *Gratiarum actio* that is distinctively late-antique is his self-fashioning as a reluctant officeholder. Ausonius insists that he obtained his consulate against his will:

> Some are tormented because their ambitions remained unfulfilled: I did not desire it. Some are busy lobbying for an appointment: I did not seek it. There are also those who extract it through persistence: I applied no force. To others opportunity offered it: I was not present at court. There are also those whose wealth assisted them: this is prevented by the high morals of the times. I did not buy it, nor could I pride myself upon restraint: I had no money. I can only offer one thing, and this I cannot claim as my own: for only your assessment can say whether I merited it.[47]

By denying any political ambition, Ausonius drives home the point that it was his solely ethical qualities as recognized by the emperor that had led to his appointment. The moral stature of the officeholder thus becomes an immediate reflection of the moral stature of the ruler. It was for this reason that this ideology was so attractive for a Gallic *homo novus* without ancestry. To doubt his own qualifications as officeholder (Ausonius implied) was to treasonably doubt the emperor's judgment. This trope frequently recurs in texts written by and for senior officeholders of the Later Roman state. It is present in two of the speeches of the philosopher Themistius, who in the 350s served as chair of the senate of Constantinople; in the *Gratiarum actio* of Mamertinus, who in 362 was consul of the emperor Julian; and in Claudian's poem on the consulate of Mallius Theodorus, a Milanese small-town notable who had risen

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46 The closest parallel is to *Pan. lat.* 3(11).16, in which Mamertinus contrasts Julian's virtue with the corrupt citizen population of the Republic. The same theme is also explored by Symmachus in *Or.* 1.9, discussed in the final section of this paper, and in *Or.* 4.7 in which the orator asserts that the election of his father by the emperor Gratian on the recommendation of the senate is superior to Republican traditions of democratic decision making.

47 Auson. *Grat. act.* 10.4 with White 1921, 245.