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5: PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVES

Greg Woolf



WRITING THE PROVINCES INTO A VERY ROMAN REVOLUTION

Augustus and the City of Rome stand at the heart of all histories of this period. Augustus and his image builders put them there. The contributions made by others were limited in fact, and effaced from memory unless they could be grouped around the person of the emperor. The other great cities of the Mediterranean – Athens and Alexandria above all – were plundered and marginalised. Augustus wrote his name all over the City and transported the City out to the world. His *Res Gestae et Impensae* lists wars won abroad and money spent at home, that is in Rome. Most modern accounts have followed this steer in stressing the complexity and importance of the accommodation that Octavian/Augustus achieved with the senatorial and equestrian élites of the City and of Italy (Syme 1939, Eck 2003). Others have explored how he constructed the new order – symbolic, political, religious, moral, military, and economic – out of the traditional symbols, words, rituals, spaces, and institutions of Republican Rome (Galinsky 1996, Nicolet 1991, Zanker 1988).¹ We slip, in our usage, easily from Rome the City to Rome the Empire and back again. *Urbs* obscures *Orbis*.²

Yet Roman history in the lifetime of Augustus is no longer the history of one city. Well before Actium the Roman People, so prominent in Augustan writing, referred to a citizen body that incorporated virtually all the free inhabitants of the Italian peninsula and many beyond it (cf. Purcell, [previous chapter](#) in this volume). Roman power extended even farther, embracing not just the scatter of Mediterranean provinces but also allied cities and the kings and tribes beyond and between them. The history of this great area cannot simply be an appendix to debates in the Senate on tribunician power, or subtle monumentalisation of the

Campus Martius. What this chapter offers is not a complementary picture of the provinces in the age of Augustus. Instead, it asks how we might write the history differently if we did not start from Rome and the first emperor.

So how do the provinces figure in conventional narratives? In the provinces, there were reserves of manpower and wealth for warring dynasts, and also places to which they might absent themselves when life in Rome was difficult. In the provinces were the armies, ostensibly pursuing the historic destiny of the Roman people, in fact ever ready to march against the City, as they had under Sulla. In the provinces, monarchy dared speak its name and the divine qualities of generals and emperors could be recognised. Tacitus, in his ironized sketch of Augustus' reign, represented the provincials as indifferent to the collapse of a free Republic that had enslaved them:

Nor did the provinces mind this state of affairs. They were distrustful of the power of the senate and the people because of the struggles of the powerful and the greed of the magistrates. The laws offered them no help because they were perverted by violence, favouritism and, most of all, by bribery.

(*Annals* 1.2)

Many studies present the provinces as laboratories of autocracy in which Rome's rulers learned quite what they might get away with in the City itself (e.g., Millar 1977). But most of all provincials are represented as cannon fodder, collateral damage, second and third murderers in dramas where Romans get all the best parts.

Analysis in these terms does have something to be said for it. Empires might be defined, in part, as hegemonic systems organised so that some places matter much more than others. Just as today's developing world is dependent on decisions taken in the capitals – financial and political – of the West, so the provinces looked to Rome, trying to guess the outcome of power struggles within the imperial court. Rome, after Actium and maybe even earlier, was not really a capital city any more. The centre of power was the person of the emperor, wherever he was at the time. But the City's magnificent monuments, the games and triumphs, the distributions of gold and grain, the court poets and the gladiators, were largely paid for by the provinces, and they advertised to provincials the splendours of the empire (Edwards and Woolf 2003). The advancement of Rome as the unrivalled cultural capital served to

mark other centres as ‘provincial’. The provincialisation of non-Roman cultures was an artefact of Roman power and – to the extent that it was successful³ – there is no point ignoring it.

It is important then, that we resist our natural temptation to knock the first emperor off his pedestal and turn our backs on the centre. It is not possible to write un-Augustan narratives of Mediterranean history in which the City of Rome is decentred. The mass of epigraphical finds from all over the empire have made clear that there were no places, no matter how remote, where the identity of this latest Roman dynast was genuinely a matter of indifference. Perhaps the slaves and peasants of the Mediterranean world did not know that Actium was ‘a secular miracle.’ Maybe women did not have a ‘Roman revolution’ of their own. But the danger of the revisionist agenda is that we may become seduced into a dialogue with Augustus over his own world-historical importance, a dialogue that in the end can only confirm his status.

What historians can do is experiment with looking at familiar events in a broader perspective, one that prioritises the political and cultural convulsions experienced right across the Mediterranean world and its continental hinterlands. There is, however, a serious methodological problem that we cannot dodge. Rome’s wider environment was indeed characterised by major changes in the reign of Augustus. But that reign was extremely long even if counted only from Actium (and why should we accept his own, politically necessary, dismissal of his career as *triumvir*?).⁴ The time span involved has made it easy for historians to connect all kinds of change with his political ascendancy. But correlation is not explanation, and demonstrating temporal coincidence is not the same as showing causal connections. Much of what happened ‘in the age of Augustus’ was rooted in longer term processes (cf. Wallace-Hadrill and Purcell, this volume). Territorial expansion, the growing infatuation of the Roman aristocracy with Greek aesthetic forms, the growth of the citizen body and the accelerating rate at which old families were replaced with new ones within the élite are just some examples.

Augustus and his spokespersons were well aware of these processes, and (for their own purposes) often stressed the elements of continuity in his reign. Historians since antiquity have often convicted Augustus of making fraudulent claims in this respect. But neither Augustus nor his critics lived with our conventional periodisation of Roman history into ‘Republic’ and ‘Principate’. And much did continue unchanged. Slavery, family structure, the organisation of intellectual knowledge, law, language, religion, and moral discourse are just the most obvious realms where there was no great discontinuity. Who are we to decide that the

political freedom of senators should be the touchstone of continuity? Continuity, to be sure, might mean remaining unchanged or it might mean continuing to change in a direction unaffected by the regime change. But maybe it is pointless expecting Augustus to single-handedly divert history. Augustus took advantage of some tides in the affairs of men, and perhaps he steered some changes. Virtual historians can wonder about the sort of epic Virgil might have written for a victorious Antony, or what role the Senate might have played in a principate founded by a Caesar who escaped assassination. Our task is to see how our understanding of the historical Augustus changes if his career is set against a wider backdrop than that of Rome and its (new) past.

Momentous cultural changes were certainly occurring across the Roman world in the last decades of the last century B.C. and in the first decades A.D. Archaeologists working on the western provinces often term these changes ‘Romanization.’⁵ The term is less commonly used in Rome’s eastern provinces, but those societies too were undergoing major transformations (Woolf 1994). Italy was changing at least as fast (Keay and Terrenato 2001). The term ‘Hellenization’ is sometimes used of areas like central Asia Minor and Egypt in this period. The education and physical environment of the élite of Rome were preoccupied with things Greek (Wallace-Hadrill 2000). For Italy, cultural change is sometimes expressed as Romanization, sometimes as Hellenization. Neither term is very satisfactory as it is easily understood to mean the spread of unified and well-defined cultures at the expense of others. No such cultures existed. But there really were major changes in intellectual life, literature, rhetorical culture, domestic architecture, public monuments, sculpture, painting, tableware, diet, dress, styles of hygiene, sexual custom, and much else across the entire Empire. In some places Greek identity was sought and claimed, in others Roman, and in yet other areas one or both those labels were regarded as culturally prestigious. Both in Rome and in Greek centres, processes of canon-formation were at work during this period reclassifying certain periods and works as classical.

Only in Rome itself were these processes highly politicised. Historians are still unsure how best to describe this process. ‘Augustan culture’ has been used (e.g., Galinsky 1996), and the idea of a ‘Roman cultural revolution’ has been floated (Wallace-Hadrill 1989 and in this volume; Habinek and Schiesaro 1997; cf. Woolf 2001) to describe similar changes. What both those terms share is a commitment to understand in similar terms literary, intellectual, and artistic changes. This is certainly to be preferred to analyses that restricted themselves to

the relationship between, say, poetic production and the politics of the court. But despite classicists' traditional strengths in combining different media and thinking in an interdisciplinary way, it is not easy to make the connections between all these changes in a convincing manner. More difficult yet is the task of integrating political change into the picture. Traditionally, political change has been allowed to set the agenda and provide the periodization. When Paul Zanker's fundamental work *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (literally *Augustus and the Power/Might of Images*) was translated into English it was given the title *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. But Augustus is not just a temporal reference, anymore than he was the prime-mover. His reign was neither simply coincidental to, nor was it the main cause of these changes. The shift to autocracy at Rome, in other words, was *just another component* of the cultural transformation of the Mediterranean world: it needs to be understood in those terms.

Characterising this transformation is not easy, but here are some of the major trends underway at the turn of the millennia. It was an age of urban expansion (Hopkins 1978; Jones 1987; Woolf 1997). Cities grew where they were already well established, and new ones were founded. This was true whether the cities were Greek *poleis*, the administrative centres of Egyptian nomes, Roman colonies, iron age hillforts in Gaul, or Anatolian temple states transformed or replaced by new foundations. It was a world where the rich were becoming richer and the poor poorer, a process that went hand in hand with the rich entrenching their power in local communities. Again the local details differ enormously. The metropolite class emerges in Egypt, democracy finally expires in the Greek world, tribal warlords are replaced with municipal landowning élites in the West (Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Alcock 1993; Quass 1993; Brunt 1976). It was a world where the rich built, privately of course, but also on a grand public scale, mostly in the cities, but also in great sanctuaries. A mass of monumentalization characterises the period. In Italy one stimulus was the end of senatorial building in the City of Rome, where it became futile and dangerous to compete with the emperor (Eck 1984). In Gaul monument building perhaps replaced leading warbands as a means of aristocratic display (Goudineau and Rebourg 1991; Woolf 2000). Much municipal building in the West asserted compliance with Roman custom and ideal. Greek cities around the Aegean world started competing with each other to develop the most splendid public buildings in a new style that made heavy use of the fabulously expensive marble (Millar 1993). By all these routes the empire of the Principate became profoundly urban in a way the empire

of the Republic had not been. The vast mass of the population still lived in the countryside, but their lives revolved around the cities which in turn were built on their labour.

Underpinning this expenditure by the landowning classes who now dominated the political establishment were changes in production. Much of their wealth certainly derived from accumulation of property, but these quantitative changes made possible qualitative ones. Technological innovations and knowledge spread throughout the Roman world, from hydraulic engineering to kiln manufacture, from the cultivation of fruit trees to the construction of mosaics, from navigation to medicine and astrology and the use of slavery and Roman law to organise these activities. Equally important, the growth in the wealth of the wealthy gave some the chance to invest in new technologies. The immense production of the red-gloss potteries in north Italy and then of their provincial offshoots attests to high level of capital investment. The final component in this cycle of growth was the increase in the size of the market for agricultural and other produce. Urbanisation, along with the existence of a standing army paid well above subsistence levels, made it worthwhile to intensify the production of olive oil in Spain and Africa, of wine in Italy, of grain in Africa, Egypt, and Sicily and so on.

A different kind of economic growth was generated among the upper classes of the empire as common cultures began to emerge creating a set of élite values that transcended the divide between Greek and Latin literary culture. The diet of the well off was broadly similar across the empire. They shared a taste in domestic architecture, created large slave households partly staffed by highly specialised (and expensive) personal attendants. The powerful hunted, at great expense, employed entertainers and teachers, patronised and sometimes competed in athletic and musical competitions. These converging cultures of consumption were created at great cost. Olive oil was used everywhere even though olives could not grow in many parts of the empire. Wine replaced beer even where vines could not be cultivated. Papyrus, flax, and marble were available everywhere but at a cost that reflected the expense of transporting them from the few areas that could produce them. Political stability made these exchanges easier, and perhaps more profitable, but the quest for luxury was well established among the last generation of the Republic's aristocracy (Edwards 1993). If this commerce de luxe cost some of the rich a great part of their fortunes, it made others very wealthy. There were no rich merchant classes in the Roman world and, although they often concealed their involvement, rich aristocrats capitalised and profited from these trades.

Only a few of these changes can plausibly be attributed to the person or policies of Augustus and his followers. Many developments – the growth of the Italian pottery industry and of Italian agriculture for instance – were already underway in the middle of the last century B.C. (Woolf 1992). Yet this was the world from which Augustus’ regime emerged, and these were the energies which it had to harness, or else resist.

PRINCEPS AND PRINCIPES

Let us begin, then, with politics. Josephus offers one provincial angle on the events of the period in Judea:

In the fifteenth year of his reign [Herod] restored the existing Sanctuary and round it enclosed an area double the former size, keeping no account of the cost and achieving a magnificence beyond compare. This could be seen particularly in the great colonnades that ran around the entire Temple and the fortress that towered over it to the north. The former were completely new structures, the latter an extremely costly reconstruction, as luxurious as a palace, and named Antonia in honour of Antony. His own palace, built in the Upper City, consisted of two very large and very lovely buildings which made even the Sanctuary seem insignificant: these he named after his friends, one Caesareum, one Agrippaeum.

(Josephus, *Jewish War* 1. 40, trans. G. A. Williamson)

Herod did not confine his munificence to Jerusalem (see Fig. 57 on p. 370 and Chapter 16 by Michael White). Josephus goes on to tell how he built a city named Sebaste (the Greek equivalent of ‘Augusta’) with walls two miles long, settled 6,000 colonists in it, gave them land, a charter, and in the centre built a vast shrine dedicated to Caesar (cf. Fig. 60 on p. 373). Later “when Caesar had enriched him with the addition of greater lands” Herod built another shrine to him in Paneum, at the source of the Jordan. Other buildings dedicated to the same friends were constructed in Jericho, and in other places. In fact, concludes Josephus:

I cannot think of any suitable spot in his kingdom that he left without some tribute of esteem for Caesar. When he had filled his own country with temples, these tributes

overflowed into the province and in city after city he erected a Caesareum.

Herod was not an isolated case. The great city of Caesarea in Mauretania, modern Cherchel, was constructed by King Juba, another prince closely linked to the house of Augustus. Neither Herod nor Juba were Greek by descent, although Greek culture was for them (as for Augustus) a natural medium of display. Their activities can be compared to those of Eurycles, the tyrant of Sparta (cf. pp. 101 and 376), and to the building programmes of tribal chiefs in Gaul, the Alps, and southern Britain:

Each of the allied kings who enjoyed Augustus' friendship founded a city called 'Caesarea' in his own domains; and all clubbed together to provide funds for completing the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens, which had been begun centuries before, and dedicating it to his Genius. These kings would often leave home, dressed in the togas of their honorary Roman citizenship, without any emblems of royalty whatsoever, and visit Augustus at Rome, or even when he was visiting the provinces; they would attend his morning audience with the simple devotion of *clientes*.

(Suetonius, *Aug.* 60; trans. R. Graves with adaptations).

Herod, Juba, and Eurycles (and more names could easily be added) illustrate the collusion of interests on which Roman Peace rested. If Augustus was *patronus* to their *clientes*, each played the role of Augustus within their own communities. Most early empires worked largely through a collusion between the imperial élites at the centre and local élites who do their bidding in return for support against their local rivals and subordinates (Alcock *et al.* 2001). Augustan propaganda represented this collusion as a harmonious order comprised of friendships focused on the emperor. He also arranged for these princes to be linked by intermarriage, and their children, often raised in Rome alongside members of the imperial family, sometimes took on Roman names.

On closer examination these relations seem a little less harmonious. These kings were more often termed "friends" than "clients," but "friendship" in Augustus' *Res Gestae* is generally something that Augustus claims he has compelled foreigners to seek. There was indeed a long Republican tradition of granting lesser allies the title "friend and ally of the Roman people" and bestowing on them honorary symbols

of office and togas. Sallust has Scipio advise a young Jugurtha to seek the friendship of the Roman people rather than individual Romans (Sallust, *Jugurtha* 8.2). Suetonius is correct to refer to these friendships as orientated toward Augustus himself, whether or not they really performed a version of the Roman client's *salutatio*. But Augustus was not always the first (or last) friend they made at Rome. Herod had already built his Antonia before he began work at Caesarea Maritima (see Fig. 58 on p. 371) and he also built monuments to Agrippa, a potential successor to Augustus. The network of friendships that bound together the Augustan Mediterranean was just the latest in a series of similar alliances.

The persistence of this pattern emerges from the case of Caius Iulius Rufus, one member of a family that dominated the new town of Saintes at the western terminal of one of the major trunk roads that Agrippa built across Gaul. That family was responsible for most of the earliest monuments there and also for the building of an amphitheatre at Lyon at the federal sanctuary of the three Gallic provinces. Rufus' most impressive surviving monument is an arch that once stood at one end of the bridge that carried the Agrippan road across the Charente into the town. On the arch stood statues of Tiberius, the emperor, and of his two sons Drusus and Germanicus. An inscription celebrated Rufus' descent from a father Caius Iulius Catuaneunius, his grandfather Caius Iulius Agedomopas and his great grandfather Epotsorovidus. The inscription is often cited as an example of the gradual Romanization of names and families, but in A.D. 18 or 19 what it proclaimed was the antiquity of that dynasty's prominence of the Santones, way back beyond enfranchisement – probably by Caesar – to a pre-conquest chieftain. How should we read the relationship between the two dynasties displayed on the arch? A simple equation, Rufus is to the Santones what Tiberius is to the Romans? Alliance? A statement about the importance of descent? Even a claim that for all his Roman name, the Roman arch and his loyalty to the *princeps* – the inscription adds that he had been elected priest of Rome and Augustus at the altar at Lyon by the delegates of the Gallic communities – nevertheless it was Epotsorovidus' blood that gave Rufus real title to dominate Mediolanum of the Santones?

It would be easy to press further back, to that generation of friends of Pompey, scattered from Spain to Syria, or further forward in time to Claudius' reign and Togidubnus, king and representative of Rome in the southern British tribe renamed the Regnenses. But the pattern is clear enough. Shifting alliances between dynasts at the centre and dynasts in the provinces are a constant in the history of Roman power. And even in Augustus' reign there were disruptions. The tangled history

of the Euryclids of Sparta is a good illustration. The exact details of their intrigues, that involved Herod's family as well as Augustus', are unclear, but it looks very much as if rival groups in the Greek East took sides in the quiet contest between Gaius Caesar and Tiberius over who would succeed Augustus (Bowersock 1984). Eurycles' family fell from grace and were then restored to favour, following the shifting balance of power in the centre. In every city and in every royal house there were friends-in-waiting ready to exploit any collapse in the relations of the *principes*.

What emerges from this is a picture of an empire that was no unified whole, but rather a political field in which conflicts increasingly resonated with each other. The energy on which these conflicts depended did not come only from the centre. Nor were moves toward peace only the product of Augustan statesmanship. The level of stability in the system certainly increased over time, and Roman generals and princes played a major part in building alliances. Yet Herod and Juba, Eurycles and Rufus and the rest had their own interests to consult, their own reasons for seeking stability. The efforts made by each of these *principes* to entrench their power preserved the power of all of them. Many, like Herod, had achieved local stability before Rome did and so were courted by successive Roman dynasts.

It is not only modern historians who have succumbed to write the history of the political unification of the Mediterranean world from a Roman perspective.⁶ Polybius found it difficult to write a 'universal history' without doing so. Appian's history was organised as a series of Roman wars, classified by the opponents. His civil war narrative, in which conflict begins with the Gracchi and spreads to include Italy and eventually the entire Mediterranean world, provides a prototype for modern accounts. But we cannot explain either the repeated civil wars of the last century B.C. or the century of peace that followed Actium simply as a by-product of Roman domestic politics. Drawing the provinces into civil wars certainly expanded the scale of those wars, and drawing them into the settlements that followed helped solidify the peace. But it was political processes at work across the Mediterranean world that allowed all these areas to be drawn into war and peace. *Pax* – meaning security and order rather than tranquillity (Weinstock 1960) – might be dubbed *Romana* or *Augusta*, but many parties were involved in its creation.

This process had begun long before Augustus. The coalition of interests among the rulers of the Mediterranean world built upon an earlier entrenchment of the power of the wealthy at the expense of other classes. That development had been underway in the city states of Italy

and the Greek world for the last three centuries B.C. and was closely linked to the rise of imperial powers. Rome and the other Hellenistic empires had tended to favour the wealthy in the cities in which they dwelt. Popular assemblies had survived in many cities, Rome included, but had less and less power. The reasons for this trend, too broad to interest all but the bravest ancient historians (e.g., Veyne 1976, and de Ste. Croix, 1981, 518–37) are uncertain. Perhaps hegemonic powers found it easier to deal with stable predictable oligarchies than volatile democracies. Wealthy and educated individuals were often the most successful representatives of their cities at the courts of kings and Roman generals. Parallel processes are familiar to scholars of other imperial systems (Alcock, 1993, 72–80). The rise of oligarchy was not driven by ideological agendas, but had an ideological component that can be inferred from the way Cicero writes of the fundamental importance of property rights or from a widespread anxiety (among the rich) about debt-abolition programmes.

When, after Actium, Octavian was able to distance himself from the *popularis* programmes and slogans of Julius Caesar he moved much closer to Cicero's view that the protection of the propertied classes was the foundation of political stability (Nicolet 1984). Once again, this should not be understood only in terms of the domestic experience of the city of Rome. Augustus aligned himself with broader trends of Mediterranean history. The fact that he did so contributed to his success, at home and also in the wider Roman world.⁷

THE EXPANSION OF ROMAN POWER

The pacification of the world is one narrative that Augustus offers us in his *Res Gestae*. Another is the story of its conquest. Neither Augustus nor his provincial subjects could ignore this central transformation of the world. The eighty years or so of Octavian/Augustus' lifetime coincided with the period in which Roman imperialism was at its most ferocious. This was the time of Rome's greatest conquest (and greatest defeats). Most of the eventual empire was conquered and turned into provinces by Pompey, Caesar, Augustus, and their agents.

The great victories of the second century B.C. which left Rome without a rival in the Mediterranean world had often resulted in great hegemonic power and booty, but in little territorial gains. At Octavian's birth, Rome controlled almost nothing beyond the Mediterranean coastal plain, and not all of that. Romans were just beginning to think

of their *imperium* as a vast expanse of space, rather than as mastery over defeated peoples (Nicolet 1991; Richardson 1991). By Augustus' death, Roman armies had fought in Ethiopia and Arabia, had penetrated Europe to the Elbe and exercised control in some form or other of all regions south of the Danube and west of the Rhine, north of the Sahara and west of the Euphrates. Roman explorers had gone even further. Embassies had been apparently received from India and other distant lands. The horizons of the Roman world had changed. Within those horizons the provinces were more numerous, were managed with more uniform systems, and were more securely held. With hindsight it seems a watershed had been passed: Rome had moved from greedy and unstable conquest state to tributary empire. When Tiberius is reported as telling a rapacious governor that he wanted his sheep "shorn, not flayed" it is easy to recall all those other periods of imperial consolidation, from the reign of Darius I in Persia to late Victorianism.

Some provincial writers certainly claimed that their world had been transformed, culturally and politically. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in Augustan Rome, argued that Roman conquest had rescued Greek rhetorical culture from itself. Rome had redirected the cities back to their ancient classical standards and set them an example of leadership:

[Rome's] leaders are chosen on merit and administer the state according to the highest principles. They are thoroughly cultured and in the highest degree discerning, so that under their ordering influence the sensible section of the population has increased its power and the foolish have been compelled to behave rationally. This state of affairs has led to the composition of many worthwhile works of history by contemporary writers, and the publication of many elegant political tracts and many by no means negligible philosophical treatises; and a host of other fine works, the produce of well-directed industry, have proceeded from the pens of Greeks and Romans, and will probably continue to do so.

(Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Preface to *On Ancient Orators* 3; Loeb transl.)

Dionysius' analysis has been much discussed (e.g., Gabba, 1991, 23–59) and has formed the basis for modern studies of 'Augustan Classicism' (e.g., Zanker 1988 with Galinsky, 1996, 332–363, and Wallace-Hadrill, 1997, 10–11). The association of the creation of a new political and moral order with a revision of the literary canon is striking, as is the

powerful appropriation of a commonplace Roman rhetoric of imperialist legitimisation to Dionysius' critical and stylistic ends.

No provincial witness offers better testimony to Rome's transformative power than does Strabo, another Greek, and one whose own political connections went back to the Pompeian Mediterranean, but who also wrote in Augustus' Rome and lived to eulogise Tiberius. Throughout his text he juxtaposes life before, with life after the Romans took control. Alexandria, he writes, has opened up now that the Romans have taken over from the Ptolemies (2.3.5); the Romans are now teaching the naturally barbarous peoples of Europe to live civilised lives (2.5.26); Cadiz has been made prosperous by the bravery of its sailors... and the friendship of the Romans (3.1.8); Turdetania trades easily now with Rome and Italy thanks to the recent peace and the eradication of piracy (3.2.5); Rome has civilised the Turdetanians (3.2.15) the Artabians (3.3.5), the Cavares (4.1.12)... the list goes on. At the other end of the Mediterranean the Romans have brought an end to Spartan helotage (8.5.4), have restored Corinth (8.6.21), brought about the end of Athenian democracy (9.1.20) and Cretan piracy (10.4.9). The chronology is deliberately vague: "then... now" or "up until the rule of the Romans" are characteristic phrases. But the sense of a world being transformed by Roman expansion is powerfully conveyed.⁸

At the centre of the work, Strabo concludes his account of Italy with a whistle stop tour of Rome's conquest of the world leading up to a panoramic view of the (Tiberian) present in all the continents of the Roman world (6.4.2). The war against the Germans has already produced triumphs. Africa, once ruled by many kings, is now safe in the hands of Juba. Asia, too, has been ruled through kings, some rebellious ones have been deposed, and all territory west of the Phasis and the Euphrates has been subjected to the Romans and rulers appointed by them. The Armenians and their neighbours are to be conquered in due course. The same applies to the tribes north of the Danube up to the lands of the nomads who are not worth conquering. The Parthians, the only plausible rival to Rome, "have nevertheless yielded so far to the pre-eminence of the Romans" and have returned the trophies they captured from earlier Roman generals. Phraates has entrusted his children and grandchildren to be raised in Rome and the emperors appoint Parthian kings. Even Italy has found peace from civil strife and Rome has pulled back from the brink:

But it would have been a formidable task to administer so great a dominion otherwise than by turning it over to one

man, as to a father. In any case, never have the Romans and their allies thrived in such peace and plenty as that granted them by Caesar Augustus from the time he assumed the absolute authority, and is now afforded them by his son and successor Tiberius, who is making Augustus the model of his administration and decrees as are his children Germanicus and Drusus who are assisting their father.

(Strabo, *Geography* 6.4.3)

Somehow “the world conquered” is combined with the vision of relentless further expansion and both are attributed to Augustus’ genius.

We should be sceptical. The panegyric tone is not the only cause for alarm (if it is so obvious, why make such a noise about it? If the succession Augustus to Tiberius to Germanicus plus Drusus is so smooth why say so?).⁹ We also need to consider how far Augustus’ world conquest was begun by others, how far his long reign coincided with world conquest, and how great his impact on it was. After all, Octavian certainly did not initiate this last phase of major Roman expansion, however much it was promoted in the middle part of his reign, and in the years before his death it slowed to a crawl, whatever Strabo says (Gruen 1996).

Expansion was not anyone’s grand strategy. The Republican empire was created by competing aristocrats harnessing the energies of a society increasingly geared to constant warfare (Hopkins 1978; Harris 1979). The only central institutions were those of the city of Rome. The Senate pooled and transmitted experience of the provinces without the aid of administrators. Senators and *equites* staffed ineffectual corruption courts. Senior magistrates let out public contracts to private individuals to supply all the infrastructure needed from road building and army supply to tax collection. The provinces were even less institutionalised. Much of the territory that obeyed Roman orders was not part of a formal province. There were few regular governors, fewer garrisons, only a handful of public slaves. Roman rule often meant little more than obeying the commands of the most powerful Roman in the vicinity (cf. Purcell in this volume). Pompey made and broke kings, abolished and amalgamated kingdoms, founded cities, gave provinces constitutions and his men extravagant rewards. Much depended on his personal prestige and connections. This pattern endured until late in Augustus’ reign.

Modest institutionalisation was underway long before Augustus took control of expansion. The pace of territorial acquisition from the

60s onward, together with some spectacular Roman disasters prompted by inconsistency at the centre and corruption and incompetence at the edge, forced Rome's leaders to develop a more sustainable administrative apparatus. Most of it did take its final form in the reign of Augustus. Key components included a huge expansion of the number of territorial provinces; the creation of a standing army; the recruitment of more senators and also members of Rome's second aristocracy – the *equites* – to share the burden of government; and major changes in the way taxes were collected, passing much of the burden onto provincial propertied classes (Bowman 1996). Accompanying these changes was the elaboration of an ideology of empire that represented Rome as having a divine mandate to rule the world.

Tracing the precise chronology of these changes is not easy. Pompey created provinces that were more systematically ordered than ever before. Caesar pioneered the transfer of land-tax collection to the cities from the contractors. Both used senatorial lieutenants to help administer large provinces. Equestrian officers became prominent in the civil wars, which had also seen the emergence of armies that were in effect professional troops. Not long before Octavian's birth, Cicero's speeches in support of Pompey's super-commands provide evidence of an emerging consciousness of empire, and of the paucity of instruments available at Rome for managing it (Steel 2001). Caesar's *Gallic War*, written in the 50s B.C., testifies to changing attitudes to conquest. Each campaign is justified individually – as Romans had always claimed that each of their wars were just – yet Caesar also boasts of being the first to lead Roman armies beyond the Ocean and the Rhine (Brunt 1978). From Pompey on, all successful Roman generals were fascinated with the person of Alexander the Great (cf. Fig. 53 on p. 342). They founded cities named after themselves. They were hailed in language usually reserved for Hellenistic monarchs or the gods. Conquests were expressed in terms of great geographical features, the Pyrenees and the Alps, the Gulfs of the Ocean, the great rivers at the edge of the Roman world.

The Augustan regime did build on these foundations. The *Res Gestae*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the images of the globe that appear again and again on Augustan coins and monuments, offer the first explicit claims about Rome's divine mandate to conquer the world. But we know little of the process by which institutional change progressed. Were there great rationalising planning meetings, of the kind Dio imagined in the debate he staged between Agrippa and Maecenas about the nature of the principate? Or do we observe not much more than an intensification of the kind of large-scale problem solving conducted by Pompey? The

latter seems more probable. The continued importance of client princes in his scheme of things, the diversity of taxation systems, the mutinies that followed his death, all show the limits of any Augustan ‘system.’ The last chapter (101.4) of Suetonius’ *Life of Augustus* records how he included with his will a brief account of the empire:

How many soldiers there were under arms and where they were stationed, how much money was in the *aerarium*, how much in the other treasuries and what tax revenue was still owing. He added to it the names of the freedmen and slaves from whom fuller accounts might be asked.

This was one limit of the Augustan reorganisation of the provinces: like any Republican magistrate he had managed public affairs through his most trusted household staff.

One major contribution we can be sure Augustus made to Roman expansion was to slow it down: although he had conquered more territory than any other Roman leader before him, and duly highlighted this in the preface to the *Res Gestae*, caution gradually replaced the bold enterprise of his predecessors. Military defeats have been blamed for the end of expansion, but late Republican disasters like those suffered by Crassus and Antony in their invasions of Parthia had not derailed conquest. Second century A.D. authors under the spell of Trajan blamed the end of conquest on the emperors’ laziness and/or vice. Modern attempts to produce a rational explanation for the location of the empire’s frontiers have not been convincing. Most do not rest on geographical or ecological limits, do not coincide with the limits of prehistoric social systems and have no strategic rationale. It is far more likely that, just as conquest was at first driven by political competition, so the end of competition had made the costs and risks of territorial expansion seem no longer worth it.

PROSPERITY

So Greater Rome rolled out, powered by forces Augustus had not set in motion. But if he neither invented nor accelerated Roman imperialism, he benefited from its results. So did many others. One of the remarkable features of this last phase of Roman expansionism was the very large numbers of people who shared in its profits. The populace of the city had their building, their dole, and their games, paid for first by the booty

of captured Egypt and then by the great revenues Augustus enjoyed privately and the state enjoyed publicly as a result of conquest. But the profits were much more widely spread.

One consequence of the low level of institutionalisation of the empire was that it depended for its success on a series of social institutions most of which pre-dated empire, but which assumed new roles as Rome acquired hegemony over the Mediterranean world. Among the institutions that were especially important were citizenship and slavery, both of which led to a steady expansion in the numbers of Romans. Closely linked to citizenship was an evolving notion of Roman identity in which habits of dress, speech, manners, and conduct were more important than descent. This made it relatively easy to become Roman (Woolf 1998). The family, extended by patronage and slavery, came to perform many of the organizing functions that are performed in modern societies by companies, corporations, or associations. Education, once a means of concentrating cultural capital in the hands of the wealthy, became a means of socializing new Romans and creating a common culture for imperial élites.

The beneficiaries of many of these institutions were first of all members of the Italian aristocracies. Agricultural intensification, first undertaken to take advantage of the growing market in the City, was expanded to supply the overseas colonies and the provinces with Italian products. The same techniques allowed the new Roman owners of provincial land to intensify its productivity. Viticulture was extended to new areas for example, Roman systems of water management were applied in much of the west, new milling and pressing technology was widely disseminated. Expansion probably provided much of the capital for this process. Italy itself was probably never richer than at the turn of the millennium, a period when the taste for Italian produce had become generalised, but the techniques to satisfy that demand had not yet become naturalised in the provinces.

Many Italians shared in this prosperity. The new civic monuments built in southern Gaul resemble those built in the Po Valley the generation before, those in Africa have more in common with southern and central styles. Architects and workmen must have moved out in pursuit of new contracts (Ward-Perkins 1970). Ceramic production, when it spread to Gaul, was brought by Italian firms. Italian entrepreneurs had been operating under the umbrella of empire from at least the second century B.C. throughout the Mediterranean (cf. Purcell, this volume). The numbers will have increased as the sphere of Roman military and political interventions increased. Many followed armies to

buy booty from soldiers, and to sell them other goods. Some doubled as tax-farmers, some sought out and exported to Rome objects of special value such as Greek statuary. There is extensive archaeological evidence for a large scale trade in Italian wine in Gaul: papyri suggest Egypt also imported it. The grain trade grew in importance as the total number of urban mouths increased. Most sinister of all was the slave trade. Many slaves were prisoners of war, but not all. Some were probably enslaved within Europe by tribes beyond the frontier who sold them on to Roman buyers. Parallels have often been drawn with the slave trade from Dahomey to the Americas. A casual mention in Cicero's speech *For Quinctius* (24) reveals a caravan of slaves being transported from Gaul to Italy.

Most of the traders involved were not of high status but in some cases the very rich were certainly involved. Only they had the capital to invest (or the social credit with which to borrow it) in large scale intensification in Italian viticulture, in developing ranches in the provinces like those discovered on the Crau plain, in setting up the transport infrastructure that made it worthwhile growing large surpluses of olives in Spain and Africa, in building kilns capable of firing thousands of vessels at very high temperatures and so on. Archaeological evidence of massive investment in agricultural and non-agricultural production all over the empire at the turn of the millennium is building up. It is difficult to imagine who but the very richest could have been involved. Patronage and a series of legal instruments developed in the early second century are the most probable means by which these ventures were organised.

Other Romans lived permanently in the provinces. The process began in the second century B.C. when settlements like Gracchuris were created in Spain, allegedly for the descendants of soldiers and local women. The redistribution of provincial land to Roman and Italian settlers was debated from the late second century B.C. and a few colonies were actually created then. But the great period of overseas settlement followed Caesar's defeat of Pompey. Once most Italians were Roman citizens the political costs of settling soldiers or the overspill population of the city of Rome in the peninsula became too high. As with more recent imperialisms, the settlers were often concentrated in territories that most resembled their home country. So the Mediterranean coasts of Tunisia, Spain, and Gaul were colonised intensively while their continental hinterlands received fewer colonies. There were exceptions: strategic reasons determined the location of some colonies, for example, those of southern Asia Minor (Levick 1967).

But the growing taste for Italian produce and what we might loosely term Roman style goods was not confined to expatriate communities. Most early public building in the West was funded by local notables, men like Rufus in Gaul (Mierse 1990). It is very difficult to find much public building on Roman lines before the mid-first century B.C. but there is enough to show that it was not an innovation of Augustus' reign. By the middle of the next century, however, the townscapes of southern Spain, north Africa, southern Gaul, and Italy were furnished with grandiose public monuments. In a few cities in the interior there was building on a grand scale from the same period. In most of these areas the monumental centres were not complete until the late first century A.D., but there were colonies like Aosta and Lyon to imitate, and the great cities built by the friends of Rome and Augustus. The catalogue of cities named, or incorporating names like Augusta, Augustodunum, Augustonemetum, Caesarodunum, Caesaromagus and Caesarea is enormous: they would be joined by Tiberias and Germanicopolis (and they followed in the tradition of Pompey's Magnopolis).

Generally, but not always, public monuments were developed ahead of private housing. But the same élites had engaged with a broad range of Roman culture from the turn of the millennium. Their children were taught Latin in model schools, reading Horace and Terence, Virgil and Cicero just as they did in Italy. They purchased Italian foodstuffs and learned how to produce them at home. They ate their food off Roman style ceramics, a change which shows the adoption of Roman styles of cuisine and manners. Perhaps these new habits were still markers of élite culture in the Augustan period. Many would soon be generalised.

What led to these shifts in taste? It was not characteristic of the Republican empire, it cost provincial élites a great deal to satisfy and enriched many Italians of various statuses. At least part of the answer seems to be that Roman society was quite easily penetrated by those whose loyalty to Rome was supported by civilised credentials. Roman writers from Lucretius on had developed a particularly Roman version of a civilizing myth by which barbarians might be softened and refined by training and the acquisition of virtue. It would obviously be ridiculous to say that local chiefs in Spain started using *terra sigillata* to support applications for citizenship. But in an empire where patronage was often an essential prerequisite for success, in which education indoctrinated the young into absolutist views of civilisation and morality, in which Roman military success seemed a proof of the superiority of Roman ways, it is maybe not difficult to imagine the seductions of Roman culture. The Republican empire had come less close to the lives

of provincials. Government had been less intensive, settlers fewer, the tentacles of the Italian economy had been fewer and shorter. General enfranchisement had only reached the Alps under Caesar.

These processes must have contributed to the success and stability of the new order in all sorts of ways. Even today, regimes have an easier time when the economy is booming. With Italian landowners richer than ever before, it was the perfect time both to purge the Senate with minimum protest and to find new recruits. While provincial élites were investing so heavily in becoming Roman, some loyalty and displays of enthusiasm might be counted on (Ando 2000). The prosperity of Italy and the growing prosperity of the provinces must have made it easier to increase the revenues of Rome and also the profits that accumulated from Augustus' considerable personal property. It was, in short, a good time to found a world-empire.

ROME'S LAST CULTURAL REVOLUTION?

Universities and schools today teach Latin off much the same texts as were used in classrooms of Gaul and Italy, Africa and Spain toward the end of Augustus' reign. Why?

Once upon a time it would have been fashionable to answer that "Golden Latin" was intrinsically better than what had gone before and from what followed, that generations of discerning readers had recognised this quality, and so that "our" "Classics" had come down to us authorised by centuries of refinement. Today we understand much more about the processes of canon-formation, how books slip in and out of fashion. It is apparent that Roman writers were actively engaged in debating which texts were central and which secondary, within a Latin classics defined during the lifetime of Augustus. Horace's *Letter to Augustus* has been read as an overt attempt to redefine the canon of 'Great Works.' Less controversially, it has been shown that a vast quantity of Latin verse set out more subtly to reinterpret and unseat what it claimed as vulgar unpolished precedents. Often late Republican writers claimed to be the first to transplant Greek forms into Italian soil. When predecessors existed they were often presented as coarse and unrefined, as Horace did Lucilius. Mid-republican writers could have made the same claim (Hinds 1998). Latin literature was created by appropriating and modifying Greek models in the late third century B.C. The precise reasons are much disputed (e.g., Gruen 1992; Habinek 1998) but there is broad agreement that two important contexts are Rome's emergence

as an imperial power and a broad fascination with Greek culture among the élites and communities of central Italy (Zanker 1976; Dench 1995).

Broadly similar phenomena accompany the history of other art forms in Rome. Marble statuary was imported as booty from the late third century B.C.: the sack of Syracuse in 211 seemed a key moment to some ancient writers, who contrasted it with the decision by the Roman conqueror of Tarentum in 209 to leave the city “its angry gods.” The first major marble monument assembled by a Roman general was probably the portico of Metellus, built in 146 B.C. Individual structures grew grander and grander culminating in Pompey’s theatre and Caesar’s assembly hall for the Roman voters, the *Saepta Iulia* (see Fig. 45.A and 47.9). By this time individual marble statues thronged the villas of great Roman generals like Lucullus. It is against this background we have to read Augustus’ claim to have transformed Rome from a city of mud brick into a city of marble, and also the preference he seems to have had for some Greek models over others (Zanker 1988).

Each new generation of Roman leaders, from the third century on, refined the public culture of the city, just as the poets redefined Roman literature. All these cultures were ‘imperial cultures’. If historians wished, they could write of “Roman cultural revolutions” in the late-third century B.C., in Scipionic Rome, and in the age of Varro and Cicero with equal justification as they can in relation to the lifetime of Augustus. The great change we do see occurring in the lifetime of Augustus is the solidification of the canon, the end of cultural revolutions. Under the principate, cultural change progressed at a more gradual pace. The will to revise the canon persisted. Juvenalian satire is hardly reverential of Horace. Tacitus has never been accused of undue meekness to his predecessors. His *Dialogue on Orators* includes a defence of the new against traditionalists. Second century A.D. scholars like Aulus Gellius still had access to much more Roman literature than has survived today. A few did express preferences for non-canonical works. Cato’s speeches could be preferred to Cicero’s, the history of Claudius Quadrigarius to that of Livy, Ennius’ epic to Virgil’s and so on. It is less clear how far works composed after Virgil and Horace wrote ever came close to becoming canonical, but some of Ovid’s writings seem to have been widely read, and Statius strove to boost the image of Lucan who had constructed himself as an heir to Virgil.

Yet Virgil, Horace, and Cicero were the victors, even when their politics – Republican and expansionist in places – was “off-message.” The reason, I suggest, lies in the provinces. As long as the game of intertextual canon-formation was played within the limits of the city of

Rome, essentially by a handful of aristocratic families and their clients, it was an easy matter to promote or denigrate Ennius, to raise up Accius or put down Cato. Once the canon was established in a wider world – the vast dispersed world of expatriate colonists and wannabe Roman élites in the provinces – it became less easy to demote the classics. Imagine, as a thought experiment, how one would set about decanonising Shakespeare and replacing him with Marlowe or John Grisham. The English reading world is vast, the modern canon is preserved by hundreds of independent institutions, some governmental, some educational, some cultural. Local divergence is a possibility, and in many spheres of Roman culture local divergence is indeed the main story of the second and third centuries A.D., but the canon will never be revised in a coordinated fashion again.

Roman civilization, put simply, having been taken on by the provinces, no longer belonged to the City of Rome. Empire acted as a brake, a vast inertial drag. This, then, is an explanation for the extraordinarily conservative nature of the intellectual life of the principate compared to the innovative dynamism of the Republic. Creativity was perfectly possible for Spanish Seneca and African Apuleius, but it was creativity within a system with an Augustan canon. Just as the monuments of Augustan Rome obscure the city of the Scipios, and as Augustus' imperialism outshines that of Pompey and Caesar, so Augustus' poets persisted as classics. But not thanks to his patronage alone. By good fortune, Virgil was in the right place when the music stopped, and Ennius and Statius were not.

AUGUSTUS IN PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE

All human agency is constrained by circumstance. It is no insult to Augustus to see the events of his lifetime as driven more by other forces than by his own policy, will, or genius. There were major changes in his lifetime, right across the Mediterranean world, but with the exception of the end of expansion that followed on the shift to autocracy, he seems to have made little difference to most. He was successful because he did not try to swim against the tide, as his own goals cohered well with processes already underway. Perhaps a different *princeps* would have slowed or accelerated the working out of some processes. Doing without an individual was probably never a very realistic option: concord between the struggling orders and a consensus among all men of influence would have been necessary, and Cicero could not achieve either of those. The

Res Gestae was for public consumption. Privately Augustus probably had a more realistic assessment of what he had achieved. Suetonius tells another story – maybe a true one – of Augustus on his deathbed (cf. Eder, p. 13):

when the friends he had summoned were present he inquired of them whether they thought he had played his role well in the comedy of life, adding the concluding lines: “Since the play has been so good, clap your hands | and all of you dismiss us with applause.”

Suetonius, *Augustus* 99 (transl. Edwards)

We do not need to applaud Augustus, but it is worth following his prompt to thinking about the stage on which he performed (cf. Beacham, this volume) and the script that he did not entirely write himself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Alcock (1993) is not focused exclusively on the Augustan period but is one of the most original approaches to the impact of Rome on the provinces and one of the few to begin from the archaeology. P. A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford 1990) collects a number of fundamental papers on Rome and the provinces. *Cambridge Ancient History*². Volume X: *The Augustan Empire 43 BC–AD 69* (Cambridge 1996) includes excellent analyses of the institutions of the empire and an invaluable series of provincial surveys. Fentress (2000) collects historical and archaeological analyses of the Roman urban boom from all over the empire. Keay and Terrenato (2001) provide a collection of regional syntheses that show some of the ways in which provincial archaeologists treat these issues at present. MacMullen (2000) is, remarkably, the only book-length study of cultural change across the entire Empire in this period. Woolf (1998) is an attempt to examine the changes often termed Romanization through a case study of one region of the empire.

NOTES

- 1 I am grateful to my colleague Jill Harries for discussion of these issues. All errors and misconceptions remain my own.
- 2 For the relation between the concepts of *urbs* and *orbis* see also Chapter 10 by D. Favro in this volume.

- 3 Perhaps it was most successful in the Augustan age. Much recent literature has dealt with the emergence of Greek centres as rival capitals. On Augustus' relations with eastern communities cf. Bowersock (1965) and Levick (1996).
- 4 Cf. Scheid in this volume on the continuity of 'Augustan' programs between the Octavianic and Augustan periods of his reign.
- 5 The potential bibliography is enormous. See most recently Millett (1990), Cherry (1998), Woolf (1998), Keay and Terrenato (2001), MacMullen (2000). Many historians and archaeologists have preferred to deal with these changes in other terms; cf. Alcock (1993), Ando (2000).
- 6 Many histories of modern imperialism fall into the same trap, representing the victims of European empire as passive and static societies transformed by energetic external ones. For an attempt to evade this see Wolf (1982).
- 7 Cannadine (2001) offers another modern parallel, showing the closeness of fit between ideals of social hierarchy prevalent in Imperial Britain, and the kinds of social hierarchy with which the British allied themselves in their empire.
- 8 See the chapter by Karl Galinsky in this volume on the negotiation of this world view in the poetry of Vergil and Ovid.
- 9 Cf. Erich Gruen's Chapter 15 in this volume on the realities of the succession, and Diana Kleiner's on their embroidering in art.