

The Tetrarchy as Ideology
*Reconfigurations and Representations
of an Imperial Power*

Edited by Filippo Carlà-Uhink
and Christian Rollinger



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contributors	7
--------------------	---

<i>Filippo Carlà-Uhink & Christian Rollinger</i> The Tetrarchy as Ideology: An Introduction	11
--	----

THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE AND THE COURT

<i>Filippo Carlà-Uhink</i> <i>Quod omni consanguinitate certius est, virtutibus fratres</i> Families and Family Relationships in ‘Tetrarchic’ Ideology	25
--	----

<i>Byron Waldron</i> <i>Virtutibus fratres</i> : The Brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian	47
--	----

<i>Anne Hunnell Chen</i> The Tetrarchic <i>Signa</i> Reconsidered	67
--	----

PERFORMING (NEW) POWER

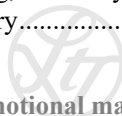
<i>Christian Rollinger</i> These Boots Aren’t Made for Walking: Tetrarchic Court Ceremonial as a Language of Authority	93
--	----

<i>Fabio Guidetti</i> Public Rituals and Performance: The Ceremonial Staging of Imperial Authority under Diocletian	119
---	-----

<i>Monica Hellström</i> The Monumental Bureaucracy of Diocletian.....	141
--	-----

THE TETRARCHIC EMPIRE

<i>Mark Hebblewhite</i> <i>Fides Militum</i> : Tetrarchic Messaging, the Army, and an Ideology of Collective Victory	161
--	-----



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

Nikolas Hächler
 The ‘Hammer of the Aristocracy’?
 Diocletian’s Reign and Its Consequences for the *Amplissimus Ordo* 179

Nicola Barbagli
 The Last Pharaohs: The Egyptian Reception of Late Roman Emperors 221

REPRESENTATIONS OF DEVIANCE AND DEVIANTS

Adrastos Omissi
 The Enemies of the Tetrarchs:
 Barbarians, Rebels, and Usurpers in the Ideology of Diocletian’s Tetrarchy 247

Marc Tipold
 In the Shadow of Valerian: Galerius’ Persian Campaigns and the
 Communication Strategies of Tetrarchic Eastern Policy 267

THE AFTERLIFE OF THE TETRARCHY

Javier Arce
 Funerals, Funeral Rites, and Tombs of the Tetrarchy 287

Rebecca Usherwood
 Fracturing the Collective: Political Disgrace and Tetrarchic Commemoration .. 303

Mark Humphries
 Concluding Remarks: Ideology Made and Unmade 319

Bibliography 329

Plates 357



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

THE ‘HAMMER OF THE ARISTOCRACY’?

DIOCLETIAN’S REIGN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE *AMPLISSIMUS ORDO*

*Nikolas Hächler**

The changes that came with the reign of Diocletian affected the Roman senate and its members. Naturally, their fate piqued the interest of modern scholarship. Michael Arnheim prominently portrays the ruler as the ‘hammer of the aristocracy’¹, who – as a true soldier emperor in character and as an (alleged) enemy of the senatorial nobility – systematically cut off the senate from any form of political participation. Stephen Williams highlights the absolute position of the tetrarchs, which allowed them for the most part to ignore the entire senatorial order, while dealing with political, military and economic issues of the Roman state.² A similar conclusion is reached by Alexander Demandt, who emphasizes the senate’s loss of political power due to the emperors’ frequent absence from Rome.³ Frank Kolb and later Klaus Altmayer argue more cautiously. Although apparently without decisive political influence, the senate was still approached with great respect by the emperors. In addition, the access to traditional offices of high prestige such as the ordinary consulate or the prefecture of Rome was for the most part still restricted to a few highly respected senators.⁴ Wolfgang Kuhoff, Michele Renee Salzmänn and André Chastagnol perceive developments from 284–305 as part of an ongoing socio-political evolution within the scope of the greater transformation of the *Imperium Romanum* eventually leading to the renewal of the *ordo senatorius* under Constantine I.⁵

* I would like to thank the editors as well as Salvatore Liccardo, Gavin Kelly, Angela Kinney, Philip Polcar, Danuta Shanzer, Roger Tomlin and Willum Westenholz for their helpful remarks on this paper. In addition, I owe many thanks to Daria Lanzuolo for her help with the plates. Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

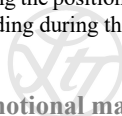
1 ARNHEIM 1972, 39.

2 WILLIAMS 1985, 146.

3 DEMANDT 2008, 254, similarly HEIL 2008a, 760. For the emergence of new political centres under Diocletian see DUVAL 1961/1962, 67–95. 1963, 76–117. 1991, 378–384. For the absence of the emperors from Rome in the 4th and 5th century and the subsequent transformation of the senatorial order see SALZMANN 2002. HUMPHRIES 2003, 27–46. WEISWEILER 2015, 17–41.

4 KOLB 1987a, 17–18. ALTMAYER 2014, 219.

5 KUHOFF 2001a, 399–410. SALZMANN 2002, 29–31; 179. CHASTAGNOL 2004, 233–236. Compare as well RODA 1977, 24–112. JONES 1964, 523–526. RODA 1993, 643–674. SOUTHERN 2001, 161–167; 254–255. REES 2004, 24–30. RÉMY 2016, 83–88. ECK 2018, 149–151, who identify numerous continuities regarding the position and political significance of the senatorial order around 300 compared to its standing during the second half of the 3rd century.



Promotional material

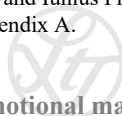
For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

Such divergent assessments are not only a consequence of varying methodological approaches and differing scholarly perspectives on the reign of the tetrarchs but often result as well from the limited number and the fragmented nature of our sources. These in turn require a careful compilation and transparent interpretation in order to determine their informative value, keeping in mind that in comparison with the second and fourth centuries in particular the evidence remains limited overall. Historiographical texts such as the *Historiae abbreviatae* by Aurelius Victor, the *Breviarium ab urbe condita* by Eutropius, the infamous *Historia Augusta* or the, by comparison, trustworthy *Res gestae* by Ammianus Marcellinus as well as the apologetic treatise *De mortibus persecutorum* by Lactantius present us with little but – after some critical evaluations – valuable information regarding the fate of the senate and its members at the end of the 3rd century.⁶ Further precious glimpses of interactions between the emperors and the council of the *patres conscripti* can sporadically be caught in the *Panegyrici Latini*.⁷ Inscriptions,⁸ scattered remarks in the *Codex Theodosianus*, the *Codex Iustinianus* and accounts of the generally reliable *Chronographus anni CCCLIII* provide us with insights into the political careers of individual *viri clarissimi* between 284–305.⁹

Based on a thorough assessment of literary and documentary sources which illustrate the situation of the Roman senate under Diocletian together with an up-to-date prosopographical survey of senatorial office-holders between 284–305 – comparable studies have formerly been presented by Timothy Barnes, Wolfgang Kuhoff and Michele Renee Salzman in 1983, 2001 and 2002 – and taking long-term developments of the 3rd century into consideration, this paper studies the functions, composition and importance of the Roman senate and its members under Diocletian in a differentiated and comprehensive way. It will highlight continuities with regard to the roles of senators as office-holders at the end of the 3rd century as well as varying forms of communicative interaction between the senate and the emperors against the background of the tetrarchic ideology. For this purpose, attention will first be paid to the relation between the emperor and the senate as a political body. In a second part, the focus is then on the role and significance of senatorial office-holders for the administration of the Roman Empire.

- 6 HARTMANN 2008a, 20–21; 31–34. 2008b, 45–51. For the senate's role regarding the election of emperors in the later Roman Empire see BEGASS 2022, 325–355.
- 7 *Pan. Lat.* X (2) from 289 and XI (3) from 291 in particular; cf. REES 2002, 27–94. HARTMANN 2008a, 39–40.
- 8 Note that it became a less and less common practice to document entire *cursus honorum* on inscriptions already during the second half of the 3rd century, see BORG & WITSCHEL 2001, 47–120. A. KOLB 2001, 136–144. WITSCHEL 2006a, 153–155. 2006b, 367–380. See as well BOLLE 2019 for a comprehensive study of the epigraphic habit in the Later Roman Empire. In fact, we know of only nine almost entirely preserved *cursus honorum* from 86 documented office-holders between 284–305: L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius (Nr. 2), Amnius Manius Caesonius Nicomachus Anicius Paulinus (Iunior) *signo* Honorius (Nr. 7), Attius Insteius Tertullus (Nr. 13), C. Caelius Censorinus (Nr. 22), L. Caesonius Ovinus Manlius Rufinianus Bassus (Nr. 24), C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus (Nr. 29), Egnatius Caec[ilius A]ntistius Luce[rinus] (Nr. 34), T. Flavius Postumius Titianus (Nr. 41) and Iunius Priscillianus Maximus (Nr. 48).
- 9 HARTMANN 2008a, 22–24. See Appendix A.



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

THE ROMAN SENATE IN TIMES OF ABSENT EMPERORS

Our knowledge about the senate's composition and its modes of cooptation under Diocletian is based on former regulations, which – to our understanding – were not altered during the 3rd century. As in previous periods, the council, whose members usually descended from a senatorial background, numbered 600 *virī clarissimi*.¹⁰ In order to officially become part of the institution through *cooptatio*, candidates had to formally hold a senatorial office. This was usually done by serving as a *quaestor*, in some cases preceded by other responsibilities among the *XXvirī*. In addition, senators in the making had to have a personal fortune of at least 1,000,000 sesterces at their disposal and enjoy a favourable public reputation.¹¹ In rare cases, a person could be picked individually for a senatorial position by the emperor through an *adlectio*.¹²

As far as we know, the Roman senate continued to formally operate under Diocletian's reign as it did in earlier times. The institution usually met two times a month – i.e. on the calends and the ides. The political agenda was fixed by the emperor, who addressed the senate by means of intermediaries, mostly (presumably) through the acting *praefectus Urbi*. The emperor allowed senatorial votes (*senatus consulta*) concerning administrative issues of the state. Approving consensus regarding imperial proclamations was expressed in form of rhythmically repeated acclamations chanted by the *virī clarissimi*, which became the standard of formalised communication between the senate and the emperor during official gatherings in late antiquity. Unfortunately, there are no examples of such interactions under Diocletian. In order to gain an impression of procedures, we have to rely on comparable depictions in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the *Historia Augusta*.¹³ In addition, the council performed certain functions as a court of justice and oversaw public works and services in Rome and Italy.¹⁴

Under Diocletian, the senate's decisions were ultimately of little immediate importance for the emperor's judgments regarding the political affairs of the *Imperium Romanum*. As far as we know, it usually rubber-stamped the ruler's decisions *ex post*. This was primarily due to the frequent absence of the emperor from Rome. As

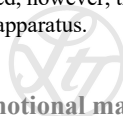
10 TALBERT 1984, 29–30; 131–134.

11 LÖHKEN 1982, 13–14; 24–25. ALFÖLDY 2011, 150–162.

12 RÉMY 2016, 82–83. Note that there are no documented instances for this practice from 284–305.

13 Regarding the depiction of senatorial *acclamationes* during the 3rd century see *HA Alex.* 6.3–5; 7.1–6; 8.2–3; 9.5–6; 10.6–8, 11.2; 12.1; *Maximin.* 16.3–4; 6–7; 26.2–4; *Max. Balb.* 2.10–12; *Valer.* 5.4–7; *Claud.* 4.3–4; 18,2–3; *Tac.* 4.2–4; 5,1; *Prob.* 11.6–9. For the *Gesta senatus Romani de Theodosiano publicando* of 438 see Atzeri 2008. The phenomenon has been treated by HIRSCHFELD 1905. ALFÖLDI 1934, 79–88. TALBERT 1984, 302. WIEMER 2004, 27–73. 2013, 173–202.

14 TALBERT 1984, 372–391. AUSBÜTTEL 1998, 64–68. KUHOFF 2001a, 406. RAINER 2006, 237–240. RÉMY 2016, 83. Due to a lack of source material, it remains unclear whether and to what extent the senate was involved in further aspects of imperial administration. Regarding tendencies of the 3rd century, it can be assumed, however, that most issues were dealt with directly by the emperors and their administrative apparatus.



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de



... is that the end?

You can purchase the complete work:

... either on our eLibrary at
elibrary.steiner-verlag.de

... or in print on our homepage
www.steiner-verlag.de

Please share this PDF! Post it on Twitter or Facebook or email it – very easily done via the **eLibrary**.

Tell your friends and colleagues about your latest publication – it's quick and easy and in accordance with copyright conventions. There are no restrictions on sharing this PDF via social media.



Franz Steiner
Verlag