This book evaluates a hundred years of scholarship on how empire transformed the Roman world and advances a new theory of how the empire worked and was experienced. It engages extensively with Rome’s Republican empire as well as the “Empire of the Caesars,” examines a broad range of ancient evidence (material, documentary, and literary) that illuminates multiple perspectives, and emphasizes the much longer history of imperial rule within which the Roman empire emerged. Steering a course between overemphasis on resistance and overemphasis on consensus, it highlights the political, social, religious, and cultural consequences of an imperial system within which functions of state were substantially delegated to, or more often simply assumed by, local agencies and institutions. The book is accessible and of value to a wide range of undergraduate and graduate students as well as of interest to all scholars concerned with the rise and fall of the Roman empire.

Emma Dench is McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History and of the Classics at Harvard University. Her publications include Romulus’ Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian (2005) and From Barbarians to New Men: Greek, Roman, and Modern Perceptions of Peoples of the Central Apennines (1995), as well as numerous articles and chapters on ethnicity, race, empire, and historiography in the ancient world.
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EMPIRE AND POLITICAL CULTURES IN THE ROMAN WORLD

EMMA DENCH

Harvard University
# Contents

*List of Figures*  
*Acknowledgments*  
*Chronology*  
*List of Abbreviations*

**Introduction**  
1. Toward a Roman Dialect of Empire  
2. Territory  
3. Wealth and Society  
4. Force and Violence  
5. Time  
Epilogue: Becoming Roman?

*Bibliographical Essay*  
*Bibliography*  
*Index*
Figures

1 Seated Egyptian god Horus dressed in the Roman military costume of an emperor or high-ranking officer, probably second to third century C.E., British Museum. Photo by C. M. Dixon / Print Collector / Getty Images. ❭

2 Obverse of silver Antonianus of Vhaballath of Palmyra with radiate crown as Im(perator) C(aesar) Vhabalathus Aug(ustus), uncertain mint, 272 C.E., ANS 1944.100.30790. Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society. ❭

3 Heavily restored monument to C. Cartilius Poplicola of Ostia, eight-times duumvir and three-times censor, showing one half of eight pairs of bacilla (axe-less fasces), frieze with sea battle and infantry soldiers, and beginning of long inscribed dedication “at public expense.” Probably early Augustan, outside the Porta Marina, Ostia. Photo by Art Media / Print Collector / Getty Images. ❭

4 Early imperial relief from Aquileia depicting a plowing ceremony probably meant to represent the demarcation of the sacred boundary associated with “traditional” Roman city foundation. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia, 1171. Photo by DEA / A. DAGLI ORTI / De Agostini / Getty Images. ❭

5 Detail of the so-called archive wall of Aphrodisias (on the north parodos of the theater) displaying carefully selected imperial documents and correspondence that highlight the city’s privileged relationship with the Roman center. Third century C.E. Photo: Jonathan Blair / Getty Images. ❭
Acknowledgments

Huge thanks first and foremost to Paul Cartledge, Peter Garnsey, and Michael Sharp for issuing me the challenge all those years ago, for not giving up on me, and for their incisive criticisms and suggestions. For hundreds of conversations over far too many years with colleagues, friends, and former and current graduate students in and out of the classroom, I especially thank Dimiter Angelov, Valentina Arena, Nate Aschenbrenner, Charlie Bartlett, Sahar Bazzaz, Anna Bonnell-Freidin, Glen Bowersock, Kathleen Coleman, Coleman Connelly, the late Patricia Crone, Tiziana D’Angelo, Rowan Dorin, Susanne Ebbinghaus, Carrie Elkins, Stephanie Frampton, Eliza Gettel, Christopher Gilbert, Henry Gruber, Danny Jacobs, Maya Jasanoff, Andrew Johnston, Christopher Jones, Julia Judge, Cemal Kafadar, Rebecca Katz, Paul Kosmin, Nino Luraghi, Duncan MacRae, Patrick Meehan, Lizzie Mitchell, John Mulhall, Greg Nagy, Monica Park, Nicolas Prevelakis, Michael Puett, Christopher Smith, Katie van Schaik, Brent Shaw, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, and Shiaoxiang Yan. I am enormously grateful to Eliza Gettel, Paul Kosmin, and Carlos Noreña for their generosity in sharing forthcoming work with me. Audiences, participants, students, and collaborators in many venues over the years have indulged me while I developed my ideas, especially during the Harvard Summer Program in Greece, my Gray Lectures at Cambridge University in May 2016, my lectures at Capital Normal University, Beijing, in October 2016, and my Magie Lecture at Princeton University in November 2016. During my visit to the Harvard Business School in 2015–2016, huge thanks to Frances Frei and our MBA and Executive Education students for the inspiring search for leadership lessons in the Roman empire. In the course of my year as Interim Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (2017–2018), my colleagues in University Hall and the geniuses of the 3rd floor of the Smith Center and Dudley House patiently supported my efforts to put my scholarly enquiry into ancient imperial structures, systems, and cultures to practical use. The
Acknowledgments

eagle-eyed Nadav Asraf put in many hours of highly skilled, meticulous, and patient work to get my mess of a bibliography into shape, for which I am extremely grateful. And most of all, love and thanks to Jonathan and Jacob for making me laugh and supplying my horror movie habit when the going got tough.
Chronology

**BCE**

ca. 560–ca. 547
Croesus rules Lydia

559–530
Cyrus II traditional founder of Achaemenid Empire

522–486
Darius I rules Achaemenid Empire

509
Traditionally first year of Roman Republic

486–464
Xerxes rules Achaemenid Empire

490
Battle of Marathon (Persian Wars)

480
Battles of Thermopylae and Artemision (Persian Wars)

479
Battles of Plataea and Mycale (Persian Wars)

478–404
Delian League/Athenian Empire

447–432
Building of Parthenon on Athenian Acropolis

431–404
Peloponnesian War (Athenians vs. Spartans)

404
Spartans defeat Athenians in Peloponnesian War

378–338
Second Athenian Confederacy

338
Battle of Chaeronea (Philip II of Macedon vs. Athenians, Thebans, and other Greek forces)

338
Rome assigns statues to ethnically Latin towns in Latin settlement

334–323
Campaigns of Alexander III (“the Great”) of Macedon, defeating Achaemenid Empire in 330

323–168
Antigonid kingdom (Successor kingdom)

312–64
Seleucid kingdom (Successor kingdom)

323–330
Ptolemaic kingdom (Successor kingdom)

273
Rome sends out colonists to Cosa and Paestum

268
Rome sends out colonists to Beneventum and Ariminum; end of Rome’s Italian wars

264–241
First Punic War

247–224 CE
Parthian Empire

218–201
Second Punic War
Chronology

168 Day of Eleusis (Antiochus IV Epiphanes obeys Roman ultimatum)
167 Roman settlement of Macedonia
149–146 Third Punic War
146 Roman Destruction of Carthage and Corinth
142–63 Hasmonaean dynasty rules Judaea
135–32 First Sicilian Slave War
133 Tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus; Attalus III bequeathes his kingdom to the Roman people
123–2 Tribunate of Gaius Gracchus
107 Marius’ first consulship
104–100 Second Sicilian Slave War
91–89 Social War
89–85 First Mithradatic War
ca. 83–81 Second Mithradatic War
82–81 Dictatorship of Sulla
73–66 Third Mithradatic War
63–62 Pompey’s settlement of the east
63 Cicero’s consulship
58–51 Julius Caesar’s campaigns in Gaul
55–54 Julius Caesar’s expeditions to Britain
44 Foundation of colony of Urso (Colonia Iulia Genetiva); murder of Julius Caesar
43 Triumvirate created (Antony, Octavian, and Crassus)
27–14 CE Principate of Augustus
41–54 Claudius emperor
66–70 Great Jewish Revolt
98–117 Trajan emperor
132–35 Bar Kokhba Revolt
212 Edict of Caracalla on (near) universal citizenship of free persons in the Roman Empire
224–642 Sasanian Empire
ca. 239–70 Shapur I “King of Kings”
250 Edict of Decius on universal sacrifice
272–74 Palmyrene Empire of Vaballathus and Zenobia
284–305 Diocletian emperor
476 Fall of Roman Empire in the west
1453 Fall of Byzantine Empire (self-conscious continuation of the Roman Empire) to the Ottomans
Abbreviations

Abbreviations of names and works of Greek and Latin authors follow *Oxford Classical Dictionary* conventions. Other editions/collections/translations of inscriptions, papyri, and documents on other materials are indicated by name of editor/translator and date and can be followed up in the main bibliography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td><em>L’Année Epigraphique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRA</td>
<td>S. Riccobono, <em>Fontes Iuris Romani AnteIustiniani</em>, Florence (1941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td><em>Inscriptiones Graecae</em>, Berlin (1873–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILS</td>
<td>H. Dessau, <em>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</em>, Berlin (1892)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Lond.</td>
<td><em>Greek Papyri in the British Museum</em>, London (1893–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Oxy.</td>
<td><em>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</em>, London (1898–)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
xiv

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Map 1  The Roman empire showing major ancient towns, regions, and natural and man-made features across the time-span of this book.

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