THE LANGUAGE OF EMPIRE

The Roman Empire has been an object of fascination for the past two millennia, and the story of how a small city in central Italy came to dominate the whole of the Mediterranean basin, most of modern Europe and the lands of Asia Minor and the Middle East has often been told. It has provided the model for European empires from Charlemagne to Queen Victoria and beyond, and it is still the basis of comparison for investigators of modern imperialisms. By an exhaustive investigation of the changing meanings of certain key words and their use in the substantial remains of Roman writings and in the structures of Roman political life, this book seeks to discover what the Romans themselves thought about their imperial power in the centuries in which they conquered the known world and formed the Empire of the first and second centuries AD.

JOHN RICHARDSON is Emeritus Professor of Classics, University of Edinburgh. He has written on Roman Spain: *Hispaniae: Spain and the Development of Roman Imperialism 218–82 BC* (1986); *The Romans in Spain* (1996) and *Appian: Wars of the Romans in Iberia* (2000); and he has contributed articles on Roman imperialism and Roman provincial administration to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edition, 1996) and the *Cambridge Ancient History*, volume IX (2nd edition, 1994).

THE LANGUAGE OF EMPIRE

*Rome and the Idea of Empire from the Third
Century BC to the Second Century AD*

JOHN RICHARDSON

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Preface

The process which has resulted in this book began many decades ago when, as an undergraduate student, I found myself asking the question, 'What did the Romans think they were doing when they created the Roman Empire?' For many years this question lurked in the background of my thoughts as I worked on Roman history more generally and on Roman Spain in particular, not least because it was not clear to me how such a question might be answered. What follows is, I hope, if not an answer, at least a contribution towards one. It emerged not least from a remark made in passing by Fergus Millar, that to understand what *imperium* meant it would be necessary to read the whole of Latin literature. I have not quite done that, but the development of accessible digital texts has made possible the next best thing, the scanning of large quantities of texts to discover the passages in which both *imperium* and its stablemate, *provincia*, appeared. I should give due recognition to the Packard Humanities Institute and the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* project of the University of California, without whose excellent productions the work of this book would have taken several lifetimes. I also mention, *honoris causa*, two pieces of software which have been indispensable: the search program Musaios, developed since 1992 by Darl J. Dumont and Randall M. Smith; and the database program, Idealist. These two enabled me to assemble a database of several thousands of passages from ancient authors, which were further analysed with the help of an Excel spreadsheet. This made possible a fuller and more contextualised examination of the words I was investigating than those to be found in such excellent lexica as the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* or the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. (For a fuller account of the methods used, see Richardson (2005).)

It hardly needs to be said that all could not be achieved even by the most useful software. Over the many years that this book has taken to come to fruition I have had much assistance, not least from the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, where I held a Visiting Fellowship in 1998, and the Carnegie Fund for the Universities of Scotland, which funded me at that time. Many, many friends and colleagues have rendered assistance, often, I suspect, more than they realised. I cannot name them all, but wish to record

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especial thanks to Clifford Ando, David Breeze, T. Corey Brennan, Michael
Crawford, the late Peter Derow, Carlotta Dionisotti, Jean-Louis Ferrary,
Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, Jill Harries, Lawrence Keppie, the late Geoffrey
Lewis, Andrew Lintott, Claude Nicolet, Jonathan Prag, Roy Pinkerton,
Keith Rutter; to my two sons, Thomas and Martin, for assistance on matters
statistical, legal and historical; to my late wife, Patricia, who encouraged
me even through her last illness; and to my wife, Joan, without whose
unflagging support it would never have been completed. I am also grateful
for permission to quote from Louis MacNeice, *Collected Poems* (London:
Faber and Faber, 1979) in the epigraph to chapter 6.

   In the long process of writing this book, parts have been presented to
audiences in the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (especially
chapter 3), the *Impact of Empire* group (especially chapter 4), the Royal
Society of Edinburgh, the Universities of Leiden and Manchester, Nijmegen
and St Andrews, and many others, to all of whom I give my heartiest thanks.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of journal titles and of authors' names and works conform to
those used in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*,
except for the following:

Epig. *Anat*.	*Epigraphica Anatolica*
Mommsen, *StR*	Mommsen, Th., *Römisches Staatsrecht*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1897–9)
Or. perd.	*M. Tullius Cicero, Orationum deperditarum fragmenta*, ed. F. Schoell (Leipzig, 1917)
RS	Crawford, M. H. (ed.), *Roman Statutes* (London, 1996)

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