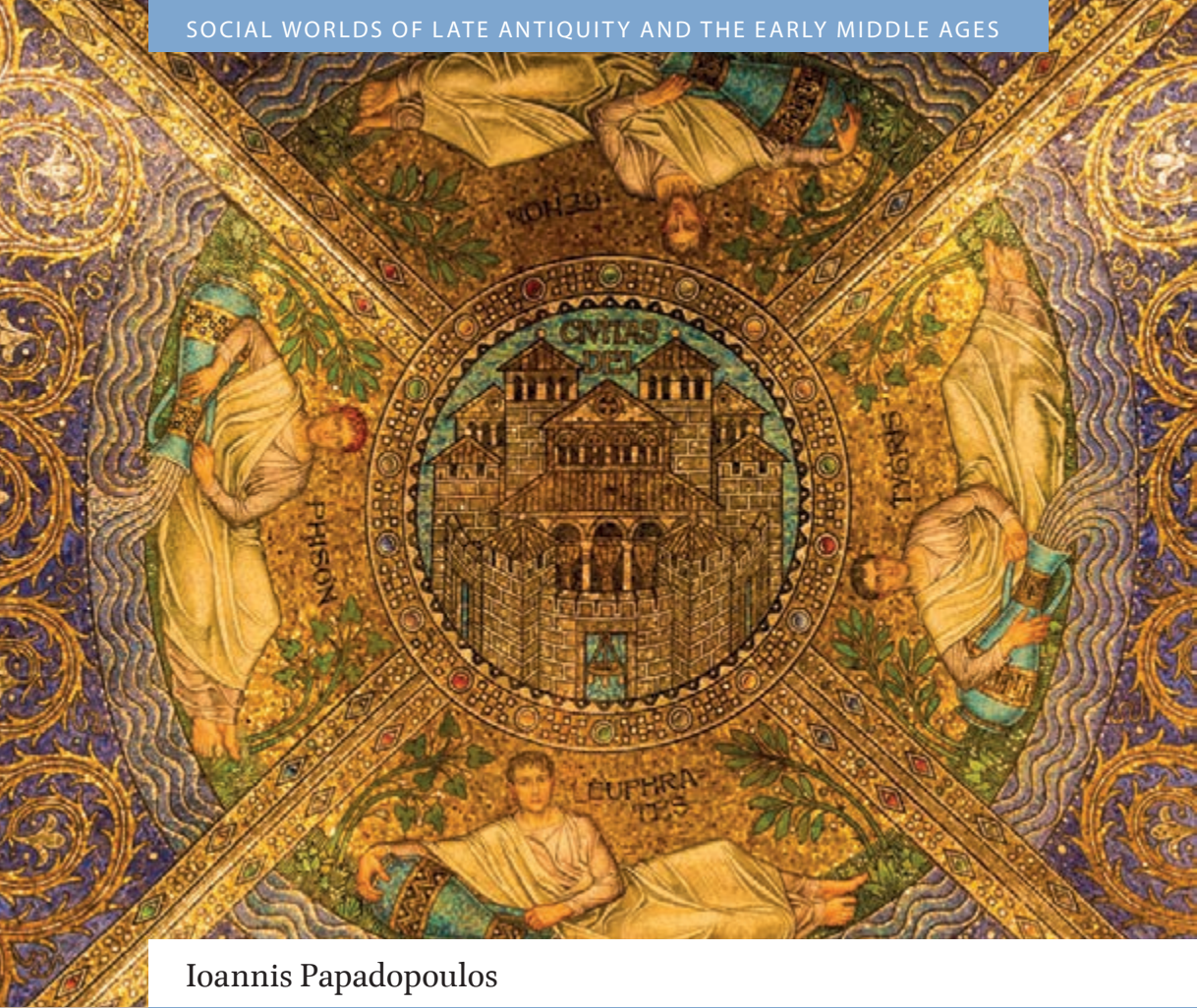


SOCIAL WORLDS OF LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES



Ioannis Papadopoulos

The Idea of Rome in Late Antiquity

From Eternal City to Imagined Utopia

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Social Worlds of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

The Late Antiquity experienced profound cultural and social change: the political disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West, contrasted by its continuation and transformation in the East; the arrival of 'barbarian' newcomers and the establishment of new polities; a renewed militarization and Christianization of society; as well as crucial changes in Judaism and Christianity, together with the emergence of Islam and the end of classical paganism. This series focuses on the resulting diversity within Late Antique society, emphasizing cultural connections and exchanges; questions of unity and inclusion, alienation and conflict; and the processes of syncretism and change. By drawing upon a number of disciplines and approaches, this series sheds light on the cultural and social history of Late Antiquity and the greater Mediterranean world.

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In Memoriam

This Book is dedicated to the loving memory of my maternal grandfather Constantine Nicolaou (1920-2011) and of my father Chris Papadopoulos (1953-2017) who departed too early to see this work complete, marking the beginning and the end of this research.

“Ἀθάνατος ψυχὴ καὶ χρήμα σόν, ἀλλὰ προνοίας,
ἢ μετὰ σῶμα μαρανθέν, ἅτ’ ἐκ δεσμῶν θεοῦ ἵππος,
ῥηιδίως προθοροῦσα κεράννυται ἠέρι κούφῳ
δεινὴν καὶ πολύτλητον ἀποστέρξασα λατρείην·
σοὶ δὲ τι τῶνδ’ ὄφελος, ὃ ποτ’ οὐκετ’ ἐὼν τότε δόξεις;
ἢ τι μετὰ ζωοῖσιν ἐὼν περὶ τῶνδε ματεύεις;”

Philostratus, *Tὰ ἐς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον*, IX, 31



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Introduction: Between a Physical and an Imaginary City

i Rome: Deconstructing an Idea

There has been a rising interest in and multiple publications regarding the role of cities as habitats, theatres of events and ideological workshops, hosts of forces of change in contemporary history, and survivors against all odds in a post-industrial world, which often exceed the norms of the established field of Urban Studies.¹ Various works, such as P. Virilio's *City of Panic* (2007), the *World City* by D. Masses (2007), and S. Graham's *Cities under Siege* (2011) are only samples of a constantly expanding bibliography on the subject.² The cities of pre-modern Europe also played a crucial role in reflecting and epitomizing human culture and ideas. The *Sovereign-City* in the form of city-state, head of confederate league, or imperial capital has dominated the Mediterranean landscape for millennia.³ While the old Brownian maxim that describes Greco-Roman civilization as 'a world of cities' maybe sound like a generalization, it is, in fact, a convincing summary of how cities function as the core of classical culture and institutions.⁴ Within the frame of this complicated relationship between the cities and their inhabitants is a bond of dependence, which has long been studied and celebrated in social sciences and literature, from G. Simmel's *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (1903), L. Mumford's *The City in History*

1 See R. Paddison, "Studying Cities", R. Paddison (ed.) *Handbook of Urban Studies* (London: SAGE, 2001), pp. 1-10. Also L. Hunt, T. R. Martin, B. H. Rosenwein, R. P. Hsia, B. G. Smith, *The Challenge of the West* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1995), pp. 752-754.

2 See P. Virilio, *City of Panic* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), D. Masses, *World City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), S. Graham, *Cities under Siege: The New military Urbanism* (London: Verso, 2011).

3 See G. Parker, *The Sovereign City: The City-State Through History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), pp. 7-27, 57-77. Also M. Hammond, *City-State and World State in Greek and Roman Political Theory until Augustus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951) and R. S. Lopez, *The Birth of Europe* (London: Phoenix, 1966), pp. 14-15.

4 See P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150-750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), pp. 11-13. Also P. Grimal, *The Civilization of Rome* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), p. 252.

(1961), to I. Calvino's *Città Invisibili* (1972), and T. Fuhrer, F. Mundt and J. Stenger's (eds.) *Cityscaping* (2015). One must therefore consider how ideas represent cities and vice versa, interconnecting, interrelating, and, finally, contributing to the shaping of new mentalities by adapting and adjusting to changing physical and spiritual needs.⁵ From that point of view, the city of Rome during late antiquity appeared to have a unique cultural and ideological importance in terms of the abstract and complex relationship that developed between the urban landscape, its inhabitants, and their identity and feelings as Romans of Rome. The eternal city embodied and reflected different ideas to various audiences, yet the symbolism and cultural burden of Rome as *patria communis* was omnipresent in late-Roman thought. This tension evolved rapidly and was becoming increasingly complex as we move towards late antiquity. We will observe how, by the fourth century AD, Rome, as archetype of the ideal/utopian city, was difficult to distinguish from the concept of *Romanitas* (Roman-ness), since by then both were evolving side by side, following each other on new ideological pathways.

Approaching the subject of this book one must consider the 'idea of Rome' and its context in general before focusing on its evolution in late antique thought. To this end, we must analyse what *Romanitas* came to mean before the fourth century AD. By the early 350s, which is the *terminus postquem* of the period covered in this work, *Romanitas* was already a multidimensional and ambiguous concept, open to multiple interpretations and, at least for the Romans of the eternal city, bound to its symbolic geography. Therefore, we must first clarify the context and, from the outset, we ought to address the notion that the manifestation of this dual concept was rather invisible to the eyes of the ordinary Roman. On the contrary, it appears as an intellectual process with all its debates and potentials destined for the select few, limited audiences, and even among them there was usually nothing more than a literary *topos*. Despite its limited scale, it developed qualities that contributed, to some extent, to what Rome came to mean as the cradle of the Empire, something of course not monolithic and always open to multiple interpretations according to the needs and standards of specific circumstances. The evolution of *Romanitas* as well as Rome as its

5 See Bücher K., Ratzel F., von Mayr G., Heinrich W., Simmel G. et al., *Die Großstadt. Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung* (Dresden: Zahn & Jaensch, 1903), pp. 185-206. L. Mumford, *The City in History: Its origins, its transformations, and its prospects* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1961), I. Calvino, *Le Città Invisibili* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), T. Fuhrer, F. Mundt, J. Stenger (eds.) *Cityscaping: Constructing and Modeling Images of the City* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

urban archetype is something far bigger than the inevitable chronological limits of this book, but the study of the manifestation of those ideas over the period covered here is a snapshot of this process in a crucial period, a *momentum* of change, and of the possibilities that arose when it seemed that any orientation was plausible; a time when Roman society was at the crossroads of a quest for new self-perceptions and all ideological paths remained open.

During the early imperial period, Rome had, by definition, symbolic primacy over the empire it had created. By the end of the first century AD, however, Tacitus was admitting that the *Empire's secret* had been revealed and that emperors could be made outside Rome as well (*finis Neronis ut laetus primo gaudentium impetu fuerat, ita varios motus animorum non modo in urbe apud patres aut populum aut urbanum militem, sed omnis legiones ducesque conciverat, evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri*).⁶ A hundred years later, a new notion emerged, one that considered Rome as something portable and identical to the emperor. Herodian portrayed Commodus expressing it clearly when he said that 'where Caesar is, there Rome is' (ἐκεῖ τε ἡ Ῥώμη, ὅπου ποτ' ἂν ὁ βασιλεὺς ᾗ).⁷ A little more than three centuries after Tacitus, the *Empire's secret* was not only revealed but betrayed, at least according to Rutilius Namatianus, who depicted Stilicho as *proditor arcani imperii*, a traitor of the Empire's secret.⁸ It is essential for this study that we penetrate the context of this 'betrayal' and its meaning by deconstructing the actual image of Rome as a symbol and collective representation in the late Roman imaginary. In the late third and early fourth century, when the emperors were settling into new administrative centres in the provinces, they carried with them this political theory of a 'portable Rome,' which was justified by the fact that this change was taking place in order to repel invaders and therefore for the security of the Empire and Rome itself.

We can symbolically mark the start of the 'long' fourth century AD (at least from the perspective of the Braudelian *longue durée* of ideas and mentalities) from the rise of Diocletian, the establishment of the Tetrarchy (284), and the crystallization of the political theology of the *Dominatus* that transformed the Roman Empire into a new 'Orwellian' state of defined social

6 Translations from Greek and Latin are the author's, unless otherwise specified. See Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 4.

7 See Herodian, *History of the Empire* [Τῆς μετὰ Μάρκον βασιλείας ἱστορία], I, 6.5.

8 See Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, II, 43-44. Translation by J. Wight Duff and A. M. Duff.



stratification and predetermined individual duties and obligations to the commonwealth, up to the sack of Rome by Alaric (410). This event officially terminated both narratives of the *restored Empire*, as the Tetrarchs and, later, Constantine saw it, as well as the Eusebian discourse of the Christian empire and its privileged position in the divine plan, and re-shaped perceptions of Rome as an (urban) archetype of the ideal society and of *Romanitas* itself as a manifestation of late Roman patriotism.⁹ Within this context, a new problem gradually rose: how to represent Rome in the new realities of the Empire?

The status of the city of Rome and its privileged position would be a sensitive issue during this period and especially in times when there was no emperor established in the West (as in the later period of the reign of Constantius II and later of Theodosius I). Hence, the more frequent appearance of references to the symbolic importance of Rome or its personifications as the *Dea Roma* in late-fourth-century literature goes beyond any interpretation of it as a simple literary scheme. On the contrary, it is the evidence of a continuous debate about the status of the old capital in a period of paramount political, social, and religious change. This, together with the significant attention that was paid to Rome, reflected the interest of its aristocracy and intelligentsia in highlighting the uniqueness of their city in comparison to 'rival' alternatives or collateral capitals such as Constantinople, as promoted by Themistius, or Milan during the active years of Ambrose. The Roman response to the challenging of its symbolic primacy or the threats to its physical existence, as happened in 410, varied depending on the audience and religious orientations and resulted in several discourses, including the 'Christian' Rome (City of the Apostles and Martyrs) that was manufactured by Damasus I, and 'celestial' Rome (*City of God*)

9 Here, the definition of the fourth century as 'long' is used to describe the establishment of a new governmentality and political theology applied in late Roman politics over a period that extends beyond the conventional dates of periodization. The term was introduced by Ilya Ehrenburg and was further developed by Eric Hobsbawm (The 'long' nineteenth century) and Fernand Braudel (*le long seizième siècle*) in their publications on modern European history. See E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), pp. 1-4. F. Braudel, A. Coll, 'Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée', *Réseaux* 5 (1987) pp. 7-37. Also H. Chadwick, 'Christian and Roman Universalism in the Fourth Century', R. Lionel, C. Wickham, P. Bammel, (eds.) *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead Leiden. Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 19 (1993), pp. 26-42. Also P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 86 and J. Pelican, *The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 67-78.

shaped by Prudentius and Augustine.¹⁰ Moreover, another city rises from the relations of Symmachus, a 'ceremonial' Rome, guardian of traditions and ancestral rites, while emperors that visited the city, or 'professional' poets and panegyrists like Claudian, treated it as a 'city-stage' that added gravity to their own acts. Indeed, as the following chapters will reveal, different *Romes* narrated different *Histories*.

The use of the plural here is more than poetic abstractness, the idea that a late antique visitor had about Rome depended less on the landscape itself and more on the expectations and ideology that the person was carrying, as well as the criteria and preferences of the targeted audience (when the individual happened to be an author/narrator). The different *Romes* represent various perceptions of the capital that co-existed in the same physical city: senatorial Rome; imperial Rome; Christian Rome; Rome of outsiders/visitors; Rome of its *populus* (a city of spectacles and active public life); administrative Rome (the city as living organization with physical needs, such as securing provisions, e.g. the arrival of the *annona*). Each one offers not simply a different perspective on the landscape of Rome, but a narrative of different cities under one label. Rome was endlessly re-written, re-invented, and re-imagined in late-Roman thought. Different ideological orientations and motives shaped and revealed different *Romanitates*.

ii Rome: The Global Capital on the Mental Map of the Empire

The city imposes itself on the consciousness of its inhabitants with its symbolic and sacral geography and the historical and cultural burden that it bears, functioning as a theatrical stage for individual or collective agents of force, action, or change, just like the neighbourhood squares as *loci* of interaction in *Commedia dell' arte*, where the real protagonist is the urban landscape and not the people that live in it, like C. Goldoni's *Il campiello* (1756). Yet, the city is not just 'a spatial entity hosting a series of social functions; on the contrary it is a social manifestation which unfolds spatially.'¹¹ By late antiquity standards, Rome had been the social and ideological workshop of the later Roman Empire, functioning as a transcultural *third space*, a

10 See A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of a Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 15-46.

11 See G. Simmel, 'Sociologie des Raumes', *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft*, vol. 27 (1903), p.35



neutral ground where different cultures and ideas emerged, reflecting, through the intellectual and religious ‘experiments’ conducted there, the flexibility and co-existence of different elements and causes in a society that had long been portrayed with the dramatic, old-fashioned tones of decline and stagnation.¹² In fact, the ability of the Romans of Rome to secure the continuity of their traditions and values mingled with new necessities and trends revitalized and further strengthened the idea of Rome. This story of continuity against all odds (and occasionally against the approaches and biased conclusions of modern historiography, so often influenced by the trendy concepts of ‘Decline’, ‘Collapse’, and ‘Fall’) created persistence and nurtured the long tradition of exceptionalism that haunted the Romans of Rome regarding the uniqueness of their cultural and ideological legacy. In the absence of emperors, the elites of Rome were positioned, for the first time since the Republican period, to express themselves in relation to the eternal city and take their own decisions in times of crisis in order to ensure its safety and interests, almost turning their home into a city-state (once again, after almost a millennium). The outcome of these circumstances was to inflame a sense of duty and devotion to the *Urbs* (city), nurtured by feelings of local patriotism that cannot be compared to any other regionalist expression by the inhabitants of other cities, since Rome was the cradle and starting point of all Roman achievements of the previous centuries. This sense of uniqueness had given them the special position of being able to judge the level of ‘Romanness’ of everybody else, and anyone seeking political and ideological legitimacy could not simply bypass the city of Rome and its sensitive and demanding audience.

For a fourth-century visitor, Rome was still the *cosmopolis*, the global centre that mirrored the Empire; the universal capital that had incorporated the entire world and reflected culturally the regions that it had annexed.¹³ It managed not only to rule the conquered territories, but also to create its own world and become its centre.¹⁴ Rome had become synonymous with the *oikoumene*. The connection between the *world* and the *city* was something deeper than a simple literary scheme. Even the size and the sacred limits of the city were connected to the expansion of the Empire.¹⁵ Tacitus mentioned how Claudius expanded the *pomerium* of the city, something that was only

12 See H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 55.

13 See Edwards C. and Woolf G., *Rome the Cosmopolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 5.

14 See Hardt M. and Negri A., *Αυτοκρατορία* (Athens: Scripta, 2002), p. 18.

15 See J. Rykwert, *The idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 91-92, 117-126.

permitted when the Empire had been expanded as well (in this case, after the establishment of the Roman province of Britain): *et pomerium urbis auxit Caesar, more prisco, quo iis qui protulere imperium etiam terminos urbis propagare datur. nec tamen duces Romani, quamquam magnis nationibus subactis, usurpaverant nisi L. Sulla et divus Augustus.*¹⁶ The fate of the city was interconnected to that of the Roman world.

Rome was above all the ideal model of a city; all new towns across the Empire, which had been founded as *coloniae*, imitated the urban Roman archetype, creating similar microcosms and framing an element of utopian uniformity.¹⁷ The term *urbs* (city) came to mean Rome itself *par excellence*, since, in the Roman imaginary, the capital of the Empire had mingled with the concept of the city.¹⁸ These ideas were not a novelty of the late Empire; Livy depicts Romulus as being aware that the city of Rome would become the capital of the world by divine commandment: “Romanis, caelestes ita velle ut mea Roma caput orbis terrarum sit; proinde rem militarem colant sciantque et ita posteris tradant nullas opes humanas armis Romanis resistere posse.”¹⁹ In the second century AD, Aelius Aristides celebrated enthusiastically in his panegyric to Rome (*Ῥώμης ἐγκώμιον*) the unification of the entire *oikoumene* into a ‘common marketplace’ (*κοινὴν ἀγορὰν*) and a ‘common republic of the world’ (*κοινὴ τῆς γῆς δημοκρατία*), signifying the epitome of the cosmos in its perfect form. He praised Rome for securing the urban civilization and way of life, expanding the *Romanitas* to the conquered people, enabling them to share the same ideals as the Romans and to adopt the Empire as their common fatherland.²⁰ According to the Greek orator, Rome was to the world what a city was to its suburban areas; from there, the *princeps* was safeguarding the Empire as the soul did for all body parts.²¹ Likewise, Rutilius Namatianus would later emphasize the incorporation of the world into the city.²² The concept of utopia had abandoned the distant fringes of the old Hellenistic maps and had settled in the core of the Roman world. Rome appeared to have reached the ideal timeless state of existence beyond which

16 Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 23. Translation by J. Jackson.

17 See Mumford L., *The City in History: Its Origins, its Transformations, and its Prospects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 239.

18 See D. J. Georgacas, ‘The Names of Constantinople’ in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* vol. 78 (1947), pp. 347-367, 358-59.

19 See Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, I, xvi, 7.

20 See Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* [*Ῥώμης ἐγκώμιον*], 63. 5-11, 64.15, 213, 348-349 and 372-375. Also G. Alföldy, *Ιστορία της Ρωμαϊκής Κοινωνίας* (Athens: MIET, 2006), p. 201.

21 See Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* [*Ῥώμης ἐγκώμιον*], 29, 61.

22 See C. Ando, *Imperial Theology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 63.



there was no need for any change, the future had come to the present. The merry 'citizens of the world' could travel anywhere, carrying with them the universal identity of the *Romanitas* and the sense that they never left home. At the same time, they might choose never to leave the city's *pomerium* for their entire life but they had still experienced, at a micro-level, a cultural sample of every corner of the world sandwiched in the neighbourhoods of Rome. The city walls would be identical with the limits of the world and cosmopolitanism was the universally accepted 'doctrine' that functioned the adhesive that held together the belief of global dominion and assimilation.²³ Provincial inhabitants could thus enjoy the same privileges and values as those of the capital. The universal expansion of citizenship two centuries before meant that Rome could now include the whole world within its walls. Rome's accomplishment was so successful that, by the late fourth century, John Chrysostom was struggling to explain to his audience why Paul had to prove in Jerusalem that he was a Roman citizen, since it was unthinkable for his contemporaries to imagine a past in which not everyone had access to this aspect of the *Romanitas*.²⁴ So, after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in the early third century (212), and the absence of any legal criteria of separation, distinguishing between Romans had to be made on another basis. From then on, *Romanitas* would involve a new kind of moral consciousness, the pride of being the bearer of a cultural burden of values and traditions and also a sense of ethical superiority, especially for the aristocracy of Rome itself.²⁵ Within elitist circles, the devotion to the Roman fatherland and the city that gave birth to the Roman civilization was more than a unifying factor, it was the essence of their identity as individuals and as members of the nobility at a time when the emperors themselves were (mentally and even culturally) alien to Rome.

The eternal city also embodied the metaphysical needs of its inhabitants, as well as those the rest of the citizens of the Empire. It had been sacred ground for so long, Livy admitted in the times of Augustus, that there was no part of the city that was not full of holiness and gods (*Urbem auspiciato inauguratoque conditam habemus; nullus locus in ea non religionum deorumque est plenus; sacrificiis sollemnibus non dies magis statim quam loca*

23 See L. S. Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought: From Walled City Spiritual Commonwealth* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1970), p. 182.

24 See John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* [*Homiliae in Acta Apostolorum*], 48,1 (*Patrologia Graeca* 60. 333).

25 See C. Bourazelis, *Θεία Δωρεά. Μελέτες πάνω στην πολιτική της δυναστείας των Σεβήρων και την Constitutio Antoniniana* (Athens: Academy of Athens, 1989) and *Οι Τρόφιμοι της Λύκαινας* (Athens: MIET, 2017). p. 382.

sunt in quibus fiant).²⁶ This kind of osmosis was legitimized by the meeting of Aeneas and Evander (who had previously brought the laws and alphabet from Greece to Italy) and the joint sacrifice that they performed to Hercules unified Greece with Rome already from the 'prehistoric' period of the Roman people.²⁷ Thus, a pattern had been set and sanctified with the most valid process. Already from the early imperial period, Rome was increasingly called *Urbs Aeterna* (*Eternal City*), *Caput Mundi* (*Capital/Head of the World*), *Caput Orbis Terrarum* (*Capital | Head of the Continents*), and *Caput Rerum* (*Capital | Head of all Things*).²⁸ Towards the late Empire, and as the state was experiencing shockwaves of internal and external challenges, the cult of Rome (*Dea Roma*) and of the guardian spirit of the Roman people (*genius populi Romani*) spread widely among citizens, symbolizing the respect and devotion to the *Urbs Roma*, while at the same time expressing a religious aspect of Roman patriotism.²⁹ Ausonius placed Rome on the top of his *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* describing it as *prima urbes inter, divum domus, aurea Roma* (*first among the cities, house of gods, golden Rome*).³⁰ Rome had gathered all the deities of the captured regions and included their cults to its pantheon, completing the conquests in a spiritual manner, thus assuring divine protection from every possible supernatural source. From that point of view, the city was already consecrated ground before the public material manifestation of Christianity in the fourth century.

The institutionalization of Christianity and its incorporation into the civic and court establishment during the course of the fourth century would raise the issue of being a Roman and a Christian. In the midst of this identity crisis, Rome would become a disputed territory, a spiritual *no man's land* where the dominion upon its *loci* of symbolic and religious importance would be the price that reshaped *Romanitas* itself. A city reinvents itself for a reason; from a long-term perspective, the search for a new past disturbed its traditional sacred geography, pointing at and highlighting the city of the apostles, the evidence of which was all around and just needed a promotion campaign, emphasizing too, the Christian contribution to the glory of the eternal city. But beyond any competition over the dominance on the urban (and suburban) sacred landscape there was a race for superiority, to prove

26 See Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, V, lii, 2. Translation by B. O. Foster.

27 See Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 102.

28 See Tibullus, *Elegiae*, 2.5-23, Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 2.655, Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.16.7, Tacitus, *Historiae*, 2.32.

29 See Kantorowicz E., 'Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 56, 3 (1951), pp. 472-492, 474.

30 See Ausonius, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, I.



which religious faction was more ‘Roman’ than the others, something that could be proven by searching for the links that bound their cause to the history of the city. By the waning of the fourth century, Christianity had visibly manifested on the urban landscape. This new confidence, however, based on the mingling of Christianity and *Romanitas* under the patronage of Christian emperors, would prove to be too fragile to survive the challenges of a new era, as the fifth century would become. Despite the sack of 410 and its symbolic blow to the image of the city as *urbs aeterna*, the position of Rome remained intact in the mental map of its citizens. Jerome was lamenting from the East that ‘the city that had once captured the entire world, had now been conquered’ (*Capitur urbs, que totam cepit orbem*).³¹ But as soon as the physical Rome became vulnerable, a new idea emerged, the plausibility of a portable, spiritual, and ever-safe Rome that could be found anywhere, from the Heavens to the tops of the Alps, as we will discover in the last part of this book. Rome would be upgraded in late-fourth-century Christian thought to a timeless spiritual *locus* and that concept itself would leave a permanent imprint on medieval and early modern thought.³² Almost a millennium after Jerome and Prudentius, Dante would still describe a celestial Rome where even Christ is a Roman citizen (*Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano; / e sarai meco senza fine cive / di quella Roma onde Christo é Romano*).³³ Although Christianity did not obviously save the eternal city, a new narrative of Rome had been unfolding in abstract time and space, where the material was mingling with the irrational and miraculous as an experience and part of a reality manifesting a Christian discourse of *heavenly Rome*. The latter gradually developed its own lore as some kind of late antique Christian *Magical Realism*, to borrow this term from the field of literary criticism and the works of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez.³⁴

iii Defining *Romanitas*

Before moving any further, we need to clarify one term that will recur in the following pages, i.e. *Romanitas*. Its first mention appears in a digression of

31 See Jerome, *Epistulae*, 127.12

32 See J. Straub, *Ο Ιερός Αυγουστίνος περί της Παλιγγενεσίας της Ρωμαϊκής Αυτοκρατορίας (Regeneratio Imperii)* (Athens: Αρχαίον Κοινωνιολογίας και Ηθικής, 1962), pp. 5-35.

33 See Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, “Purgatorio”, Canto XXII, 100-105.

34 See M. A. Bowers, *Magical Realism: The New Criticism Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 19-30. Also A. Liakos, *Αποκάλυψη, Ουτοπία και Ιστορία: Οι Μεταμορφώσεις της Ιστορικής Συνειδήσης* (Athens: ΠΟΛΙΣ, 2011), p. 75.



Tertullian in order to describe the Roman manner of things, although, two centuries earlier, Augustus promoted a revival of the old Roman values in his cultural agenda without, however, using a specific terminology to name it, a policy that has been often seen as a 'Cultural Revolution'.³⁵ By the fourth century, however, when several versions of what Rome and *Romanitas* used to be were circulated around various audiences, those values were under question and, from that point of view, a trend of returning to the study of Augustan literature and especially Virgil, or moralists like Varro (as Augustine did in his *De Civitate Dei*) or Cato (the *Dicta Catonis* which, by the fourth century, people wanted to be written down and preserved), reveals a need to re-interpret the *mos maiorum*, the ancestral manner (the equivalent of the Greek ἀρχαῖον ἔθος) that epitomized Roman cultural consciousness.³⁶ *Romanitas* in late antiquity was perceived as *heritage*, i.e. an embodied cultural capital, consciously acquired, and passively inherited through tradition, more like a social asset that was open to anyone willing to absorb and be incorporated into Roman lifestyle. A sense of identity and self-image that could bind one to another, also to their ancestors, supplying them with the intellectual tools to help them interpret the often unpredictable and sudden changes of an uncertain world with some degree of confidence.³⁷

When Tertullian introduced the term 'Romanitas' (*De Pallio* 4.1), he did so in order to describe a complex relation between Greek and Roman culture in a place that traditionally followed Phoenician custom (*more punico*).³⁸ He described those in Carthage who supposed to follow the Roman lifestyle yet were apparently more inclined to Greek manners in certain aspects of their daily life (*quid nunc, si est Romanitas omni salus, nec honestis tamen modis as Graios estis?*).³⁹ Here, the definition of 'Roman' identity manifests through admitting that it is to the benefit of all.⁴⁰ In contrast to Hellenism (Greeks

35 See R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (OUP, 1956). Also A. W. Hadrill, 'The Idea of a Cultural Revolution', T. Habinek, A. Schiesaro (eds.) *The Roman Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 3-22.

36 See R. Rees, 'Dead Poet's Society' in R. Rees (ed.) *Romane Memento: Virgil in the Fourth Century* (London: Duckworth, 2004), pp. 1-16, 6. Also P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων* (Athens: MIET, 2009), pp. 211-212.

37 C. J. Richard, *The Founders of the Classics: Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 6-7.

38 B. Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome: The first three centuries* (New York: 2010), p. 129. Also M. Edwards, 'Severan Christianity', S. Swain, S. Harrison, J. Elsner (eds.) *Severan Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 401-418, 414-418.

39 See Tertullian, *De Pallio*, 4.1

40 E. Dench: *Romulus Asylum: Roman identity from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 368.

required language and religion before admitting anyone to their institutions), the Roman customs, religion, and the feasts of the calendar were an aspect of *Romanitas* open to anyone willing to follow them; a portable set of Roman values open to anyone wishing to be assimilated into Roman culture. The contemporary American holidays, for instance, such as *thanksgiving*, is a close example that illustrates the contribution of the openness of annual festivals to the incorporation of immigrants into American society, values, and way of life through the years.⁴¹

Romanitas combined the ideals of *mos maiorum* and incorporated the symbolic importance of the city of Rome, its landscape, and the traditions bound to it. By the late fourth century, these values were associated with and personified by the literary description of *Dea Roma* in prose and verse, a result of a long process of familiarity with Roman cultural heritage. A notion that, by this period, had been functioning as an ideogram or a pictogram that summarized the essence of Romanness that anyone could understand and instantly decode.

We can summarize the values and themes that the terminology of *Romanitas* had acquired by the fourth century in a series of elements. Often, this consisted of a set of idealized heroic exempla of a distant past (real or imaginary), the illustrious ancestors (*summi viri*) as described by authors like Polybius, Livy, and Virgil. By the fourth century, however, this included emperors like Augustus, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius. *Romanitas* can also point to the expression of Piety and Devotion to the cults that comprised Roman religion, especially those linked with certain historical or mythical events, (foundation myths, epiphanies, introduction of foreign cults, etc.). Additionally, it carried a notion of the *Eternity* of Rome and the perpetuity of the Empire that, by the late fourth century, had gained metaphysical proportions, identifying the safety of the Empire with the existence of the world itself. Furthermore, it encapsulated a teleological sense of a Roman 'mission' to *civilize* the world by the introduction of law and civic institutions in all cultures, as propagandized in Augustan poetry and the orations of the Second Sophistic, a *Manifest Destiny* that would be fully revealed when the Empire finally incorporated the entire world (i.e. the promise made to Aeneas of an *imperium sine fine*).⁴² The Roman Empire appeared to have fulfilled that destiny in the second century AD, as Aelius Aristides declared in his *Roman Oration* (143 AD), counting the achievements of Rome as the *omega*

41 C. Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American intellectual life 1780-1910* (Baltimore, MD: Baltimore University Press, 2004), pp. 10-40.

42 See Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 279.



phase of a long, inevitable, and predetermined process that portrayed the capital of the Empire as the epitome of the entire world and an ideal life of utopian proportions, preserving an almost post-apocalyptic notion of the perpetuity of Empire in this condition. Finally, *Romanitas* was identified with certain expressions of traditional Roman virtues like *Pietas* (Piety), *Dignitas* (Dignity), *Virtus* (Virtue), *Gravitas* (Seriousness), *Severitas* (Severity), and *Clementia* (Clemency), which appear in Greek and Roman sources that described the character and attitude of early Romans, the *mores maiorum*.

iv Planet Augustus

Another theme that deserves a special mention, and which will be referenced several times in the following chapters, is the constant and deliberate return to the motives of Augustan political theology and the context of Augustan literature regarding the return to the *Aetas Aurea* and the (re)framing of the ancestral Roman ideals.⁴³ The concept of circular return to the first *golden age* is not without connection to a *Roma* growing old and then rejuvenated, as we will see, for instance, in the works of Claudian. Connected to the idea of *Aeternitas*, this was a never-ending Rome deemed to survive and regenerate. It was an expression of an articulated folkloric and institutional patriotism as promoted by the cultural agenda of the Augustan regime and the poets of his time. The influence of this scheme, however, expanded beyond the fields of literature and political rhetoric and certainly beyond the age of Augustus. In the early third century, Dio Cassius portrayed the era, which he considered to have begun with Commodus (180-192), as the transition from an age of *Gold* to one of *Iron* (ἀπό χρυσῆς τε βασιλείας ἐς σιδηρᾶν καὶ κατωμμένην τῶν τε πραγμάτων τοῖς τότε Ῥωμαίοις καὶ ἡμῖν νῦν καταπεσοῦσης τῆς ἱστορίας).⁴⁴

The commemoration of Augustus and the reference to or imitation of Augustan *civilitas* during the fourth century imperial visits to Rome reveal the need to shape the imperial profile according to the archetype of the ruler of the *principatus* era. Of course, *civilitas* meant something more than plain courtesy of civility in the modern sense. It described the attitude of a prince who was still the *primus inter pares* in a society of citizens. It also meant respecting individual and collective rights and freedoms as well as institutions, laws, and traditions. The term *civilis* itself appears

43 See W. Eder, "Augustus and the Power of Tradition"; K. Galinsky, (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 13-32.

44 See D. Cassius, *Roman History* [Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία], LXXII, 36.4.

only at the end of the Republic, when Cicero explained the nature of the *societas civilis* in *De Republica* (*quare cum lex sit civilis societatis vinculum, ius autem legis aequale, quo iure societas civium teneri potest*).⁴⁵ ‘*Civilis*’, however, still had only a philosophical context. It was not until the early years of the *Principatus* that the concept of *civilitas* was idealized and gradually transformed into public etiquette, according to which emperors could be praised or criticized. The term appeared for the first time in the biography of Augustus, written by Suetonius who described clemency and civility as testaments of imperial attitude (*clementiae civilitatisque eius multa est magna documenta sunt*).⁴⁶ In fact, Suetonius further advanced the conceptualization and contextualization of Augustan *civilitas* and, in a sense, provided a definition that set the standards of imperial biographies for the following centuries. From then on, the author’s judgement of any emperor as *civilis* or *incivilis* followed the context that Suetonius set in portraying Augustus.⁴⁷

The main pillar of imperial *civilitas* was actually based on a demonstration of denial (*recusatio*) of privileges granted to the emperor by the Senate.⁴⁸ If an emperor wished to promote himself as *primus inter pares*, he had to voluntarily submit himself to the status of a citizen. However, balancing between *de facto auctoritas* and *de jure* supremacy of ancient institutions was not always easy. Ideally, an emperor ought to exercise *modestia, moderatio, comitas, clementia*, and *civilitas* while he had to avoid *superbia* and *arrogantia* (the opposite of *civilitas*).⁴⁹ Augustus himself, for instance, denied the title of *Dominus* (*Domini apellationem ut maledictum et obprobrium semper exhorruit*).⁵⁰ Fourth-century court protocol emphasized the opposite, however. Late antique emperors who happened to visit Rome still had to act as *principes civiles*, at least according to what late-Roman imaginary dictated as such. Following in the steps of Suetonius, Pliny the Younger used the same descriptions of *civilitas* to shape the profile of Trajan as an exemplary emperor. In the late fourth century, Pacatus would follow the same pattern in his panegyric to Theodosius I on the latter’s *adventus* at Rome (389). According to Suetonius, Augustus never left the city of Rome

45 See Cicero, *De Republica*, I.49.

46 See Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Augustus*, LI.1.

47 See A. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* vol. 72 (1982), pp. 32–48, 44.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 36. Also D. Wardle, ‘Suetonius on Augustus as God and Man’, *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 62, n. 1 (May 2012), pp. 307–326, 308.

49 A. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King’, pp. 41–43.

50 Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, LIII.1.

without a particular reason and, if he did, it was always after nightfall in order not to disturb anyone with protocol and ceremonial procedures. Moreover, during his consulships, he crossed the city's streets on foot and greeted the common people. When he was in the Senate House he greeted the Senators in person, remembering each individual's name. Furthermore, on various occasions he visited the homes of private citizens.⁵¹ Pliny also mentioned that Trajan entered Rome on foot and visited his friends as an ordinary citizen.⁵² According to Pacatus, Theodosius I followed the same example when he entered the city in 389.⁵³

The imitation of the ritual parade of the *Ara Pacis* by Julian, as described by Claudius Mamertinus in his *Gratiarum Actio*, and the controversy regarding the removal of the Altar of Victory that had stood in the Senate House since the era of Augustus, in a sense revealed a *trauma* of loss of bonds with Augustan Rome.⁵⁴ Despite its rather controversial impressions, the *adventus* of Constantius II (357) was a re-enactment of the *civilitas* of Augustus, following a tradition of comparison of late antiquity emperors entering Rome to Augustan measures of *civilitas* in order to judge whether or not this imperial visit was successful. After all, the emperor remained *primus inter pares* within the city's *pomerium*, where the shadow of the *princeps ob cives servatos* was still chasing the late Roman imagination.⁵⁵ By late antiquity, an imperial entry to the eternal *city* was a combination of both rite and performance, something the *populus Romanus* was expecting to see. The emperors were well aware of this, as well as of the special case of Rome in relation to how they ought to behave while being there. For, if Augustan *civilitas* really meant something then it was the paradigm shift of Rome from *nobody's city* to *everyone's city*. Since the time of Gracchi and until the end of the civil wars, the fast growth of empire and of private wealth left little interest for the public space of the capital. The Augustan regime changed all that by shifting interest from the Private to the Public once again after a century of neglect, transforming Rome in almost half a century (31 BC-14AD) into a landscape

51 Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, LIII, 2-3.

52 See Pliny, *Panegyrici Latini* I, 22.4.

53 See Pacatus, *Panegyrici Latini* II, 47.3.

54 See Claudius Mamertinus, *Gratiarum Actio*, 28, 3-4. Also R. C. Blockley, 'The Panegyric of Claudius Mamertinus on the Emperor Julian', *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 93, No. 3 (1972), pp. 437-450, 445; J. Fears, 'The Theology of Victory at Rome: Approaches and Problems', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, 17, 2 (1981), pp. 736-826. Also K. Lamp, 'The Ara Pacis Augustae: Visual Rhetoric in Augustus' Principate', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter, 2009), pp. 1-24; and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Emperor Julian: Panegyric and Polemic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), p. 5.

55 See P. Zanker, *O Aύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων* (Athens: MIET, 2009), p. 131.

that would later be familiar to late antiquity aristocrats.⁵⁶ This revival of interest in the urban space, similar to the *amor civicus* and the concept of the civic benefactor that was already present in the Greek East, managed to turn the interest of the elites away from private splendour and luxury towards a new sense of collective aesthetics regarding the place of their city as an imperial capital. That feeling, 'this very special sort of love for the city and its citizens,' would revive in late antiquity when, in the absence of emperors, the Senate would reclaim the power vacuum and the city's public space by restoring and preserving the historic monuments of Rome. By the late fourth century, generations of Roman senators were placing the portraits of their illustrious ancestors in the imperial fora of Rome, promoting the history of their families, and advertising themselves by turning the public space into 'an open-air gallery of civic love.'⁵⁷ It was the architectural programme of Augustus that created a particularly 'Roman' form in the topography of places like the Forum Romanum and the Campus Martius; the majority of the monuments that Ammianus Marcellinus describes as impressive, for instance in his digression on the *adventus* of Constantius II, are anyway Augustan (the rest are Trajanic).⁵⁸ The Augustan impression on the Roman landscape would define the measure of Romanness in the many centuries to follow. Almost a millennium and a half later, scholars like Flavio Biondo would still struggle to recover that spatial sense in treatises like *De Roma Instaurata* (1444-48) or *De Roma Triumphante* (1479). The late-fourth-century aristocrats of Rome also shared a sense of recovery, or at least of the preserving of their cultural (both material and spiritual) legacy, hoping to maintain the uniqueness of Rome. With a similar zeal, Ettore Roesler Franz (1845-1907) was trying to capture the image of a Rome about to fade away in his 'Roma Sparita' series of paintings, after the *Risorgimento* (1871).

Another motif that will also be traced was the constant search for an Augustan image, or at least for the archetype of an Augustan ruler on every imperial succession or visit to Rome. The two centuries that separated their time from the Antonine era were marked by civil wars and social turmoil, just like the century before Augustus, and like their ancestors after the battle of Actium (31 BC), who were rather pessimistic about the future until

56 P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, p. 46.

57 See P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome and the making of Christianity in the West, 350-550AD* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University press, 2012), p. 64.

58 See Strabo, *Geography* [Γεωγραφικὰ], V, 3.8, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XVI, 10. Also P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, p. 208 and D. Favro, 'Pater urbis': Augustus as City-Father of Rome', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar. 1992), pp. 61-84.

Augustus announced the return of the *Aetas Aurea*. There was a similar sense of political messianism and expectation in the politics of the fourth century, a quest for an emperor that would deliver them from the calamities of their present. The Augustan literature scheme of the circle of the ages and the return to the golden age after a period of decline continued to deeply influence Roman thought. Likewise, the fourth-century aristocrats who studied Augustan *classics* were constantly expecting a similar revival, which had almost eschatological proportions. The artwork of monuments like the *Ara Pacis* or the temple of Mars *Ullor* were still promoting the idea that the coming of a golden age remained possible. The powerful message of their images was not just a fragment of a glorious past; they were still advertising a potential destiny for Rome, the coming of a saturnine era. It was the long shadow of the Augustan state-myth of a long-expected restoration to a previous state of felicity. Aristocratic circles like those of Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus were constantly hoping for the appearance of such a ruler who would turn his attention to Rome once again. Initially, Symmachus hoped that Gratian would be such a ruler, mainly because of the aristocratic influence over him by educated men like Ausonius and his good relations with the Senate, and he declared his desire for the coming of the *novi saeculi* and *spes sperata*, only to be disappointed later.⁵⁹ Claudian may have thought the same about Honorius if we are to give any credence to the context of his panegyrics, while Rutilius Namatianus appears to have placed his hopes for the future on Flavius Constantius (future emperor Constantius III, 421AD).⁶⁰ The quest for a 'Roman' Emperor based at Rome, or at least in Italy, reveals the extent to which the ghost of the Augustan ruler of the *principatus* haunted the late Roman imaginary, an ideal that *rustics* like Constantius II or Valentinian I could never reach or understand.

When, by 17BC, Augustus had declared the beginning of the golden age, his agenda included a religious renovation with a revival of ancestral cults and rituals (*cultus deorum*) and a preservation and restoration of public buildings (*publica magnificentia*).⁶¹ Thus, he tried to promote a *new wave* of *pietas*, aiming to imitate the religious devotion of the early Romans and purging Roman public life of Greek *luxuria*.⁶² The late-fourth-century

59 See Symmachus, *Oratio* III, 1. Also J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, AD 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 69-87.

60 See P. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Pan Books, 2006), pp. 236-238.

61 P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, p. 144. Also J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 55-86.

62 See N. Petrocheilos, *Ρωμαίοι και Ελληνισμός: Μια Διαλεκτική Σχέση* (Athens: Παπαζήση, 1984), pp. 47-48.

aristocrats of Rome had a similar agenda within their capacity as Urban Prefects, creating inscriptions to celebrate their restoration activities, just like Augustus did in his *Res Gestae* commemorating the re-opening of eighty-two temples within the city's *pomerium* during his reign.⁶³ Similarly, as we will see in the chapter about the era of Symmachus, the aristocracy of the late fourth century was trying to promote another wave of religious piety. This new sensitivity manifested in inventing traditions and treating the old temples of the city centre not simply as monuments, but as living organizations that needed public rites in order to sustain themselves. The notion of (each) city as a living organism with its own *genius* that needed care and devotion would also play a vital role in the Julianic vision of the restoration of the role of cities and temples in the public life of empire. Again, the model of Rome, together with that of Athens, had a crucial role to play in that process, as cities famous for their multitude of temples and their public piety. In this context, late antiquity pagans again used Augustan literature as guides to the 'orthodoxy' in religious practices; thus, texts like the *Fasti* of Ovid gained new value in the late fourth century.⁶⁴ It was part of a revived interest in copying and correcting important works of Augustan literature like Virgil's *Aeneid* or Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* that, in turn, contributed to a revival of archaic rituals 'by-the-book' or the invention of new ones (*mutatio morum*), in this way revitalizing public life in Rome at the end of the fourth century AD.⁶⁵ Some samples of this late antiquity focus on the *classics* of the Augustan era have been preserved, illuminated manuscripts like the *Vatican Virgil* (c. 400) or the *Roman Virgil* (early fifth century), commissioned for aristocratic libraries, preserved the late Roman *interpretatio* of what they considered as ancestral heritage.⁶⁶ The depicted scenes feature a rather unfamiliar – by late-fourth-century standards

63 See *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 20.

64 See R. Rees, 'Dead Poet's Society', pp. 5-11.

65 See G. Schmeling, 'Urbs Aeterna: Rome, a Monument of the Mind', S. K. Dickson, J. P. Hallet (eds.) *Rome and her Monuments: Essays on the city and literature of Rome in honor of Katherine A. Geffcken* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2000), pp. 89-98, 96.

66 See *Vergilius Vaticanus* (Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, Cod. Vat. lat. 3225), available online at: http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3225 (accessed 6/8/2017) and *Vergilius Romanus* (Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica, Cod. Vat. lat. 3867). Also E. Rosenthal, *The Illuminations of the Vergilius Romanus (Cod. Vat. Lat. 3867). A Stylistic and Iconographic Analysis* (Zürich: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1972); T. B. Stevenson, *Miniature Decoration in the Vatican Virgil: A study in late antique iconography* (Tübingen: Verlag E. Wasmuth, 1983); D. H. Wright, *The Vatican Virgil, a Masterpiece of Late Antique Art* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1993); and *idem*, *The Roman Virgil and the Origins of Medieval Book Design* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

– emphasis on sacrificial offerings, something that was not unrelated to the religious tensions in Rome during the 380s and 390s, as will be examined in the relevant chapter.⁶⁷ The intensive study and editing of Augustan literature in the late fourth and early fifth century from a linguistic and antiquarian point of view is also mirrored in the works of grammarians like Arusianus Messius (*Exempla Elocutionum*), Aelius Donatus (*Vita Vergiliana*), Maurus Servius Honoratus (*In Vergilii Aeneidem commentarii*), and Tiberius Claudius Donatus (*Interpretationes Vergilianae*).⁶⁸

v Rome personified: The *Dea Roma* Figure as an Ideogram in Late Roman Literature

People experienced Rome as a collective entity and they attributed personal qualities to the city that epitomized the elements of the place as an imperial capital. Thus, the city of Rome began to appear in Augustan and post-Augustan literature as a female or maternal figure.⁶⁹ Generations of Greek and Roman authors perceived the beauty and glory of Rome not in the appearance of its structures but in the symbolic stature of the city within the Empire; indeed, its anthropomorphization was almost inevitable.⁷⁰ This is another important aspect of the *Romanitas*, which, by the second half of the late fourth century AD, would have been crystallized as the goddess *Roma*. The cult of the personified Rome, however, first appeared in the Greek East during the Hellenistic period.⁷¹ Initially, *Dea Roma* was the personification of *Res Publica Romana*, which, according to Tacitus, was institutionalized as a cult by the citizens of Smyrna in Asia Minor, who were the first to erect a

67 P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, p. 121.

68 See R. Linn, 'Augustine, the Grammarians and the Cultural Authority of Vergil', R. Rees (ed.) *Romane Memento: Virgil in the fourth century*, pp. 112-127, 122-123. Also A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, pp. 567-626.

69 See Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, II.40 and Martial, *De Spectaculis*, XII.21. Also C. C. Vermeule, *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire*, (Boston, MA: Museum of Fine Arts, 1974).

70 See V. Hope, 'The City of Rome: Capital and Symbol'; J. Huskinson (ed.) *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 63-93, 69-70. Also D. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 45.

71 See C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 45. Also C. Habicht, 'Die Augusteische Zeit und das erste Jahrhundert nach Christi Geburt'; S. R. F. Price (ed.), *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 41-88; and J. Champeaux, 'Images célestes de Rome: La Ville et ses incarnations divines'; P. Fleury and O. Desbordes (eds.) *Roma Illustrata* (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2008), pp. 85-96.

temple to *urbs Roma* in 195 BC, at a time when they were still threatened by Antiochus III.⁷² Athenian inscriptions dated to the end of the third century also inform us about the establishment of the cult of the personified *demos* (i.e. the people and state) of Athens.⁷³ Later, by the mid-second century BC, this cult soon twinned with that of the goddess *Rome* under the responsibility of the same priest who managed the cult of the personified Athens.⁷⁴ Later, a small circular temple dedicated to *Roma* and Augustus in the east end of the Parthenon, on the Acropolis of the city, would appear as the final stage of establishing the goddess *Roma* in Athens.⁷⁵ The model followed for this purpose was the familiar archetype of the Hellenistic ruler cult.⁷⁶ The style of the Greco-Roman goddess *Roma* on Greek coinage usually portrayed her with a mural crown, signifying Rome's status as loyal protector of Hellenic city-states.⁷⁷ Initially, the *corona muralis* was a golden crown, or a circle of gold intended to resemble to a battlement, and it was bestowed upon the first soldier to climb the wall of a besieged city and successfully place the standard of the attacking army upon it.⁷⁸ During the Hellenistic period, the mural crown had been identified with deities such as the goddess Tyche/Fortuna (the embodiment of the fortune of a city). Furthermore, the high cylindrical *polos* of Cybele could be rendered as a mural crown in Hellenistic times, specifically designating the mother goddess as patron of a city.⁷⁹

Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the early 390s, portrayed *Roma* as an elder woman, something that had already appeared in Greek literature with the personification of Greece as an elder lady in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (*Βίοι Παράλληλοι*), where the Achaean *strategos* Philopoemen is presented as the last-born child of an elder Hellas (*καὶ γὰρ ὡσπερ ὀψίγονον ἐν γῆρᾳ ἐπιτεκοῦσα τοῦτον ἡ Ἑλλάς*).⁸⁰ Pausanias narrated that the figures of

72 See Tacitus, *Annales*, IV.56.1

73 See <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/3053?&bookid=5&location=7> <*Inscriptiones Graecae* I-III Attica, IG II, 834> [accessed 2/8/2017]

74 See C. Habicht, *Ελληνιστική Αθήνα* (Athens: Οδυσσεύς, 1998), p. 239

75 See S. E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 181-182.

76 See R. Mellor, *ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΗ: The Worship of the Goddess Roma in the Greek World* (Hypomnemata, 1975), pp. 5, 14-16.

77 See R. Mellor, "The Goddess Roma", W. Haase, H. Temporini (eds), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (De Gruyter, 1991), pp. 60-63.

78 See Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V.6.4, Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, XXVI.48. Also E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, vol. I (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 178.

79 See F. Allègre, *Étude sur la déesse grecque Tyché* (Paris: 1889), pp. 187-92. Also J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), pp. 84-87.

80 See Plutarch, *Philopoemen*, 1.4



Hellas and Salamis were depicted on the outer wall of the temple of Zeus in Olympia.⁸¹ Philostratus also described how Apollonius of Tyana dreamt of the island of Crete personified as an elder woman (*γυνάικα μεγίστην τε καὶ πρεσβυτάτην*), who begged him not to depart to Italy before visiting her.⁸² But the portrait of an elder Rome (*vergens in senium*) was not an image of exhaustion, decline, or resignation to the fatalism of an inevitable end of an era.⁸³ On the contrary, it is a middle-aged Rome, at the peak of her life, sitting aside and inspecting her past deeds, recognized by all as supreme and prosperous with the validity and gravity of old age, reflecting respect and prestige.

The archetype of *Dea Roma* became a familiar literary scheme in the ages that followed in various places and circumstances but with the same role, as an embodiment of ideals and personifications of countries or continents. One such example is the figure of *Europa regina*, used in early modern cartography as a personification of the European continent and bearing a turreted crown (see the famous *Cosmographia* by S. Münster, 1588).⁸⁴ The figure of *Marianne* as a personification of France and of the French Republic(s), which first appeared in 1792 on the new seal of the state after the National Convention of the same year, is a product of the same tradition (although she was wearing the Phrygian cap instead of the *corona muralis*; she is still depicted on the French coat of arms). One characteristic example of the archetype of Rome as Marianne is the statue complex *Le triomphe de la République* by Aimé-Jules Dalou (1899), on the Place de la Nation in Paris, where the female figure is depicted on a chariot with two lions, thus mingling Roma and Cybele. The latter had been already associated with the figure of *Dea Roma* in depictions of goddess Rome in ivory diptychs and numismatics. Similarly, the depiction of *Athena/Minerva-Hellas* as a personification of Greece in the nineteenth century, during and after the war of independence (1821-1830), appeared in the paintings of Eugène Delacroix (*Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi*, 1826) and of Theodoros Vryzakis (*Grateful Hellas*, 1858)

81 Amy C. Smith, "Athenian Political Art from the Fifth and Fourth centuries BCE: Images of Historical Individuals," in C.W. Blackwell, ed., *Dēmos: Classical Athenian Democracy* (A. Mahoney and R. Scaife, eds., *The Stoa: A consortium for electronic publication in the humanities* [www.stoa.org]) edition of January 18 2003 (accessed http://www.stoa.org/demos/article_portraits?page=1&greekEncoding=UnicodeC.html 23/2/2021), pp. 1-14.

82 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* [Τὰ ἐς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον], IV, 34.

83 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XIV, vi, 4. Also Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico* l.24-25 and Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* [Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία], II, 3.4.

84 See A. Bennholdt-Thomsen, A. Guzzoni, (eds.) *Zur Hermetik des Spätwerks*, *Analecta Hölderliana* 1. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), p. 22. Also D. Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh university Press, 1968), p. 119.

and later in propaganda posters and political caricatures in newspapers. Moreover, the figures of *John Bull* and *Britannia* in nineteenth-century Britain can be seen as the British equivalent of the *genius populi* and the personified country. John Bull is depicted as an upper-class, middle-aged man (originated in the creation of Dr. John Arbuthnot and Alexander Pope in 1712, and popularized first by British printmakers and later by George Bernard Shaw in his work *John Bull's Other Island*, 1904). It is noteworthy that *Britannia* is closer to the archetype of Athena/Roma, depicted enthroned and wearing a Greek helmet as ruler of the seas, revealing the Greco-Roman influence in the iconography of the British Empire as beacon of (neo)classicism.⁸⁵ Lastly, stands the figure of *Italia Turrata*, which is definitely the closest iconographically and, in a sense, predates the archetype of *Dea Roma*, as an allegory of Italy with laurels and a turreted crown. It first appeared on coins during the *Social War* (91-88BC). Under Emperor Augustus, an allegorical representation of Italy known as *Saturnia Tellus* (The Earth of the Saturnine/golden age) was carved on the external wall of the *Ara Pacis* (13-9 BC) in Rome.⁸⁶ A century later, the allegory of Italy appeared on coins during the reign of Emperor Nerva (96-98 AD), and, starting from the 130s, under Hadrian and later Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla, the allegorical representation of Italy kept re-appearing on Roman coinage as a female figure with a turreted crown and occasionally a cornucopia.

The image or the reference to the *Dea Roma* as it appears in the descriptions of Symmachus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Claudian functioned more like the modern-day *emoticons*, the widely recognized schematic images that have globally replaced standard words and phrases in social media, playing a crucial role in communicating a message, thus implying the qualities mentioned in section iii. *Dea Roma*, therefore, symbolized and epitomized all that the concept of *Romanitas* could carry or imply, adding accuracy and validity to the message of the speaker/author.

The expression of devotion to a personified *Roma* was quite popular in the waning fourth century and at the beginning of the fifth, and was not discouraged by the Christian authorities. Various depiction of an anthropomorphic Rome appeared in numismatics and in the prose and verse literature of

85 See Hingley R. 'The "Legacy" of Rome: The rise, decline and fall of the theory of Romanization', Webster J., Cooper N. (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: Post-colonial perspectives* (Leicester: Leicester Archaeology Monographies, 1996) pp. 35-48. Also C. Edwards (ed.) *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

86 P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, pp. 234-236.

diverse religious backgrounds. Such an example is the appearance of the *genius publicus* in Ammianus Marcellinus, or the personified *Roma* in the *Relationes* of Symmachus, the panegyrics of Claudian, and the *De Reditu Suo* of Rutilius Namatianus. But its appearance was something more than a simple literary scheme; it was a form of devotion to the state and the Roman values that form an unofficial creed of deistic proportions similar perhaps only to the cult of the *Supreme Being* during the French Revolution (which was, after all, influenced by the Greco-Roman civic ideals and the public virtues of an ideal republican society).⁸⁷ This form of cult of the state, defined as *Genius Publicus* or otherwise mentioned as *genius populi Romani*, appears in the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus as a form of pagan monotheism, which, in contrast to the Robespierrist *Supreme Being*, never had its own public festivals or rites but remained a rather illusive concept among intellectuals and court officials. The fact that this ‘cult’ was limited to public administration circles perhaps reveals its function as a tool for popularizing Roman governmentality in a simple, portable, and religiously neutral way to introduce or reinterpret the values of the *Romanitas*. A more recent example of a similar mechanism was the introduction of the *Marianne*-figure and its popularization as a bearer of *Frenchness* during the *Third Republic* (1871-1940) in an attempt to spread civic/republican virtues and a sense of nationhood to the population of the French countryside through the education system, transforming, as E. Weber put it, *Peasants into Frenchmen* for the cause of an ‘One and Indivisible France.’⁸⁸

vi A Rome Too Much: The Uncomfortable Relationship Between Rome and Constantinople in the Fourth Century AD

The fourth century AD was an era of political and ideological experimentation, starting with the model of the Tetrarchy and later the gradual establishment of a new dynastic capital in the East that, during the time of Theodosius I, would acquire the title of *New Rome* at the second Ecumenical Council (381). Initially, few would have believed that Constantine’s venture

87 S. Žižek, *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* (New York: Verso, 2007), p. 111. Also W. Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 276.

88 See E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 95-114, 303-338. Also G. Wright, *France in Modern Times: From the Enlightenment to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), p. 313.

of (re-)founding a city as a substitute for Rome would last, or at least outlive him, since that had been the case in the past with several 'personal' capitals whose status was primarily dependent on the emperor's presence.⁸⁹ Diocletian wished to transform Nicomedia into 'another district of Rome' (*regio quaedam Urbis [...] aeternae*).⁹⁰ Galerius founded Felix Romuliana in *Dacia Ripensis* in order to function as his own 'Spalatum' (Diocletian's retirement residence in Dalmatia). Earlier in his reign, Constantine referred to Serdica as 'my Rome' (*Ἡ ἐμὴ Ρώμη Σαρδική ἐστίν*).⁹¹ Later, the western branch of the Valentinian dynasty (Gratian and Valentinian II) as well as the usurper Magnus Maximus (383-385) would have their own 'Rome' at Trier, where, a century earlier, Tetricus (270-274) ruled the Gallic Empire (260-274) along with his own Senate. Various cities of Northern Italy were also gaining importance already from the third century. Among them was Mediolanum, where Emperor Gallienus (253-268) had established his court, a city that would occasionally serve as imperial base during the fourth and early fifth centuries AD, and even smaller cities like Aquileia and Verona, which gained a disproportionate amount of attention from the mid-third century at a time when the primacy of Rome was still, theoretically, unchallenged.⁹²

The finalization of Constantinople as a permanent imperial capital would be a long process that would start with Constantius II (337-361) and only be completed by Theodosius I (379-395). Even the latter, in the aftermath of Adrianople (378), wished to move the see of imperial residence to Thessalonica, and it was only having been persuaded by Themistius that he finally settled in Constantinople in early 381.⁹³ It was Themistius who, during the previous years, insisted that Constantius II conduct frequent visits to Constantinople in order to secure the status of his father's foundation. At a time when Rome could be as important as a campaigning emperor, the frequency of imperial visits confirmed the city's place in the symbolic

89 See L. Grig and G. Kelly, 'Rome and Constantinople in Context' in L. Grig and G. Kelly (eds.) *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in late antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 3-30, 7.

90 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXII, 9.3). Also, Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 7.10.

91 See Anonymus post Dionem (Dio Continuatus), *frag.* 15.1.

92 See M. Grant, *From Rome to Constantinople: The Fifth Century AD* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 3-4.

93 See P. Heather and D. Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 218. Also Themistius, *Orat.* XIV,181.d.

geography of the Empire.⁹⁴ It has been suggested that Constantinople was designed to be a *New Rome* from its foundation. The testimony of Socrates, who mentions the existence of a Constantinian inscription on the *Strategion* that refers to the city as 'Second Rome', is presented as evidence, along with a Constantinian law that refers to Constantinople *quam aeterno nomine iubente deo donavimus*, and a poem by Publius Optatianus Porphyrius that mentions the city as *altera Roma*. In addition, the *populus Romanus* inscribed coins from the city's mints are considered as a deliberate attempt to make the city appear as (a model of) Rome.⁹⁵ I disagree with this interpretation, however, for the following reasons:

- a) The mention of the inscription by Socrates must be treated with caution, scepticism, and suspicion since it comes from such a chronologically late source, dated during the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), when the Constantinopolitan and Eastern court wished indeed to compare their city to Rome (if not to surpass it).⁹⁶
- b) As for the reference to Constantinople as the city of *aeterno nomine* in Constantinian legislation, I believe that this is at least a misinterpretation of a rather frequent late Roman imperial address that could result in a misleading conclusion. The phrase 'aeternitas mea' is a common post-Diocletianic form of imperial self-address and it appears in the narrative of Ammianus Marcellinus, where Constantius II is described as referring to himself as 'aeternitas mea' and signing the imperial documents with that phrase (*ut "Aeternitatem meam" aliquotiens subsereret ipse dictando scribendoque propria manu orbis totius se dominum appellaret*).⁹⁷ Therefore, the phrase *aeterno nomine* is not a reference to Rome as an eternal city, but rather to the eternity of Constantine's name, which was given to the city he (re-)founded. It was thus all about the narcissistic 'eternity' of Constantine, not of (any) Rome.
- c) Regarding the mention of *altera Roma* in the Porphyrius verse, we must consider that it was composed by someone who had fallen out of

94 See J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 54.

95 See Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* [Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία], I, 16.1. *Codex Theodosianus*, XIII, 5.7 (1 December 334). Porphyrius, *Carmen* 4.6 cited from L. Grig, G. Kelly, 'Rome and Constantinople in Context', p. 11.

96 See P. Van Nuffelen, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes and Eastern Triumphalism' in C. Kelly (ed.) *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 130-152.

97 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XV, 1.3.



imperial favour and was attempting to regain it by trying to maximize the deeds of the emperor.⁹⁸ The fact that he compares Constantine's foundation to Rome does not reveal whether or not this had been the emperor's intention as well, since what mattered most to the author was to compliment the ruler. In fact, his choice to characterize the city as another Rome would be no praise at all if this was an established imperial policy at the time. On the contrary, Porphyrius must have wished to maximize praise for Constantine by using a comparison that might have appeared rather exaggerated and paradoxical since no city could ever reach the status of Rome.

- d) Lastly, the 'Populus Romanus' motto inscribed on Constantinopolitan coins is a rather abstract reference, which, by the early fourth century, had come to mean citizens/subjects and was mostly used in a general context. Julian, for instance, in one of his epistles, addresses the people of Alexandria as 'fellow citizens' (*τοῖς ἐμοῖς πολίταις Ἀλεξανδρεῦσιν*). This did not make Julian an Alexandrian, nor did it upgrade the Alexandrian *populus* in comparison to the inhabitants of any other city.⁹⁹ So, a 'Populus Romanus' inscription outside Rome in the fourth century could mean anything or nothing in particular.

Consequently, there is no solid evidence for understanding or decoding Constantine's agenda about the role, function, and status of his new city, which thus remains a mystery. Here, however, our concern is not evidence of Constantinopolitan ambitions to match Rome, but rather the first time when news of such intentions reached the Senate and the people of the *eternal* city. It appears that the first occasion when such rhetoric appears to have posed a threat to the symbolic and privileged position Rome enjoyed in the Empire was during the imperial *adventus* of 357, during an encounter with representatives of 'another' Senate. The other terminus that consolidates the old capital's loss of unique status was the first clear and confirmed mention of Constantinople as *New Rome* in the acts of the synod of 381, which cannot be disputed or interpreted otherwise.

Septimius Severus (193-211) was the first late Roman emperor to realize the importance of Byzantium's location during his conflict with Pescenius Niger, a city he could not by-pass, standing in the frontier zone between

98 See T. D. Barnes, 'Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius', *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 96, no. 2 (Summer, 1975), pp. 173-186, 174-175.

99 See Julian, ep. 60, 380d.

the two imperial pretenders' territories.¹⁰⁰ Later, Licinius preferred to settle there instead of Nicomedia and perhaps Constantine, after his victory over his former imperial colleague and, indeed, he established his authority there and renamed in a bid to cast Licinius's memory to oblivion.¹⁰¹ He did the same in Rome, by imposing his signature on all monuments of Maxentius (306-312), although he could not alter the name of the city.¹⁰² Rome must have been a rather inhospitable place for him given that, after the Milvian Bridge (312), he had been in the awkward position of being in control of a city that had hoped rather for the victory of Maxentius, who had been the most 'Roman' emperor of his time (spending his entire reign within the *pomerium* of Rome, naming his son Romulus, and promoting his image as *conservator Urbis*. This offers a glimpse of his connection to the eternal city that survived the subsequent waves of Constantinian propaganda about the 'tyrant' of Rome).¹⁰³ Constantinople would be the city of Constantine's victory over Licinius; it was to stand as his own 'Nicompolis' for his own 'Actium'.

Constantinople was a city designed as Rome ought to be, according to fourth-century post-tetrarchic autocratic standards, with no republican past or annoying ritual protocols of the *principatus* era and civilian forms of attitude, a city adjusted to the late Roman militaristic style. Despite that fact, the new city was designed with a utopian planning that indicated what Rome should be, at least according to the imperial aims and needs of the time. Initially, this meant a palace and a circus with an Egyptian obelisk and a forum. In its early phase, Constantinople would grow up within the

100 See Dio Cassius, *Roman History* [Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία], LXXIV, 6-14; Herodian, *History of the Empire* [Τῆς μετὰ Μάρκον βασιλείας Ἱστορία], II, 14, III, 6. Also G. Dagron, *Η Γέννηση Μιας Πρωτεύουσας: Η Κωνσταντινούπολη και οι Θεσμοί της (330-451)*, (Athens: MIET, 2009), p. 17; and R. Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople: Rewriting Roman History during Late Antiquity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), p. 51.

101 D.J. Georgacas, 'The Names of Constantinople', p. 355.

102 See L. Kerr, 'A Topography of Death: The buildings of the emperor Maxentius on the Via Appia, Rome', M. Carruthers et al. (eds.) *Eleventh Annual Proceedings of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 24-33. Also J. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 76-90; and G. Kalas, *The Restoration of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity: Transforming the Public Space* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015), pp. 47-54.

103 See R. Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 45. Also R. MacMullen, *Constantine* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 88, M. Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae: Studies in the Politics and Propaganda of the Emperor Maxentius* (Stockholm: Paul Aströms, 1994); and J. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century*, pp. 43-63.

ideological territory of Rome.¹⁰⁴ Yet, this new personal capital, as a new city, lacked the antiquity of the institutions of Rome, not to mention the regionalism and civic pride shared by the citizens of the *eternal city*. The fact that Constantine was buried there must have surprised the citizens of Rome. We do not know whether this was according to his personal wish or not but the preparation of a circular mausoleum for himself at Rome, attached to St Marcellinus and Peter's church outside the city walls, where his mother Helena was buried, certainly raises some questions. Additionally, the bodies of his two daughters, Constantia and Helena, were also placed in a mausoleum next to the church of St Agnes. We are not obliged to trust the account of Eusebius that Constantine had prepared a place for himself in the Constantinopolitan church of the Holy Apostles.¹⁰⁵ After all, not all the emperors that followed him were buried at Constantinople (the first one to die in the city would be Arcadius (395-408)). It seems that the imperial visit of 326 to Rome and its unhappy outcome might have caused a change of plans. The uncomfortable relationship between Constantine and the *populus Romanus* almost turned to open hostility due to the emperor's refusal to comply with the protocol and the politically correct attitude regarding the religious obligations of an emperor at Rome. Constantine openly objected to such matters for reasons related to his 'personal' religion and anti-sacrificial beliefs, which was quite a strong trend in late Roman polytheism / non-Christian monotheism.¹⁰⁶ It seems that after this visit, his personal foundation of Constantinople gained a new importance as the place where he could set the rules of conduct without the annoying presence of the ever-demanding *populus Romanus*. Seen from that point of view, the function that Constantinople came to have was, to an extent, the outcome of Constantine's psychological repression.

Constantius II became the institutional architect of Constantinople with the establishment of a Senate and a *Praefectus Urbi* in imitation of Rome. The eastern Senate would have a purely ceremonial role since it did not represent any institutional continuity and it did not stand as a guardian of ancestral customs as it did in Rome. In fact, it was just a simple upgrade of the pre-existing *comitium* of the city that already functioned under Constantine and could potentially play the role of a Senate as long as the emperor was

104 See B. Ward-Perkins, 'Constantinople: A City and its Ideological Territory', G. P. Brogiolo, N. Gauthier and N. Christie (eds.) *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 325-345, 325-326.

105 See Eusebius, *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* [*Βίος Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου*], 4.58-60. Also R. Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, pp. 58-59.

106 See D. Bowder, *The Age of Constantine and Julian* (London: Elek, 1978), p. 34.

residing there. Nevertheless, the *comitium* of Constantinople was in no way considered a Senate; its members had the title of *clari*, not of *clarissimi*, which reveals that Constantine had no intention of establishing a second Senate.¹⁰⁷ The founding of a second Senate and the meeting of its representatives with their western counterparts during the *adventus* of 357 must have been a rather awkward *momentum*, as we will see in the relevant chapter. Again, Themistius would try to bridge the gap of legitimacy and antiquity that separated the two institutional bodies. For Rome, the *praefectura urbis* was primarily an Augustan institution with its own history, which was later modified by Septimius Severus and was linked to its urban history as a necessity. On the contrary, it was a luxury for Constantinople, just another artificial institution in order to match Rome.¹⁰⁸ The first *praefectus urbi* of Constantinople was Honoratus, in 359, succeeding the last proconsul of the city, none other than Themistius himself. This is a milestone date since, after 359, there were no longer institutional differences or inequalities between Rome and Constantinople.¹⁰⁹

Themistius had a significant role to play in promoting the new foundation as *daughter* of Constantine, *sister* to Constantius II, and *mother of kingship* (*μητέρα τῆς βασιλείας*), which would guarantee the continuation of the legitimacy of the Constantinian dynasty.¹¹⁰ Of course, there was no intention to downgrade Rome, as we will see in the chapter on the *adventus* of Constantius, but probably their vision was that of a united Empire under a single monarch but with a dual head (two capitals). The closest similar example in modern history is the dual system of rule in the post-1867 *Compromise* (*Ausgleich*) in Habsburg Austria, a system of corporative federalism with two parliaments (one in Vienna, the other at Budapest) and two major administrative divisions (Austria-Hungary) under a single monarch (Franz-Joseph, 1848-1916).¹¹¹ The new capital still required a *new history*, a new discourse to legitimize its status. Later, in the sixth century, Hesychius would provide that new past with a narrative linking the history of

107 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

108 See G. Dagron, *Η Γέννηση μιας Πρωτεύουσας*, p. 42. Also A. Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), pp. vii-viii.

109 G. Dagron, *Η Γέννηση μιας Πρωτεύουσας*, p. 258.

110 See Themistius, *Orat.* III, 40.c, IV, 53.a-c, 58.b, 59.a-b. Also R. J. Panella, *The Private Orations of Themistius* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 2.

111 See R. W. Seton-Watson, 'The Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 19.53/54(1939), pp. 123-40. Also L. C. Tihany, (1969), 'The Austro-Hungarian Compromise, 1867-1918: A Half Century of Diagnosis; Fifty Years of Post-Mortem', *Central European History* vol. 2.2 (1969), pp. 114-38.

Constantinople to Troy, Rome, and Byzantium, and associating the city with both Greek culture and Roman rule.¹¹² Back in the fourth century, however, there was an issue of legitimacy regarding the status of the eastern capital, something that Themistius attempted to smooth by defining the mutual relationship of the two cities as *ἀνανέωσις* (renewal), with Rome being the metropolis of Constantinople and not Byzantium of the Megarians. In doing so, he admitted that the foundation of Constantine had no past of its own; moreover, it did not need a past since its metropolis was the metropolis of the world. While Rome claimed its legitimacy from its antiquity, the new capital would do so by being exactly the opposite, a new foundation of the *vetus* Rome. This dual scheme of *aeternitas* and *rejuvenatio*, i.e. *continuity* and *change*, encapsulated the motif of a minimum of change in order to secure continuity and legitimize Constantinople as a twin capital.¹¹³

This perception of the *eternity* of Rome in the east was not a fourth century novelty. It was based upon a pre-existing regional 'mutation' of Rome's eternity by a specific theological interpretation.¹¹⁴ While the concept of the personified Rome had been linked to stability and integrity by ageing, a literary scheme popular with Roman audiences (as Symmachus and Ammianus Marcellinus portrayed in their works), the eastern provinces, and especially Egypt, produced a new theme of rejuvenation/rebirth of the eternity of Rome that had deep theological roots extending as far back as the Osiris mythological circle. From that point of view, the discourse of an ever-rejuvenating Rome was the *interpretatio aegyptica* of the representation of eternal Rome's idea.¹¹⁵ It seems that the cult of Αἰών (Aion) in Alexandria, a personification of the abstract philosophical concept of eternity, was associated at some point with imperial authority and the depictions on coinage from the Antonine era portraying Aion and phoenix (as a symbol of rebirth) confirm this.¹¹⁶ Thus, the gradual association of Aion with the eternity of Roman authority, which also encapsulated transformation and rejuvenation, was introduced. Also, an inscription by Eleusis appears to

112 R. Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, p. 68. Also G. Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire: Études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984).

113 See Table 2, p. 219

114 See G. W. Bowersock, *Ο Ελληνισμός στην Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα* (Athens: MIET, 2000), pp. 55-60.

115 G. W. Bowersock, *Ο Ελληνισμός στην Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα*, p. 59.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 55. Also F. Cummont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans* (New York: Dover, 1960), pp. 58-62; J. R. Fears, 'The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.17.2 (1981), p. 939; I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 310-311; and J. Fossum, 'The Myth of the Eternal Rebirth: Critical Notes on G. W. Bowersock, Hellenism in Late Antiquity', *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Aug., 1999), pp. 305-315.

identify Aion with the eternity and the durability of Roman authority (<Αἰὼνα εἰς κράτος Ῥώμης καὶ διαμονὴν μυστηρίων. Αἰὼν ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς αἰεὶ φύσει θείαι μένων κόσμος τε εἰς κατὰ τὰ αὐτά, ὁποῖος ἔστι καὶ ἦν καὶ ἔσται, ἀρχὴν μεσότητα τέλος οὐκ ἔχων, μεταβολῆς ἀμέτοχος, θείας φύσεως ἐργάτης αἰωνίου πάντα.>).¹¹⁷ Similar to that context is the inscription that Plutarch preserved in his work *on Isis and Osiris* (*Περὶ Ἰσιδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος*) which was visible at the site of the temple of Neith (a deity identified to Isis and Minerva/Athena) at Sais (ἐγὼ εἶμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸς καὶ ὄν καὶ ἐσόμενον καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν πέπλον οὐδεὶς πω θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν).¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Nonnus, described Aion in the *Dionysiaca* (*Διονυσιακά*) epic poem as rejuvenating like a snake that emerges from its old skin (Αἰὼν, | μάντις ἐπεσομένων, ὅτι γήραος ἄχθος ἀμείβων, | ὡς ὄφρις ἀδρανέων φολίδων σπείρημα τινάξας, | ἔμπαλιν ἠβήσειε λελουμένος οἶδμασι θεσμών: | θεσπεσίην δὲ θύγατρα λοχευομένης Ἀφροδίτης / σύνθροον ἐκρούσαντο μέλος τετράζυγες ὦραι).¹¹⁹ Additionally, the fact that Aion is often depicted in the company of an earth or mother goddess like Tellus or Cybele (see the artwork of the Parabiago plate), who are also associated with the figure of a personified Rome, confirms the influence of the archetype of that deity in an eastern version of a *Roma* gaining eternity by rejuvenation.¹²⁰ After all, Claudian, who first introduced the image of a rejuvenated *Roma* to the west, was an Alexandrian Greek.

Claudian portrayed the personified *Roma* as rejuvenating (*meliore iuventa*) after the suppression of Gildo's rebellion. She reclaimed her old strength and her hair ceased to be grey, a description of the consequences of Gildo's defeat that the audience totally understood.¹²¹ Prudentius portrayed a similar version of a rejuvenated *Roma* (despite his initial criticism of her cult)¹²² but it was only because so many of her old senatorial families (*sanguine prisco*) – the *excellentior ordo* to which the *urbs* owed its *status* – had been converted to Christianity that the goddess was now permanently elevated.¹²³

117 See *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (3rd edition) <*Inscriptiones Graecae* II 4705> <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/7003?&bookid=5&location=7> [accessed 9/8/2017].

118 See Plutarch, *Περὶ Ἰσιδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος*, 8.c

119 See Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* [*Διονυσιακά*], 41.180–184.

120 See R. E. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Ashgate, 2004), p. 146; J. A. Ezquerra, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation, and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele* (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), p. 140; and G. S. Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis* (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 1985), p. 99.

121 See P. G. Christiansen, *The Use of Images by Claudius Claudianus* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), p. 52.

122 See Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, I, 217–25.

123 Prudentius, *Contra Sym.* I, 569–570 and II, 655.

While (Old) Rome was structuring its prestige, validity, and venerability to its *aeternitas*, Constantinople would base its legitimacy in the concept of the everlasting rebirth of Rome as a timeless and portable symbol.¹²⁴ Menander Rhetor advised his contemporary panegyrists-in-the-making that they could use the concept of age and youth personified when the city to be praised has older neighbours (*αἱ μὲν κεκμηκάσαι χρόνῳ, ἢ δ' ἀνθρῆι*).¹²⁵ Traditionally, the idea of an *aged Rome*, as in the case of Ammianus Marcellinus's description ([Roma] *vergens in senium*), was part of a dialectic of authority and superiority that justified the privileged position of the eternal city in the cosmos.¹²⁶ The everlasting duration of Rome and its Empire would be bound to the repeating circles of crisis and restoration, an idea that Rutilius Namatianus would later promote in his *De Reditu Suo*.¹²⁷

The next key date in relation to the institutional equilibrium between Rome and Constantinople is the upgrading of the authority of the Constantinopolitan Christian bishop and the declaration of the Eastern Capital as *New Rome* in the Acts of the Council of 381.¹²⁸ It was a synod with no representatives from (Old) Rome, since it included only bishops within the jurisdiction of Theodosius I (at that time, emperor only in the East). The third synodic canon elevated Constantinople to the status of a *New Rome* and, from that point, its bishop would hold *τὰ πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς*, since his city comes second after Rome.¹²⁹ Later, at the synod of Chalcedon (451), the third canon of the Council of 381 would be reaffirmed by adding that 'the city that is honoured with the emperorship and the (second) senate enjoys equal privileges with the Old Rome.'¹³⁰ The Acts of the 381 synod placed the new bishop of Constantinople, Nectarius (381-397), in a privileged position since its see had now replaced the old dual 'leadership' of the Christian church, which, until then, Rome had shared with Alexandria. This position of confidence allowed Nectarius to be diplomatic and tolerant towards the other churches and even 'heretics', marking a period of internal peace in

124 See Constantinos Manasses, *Σύνοψις Χρονική*, 2313-2332. Also I. Karagiannopoulos, *Το Βυζαντινὸ Κράτος* (Thessalonica: Vaniias, 2001), p. 286.

125 See Menander Rhetor 350. 20 in D. A. Russel and N. G. Wilson (eds.) *Menander Rhetor: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 40.

126 See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XIV, vi, 4. Also Burgersdijk D. W. P., Van Waarden J. A., *Emperors and Historiography: Collected Essays on the Literature of the Roman Empire by Daniel Den Hengst* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 264.

127 See Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, I, 139-140.

128 See C. Freeman, *AD 381: Heretics, Pagans and the Dawn of the Monotheistic State* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2009), pp. 91-104.

129 G. Dagron, *Η Γέννηση μίας Πρωτεύουσας*, p. 521.

130 J. Pelikan, *The Excellent Empire*, pp. 76-77.

ecclesiastical matters. But most importantly, as G. Dagron summarized in his *Naissance d'une Capitale* (1984), 'up until 381 "orthodox" meant complying with the "doctrine" of Nicaea (325), after the synod of 381 meant agreeing with Nectarius.'¹³¹ Notwithstanding the concerns of the church of Rome during that period, the authority of the *episcopus Romanus* was overshadowed by someone closer to home, the bishop Ambrose of Milan (374-397), who took advantage the imperial see being moved into his bishopric (until 387) during the reign of Valentinian II (375-392) in order to impose his own agenda and upgrade his see.¹³²

vii Conceptualization and Contextualization of Terms

At this point, there is a need to devote some space to explaining certain terms that will recur in the following chapters. I will elaborate regarding the context in which I use them and provide some justification about my intention to do so. Firstly, the emphasis on Rome as an urban archetype of Utopia has already been explained in the first two sections of the introduction, but here it is necessary to clarify the interrelation between the concepts of Rome and Utopia, which will recur throughout this book. Indeed, by attempting to do so I am not only using a necessary anachronism, but I am also moving into rather uncharted territory, into what appears to be a gap in the modern bibliography on Utopian Studies, which is generally dominated by the assumption that there is a break of two thousand years between Plato's *Republic* and Thomas More's *Utopia*, a lacuna in political idealism, planning and vision, overshadowed by the Christian eschatological concept of the *New Jerusalem*. Thus, traces of utopian thought in the period between the two monumental works of Western political thought are generally ignored by modern authors like L. Mumford, M.-L. Berneri, F. and F. Manuel, and R. Levitas, who chose to skip the fifteen centuries between Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, claiming a break in utopian political thinking due to the dominance of Christian Eschatology.¹³³ In doing so, however, they ignored the potential created by the values and idealism of the late antique mind. A chance for an alternative present and future in an age of political, social,

131 G. Dagron, *Η Γέννηση μιας Πρωτεύουσας*, p. 517.

132 C. Freeman, *AD 381: Heretics, Pagans and the Dawn of the Monotheistic State*, pp. 105-116.

133 See L. Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (New York: Harrap, 1922); M. L. Berneri, *Journey Through Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1950); F.E. Manuel and F. P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979); and R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990).



and religious transition was not far from the late Roman imagination, as we will see in the chapter on Augustine and his *City of God*.

The connection between City and Utopia had already been established in Plato's *Commonwealth* (*Πολιτεία*), where a strong urban archetype dominated political idealism. The articulation/manifestation of utopian vision through an urban archetype continued in the works of the *Second Sophistic* in the second and early third centuries AD, when the *laudatio Urbis/ekphrasis* was already an established literary genre and, like many other cities, Rome soon fitted in. Since the Antonine era, the archetype of Utopia as a condition of ideal living/ideal city-scape had been synonymous with the city of Rome and its Empire. For enthusiasts like Aelius Aristides, the old Hellenistic descriptions of isolated insular societies beyond the *Orbis Romanus* made no sense at all, since Rome brought the ideal condition to the *Here and Now*. Utopia had abandoned the fringes of the Hellenistic maps and geographical treatises and resettled within the Roman imperial space; the *Universal Empire* seemed to have reached the ideal state and form where no change was needed.¹³⁴ The strong connection between City and Utopia was, of course, transplanted through Neoplatonism in late antique thought.¹³⁵ By Augustine's time (354-430), the term *civitas* had adopted a more complex content beyond the obvious meaning; its importance had shifted from the place, to the people (*civitas, quae nihil est aliud quam hominum multitudine aliquot societatis vincula conligata*).¹³⁶

The term 'Utopia(n)' may be another anachronism, since it was invented by Thomas More (*De optimo rei publicae deque nova insula Utopia* – 1516) from the Greek: οὐ ('not') and τόπος ('place') in order to use it in a rather humoristic or ironic context. Utopia, however, never appeared as a non-existent, imaginary society before modern times; its purpose was to depict the ideal, not the impossible.¹³⁷ The impossibility of the state of perfection

¹³⁴ See R. Evans, *Utopia Antiqua*, pp. 8, 13.

¹³⁵ See D. J. O' Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 87-98.

¹³⁶ See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XV, 8. Also P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), pp. 312-319; J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study of Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 102-15.

¹³⁷ See M. Abensour, *L'Utopie de Thomas More à Walter Benjamin* (Paris: sens et tonka, 2002), pp. 14-15. Also E. Bloch, T. W. Adorno, *Κάτι Λείπει* (Athens: Έρασμος, 2000), p. 11; M. Buber, *Μονοπάτια στην Ουτοπία* (Athens: Νησιδες, 2000), p. 18; E. Bloch, *L'Esprit de l'Utopie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 11; S. Rozanis, *Τρία Κείμενα για την Ουτοπία: Thomas More Ουτοπία, Francis Bacon Νέα Ατλαντίς, Henry Neville Η Νήσος των Πάιν* (Athens: Μεταίχμιο, 2007), pp. 9-15; T. Paquot, *Η Ουτοπία ή το παγιδευμένο ιδεώδες* (Athens: Scripta, 1998), pp. 29-31.

is rather a modern point of view.¹³⁸ The literature of antiquity appears to have a far more optimistic view of the ideal as something that deserves to be achieved. The fact that this pattern of thought kept re-emerging towards the late Empire seemed to mean that the utopian context of Rome as an idea was something that the people, or at least the intelligentsia, needed. The fourth century realities that presented multiple intellectual and ideological paths appear to share similarities with More's times (also an era of transition) in challenging pre-existing beliefs and searching for new potentials.

Inevitably, the term 'utopia' will be used in the following pages to describe an abstract place/condition, ideally perfect in respect of laws and customs, which is not that far away from the collective representations of the pre-classical 'golden age' concept of return to the *Aetas Aurea* that was constantly re-emerging in Classical and post-Classical thought. From that point of view, utopia functioned as some kind of goal and, in that scope, Prudentius and Augustine used the idea of Rome as an agent of change in order to reach an ideal mental state. Therefore, utopia functioned as means to an end. Oscar Wilde summarized it better when he said that 'a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias.'¹³⁹ The notion of moving forwards by looking backwards was not something theoretical; it was a sense of a cultural and mental 'revolution', similar to the concept of the return to the *aetas aurea* that Augustus had unleashed back in the first century.¹⁴⁰ In the frame of this work, progress might seem to occur as another anachronistic concept, but I suggest that we perceive it more like a pattern of thought that alters and evolves according to the spiritual and political needs of different periods. When (the personified) Roma is described, for instance, as *vergens in senium* (ageing) or rejuvenating, this probably reflects the need for change or is a signal that it was already happening. Evolution and continuity offered validity; after all, the quality of adaptability made the idea of Rome timeless, by simultaneously changing over time and yet

138 See R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, p. 3.

139 See O. Wilde, 'The Soul of Man under Socialism', *Selected Essays and Poems* (London: Penguin, 1954), p. 34.

140 P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, pp. 224-254. Also R. Heinberg, *Memories and Visions of Paradise: Exploring the Universal Myth of a Lost Golden Age* (Los Angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher, 1989), pp. 46-50, 116-17; and A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), pp. 23-102.

remaining the same. Therefore, utopianism and evolution did not occur as an accident in late Roman thought but as a necessity.

Another term that will be repeated several times in what follows is the 'archetype', a word originating from the field of Psychology. Carl-Gustav Jung introduced it in his essay *Instinct and the Unconscious* (1919) in order to describe a collectively inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought, or image that constantly recurred as a symbol or motif in various fields, from literature and arts to the collective unconscious. It is history, culture, and personal context that shape these manifest representations thereby giving them their specific content. These images and motifs are more precisely called archetypal images.¹⁴¹ I adopt this term since it mirrors best the re-occurring image of an epitomized or personified Rome in late Roman literature.¹⁴²

A terminology that also needs clarification, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings or misinterpretations, is the use of concepts such as *patria*/patriotism/fatherland and the rather problematic nature of how the late antique Roman understood his devotion to (Rome as) *patria communis*. The rather anachronistic terms 'fatherland' and 'patriotism' are used for convenience, in order to describe more accurately terms like 'patria' and devotion to the 'mos maiorum', which they must not be confused with. The modern meaning of these terms originates from their radical reshaping and abuse by nationalist movements in Europe during the last three centuries. To a contemporary audience, the term 'fatherland' carries a particular ideological and cultural burden quite different from what the ancients perceived when coming across to the term 'patria'. This makes the use of it rather complicated and demands an explanation, at least regarding its context, since it will appear multiple times in this work. Reflecting from our modern standpoint, in the shadows of the Enlightenment and nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism(s), we need to trace what the Romans understood when they used the term 'patria'. Its primal meaning had, of course, been an expression of regionalism, indicating a place of birth together with the specific cultural burden that this geographical location implied. The concept of fatherland had a very specific and limited place within the walls of the Greek city-states, where the term *πατρίς* originated.

141 See A. Stevens, 'The Archetypes', R. K. Papadopoulos (ed.) *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology: Theory, Practice and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 74-93.

142 See M. Roberts, 'Rome Personified, Rome Epitomized: Representations of Rome in the poetry of the early fifth century', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 122, No. 4 (Winter, 2001), pp. 533-565.

The early Romans shared similar perceptions, at a time when their territorial domain was no larger than that of a classical Greek *polis* and the borders of the Roman domain were identical to the archaic *ager Romanus* (roughly speaking, the defined area surrounding the city of Rome, which was under the jurisdiction of Roman municipal authorities).¹⁴³ Within the cosmopolitanism of the late Hellenistic era, however, and the rapid expansion of the Roman state and the annexation of other cultures after consecutive wars and occasional hard-won victories, the relationship between the individual and the state and what the sense of devotion to the *patria* was, began to adopt new meanings.

Patriotism, in the sense of an attachment to a homeland, can be viewed through the lens of different features relating to one's homeland, including ethnic, cultural, political, or historical aspects. During the Augustan era, this devotion to the fatherland was something far more complicated and, in a sense, more familiar to our contemporary understanding of what devotion to a fatherland is. In a marble replica of an Augustan *clipeus virtutis* (i.e. literally meaning 'shield of virtue/bravery', a decorative shield awarded to illustrious men in recognition of their valour/services during a crucial event or due to their acts of devotion to the state or authorities) from Arles (26 BC), the dedicator leaves us with no doubt about how he perceives himself and also Augustus in relation to the Roman *patria*: 'Virtutis, clementiamque, iustitiae pietatisque erga deos patriamque.'¹⁴⁴ The appearance of the *erga deos patriamque* ('for Gods and Country') reveals not only the importance of the role and cause of the *princeps*, but also the new complicated context of the term *patria*, which already resembles the 'For God, King, and Country' motto that we encounter today on every memorial to the *Unknown Soldier*, not to mention the famous verse *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* by Horace.¹⁴⁵ It signifies the beginning of a more complicated relationship between the individual and society governed by a set of values that defined the fatherland beyond any obvious geographical/regional limits.

By the late fourth century, we read in the *Dicta Catonis* (a collection of sayings attributed to Cato by an anonymous fourth-century author), among other moral supposed sayings of Cato, the maxim 'pugna pro patria' ('fight for fatherland'), which, by the fourth century, was judged to be important enough and appropriate to be said by none other than the famous Roman

143 See R. E. A. Palmer, *The Archaic Community of The Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 5-9, 26-34.

144 See P. Zanker, *Ο Αύγουστος και η Δύναμη των Εικόνων*, pp. 135-136.

145 See Horace, *Carmina*, III, 2.13.

politician of the Republican era.¹⁴⁶ Apparently, a similar Greek version survived in the form of a ‘Delphic’ maxim, *Θνήσκει ὑπέρ πατρίδος* (‘die for fatherland’), attributed by Stobaeus to Periander, tyrant of Corinth (627-585BC).¹⁴⁷ However, the evolution of the term’s context is neither clear, nor linear, since, in the late sixth century AD, the term *patriota* still means ‘countryman’ (derived from the Greek *πατριώτης*, i.e. defining someone from the same country of origin).¹⁴⁸ I always use this term in the context of a sense of devotion to the civic virtues and ideals of *Romanitas* as perceived by Augustan poets and mirroring the historical and cultural uniqueness of the city of Rome. This pattern of thought heavily influenced late-fourth-century aristocratic audiences. Despite its abstract and allusive nature, however, a devotion to Roman *patria* appears to gain a degree of precision within the chronological limits of the period covered in this book (c. 357-417). While the idea of a personified Roma was becoming standardized as a literary *topos*, the idea of Rome as a notion of patriotism was also gaining ground, surpassing any geographic or regional limitations and resulting to a more abstract expression of portable concepts that remained open to everyone (see section iii). The personification of Rome and the embodiment and encapsulation of a set of ideals and values not necessarily related to the Roman urban landscape (even if they originated there) based on the figure of *Dea Roma* was a manifestation of the *Romanitas* as a universal idea and component of collective and individual provincial identities. Of course, it was not a linear or easily defined transformation, and we cannot be sure about how these ideas were perceived or functioned outside the narrow world of the *intelligentsia*; after all, ‘a history of transformation cannot seek certainties.’¹⁴⁹ As summarized by C. Ando, the existence of a *communis patria* relied not on a genuine identity of patriotic sentiments between people, but on their faith in the existence of such an identity.¹⁵⁰ By the fourth century, Rome had been identified primarily with a set of concepts articulated by the notion of universality, without being clear about whether this was the result of an evolution inwards or outwards (i.e. whether this notion appeared in the provinces and later reached Rome, or vice versa).

This portable *Romanitas* had been transplanted even in the Greek East with its particularly strong sense of a pre-existing cultural identity. The Greek

146 See *Dicta Catonis*, Prologus, I, 23.

147 Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, Περί Φρονήσεως, III, 8

148 See Gregory, *Epistulae*, 8, 37.

149 C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, p. 19.

150 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.



elites, however, perceived it more as an asset than a necessity and its spread was based not on imposition but on the comfort of an individual's preference. This local consensus was a key factor in the spread of *Romanitas* as an identity coexisting with cultural heritage/background.¹⁵¹ The closest modern example is the distinct yet co-existing elements of American citizenship and ethnic heritage that individuals or groups in the United States share. It is the participation in aspects of public life like the celebrations of national holidays such as Thanksgiving that consist of a portable set of American values and ideals open to anyone, which, in turn, allowed first-generation immigrants to build an attachment to the dominant culture. Likewise, the conducting of Roman festivals and participation in them that promoted the organization of private and public life *more Romano* (i.e. in Roman style) helped the provincial elites to re-organize their routine according to the ritual time of the Roman calendar without neglecting their own cultural background. Pliny the Younger, for instance, during his years of service in Asia Minor, described how Greeks offered the *toga virilis* to their sons and celebrated the *saturnalia*.¹⁵² No matter what their motives, the fact that they behaved as such means that they were confident in the existence of a portable set of values that epitomized *Romanitas*. Yet, this preferential attachment within the social networks of the provincial elites was no obstacle to expressing their regional/local patriotism. Aelius Aristides described the label of 'Roman' as an equal and parallel to any regional labels (το Ῥωμαῖον εἶναι ἐποίησατε οὐ πόλεως ἀλλὰ γένους ὄνομα κοῖνου τινος, καὶ τοῦτον οὐχ ἕνός τῶν πάντων, ἀλλ' ἀντιρρόπου πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς).¹⁵³ Despite the fact that the Greek orator portrays the expansion of Roman identity in an almost colonial *mission civilisatrice* context (if we could anachronistically use a term from the field of Colonial Studies), the choice of a common name without omitting but balancing all the rest transformed *Romanitas* into a rather attractive concept, even for the Greeks, who still perceived their city-states as independent but in partnership with the Roman people (*socii populi Romani*) and still considered Rome a city-state in what appeared to be an Empire of confederate cities.¹⁵⁴ When, in 221-222 AD, for instance, several Greek cities

151 See P. Veyne, *Η Ελληνιστοκρατική Αυτοκρατορία* (Athens: Εστία, 2013), pp. 207-210.

152 See Pliny, *Epistulae*, 10. 116. Also C. Vout, 'The Myth of the Toga: Understanding the History of Roman Dress' in *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Oct., 1996), pp. 204-220, 213-218.

153 Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* [Ῥώμης ἐγκώμιον], 63.

154 See K. Harl, *Political Attitudes of Rome's Eastern Provinces in the Third Century AD*, (Ann Arbor, MI, Univ. Microfilms Internat, 1978), p. 301; and C. Ando, 'Was Rome a Polis?' *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Apr. 1999), pp. 5-34; A. L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998);

of the Peloponnesus sent an embassy to Emperor Elagabalus (218-222AD), they did so as members of the Achaean League (*Κοινὸν Ἀχαιῶν*), preserving the old mindset of self-definition beyond labels.¹⁵⁵ Here, however, we are not going to deal with the provincial expression(s) of Romanitas unless there is a strong urban archetype of the city of Rome dominating it. From that point of view, *Romanitas* had a dual nature, one for the provincials and one for the Romans of Rome, whose sense of uniqueness as such was an unreachable frontier, a separate, privileged identity and heritage that they were unwilling to share with anyone else outside the eternal city.¹⁵⁶

The expansion of the title of the *vir clarissimus* as an award for provincial elites for service in public offices and, introduced by Constantine's reforms, might have made the aristocracy appear as a legally defined class. However, the nobility of Rome never perceived their identity in terms of a legal definition, but rather judged it based on the contribution their families made to the glory of the city. Their social status was regulated by themselves and not by imperial legislation.¹⁵⁷ They had no need to approach any emperor; on the contrary, the latter had to approach them and offer offices in order to consolidate his authority in Italy and the western provinces by collaborating with the class that considered itself as the *noblissimi humani generis* and *pars mellior humani generis* (i.e. the noblest/best part of the human race).¹⁵⁸ It was that special distinction, based on the historical and cultural uniqueness of their city, which was their powerbase, source of status, and field of conducting politics and expanding influence; a place where the post-Constantinian *noblesse de robe* had little space to manoeuvre.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, the use of the term *manifest destiny* is necessary in order to establish the teleological context in which Augustan literature framed the destiny of Rome using mythological images and references. This notion became even stronger in late antiquity, especially in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, when aristocrats paid particular attention to preserving and editing Augustan literature. Initially, manifest destiny was coined in the

D. Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice: Le rôle de l'histoire coloniale dans la construction de l'identité politique française* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2008); and M. Falser, *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery* (New York: Springer, 2015).

155 See <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/3309> <*Inscriptiones Graecae* I-III Attica, IG II 1094> [accessed 2/8/2017].

156 P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, pp. 93-96.

157 See C. Badel, *La noblesse de l'Empire Romain: Les masques et la vertu* (Seysssel: Hamp Vallon, 2005), pp. 12, 65-105, 188.

158 Symmachus, Or. VI,1 and ep. 1.52. 9ad

159 See R. L. Testa, *Senatori, popolo, papi: Il Governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani*, (Bari: Edipuglia, 2004), pp. 361-364.



nineteenth-century United States in order to encapsulate the belief that American people and institutions had special virtues and to propagate the country's 'mission' to expand westwards. This concept represented the US as a 'young' state and nation that would be better articulated not by the remembrance of a glorious past, but by a 'metaphysical' belief that the achievements of the American people still lie in the future.¹⁶⁰ This was a reverse legitimization of the existence of an identity in contrast to the national uprisings in Europe during the century that followed. The concept was introduced by the newspaper editor John O' Sullivan in 1845, who described the essence of this manifest destiny while arguing for the annexation of the Republic of Texas.¹⁶¹ In a similar way, there was already a belief in the Hellenistic era of Roman exceptionalism and a 'mission' to expand the limits of the Empire until it incorporated the entire world. Polybius first understood the inevitable dominance of Rome (*Ρωμαίων ὑπεροχήν*) and invented a theoretical construction to prove that this was not an outcome shaped by luck.¹⁶² He portrayed the Achaean leader Philopoemen (in Roman imperial times called the "last of the Greeks") as admitting that an annexation by Rome was simply a matter of time and that what was at stake was whether this would be a smooth or painful transition to the new order of things (*ὅτι μὲν γὰρ ἤξει ποτὲ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ὁ καιρὸς οὗτος, ἐν ᾧ δεήσει ποιεῖν κατ' ἀνάγκην πᾶν τὸ παραγγελλόμενον, σαφῶς ἔφη γιγνώσκειν ἄλλὰ πότερα τοῦτον ὡς τάχιστα τις ἂν ἰδεῖν βουλευθεῖη [γενόμενον] ἢ τούναντιον ὡς βραδύτατα; δοκῶ μὲν γὰρ ὡς βραδύτατα*).¹⁶³ Later, Roman and Greek authors like Virgil and later Aelius Aristides described this manifest destiny as it fully unfolded in an age of confidence, summarizing this vision by looking backwards at the city-cradle of their world with respect and gratitude for being part of it (see section ii). In the same vein, the post-Cold War Western world was dominated by a similar perception of the final victory of Western democracy and capitalism during the 1990s and 2000s, as F. Fukuyama made clear in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) when he celebrated what he called the 'End of History'.¹⁶⁴ It was an Illusion that

160 See R. Miller, *Native America Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2006), p. 120. Also F. Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 3.

161 See J. L. O' Sullivan, "Annexation," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17, 1 (July – August 1845), pp. 5-11.

162 See Polybius, *The Histories* [*Ἱστοριῶν*], I, 2.1-2. Also F. W. Walbank, 'Polybius and the Roman State' in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964), pp. 239-260.

163 Polybius, *The Histories* [*Ἱστοριῶν*], XXIV, 13.6.

164 See F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1992).

ended with 9/11, as it did for Rome with sack of 410. It marked the end the ruling elites' confidence, terminating the concept of a *Restored Empire* that had emerged during the era of the tetrarchy. From then on, there was a need for a new narrative regarding the future of Rome in a time that it no longer out of reach for foreign foes. As we will discover later, the *ordo renascendi* discourse of Rutilius Namatianus as well as Augustine's *City of God* provided new survival manuals for what appeared to be a post-apocalyptic landscape from an ideological and symbolic point of view.¹⁶⁵

Another important issue is the use of the terms pagan and paganism in the following chapters. Of course, there has been much debate in recent decades about what it actually is and its use in ancient sources and/or even in modern bibliography.¹⁶⁶ It is certainly a concept that demands explanation regarding its usage at least within the limits of this work. Initially, the term pagan derived from *pagus* (= a country district or a community), but it was also used in Roman military jargon to describe an untrained soldier (from the infinitive 'pongere' – i.e. 'to fix' a non-combatant and unskilled soldier) (*mox infensus praetorianis vos inquit, nisi vincitis, pagani, quis alius imperator, quae castra alia excipient?* – 'right after [he shouted] to the praetorians "you", he said, "pagans, if you do not win, which other emperor or which other military camp will take you in?") although it could also reference a 'civilian' way as opposed to the 'military' one.¹⁶⁷ Persius defined himself as *semipaganus*, meaning 'newbie' or 'semi-rustic', in comparison to more experienced poets.¹⁶⁸ However, the term gained a very specific content when it began to be used by some Christian authors in an inter-religious context.

165 Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, I, 140.

166 See T. Zahn, 'Paganus', *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* vol. 16 (1899), pp. 18–44; J. Zeiller, *Paganus: Étude de terminologie historique* (Freiburg and Paris, publisher?: 1917), pp. 29–35; B. Altaner, 'Paganus: Eine bedeutungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung,' *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 38 (1939), pp. 130–41; C. Mohrmann, 'Encore une fois: Paganus,' *Vigiliae Christianae* 6(1952), pp. 109–21; and C. Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des Chrétienis* (Rome 1958–65) vol. III., pp. 277–79. Also J. J. O'Donnell, 'Paganus: Evolution and Use', *Classical Folia* 31 (1977), pp. 163–69; and A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 14–32.

167 See Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 24. Also Cicero, *Pro Domo*, 74. See 'Paganus', *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*: https://www.degruyter.com/view/TLL/10-1-01/10_1_1_paganus_v2007.xml?pi=0&moduleId=tll-entries&dbJumpTo=paganus (accessed: 11/3/2018). Also P.G.W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 'pagus', p. 1413; T. Jürgasch, 'Christians and the Invention of Paganism in the Late Roman Empire' in M. R. Salzman, M. Sággy, R. Lizzi-Testa (eds.) *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, competition and coexistence in the fourth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 115–138, 116–117; P. Brown, 'Pagan' in G.W Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (eds.) *Late Antiquity: A guide to the post-Classical world* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 625.

168 See Persius, *Saturae*, Prologus, 6.



Tertullian, the first Christian author to leave us a significant number of works in Latin, still used terms like *gentes*, *ethnici*, and *nationes* to refer to polytheists, while the term *paganus* occurred only twice in his texts and only in the context of ‘civilian’ (*apud hunc tam miles est paganus fidelis quam paganos est miles fidelis*).¹⁶⁹ The same author represents the body of the Christian Church from a militaristic perspective. Christ appears as *imperator*, bishops as *duces*, while the laity appears as the *gregarii milites*.¹⁷⁰ From this perspective, the pagans of course appear as untrained (potential) soldiers. Still, ‘pagan’ was a very vulgar term and any educated Christian avoided using it without a proper explanation as to why he did so. Even when it appears in imperial legislation it still refers to *quod vulgo paganus appellat* (i.e. ‘in the common expression called “pagans”).¹⁷¹ The first mention of pagans as such comes only in the 360s, with Marius Victorinus, who considered it necessary to clarify that someone was *graecus erat, id est apud paganos* (i.e. ‘he was a “Greek”, [which means] of the pagans’).¹⁷² However, we are not going to deal here with the identification of *paganus* with *Hellene*/Greek, another significant issue that goes as far back as the apostolic era, but which is rather a concern for those studying the Christian literature of the Eastern Empire.¹⁷³ Even Augustine, in the early fifth century, was not comfortable using the term without an explanation, in order not to appear uneducated.¹⁷⁴ However, the Christians used the term as a convenient shorthand for a variety of cults.¹⁷⁵ Non-Christians never had a sense of a monolithic religious identity as was the case in Christianity and, later, in Islam. ‘Paganism’ was a genuine Christian construction of otherness, imposed on all outsiders either for convenience or self-exclusion. Julian attempted to promote a more articulated ‘pagan’ identity, but only because of his Christian background and the religious enthusiasm of a convert. It was that sort of ‘pagan’ that the Christians had created.¹⁷⁶

‘Pagan’ and ‘paganism’ were inherited in the Middle Ages and modern times as a Christian stereotype and many modern scholars, including A. Cameron and G. Fowden, prefer to use the more neutral and pejorative-free

169 See Tertullian, *De Corona Militis*, 11, *De Palio*, 4.

170 See *idem*, *De Fuga Persecutione*, 10-11.

171 See *Codex Theodosianus*, XVI, 5.46 (409).

172 See Marius Victorinus, *De homoousio recipendo*, 1.13

173 A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, p. 17.

174 See Augustine, *Epistulae*. 184, 3-5

175 See J. North, ‘The Development of Religious Pluralism’, J. lieu, J. North and T. Rajan (eds.) *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 174-193.

176 See G.W. Bowersock, *Ο Ελληνισμός στην Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα*, p. 25.

term 'polytheist'.¹⁷⁷ In fact, a respected proportion of modern relevant bibliography is still dominated by this traditional binary opposition between pagans and Christians.¹⁷⁸ The term polytheism, however, is rather too general and insufficient when we have to approach belief systems like pagan monotheism or neo-Pythagorean messianism, Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and the various individualistic cults and creeds that emerged from the second century AD onwards. The label paganism is rather misleading when used for the more internalized and spiritual forms of devotion that dominated, mainly among educated individuals or groups who occasionally shared common beliefs with the Christians regarding the relationship between the material and spiritual world.¹⁷⁹ It was the short *new wave* of religious expression that P. Veyne attempted to summarize as 'The second Paganism'.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, the conventional labelling of authors/works as pagan or Christian should be treated with a certain scepticism. As R. A. Markus summarized, 'there was a wide no man's land between explicit pagan worship and uncompromising Christian rejection of all its associations'.¹⁸¹ It appears that the identification and classification of religious affiliations of texts and authors is often a far more important issue for contemporary scholars than for individuals in late antiquity. However, I intend to use the terms pagan/paganism, which despite their problems, encapsulate all non-Christian heterodoxies, including those of a dualist nature that is still not polytheism. After all, the term 'pagan' no longer has a negative connotation, even outside the Academy.¹⁸²

The next term which I believe deserves a special mention, even though it has been already standardized and universally accepted, is that of 'invented

177 See G. Fowden, 'Constantine's Porphyry Column: The earliest literary allusion', *Journal of Roman Studies* 81 (1991), pp. 119-131, 119. Also A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, pp. 25-27.

178 See E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); *idem*, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Penguin, 1988); and M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430 AD* (London: Ashgate, 2007).

179 See P. Athanassiadi, M. Freed (eds.) *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

180 See P. Veyne, 'Tranquilizers' in P. Ariès, G. Duby (eds.) *A History of Private Life*, vol. I, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 207-233, 217-219.

181 See R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 33. Also R. Shorrock, *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the world of Late Antiquity* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), p. 4.

182 A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, p. 26.



traditions'. It was a concept first introduced by E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger in the collective volume *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) to describe a variety of public ceremonies, customs, and symbols, which, despite being considered as old or ancient, are often products of nineteenth-century national imagination, a tension that can be traced in various parts of the globe during the period 1870-1914.¹⁸³ It was a process that developed as a consequence of the rise of nationalism and contributed to the creation of a national identity by legitimizing certain institutions or cultural practices in a rather simplistic and monolithic manner. Within this context, the actual origin of those traditions (if they indeed existed) is often ignored or twisted in order to appear more articulate and legitimate.¹⁸⁴ The phenomenon of invented tradition(s) will occur several times in the following pages, in particular when there is a focus on the public religious life at Rome towards the end of the fourth century, since new rites would appear as revived when, in fact, they were late antique inventions. This justifies the use of that term in a pre-modern, late antiquity context when describing a series of religious activities in late-fourth-century Rome that aimed to re-connect the present with a past (real or imagined) and which have often been seen as a 'reaction' to the rise of Christian influence.¹⁸⁵

viii Methodological Approaches

The principal criterion for the selection of the material was the potential indication of the development of a variety of discourses and versions of *Romanitas* between the defined chronological limits (357-417) that appear to represent better the aspects of the evolution of the idea of Rome. This book focuses on the evolution of that idea revealed either as an abstract expression of local patriotism/regionalism dominated by the urban archetype of Rome and its symbolic geography, or as a personified *dea Roma*. Additionally, from a spatial perspective, the primal focus will be on the city of Rome and its management by the local aristocracy. Moreover, from a geographical point of view, there will also be a focus on ideological concepts developed outside the Italian peninsula in circumstances where they interacted with the

183 See E. J. Hobsbawm, T. O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

184 E. J. Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions', E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 1-14, p. 1.

185 See P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne: étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du Ier au VIe siècle*, (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1934).

archetype of Rome. Specifically, this will be examined using the cases of the emperor Julian and of Augustine of Hippo. It should be noted that this work excludes the idea of Rome as an *Empire* in late Roman thought, which would be the case for another extensive study and should not be confused with the idea of (the city of) Rome.

Furthermore, the evolution of the idea of the *New Rome* in the East will be largely ignored since it is an entirely different issue, one that is related to Byzantine political theology. The rise of a *rival* 'Rome' in the East would challenge the symbolic primacy of the eternal city in the Roman world, a struggle that would be based on emphasizing the antiquity of the city and its legitimacy in contrast to Constantinople, which had no past and only artificial traditions and claims, based on imperial favour. This tension appeared officially for the first time during the reign of Constantius II, the first emperor to try to legitimize and promote the new Senate of the East to a status equal to that of Rome.

The chapters in this book represent the different approaches to Rome and various versions of Romanitas that developed during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. These many faces of Romanitas had a variety of utilities and each one offers a different perspective on the city of Rome. These separate worlds rarely encountered each other. From a chronological point of view, the *adventus* of Constantine's successor to the eternal city (357) was the occasion when the representatives of the two Senates met for the first time. It was perhaps also the first time Romans of Rome feared that the privileged position of their city could be abused. However, the chapter adopts a reverse approach since the narrative begins where it could end, with the journey of Rutilius Namatianus from Rome to his gallic homeland. Thus, this book's journey starts and terminates with two different narratives of recovery: one physical, with Rutilius Namatianus confident of Rome's survival in the years post 410 in an atmosphere of restoration; and one spiritual, with the erecting of an invisible and everlasting Rome in Augustine's *City of God*. Yet, somehow, these two works overlap in their shared confidence about the continuity of Rome as a physical and spiritual place. In the same period that Rutilius took the journey northwards and departed from his beloved Rome, between 410 and 417, Augustine published his first books on the *City of God*, introducing the concept of a celestial *Rome* that cannot be reached; an *invisible* Rome in parallel to the physical. This concept had already been developed by Prudentius, but Augustine transformed it into a timeless and spaceless concept. Likewise, we fulfil this journey from perspective of the obvious, material, earthly Rome towards a spiritual one and with optimism about two different potentials for *Romanitas*. The first is a secular vision



of a regionalistic and fundamentally urban Rome connected to the fate of the physical city; the second is spiritual yet still Roman in its context. No matter whether the Empire, not to mention the eternal city itself, appeared as nothing exceptional in the divine plan, its urban ideal survived within the walls of a celestial commonwealth. This illusion of a 'happy ending' or a restored order in the certainties of the fourth century would crumble with the realities of the fifth, making both *De Reditu Suo* and *De Civitate Dei* appear as narratives of lost futures of Rome. In the meantime, let us pretend that we do not know what occurred afterwards, in an attempt to penetrate the thought and motives of the individuals that we are going to meet in the following pages.

'Can there possibly be any vision of the eternal city, any reaction to its manifold variety and continuity which has not already been set down, romantically or painstakingly according to the writer's ability?'¹⁸⁶ I only start with a rhetorical question in order to mention the lineage of research regarding the idea of Rome. Inevitably, there was a need to select according to the criteria and starting points of this research. There was a particular focus on the topic already from the mid-war period in French bibliography and here I must mention J. Perret's *Pour une étude de «l'idée de Rome»* (1932) and later F. Paschoud's *Roma Aeterna. Études sur le patriotisme romain dans l'Occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (1967).¹⁸⁷ The latter included a variety of sources in a quite extended chronological period between the battle of Adrianople (378) and the death of Leo III (461); however, it is a rather outdated and inadequate study in the sense that it lacks a utopian context that the present research hopes to add. Also, D. Thompson's *The Idea of Rome from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (1971) is another interesting approach on the topic, extending in a wide chronological period, and emphasizing a variety of aspects of *Romanitas* through the ages as well as their functions, which are often omitted or underestimated.¹⁸⁸ Another work that deserves mention is *Roma Aeterna: Lateinische und Griechische Romdichtung von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart* by B. Von Kytzler (1972), which contains a series of texts highlighting the continuity and variations of the idea of Rome from

186 See D. B. Ellis, 'Eternal City', *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Oct., 1959), pp. 189-192, 189.

187 See J. Perret, *Pour une étude de «l'idée de Rome»: La légende des origines de Rome*, (Paris: Belles-lettres, 1932) and F. Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna. Études sur le patriotisme romain dans l'Occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (Rome Institut Suisse de Rome, 1967).

188 See D. Thompson, *The Idea of Rome from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1971).

antiquity to modern times.¹⁸⁹ C. Edwards' *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (1996) has a similar approach.¹⁹⁰ More recently, the study by D. Brodka, *Die Romideologie in der lateinischen Literatur der Spätantike* (1998), offers a fresh perspective on the topic.¹⁹¹

Furthermore, the following works had an important influence on my research and my reflections on the concept of urban archetype(s), functioning in that sense as *manifestos*: L. S. Mazzolani's, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought* presents the urban archetype of Rome and its evolution in Roman thought from the republican times to the age of Augustine.¹⁹² I must also mention L. Mumford's book *The City in History*, which moves beyond the obvious spatial/material manifestations of city and traces the evolution of the city as an idea(l) through the ages, highlighting the common pathways of the concepts of the city and utopia.¹⁹³ Lastly, J. Rykwert's book *The Idea of a Town* emphasizes the anthropological and sociological aspects of the spatial layout of the city, from its founding to further stages of development, highlighting the institutional and ritual functions of the public space.¹⁹⁴ Following the sequence of these works, the present book attempts to emphasize not only the variations of *Romanitas* during a defined chronological period, but also bring to attention the paramount importance of the strong utopian context of the idea of Rome.

189 See B. Von Kytzler, *Roma Aeterna: Lateinische und Griechische Romdichtung von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart* (Zürich: Verlag, 1972).

190 See C. Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

191 See D. Brodka, *Die Romideologie in der lateinischen Literatur der Spätantike* (Frankfurt: Europäische Hochschulschriften, 1998).

192 See L. S. Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought: From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1970).

193 See L. Mumford, *The City in History: Its origins, its transformations, and its prospects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

194 J. Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The anthropology of urban form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999).

