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Emperors on the move

T. D. Barnes

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Introduction

Imperial residences and journeys constitute a central theme in the history of the Roman Empire. If the principate arose from usurpation, when the last of the republican dynasts established himself as a monarch in Rome, the emperor's position always retained a Janus-like aspect, facing both backward to the republic and forward in the direction of an openly avowed autocracy. The emperor in Rome and the emperor outside Rome played different rôles and were subject to different expectations. In Rome itself, even centuries after Augustus, an emperor was expected to comport himself as the first citizen of a republic rather than a monarch, preeminent in rank yet not infringing the traditional freedom of the citizenry. When Constantius visited Rome in 357 he was careful to express pleasure at the *dicacitas* of the populace (Amm.Marc. 16.10.13), for it was the mark of a tyrant like Diocletian not to be able to tolerate "the freedom of the Roman people" (Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 17.2). The panegyrist Pacatus reveals other aspects of what was expected when complimenting Theodosius in 389: in his triumphal entry into Rome, the emperor walked on foot part of the way; he behaved like a senator when dealing with individuals; he visited private homes unaccompanied by his military bodyguard (*Pan. Lat.* 2[12].47.3). Outside Rome, it had always been different. When Augustus stepped into the shoes of a Hellenistic monarch, he was following the well-established precedent of Antony, Julius Caesar, Pompey and earlier republican generals. The ceremonies and rituals of power may have developed over the centuries, but from the start Roman holders of *imperium* exercised virtually untrammelled authority in the provinces that they governed.

Modern historians of Rome have not at all neglected imperial journeys, at least in the case of emperors who travelled widely. As early as 1860 Theodor Mommsen saw that to introduce order into the chronology of the attested legal enactments of Diocletian and his colleagues, he needed to establish imperial itineraries and to employ them as dating criteria,¹ and it is more than a century since Julius Dürer published *Die Reisen des Kaisers Hadrian* (Vienna 1881). In his classic study of Augustus and his age, Viktor Gardthausen inserted tables showing Augustus' known movements from birth to death.² In this century, Hadrian's journeys occupied the bulk of the space in Wilhelm Weber's learned but undisciplined *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Hadrianus* (Leipzig 1907), and those of Septimius Severus a good part of Johannes Hasebroek's *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus* (Heidelberg 1921). (Both Weber and Hasebroek were pupils of Alfred von Domaszewski, to whom they dedicated their researches.) For the later Roman empire, imperial itineraries are basic to military, political and administrative history. It was no accident that the first large-scale product of Mommsen's idea for a prosopography of the Christian Roman empire was Otto Seeck's *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n.Chr.* (Stuttgart 1919): it bears the subtitle *Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit*, and imperial residences and journeys form the thickest strand in its carefully woven chronological arguments. Accordingly, when the reviewer began research on the period of Diocletian and Constantine, he felt obliged to revise and extend the work of Mommsen and

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- 1 T. Mommsen, "Über die Zeitfolge der Verordnungen Diocletians und seiner Mitregenten," *Abh. Berlin* 1860, 249-447 = *Gesammelte Schriften* 2 (Berlin 1905) 195-291.
 - 2 V. Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit* 2.1 (Leipzig 1891) 267-73 (63-29 B.C.); 2.2 (1896) 644-48 (29-12 B.C.); 2.3 (1904) 905-7 (12 B.C.-A.D. 14).