The ambitions of government:

Territoriality and infrastructural power in ancient Rome

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Abstract

The last thirty years have been much fluctuation in the estimation of ancient empires as regards assessment of both their power and style of governance. Did ancient empires formulate and implement policies, or was ancient government largely reactive? Did they have the power or aspiration to penetrate deep into the territories they ruled, or were they content to rule through the cooptation of local elites and pre-existing institutions? Related inquiries have been launched into the importance of territoriality to ancient states, as well as the relationship between territoriality and imperialism: did Rome, or Persia, for that matter, recognize or materially mark firm borders of its control? Did their practice differ in regard to borders between administrative units within the empire? For that matter, when did ancient terms like *imperium* or *provincia*, "power of command" and "bailiwick," take on notions of spatial extension such that they could come to mean "empire" and "province?" These questions, which have scarcely been resolved, have taken on new urgency in light of the importance comparison has assumed in contemporary (ancient) empire studies. My paper takes its inspiration from two bodies of recent work: one recuperates the notion of infrastructural power from Michael Mann's historical sociology, to develop a framework for assessing the elaboration of state power in terms of institutions and personnel as well as materiel (cf. Bill Novak, "The Myth of

the Weak American State," *American Historical Review* [2008]); the other poses the question of what meaning to grant to the fact that even very rudimentary ancient states (indeed, so rudimentary as to provoke the question, whether they were states at all) *talked* like states. That is to say, their legislation spoke as if its right of command extended uniformly through its territory and down through its population; their practice of diplomacy was conducted as if their territory ended where another's began *and* the line firmly known, and so forth (cf. Seth Richardson, "The presumptive state" (*Past & Present* [2012]). I will attempt to lay out the stakes of these debates and then discuss the case of Rome, focusing on the organization of populations in the landscape and theory and practice in its governance of non-urbanized persons.

1. Introduction

How strong were ancient states? In particular, how well—how deeply, how uniformly— did the state power of ancient empires penetrate the territories and populations over which they claimed sovereignty? These questions demand attention all the more insistently as one observes that perhaps 85% of the population of the Roman empire dwelled in villages or scattered in the countryside, and some unknown number sustained largely pastoralist lifestyles. Such people(s) did not meaningfully figure in the cultural productions of ancient elites, even when they imagined the countryside. Theirs, however, was the labor that sustained those elites and built their cities; they manned the army and fed its appetites. As regards this bulk of the population, did it matter what power exercised macroregional hegemony, or was everyday dominance in the ancient world always a purely local affair? And what forms did such dominance take?

        For just over a generation, the answer to these questions in regards to the Roman empire was simple. Largely in response to the work of Fergus Millar but also, to a point, Keith Hopkins, scholars understood Roman government as minimalist in its ambitions. According to this tradition, the actions of Roman government were reactionary rather than proactive; there is little or no evidence for the design and implementation of policy;

a substantial majority of government outlays were devoted to the military. This interpretive claim about the empire's minimalist ambitions was later seconded by scholars of the Roman provinces in the age of postcolonialism, who wished to assign agency for the changes they charted to indigenous victims rather than Roman overlords and who therefore received and echoed the minimalist orthodoxy with gratitude. In these scholarly traditions, state power was military power; its primary tool was spectacular violence; its influence, minimal.

Two further theoretical and historiographic traditions converged to enhance the cogency of these claims (even if the ancient history community has largely conducted itself without explicitly engaging literatures beyond its own). The first "tradition" is perhaps better identified as plural: I refer to all those sociologically-oriented histories and theories of modernity that posit profound changes in the technologies of communication and knowledge-production as causing or marking the break between the modern and whatever came before, by Benedict Anderson, James C. Scott, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Reinhart Koselleck and Michael Mann. In their theories, changes in technology give rise to profoundly new ambitions on the part of government, which in turn prompts the development of new forms of knowledge and new self-interpretations. The economy, modern domesticity, the public sphere, political subjectivity, propaganda, and even ideology in some narrow sense issue from these transformations. The knock-on effect of these convergent intellectual currents was to imply the deficiency or absence of all such effects and social fields in the premodern world.

The second tradition burnishing the luster of the minimalist school of ancient government originates in modern empire studies and has, of all this work, the greatest claim to empirical validity and interpretive utility. Students of modern empire standardly differentiate modern empires from ancient ones as follows: modern empires have commercial ambitions at their core and civilizing missions as their pretext. Their operation is understood, not incorrectly, as intended (never quite) to issue in the incorporation of subaltern regions into unified and universalizing metropolitan networks,

whether of commerce, culture, law, development, politics, or what have you. Ancient empires, by contrast, operated through the cultivation and management of difference. Being wholly unable to govern their territories directly and, indeed, largely uninterested in doing so, ancient empires delivered the control of territories into the hands of local elites, who facilitated the extraction of wealth by the center in exchange for material and ideological support of their own continuance. Far from imposing universalizing norms, ancient empires developed institutional and communicative structures that rived subaltern communities one from the other and encouraged each to have purely bilateral relations with the metropole. Ideally, they would come to compete with each other in a culture of loyalism, each subunit celebrating its culture in rivalry with others, with whom relations of solidarity might be formed exclusively around the norms of empire.

This paper launches (or better yet, re-launches) a project intended in the long run to call into question many of the distinctions drawn in the literature that I have so far evoked, distinctions often drawn, I might add, by way of supposition and rarely subjected to empirical verification. Along the way, I shall employ as an heuristic a theoretical distinction drawn by Michael Mann in his historical sociology of the 1980s, that between infrastructural and despotic power. Infrastructural power he defines as "the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm"; despotic power is "the range of actions that the [state] elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups." Infrastructural power obviously performs some of the same work effected by (communicative) technological development in some of the theories mentioned above but embraces a fuller range of instruments, including both static and dynamic materiel (e.g., monumentalized urban spaces as well as transport systems) and also personnel. Up to a point, it therefore escapes the fetishization of temporality implicit when one emphasizes the speed of communication as a distinctive variable in the conduct of politics and formation of subjects.

That said, I hope in the end also to show that despotic and infrastructural power themselves coexist in mutually constitutive ways. More importantly, as regards not least

Mann's own periodization of state power, I will argue imperial despotic power was instrumental in shaping and promoting the infrastructural capacity of subaltern communities within the Roman empire, which capacity was then coopted to Roman ends. What is more, such developments in subaltern communities (unsurprisingly) took place through processes of mimetic reduplication, such that both the institutional and material structures of subordinate communities as well as the principles of legitimation operative in respect to public powers specifically and social differentiation more generally came to exhibit deep homologies with Roman ones. It was, however, crucial to the long-term vitality of Roman politics that these communities remained notionally autonomous. They thus came to function as a constitutive outside to the central power, and in echoing back the Romanizing principles of legitimation regarding the functions of government, they collaborated with empire in creating and sustaining a single and singular imperial social order.

   If this analysis is correct, then in the Roman case, at least, no simple division between the metropolitan and the local or between the imperial and the indigenous can long be sustained, nor can any strict accounting of the limits of the infrastructural power of the central state based on such a division be accepted. As a related matter, a strong distinction between ancient and modern empire organized around some ancient surrender of autonomy to local elites, based on a calculus of pure extraction (whatever its ideological justification), will necessarily collapse.

   This paper pursues these larger theoretical aims through the study of two institutions, one underexplored, the other unexciting. The first is the practice of adtributio, whence English "attribution," which is to say, the administrative subordination of populations to cities. Though quite substantial communities dwelling in monumentalized conurbations might be subordinated to other, similar populations for administrative convenience or narrowly political motives, I will concern myself here with cases that involved populations deemed to deserve such subordination because they were unurbanized. Was their attribution an administrative convenience, a case simply of a pre-

modern state ruling through cities? Or did Rome have other objectives in mind? And bracketing the question of intent, what was the effect of such attributions?

The second institution is the road, an instrument of infrastructural power par excellence. Although I will allude to the variety of aperçus that Roman roads offer the historian, I will focus on the response generated in local communities by the requirement imposed by Rome that communities located along roads take charge of their maintenance. This will permit as well a brief survey of other such functions that local governments were betimes required by the metropole to fulfill.

2. Attribution

The long-standing uninterest of classical historians in the administrative subordination of populations to cities has a number of likely causes, two of which merit some reflection in this context. The first is a simple uninterest in unurbanized populations. In part this is a matter of self-regard: populations dwelling in villages or living by transhumance have not been understood as constituents of that classical world that we identify as having given birth to ourselves or, one might say, they did not contribute in any way deemed important to those forms of cultural production that we esteem as part of our own past. In so judging, we are heirs to an imbricated series of willful blindspots that commenced already in antiquity, according to which cities and not villages were centers of culture (hence *urbs*, "city," urban, urbane); cities and not villages sustained intersubjective relations worthy of the name "politics" (*polis < politeia - politikos - politeusthai*); and so forth. As a related matter, the sciences that we have developed and the locations where we have deployed them in our archaeologies of the classical past have focused overwhelmingly on civic, which is to say, city life.

The second cause for contemporary neglect of the administrative subordination of non-urban populations is the challenges of the evidentiary regime. No general regulations governing such relations survive. Rather, the evidence consists of occasional remarks in technical literatures (including, most importantly, several asides in the corpus

of Roman land-surveying manuals), as well as references to such relations in official records and legal instruments. As regards the latter documents, these do not survive in toto, nor in the form in which they circulated in antiquity. Versions, representations and excerpts were transcribed to permanent media, often after having been translated; these texts were then posted by interested parties, to achieve specific ends; and the stone surfaces and bronze tablets that carried those texts, having suffered two thousand years of neglect, abuse, re-use and fragmentation, constitute the bulk of the evidence. Even beyond problems of reconstruction and translation, there lie the essential problems that such instruments were often written (and can in any event be read) as if applicable only to the situation at hand. What is more, like many such occasional texts, they could easily be written without reference to the conceptual and institutional structures that enabled their operation. As in many fields in ancient history, the evidence for the governance of unurbanized populations presents profound challenges of aggregation.

These features of the evidence have naturally played a role in the historiographic and interpretive debates described above: the contingent particularities that generated any given text may naturally (if not persuasively) be read quite narrowly, such that what we know about the contribution of villages and farmsteads in the hinterland of Oenoanda to festivals in that city, say, is not generalized to other such cities. The questions of when and how we are entitled to reconstruct weak or strong institutional contexts to explain the pragmatics of such texts is obviously at the heart of the debate in which this project intervenes.

In this preliminary paper, I will discuss a few documents only, ones that speak to the ways in which social relations and cultural change followed upon (and were in my view intended to follow upon) the attribution of unurbanized populations to city centers. Let me however gesture at the range of relations cited in the documentary record. Just as Oenoanda in Lycia wrested contributions of sacrificial animals from villages and farmsteads in its hinterland, so the city of Nacoleia required towns in its hinterland to contribute to its ritual life, a fact cited by the Christians of one such town in their petition to the emperor Constantine for the status of autonomous municipality. Cities are likewise

on record as responsible for collecting taxes from villages and other populations in their catchment: in an inscribed schedule from Roman Sparta, in literary texts from Roman Judaea, in remarks on Italy by a Roman land surveyor, and in records from Roman Carthage. Civic elites might also impose financial burdens (in the form of so-called liturgies) quite narrowly on village elites: this occurred in Roman Egypt and high imperial Syria, as well as Trieste, where the civic elite sought to preempt any effort to seek autonomy by its subordinate communities by coopting their elites into its municipal council. Very occasionally, even as civic elites gave money to their cities in support of some building project or even as tax relief, so very rarely individuals are on record as paying the share also of villages subordinated to their city. Finally, cities were responsible to levy troops not simply from their own populations but also from any residents of the territories assigned to them. (The phrases "as responsible for," "assigned to them" and the like are not intended to convey any judgment on the question of whether cities distributed burdens of taxation, etc., fairly; I note, however, that on occasion cities were punished by emperors by being deprived of administrative autonomy and attributed to their neighbors and such subordination was very occasionally glossed as a form of slavery.)

To begin, we might consider the range of terminology employed to describe relations of administrative subordination. In the middle of the first century CE, a massively experienced Roman official named Pliny composed a *Natural History* of the Roman world. It opens with a three-book geography, which is now widely recognized to have been based very largely on Roman administrative surveys: the world is divided into provinces, assize districts, cities, subordinated towns and peoples, etc. I quote some representative language regarding the situation of Roman cities in wider provincial landscapes (with very minor changes, I employ the translation of the Loeb Classical Library edition):

| 3.25 | *Carthaginem* **conveniunt** *populi LXV exceptis insularum incolis...* | At Cartagena assemble sixty-five peoples, not including inhabitants of |

		islands...
3.26	*In Cluniensem* **conventum** *Varduli ducunt populos XIV, ex quibus Alabanenses tantum nominare libeat, Turmogidi IV, in quibus Segisamonenses et Segisamaiulienses.*	To the assize of Corunna the Varduli bring 14 peoples, among whom we would mention only the Alabanenses, and the Turmogidi bring 4, among whom are the Segisamonenses and the Segisamaiulienses.
3.37	*oppida vero ignobilia XIX sicut XXIV Nemausensibus* **adtributa**.	There are also 24 unimportant towns, as well as 24 assigned to Nîmes.
3.134	*verso deinde in Italiam pectore Alpium Latini iuris Euganeae gentes... ex his Triumpilini ... dein Camunni conpluresque similes finitimis* **adtributi** *municipiis.*	On the side of the Alps facing Italy are the Eugaenean peoples, who have the Latin right. Among these are the Triumpilini ... and then the Camunni and many similar peoples assigned to neighboring municipalities.
3.142	**petunt** *in eam [coloniam]* **iura** *viribus discriptis in decurias CCCXLII Delmataei...*	The Delmataei seek laws in that colony, their forces being divided into 342 tithings...
5.109	*Praeterea sunt Thydonos ... Alabanda libera quae conventum eum cognominavit... longinquiores* **eodem foro** *disceptant Orthronienses, Alidienses...*	There are also Thydonos [and] Alabanda, the free town that gives its name to this assize... More distant places settling their disputes in the same forum are the Orthronienses, the Alidienses...

In two examples (3.37, 3.134), Pliny both employs the technical term for administrative subordination and likewise indicates his own impatience with populations not worthy of metropolitan attention: hence, after all, their subordination. (In all fairness, if Pliny had in fact attempted to list all persons and things known to Roman government, he would never have completed the geographical books, let alone the thirty-one books that follow. Or, one might say, if towns can be ignoble, why not peoples?) But Pliny also employs language that implicitly singles out access to law as a preeminent justification for subordination: *conventus*, "assize" (3.26), derives from *convenire*, "to come together, assemble" (3.25). Hence in the latter passage one might more accurately translate, "At Cartagena sixty-five peoples come together [to settle their disputes]..." The same understanding of the ties that bind nonurbanized populations to cities is explicit in the phrase *petunt ... iura*, here rendered "seek laws" (3.142).

Finally, Pliny employs the term *forum* in synedochic relation to the city whose public core it is and simultaneously as a metonym for *conventus*, assize (which was itself a metonym referring to the purpose for which people come together, namely, the holding of an assize). In other words, the naming of a Roman-style monumentalized urban core can stand—by virtue of the assumption that all cities properly ordered will have one—for the functioning of depersonalized, communal institutions of dispute resolution and rights redemption, which are understood to have such a *forum* as their necessary context. Pliny can thus employ *forum* in synecdoche for city because it suffices as no other part of the city would to identify the function of Roman-style conurbations as nodal points for the intrusion of Roman institutions into landscapes of peoples not articulated along Roman lines.

Although the documentation is (as always) scattered, let me add that there exists very considerable evidence *both* of a normative kind (identifying assize centers) *and* regarding specific cases, to suggest that individuals as well as public and private corporate bodies did in fact make the journey to assize centers to have their cases heard before Roman tribunals (even when it was not required that they use a Roman court), and that the mechanics of the court required them repeatedly to revisit the *forum* of

adjudication, not least because decisions were posted there (see, e.g., *AÉ* 2008, 1349 = *SEG* 58, 1536).

It is in my view possible to vindicate the two claims, first, that the Romans intended such relations of attribution to promote what one might call development among the populations so subordinated and, second, that they conceived dispute resolution according to law as fundamental to that process. Certainly in the most famous narrative of the most conspicuous failure of Romanization to be preserved from antiquity, the Roman historian Velleius Paterculus attributes to the Germans an awareness of the Roman conceit that they bring law to uncivilized peoples. Indeed, in his narrative that conceit is their undoing, and it is articulated as a confusion between the one (German, unurbanized) context and another (urban, Roman) one (Velleius 2.118.1):

> *At illi, quod nisi expertus vix credat, in summa feritate versutissimi*
> *natumque mendacio genus, simulantes fictas litium series et nunc*
> *provocantes alter alterum in iurgia, nunc agentes gratias, quod ea*
> *Romana iustitia finiret feritasque sua novitate incognitae disciplinae*
> *mitesceret et solita armis discerni iure terminarentur, in summam*
> *socordiam perduxere Quintilium, usque eo, **ut se praetorem urbanum in***
> ***foro ius dicere**, non in mediis Germaniae finibus exercitui praeesse*
> *crederet.*

> But the Germans, in a fashion scarcely credible to one who has no
> experience of them, are extraordinarily crafty and terribly savage all at
> once—a race born to lying. By feigning a series of made-up lawsuits, now
> summoning each other to disputes, now giving thanks that Roman justice
> was settling them and that their savagery was being rendered mild by this
> unknown and novel discipline and that quarrels which were customarily
> settled by arms were now being settled by law, they brought Quintilius to
> such a degree of negligence that he came to think of himself as though he

were the urban praetor administering justice in the forum and not as
commanding an army in the middle of Germany.

That said, a paper of this scope is not the place to vindicate such a claim. Instead, let me
turn to two case studies of cultural and social change prompted by relations of proximity
and, in part, of attribution. I take these in chronological order of the source that attests
them.

On the Ides of March, 46 CE, the emperor Claudius issued an edict resolving a set
of legal problems that had first been reported to the imperial court under the emperor
Tiberius, but which lingered unresolved at his death and likewise at the death of his
successor, Caligula. One of these concerned the status of three Alpine peoples in the
neighborhood of Tridentum (modern Trento). A copy of the edict, inscribed on a sheet of
bronze, was found near Trento (*ILS* 206; translation after R.K. Sherk):

> *quod ad condicionem Anaunorum et Tulliassium et Sindunorum pertinet,*
> *quorum **partem** delator **adtributam** Tridentinis, **partem ne adtributam***
> ***quidem** arguisse dicitur, tametsi animadverto non nimium firmam id*
> *genus hominum habere civitatis Romanae originem: tamen, cum longa*
> *usurpatione in possessionem eius fuisse dicatur et **ita permixtum cum***
> ***Tridentinis, ut diduci ab is sine gravi splendidi municipii iniuria non***
> ***possit**, patior eos in eo iure, in quo esse se existimaverunt, permanere*
> *benificio meo, eo quidem libentius quod plerique ex eo genere hominum*
> *etiam militare in praetorio meo dicuntur, quidam vero ordines quoque*
> *duxisse, non nulli allecti in decurias Romae res iudicare.*

> *quod benificium is ita tribuo, ut quaecumque **tanquam cives Romani***
> ***gesserunt egeruntque**, aut inter se aut cum Tridentinis alisve, rata esse*
> *iubeam, nominaque ea, quae habuerunt antea tanquam cives Romani, ita*
> *habere is permittam.*

As concerns the status of the Anauni and Tulliassi and Sinduni, some of
whom an informant is said to have proved are attributed to the Tridentini
but some are not: Although I realize that this class of people does not
have a very strong case for Roman citizenship, nevertheless, since by long
arrogation they are said to be in possession of it and are so intermingled
with the Tridentini that they cannot be withdrawn without serious harm to
that splendid municipality, I permit them by my favor to remain in the
legal status in which they believed themselves to be. I do this all the more
freely because many from this class of human beings are said to be serving
in my Praetorian Guard, indeed, some are commanders of units, and not a
few have been enrolled in jury panels to judge cases at Rome.

I so grant this benefit to them that whatever they have done or transacted
as if they were Roman citizens, either among themselves or with the
Tridentini or with others, those things I order to be legally valid, and the
names which they have previously had as if they were Roman citizens, I
permit them to retain.

As it happens, the Tridentini were themselves a Gallic tribe raised to prominence over
their neighbors by Julius Caesar, who (re)founded their capital city, Tridentum, on a
Roman plan, high in the foothills of the Alps in the valley of the Adige. Claudius makes
no mention of this fact. But the situation that he is called upon to address is therefore the
historical product of the proximity and intermingling of <u>juridically</u> Roman and non-
Roman populations, one of which is Roman only by virtue of an earlier incorporation
(whatever it entailed). It has henceforth played a metropolitan role in like processes
involving its neighbors. What is more, as regards the specificities of the situation under
Claudius, some of the populations in question were in fact legally subordinated to the
Tridentini; others were not. Nevertheless, they had all come to regard themselves as like

unto the Tridentini and, indeed, so mimicked their self-fashioning as Roman, that they were able to pass as Roman in two of the most crucial duties of citizenship, service in the legions and on juries, and at Rome at that. Note, too, Claudius's concern that the restoration of legal propriety would damage the Tridentini: the taking-up of non-citizens into the community is understood to have benefitted a citizen population in ways the government did not wish to undo, the ideological charge of usurping metropolitan status notwithstanding.

Nearly two centuries before Caesar founded Tridentum as a Roman(izing) city, the Romans had begun their expansion across the Apennines into the Po Valley with the foundation of two colonies, Cremona and Placentia, both in 218 BCE (modern Cremona and Piacenza). This occurred on the eve of the Hannibalic invasion, and though they suffered greatly in the disastrous first years of that war, when Hannibal allied with Gauls and ranged at will in Italy, they stayed loyal to Rome and figure prominently in narratives of Roman action in the north in the first decades of the second century BCE. In 69 CE, Cremona became embroiled in the civil wars that erupted after the death of Nero, being held first by troops of Vitellius against those of Otho. Later, troops loyal to Vespasian occupied the city and, motivated by greed and spite, turned on the populace: the entire urban fabric of public and private buildings was destroyed (Tacitus, *Histories* 3.26-33). "Cremona sufficed them for four days; when all its buildings, sacred and profane, settled into flame, the temple of Mefitis alone remained, before the walls, protected either by its location or the god" (Tacitus *Histories* 3.33.2).

> This was the end of Cremona, in the 286th year since its founding. It was
> founded when Tiberius Sempronius and Publius Cornelius were consuls,
> as Hannibal was entering into Italy, as a bulwark against Gauls acting
> across the Po (*propugnaculum aduersus Gallos trans Padum agentes*) and
> if some other force should cross the Alps. Thereafter, thanks to number of
> colonists, the convenience of the rivers, the richness of its fields and
> association and intermarriage with indigenous peoples (*adnexu*

> *conubiisque gentium*), it grew rich and flourished, untouched by foreign
>
> wars but unlucky in civil ones. (Tacitus *Histories* 3.34.1)

By the time Tacitus wrote, Gaul south of the Alps had long since been reclassified as a region of Italy. Nonetheless, Tacitus preserves an awareness of Cremona's status as a bulwark of empire against non-Italians across the Po, and so his conjoining of "association and intermarriage with indigenous peoples" alongside other factors as causal in the flourishing of the colony speaks volumes—indeed, these were presumably the very indigenous peoples against whom the colony had been founded in the first place.

To the two cases of Tridentini and Cremona we might compare briefly the history of the Tricastini and Arausio (modern Orange). This was one of the Celtic tribes in Gallia Narbonensis (southern France) whose land was expropriated c. 36 BCE for the foundation of a colony of Roman veterans; its official name was "The Loyal Julian Colony of Veterans of the Second Legion, Arausio." Seventy years earlier, the site had witnessed a monumental Roman defeat, and the seizure of land presumably allowed for the material elision and erasure from public memory of the site's pre-colonial past. We possess today fragments of a cadastral map from Arausio, and though it was inscribed in the 70s CE, it appears still to distinguish land assigned to veterans, land assigned to other colonists, and land left to the Tricastini.

Notwithstanding the incorporation of the Tricastini as defective non-members of the colony or, one might say, as aliens in its landscape, to which they of course were native, their own "intermingling" with Roman veteran colonists issued in a similar transformation to that at once imposed upon and undertaken by the Tridentini. Perhaps a generation after the foundation of Arausio, a subordinate village of the Tricastini was awarded autonomous status by the emperor Augustus and named *Augusta Tricastinorum* (Pliny *Nat*. 3.36). A half century or more on, it is granted the status of a Roman colony under the Flavians, under the name *Colonia Flavia Tricastinorum*, "The Flavian Colony of the Tricastini" (HD016699 = *AE* 1962, 143). Not only are its residents granted Roman citizenship, the fiction is implicitly entertained that they had been Romans all along, who

emigrated to a colony in subject lands. But their true history abides, preserved in their new Roman name.

In all these cases, social and juridical transformations are causally connected with the material transformation of colonial landscapes, with the result that, in the perspective of the imperial center at least, non-poliadic (or non-urbanized), indigenous populations are ultimately reclassified as metropolitan, with all that entailed. Furthermore, it is the extension of infrastructure to non-metropolitan peoples, and their performance on that statue, that renders them recognizable to the center, whence they assume the status of metropolitans vis-à-vis further non-Roman populations now attributed to them.

3. Bureaux of roads

Roman roads have since antiquity been a symbol of Roman power and aspects of their history have long been studied: this is especially true of their routes, construction technique, and dates of building and repair (data provided by milestones). In consequence of the evidence (on which more in a moment), some attention has also be paid to the organization and maintaining of the so-called imperial post. Nonetheless, the importance of roads for promoting but also channeling the mobility of persons and goods and thus directing flows of social energy and culture change remains underexplored or, perhaps one might say, undercharted. I adopt the latter term because this is an area where appropriate graphic representation could clarify the importance of transportation infrastructure to human mobility most fundamentally and culture change in consequence of that, but that opportunity has often not been seized. I can display additional examples on the occasion of my visit to OSU later this month, but let me discuss two here. The first concerns the "mapping" of the epigraphic habit in Roman Gaul, in a map from Greg Woolf's *Becoming Roman*, a justly celebrated book in the field. Here is Greg's map displaying the distribution of clusters of inscriptions according to the gross number at any given site:

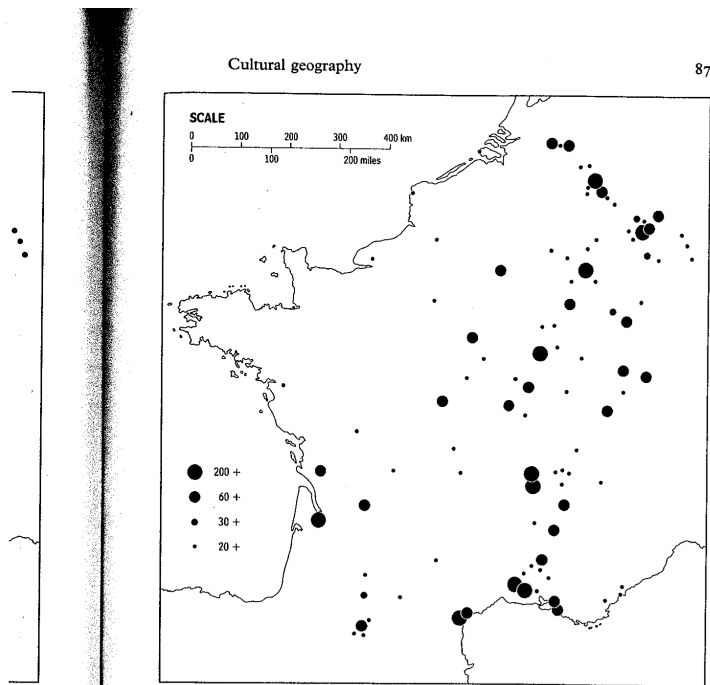Cultural geography   87

Fig. 4.5 Clusters of inscriptions

Bordeaux, Arles, Cologne, Vienne and Langres, all of them large cities located on one or more major routes, most of them heavily monumentalized, and several of them centres of provincial administration. The relative numbers of inscriptions are not too badly affected, then, by post-depositional factors and the primate distribution reflects a feature of Gallo-Roman urbanism as a whole.

As an attempt to illustrate both the distribution of concentrations and their relative size, figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show the distribution of concentrations of 100 or more, 50 or more and 20 or more inscriptions respectively. As a control against the effect of the thresholds selected, figure 4.5 shows on a single map the same series divided at a different set of thresholds, 200 or more, 60 or more, 30 or more and 20 or

Greg does provide a map of major roads, but on another page (and not a facing one):

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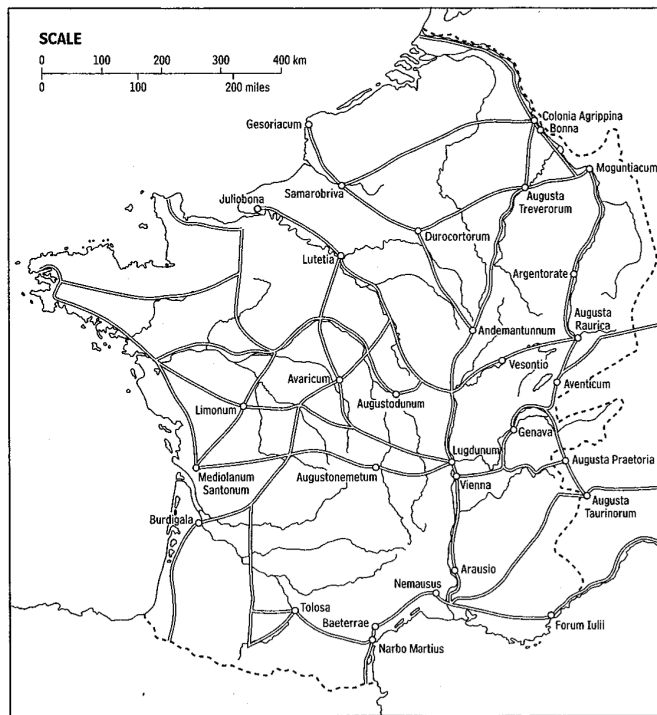
Cultural geography   89

Fig. 4.6   Major roads

providing links between them. But the Agrippan road system was not the
only possible enhancement of the 'natural' patterns of communications.
The choice of Lyon as the fulcrum of the network was to some extent
arbitrary, and the general plan of the road system was arguably partly a
result of the inadequacy of Roman knowledge of Gallic geography and
partly designed to meet the military demands of the projected con-
quests of Britain and Germany.[23] As such the road system represents a
man-made contribution to the cultural geography of the Gauls.

23 See Drinkwater (1976) on the location of Lyon, and Goudineau (1996, 464–9) on the
       relation between the picture of Gaul presented by Strabo and the Augustan provincial
       organization and road system.

The importance of the road system to the spread of the Roman epigraphic habit is left
unillustrated. (As a related matter, the map of clusters of inscriptions does not name the
cities or identify their type (e.g., Roman colony or native settlement), which information
would also seem to be essential.)

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I could multiply examples of this kind: Christian Goudineau's contribution to the multi-volume history of the city in France contains many maps, none of which displays the road system in addition to the various phenomena it charts. Mark Humphries' fine essay, "Trading gods in northern Italy," signals "the location of Jewish and Christian communities by the early fourth century," but it offers no insight as to why such communities flourished in these cities first:
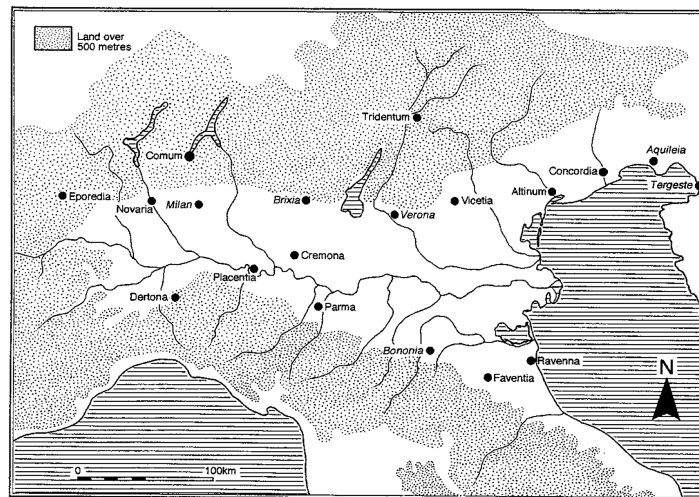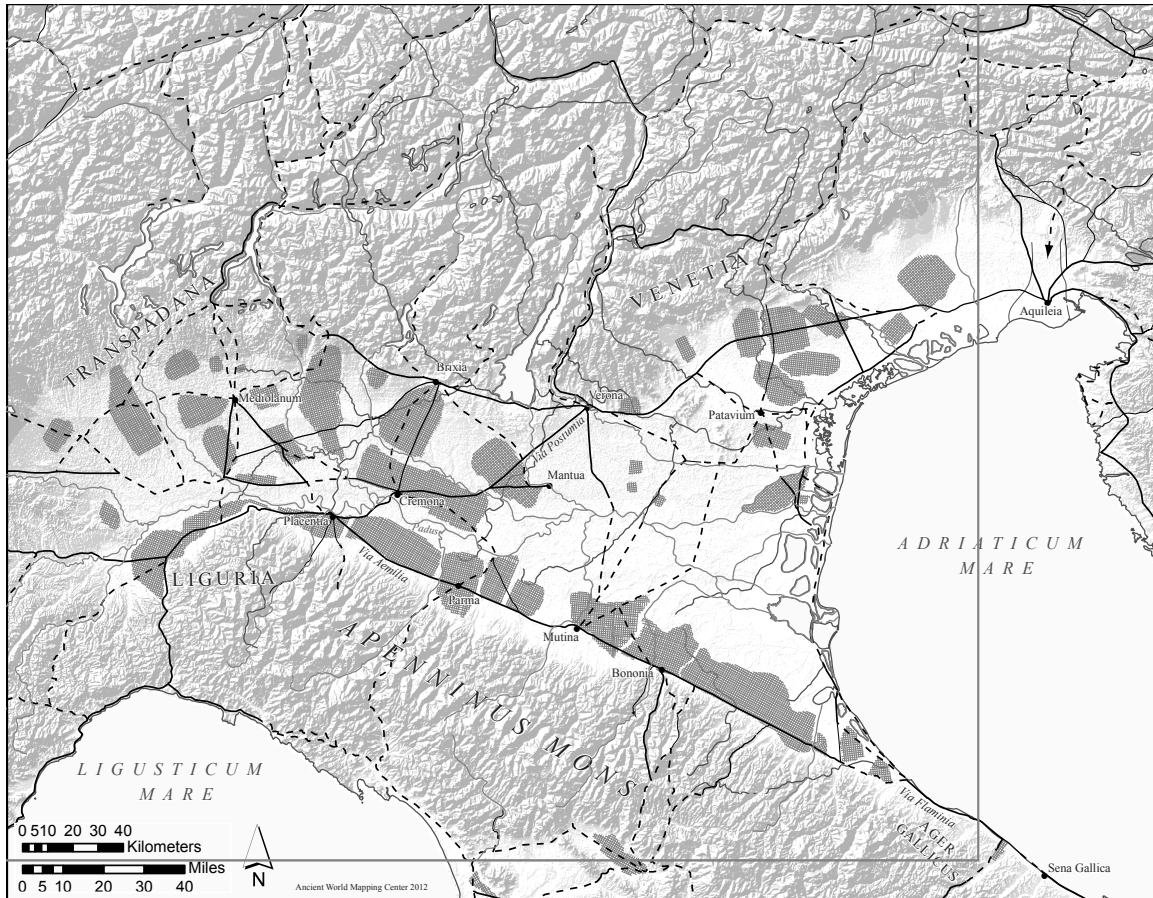

Figure 10.2 Map of northern Italy showing the location of Jewish (in italics) and Christian communities by the early fourth century. Based on data in Lanzoni 1923 and Ruggini 1959.

In fact, one would need to find a map of the Po Valley in the imperial period on one's own in order to see that all these cities lay on paved Roman highways:

I emphasize "paved" to draw attention to the fact that the road systems of the Roman empire were complex and included paved roads of many kinds and quality as well as unpaved ones. (The Roman state concerned itself directly with the maintenance of the major arteries that it had itself built, which it denominated public roads—meaning, roads of the Roman people—but it understood all roads to be public goods and laid down various injunctions for their upkeep.)

At a more general level, one would expect phenomena like those studied by Woolf, Goudineau or Humphries over the longue durée to move first along major shipping lines, then from major ports to minor ones by cabotage; perhaps simultaneously to move from major ports inland along navigable rivers and paved highways; and only much later to penetrate the countryside. This is of course a wholly uncontroversial point. (Indeed, many Roman policies, not least as concerns taxation, were structured around just

this expectation.) I wish only to emphasize that it has rarely been cashed out graphically.
The most suggestive example known to me is that produced by Michel Malaise to
accompany his "Preliminary Inventory" of texts attesting Egyptian cults in Italy:
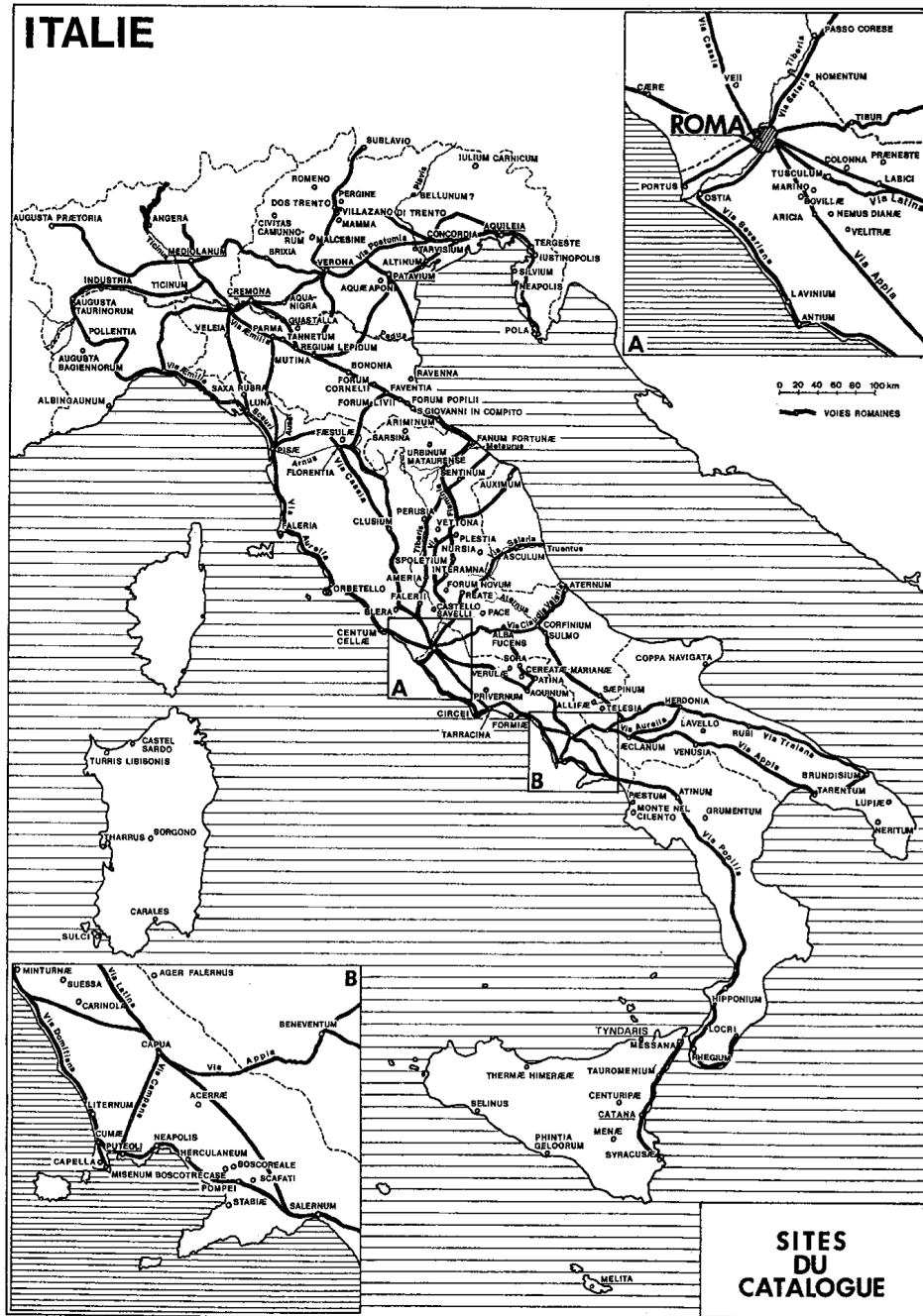
Carte I

Alas, for all its many virtues, Malaise provides a guide neither to the temporality of the distribution nor to its intensity.

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In what follows, I focus on the role played by roads in mediating relations both between subaltern communities and Rome and between the subaltern communities themselves. Negotiation about roads, I will argue, spurred institutional and cultural change. To put the matter briefly, Rome required communities located along roadways to contribute to the maintenance of the road, and when the roads served the *cursus publicus*, the imperial post, those communities were obliged to supply materiel to the imperial post as well. (The term "post" is slightly misleading, as the system moved not only messengers but officials of a certain rank, too, as well as anyone outfitted with appropriate letters of transit.) But when one received a memorandum from the Roman bureau of roads and transport, it was best to have a bureau of roads and transport to write the reply.

As with administrative subordination of communities, so in the case of roads, a significant portion of surviving evidence for the burdens levied on neighboring landowners and communities consists of occasional documents. In particular, we possess numerous inscribed records of protests and petitions from local communities, to the effect that they have been subjected to excessive or inappropriate demands. Sometimes the party protests against illegal exactions on the part of Roman officials; at others, a party urges that a neighboring community, namely, one that exists in parallel relation to it in public law, or a city in administrative supervision over it has attempted to shift its burden onto them. When such petitions obtained a favorable response, the recipients often transcribed relevant portions to permanent media for public display, in the hope of warding off bad conduct in the future. Such were often also the instructions of the imperial officials who wrote the response. Again, this pattern, to wit, that our evidence consists largely of responses, might be taken as indicative of some underlying feature of Roman government. It is not. It is a function, rather, of the interests that determined which documents would be transferred to permanent media—not that anyone would maintain that a road system of many tens of thousands of kilometers could come into existence in a fit of absence of (reactive) mind.

I take as a case study the inscribed record of a dispute brought before a succession of imperial procurators by two villages in Phrygia, Anossa and Antimacheia, whose public affairs were to a point overshadowed by (and whose territory may have lain wholly inside) a great imperial estate (*SEG* 16, 754; a translation is appended to this paper). The dispute stretched from before 213 – it may have started as early as 200 – to at least 237 CE. The fragmentary text preserves the records of proceedings before three procurators, as well as two letters addressed to the councils of the villages in question, written by a procurator's assistant seeking to enforce the decision. (I term the text fragmentary because the left edge of the stone is broken off: depending on the area of the stone, perhaps 20-25 characters are missing from the left of each line.) One formal aspect of the inscription bears on its interpretation: within the records of proceedings (as opposed to the letters), the protocols—namely, the dating formulae, the names of the speakers, etc.—are in Latin, while the text of the speeches is in Greek.

The dispute concerns an obligation placed on communities along so-called public roads, to wit, to supply animals and occasionally carts for transport for the imperial post. It is clear that the obligation placed on the villages is assessed in two units: a distance along the road or roads that pass through their territory (described by reference to milestones: "for those coming from Synnada, from the fifth mile" [line 5]), and cash, a contribution very likely made in kind but assessed in cash, that was apparently directly proportional to the village's overall tax liability ("according to a proportion of the [tax] liability," (line 11)). The dispute arises between two villages but the procurator clearly feels the heart of the issue at this moment to be that one village does not wish to meet its obligation, and he seeks to discover why the village feels it can no longer provide in the future the contribution it has always made in the past. And on it goes.

A number of aspects of the dispute, the behavior of the principals, and the text deserve our attention. First, the villagers are fully aware that the structure of Roman administration, and the administration's procedures, allowed nearly any decision to be appealed and nearly every question to be re-opened. In the first hearing, the spokesman for the poorer village, one Panas, evidently sensed the conversation turning against him

and threatened an appeal over the procurator's head (ll. 11-12). Though the procurator asked a rhetorical question, "What more would you say there than you have said here?", and obviously considered the matter closed, we of course know that the case did in fact continue. It continued both because one party appealed, and because the people of Anossa complained that the people of Antimacheia had not been acting in accord with some aspect of the earlier judgment. For the present argument, interested as we are in the culture of government, the essential point to emerge from the villagers' explicit references to an appeals process and to lower- and higher-ranked officials is that the villagers understood themselves to be engaging a hierarchical bureaucracy and furthermore that they were savvy in manipulating it.

A second aspect of the text that deserves comment here concerns the form taken by its bilingualism. The text from Phrygia is one of a number of inscriptions and papyri that preserve in Latin either the formal protocols that indicate imperial authorship (e.g., the first-person notation in Latin "I have signed") or the protocols that locate the origin of the text or some part thereof in a (Roman) record of proceedings. On my reading, the format of these documents attests a faith, however motivated or strong, in the social efficacy of the procedures of Roman government. A similar faith might be said to inhere in the act of inscription itself, which can only have been undertaken in the hope that the very display of a text would induce obedience to its content. The format of the inscriptions also attests a conviction that others will recognize and esteem Roman documents by virtue of their formal aspects: their use of Latin, their dating formulae, and other characteristics specific to particular genres, whether the record of proceedings or the rescript.

A third consideration follows on the second. Reading the dispute between Anossa and Antimacheia, a modern reader might well be struck by the very high level of the debate, as well as the high degree of agreement among the participants over what the terms of the debate should be. In the first hearing, everyone knows, and no one contests, the formula that defines the burden for each community. What is at issue are the facts that one should plug into the formula. Here, the procurator's global knowledge of practice in

past and present plays an essential role. But overall, what merits observations is the conduct of the villagers and its implications. When the dispute began, they were aliens in respect to the metropole and almost undoubtedly regulated their private social and economic affairs according to their own laws. Nonetheless, the pragmatics of Roman government shaped their lives, and it seems to have been wholly legible to them.

Villages in Phrygia thus contributed essentially to sustaining the infrastructural power of the central state. To do so, they must have organized considerable aspects of their day-to-day existence around the need as a community to provide quite specific materiel upon demand. They had also come to possess, because the structures of empire made it essential to do so, knowledge of the second-order institutional structures that regulated that provision. Furthermore, their relations with each other were mediated by formulae controlled, and justice dispensed, by Roman officials. Even at the level of village-to-village microregional relations, the superordinate structures of empire played a role. The same was true at an even more profound level of the legal, economic and cultic ties between villages and cities.

The lives of these villagers were thus shaped by, even as their mutual relations revolved around, one of the great material facts of empire, its roads. The road systems of Asia Minor antedated the arrival of Roman power, of course. But it would be nearly impossible to overstate the material and symbolic importance of the roads in uniting the local, regional and imperial in the Roman period. What is more, Roman agents had long recognized this importance on both levels, material and symbolic: they devoted enormous resources to building and maintaining roads, and mobilized and therefore shaped the social and economic energy of alien communities in those projects. They also exploited fully the opportunities afforded by road systems to address their users. In the discursive system so established, roads were a gift of imperial power, and the road system was described as uniting the local, provincial and imperial into a single whole. The Romanness of this ideological apparatus, and even of the conception of physical space that underlay its use, is visible even in this text in the casual use by all parties of the Latin loan-word "mile" in Greek.

Allow me to offer a brief comparandum in the census. The ideological and cultural importance of the Roman census can scarcely be overstated, and certain aspects of its history have of course received important scrutiny. But three aspects of its conduct have hardly been sufficiently emphasized and deserve mention here. First, it was in many regions a wholly novel undertaking. Second, before the reign of Augustus, the Roman census had counted exactly the same objects as every other institution of its kind, namely, Romans. Under Augustus, the Roman census began to count alien subjects of rule. Third, the Roman state did not have the personnel to conduct this count on its own. Despite the provision of high-level supervision, especially in its early iterations, the actual count must have been performed by local governments. This was revolutionary.

In a number of contexts, direct attestation of the mandating of local cooperation in the conduct of the census survives, none more explicit than a law of the mid-first-century BCE from Heraclea, a Greek city of southern Italy. The law in question is a mad pastiche of Roman laws directed at others and Roman laws concerned with life at Rome itself. This heterogeneity suggests that the text was not produced as a unity at Rome and imposed on the cities of Italy. Rather, the text attests an extraordinary effort on the part of one city to refashion its internal self-governance in response to the political and juridical realities of the Roman state, in the years immediately following its incorporation. The clauses on the census, however, do appear to have a general status in respect to the polities of Italy. They run as follows (*Roman Statutes* no. 24, ll. 142-148):

> Whatever *municipia*, colonies, or prefectures of Roman citizens are or
> shall be in Italy, whoever in these *municipia*, colonies or prefectures shall
> there hold the highest magistracy or highest office, at the time when a
> censor or any other magistrate shall conduct the census of the people at
> Rome, within the sixty days after he learns that the census is being
> conducted at Rome, he is to conduct a census of all his fellow *municipes*
> and colonists and those who shall be of that prefecture, who shall be
> Roman citizens; and he is to receive from them under oath their *nomina*,

their *praenomina*, their fathers or patrons, their tribes, their *cognomina*,
and how many years old each of them shall be and an account of their
property, according to the schedule of the census, which shall have been
published at Rome by whoever is then about to conduct the census of the
people; and he is to see that all this is entered into the public records of the
municipium, <and send the information on to Rome...> and he is to receive
from them under oath their *nomina*, their *praenomina*, their fathers or
patrons, their tribes, their *cognomina*, and how many years old each of
them shall be and an account of their property (*rationem pecuniae*),
according to the schedule of the census (*ex formula census*), which shall
have been published at Rome by whoever is then about to conduct the
census of the people...

Note the seemingly principled non-interference in the structures of local self-governance:
no uniform constitution or charter being imposed by Rome, the title of the highest
magistracy or office is not specified. That said, not only is frequent communication
between center and periphery supposed (no provision being here made to inform
localities that a census is being conducted), but a synchronicity between Roman
municipal and local municipal governance is perforce required, a product of despotic
power.

    As for the information required, the census of the high empire demanded a list of
all persons resident in any given household, including slaves, a register of significant
moveable and immoveable goods, an account of one's liquidity (cash and debts), and a
full accounting of real estate holdings:

It is provided in the schedule for the census that land should be recorded in
the census in this way: the name of the property to which it belongs, and in
what civic community and in what district it belongs, its nearest two
neighbors; the extent of the land on the property under cultivation over the

last ten years, measured in *jugera*; how many vines in its vineyards; how

many *jugera* of olives under cultivation and how many trees; how many

jugera of pasture have been mowed [to produce hay] over the last ten

years; how many *jugera* of pastureland there seems to be; likewise, how

much of forest. (Ulpian *De censibus* bk. 3 fr. 22 Lenel = *Dig*. 50.15.4.*pr*.).

On one level, this amounted to an extraordinary act of interpellation, individual subjects

of empire becoming known, person by person, to the metropole. What is more, their self-

knowledge will inevitably have been shaped by the range and import of the facts deemed

salient as knowledge in eye of the center: families and households are constituted as

Roman *familia*; persons are fixed in space in relation to others similarly interpellated,

each naming the other to the center; economic wealth and productivity are elevated in

importance beyond any factor of purely intersubjective interest—such are the interests of

the state, the reduction of wealth to money and quantification being related acts of

simplification and abstraction in the history of government. By similar means, persons

are aggregated into populations, and the messy clutter and dynamism of the world is

reduced to a list of stuff susceptible of counting. The emergence of these facts to salience

in relations of power must have affected understandings of self and other in purely local

and affective matters, too.

This was so not least because, as we have seen, the census was in many places a

local affair. Local infrastructural power was mobilized through mandate, but local it

remained. The act of interpellation accomplished by the census was thus not narrowly

bilateral, center to subject. It was a more complicated act, requiring local authorities,

created through local institutions and produced and esteemed through local systems of

social differentiation, to be the eye of center. They were the eye of the center; it was they

who elicited self-descriptions licit in the epistemics of empire. The result was a new and

distinctive form of political subjectivity.

Like the maintenance of road and imperial post, the census thus served as an

aperçu through which relations between indigenous populations, and between individuals

and public powers within subaltern communities, were radically reconfigured. In large measure, this occurred not through some direct exercise of state infrastructural power on the part of the imperial center. On the contrary, it was precisely the limits of metropolitan power that called forth the system that I have described, which rested upon the capacity of the center to summon into being and betimes to reshape local institutions.

4. Roads to Romanness

I have ordered a pair of maps to illustrate the gradual extension of Roman power over the Berber tribes in western Tunisia and southereastern Algeria. Alas, these have not yet arrived. If I have them in time for the seminar at OSU, I will give a brief powerpoint outlining that story. On a material level, one can describe a gradual Romanization of the landscape: the situating of towns and legionary camps, connected by roads, stretching east and west on both the northern and southern edge of the mountains; the imposition of cadastral grids in level areas within the mountain range; and so forth. On a social one, a very long time after the Roman intrusion begins, a switch takes place, in which indigenes with Roman citizenship begin to hold supervisory offices over the non-urbanized population, holding titles formerly held by Roman officials. What is more, several such persons are attested precisely because they supervised the building or repair of roads north-south over the mountains. The intrusion of Roman state power thus commenced a process of social change, such that patterns and principles of social differentiation once operative between metropolitans and indigenes are later reduplicated within the subaltern population itself. This is, of course, a wholly unsurprising story, but the evidence allows us to rehearse it with unusual precision.

5. Conclusion

The Roman empire poses a series of interpretive challenges to an historian of government. The civilian bureaucracy of the Roman state had fewer personnel than a

modern research university has employees, and the empire declared a policy of non-interference in the structures of social, legal and religious life of alien subalterns. What is more, the technological, financial and manpower limitations on its power were substantial. Nonetheless, the Mediterranean world of the high Roman empire was vastly more interconnected, greatly more urbanized and culturally and linguistically more homogeneous than it had ever been before, and its urban centers exhibited a uniformity of style that remains striking.

This paper has argued that the implication of local communities in infrastructure projects (like road maintenance) not only bound them to the macro-regional and indeed the imperial economy, but it served to bring into being within local communities institutional structures that responded, and indeed, corresponded to the supervisory and regulatory structures of the imperial state. A bureau of roads was required to talk to a bureau of roads.

The cooptation of local resources was of course a principle means toward the extension of metropolitan infrastructural power. On my argument, it had the further effect of producing, or one might say, inducing, local institutional change. Power being what it is, these changes also engendered social and cultural change, as those on the top of local systems of social differentiation claimed authority over new state functions, in consequence of which those same local systems of social differentiation came to echo the principles that organized authority within those new, imperial institutional structures.

In the Roman case, at least, the distinction between ancient empire and modern state therefore has diminishing value over time. The intrustion of quite limited material infrastructure into provincial landscapes emerges as instrumental in the reconstitution of even extra-urban populations in fractal reduplication of the metropole, such that they appear homeomorphic as regards the structures of government and homologous in its responsibilities and principles of legitimation.