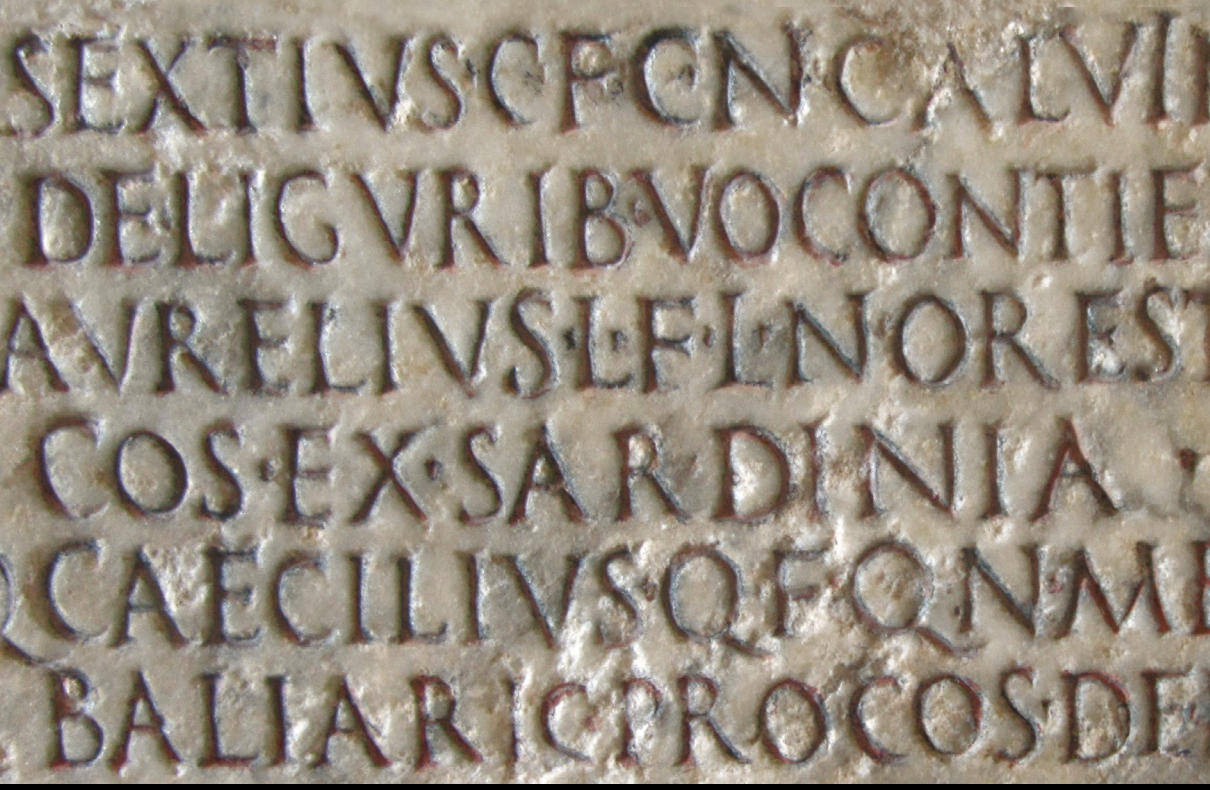


**ALEJANDRO DÍAZ FERNÁNDEZ** (ed.)

# PROVINCES AND PROVINCIAL COMMAND IN REPUBLICAN ROME

## GENESIS, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

EDITORIAL UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA
PRENSAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

Página de créditos Contra-portada Índice

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Índice

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Índice

Imagen de cubierta: fragmento de los *Acta Triumphalia Capitolina* correspondiente a los años 122-121 a.C., Musei Capitolini, Roma (foto de Alejandro Díaz Fernández).

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# CONTENTS

# PROVINCES AND PROVINCIAL COMMAND: INTRODUCTION

When the Romans defeated the Carthaginians in the decisive battle of the *Aegatae insulae*, in 241, the Republic lacked its own system for running the overseas dominions wrested from the enemy as a result of the war. Rome had certainly become the leading power in the Mediterranean, but its institutional structure was still that of a simple *civitas*, in spite of previously having subjected much of the Italic Peninsula to its *imperium*. Preserving its overseas conquests involved adapting the civic institutions of the *res publica* to the needs of that new situation—and that is what the Romans did. In 227, just a few years after the victory over the Carthaginians in Sicily, and once the uprising of the mercenaries in Sardinia had been suppressed, the senate increased the annual number of praetors from two to four, with the aim from then on of having two magistrates in office in each of those islands. Sicily and Sardinia thus became the posting or *provinciae* of two Roman commanders on a permanent basis, whilst the Republic converted itself into the master of an empire.



During the two centuries following that decision, Rome continued to widen its dominions until it controlled a vast empire that ranged from remote Hispania to the borders with the Parthians in Syria. Much of that success should doubtless be attributed to Rome's military might as well as the imposing machinery of its army, which was capable of vanquishing the Macedonian phalanx on the plains of Pydna and overwhelming the Hispanian peoples and the Gauls, under the most adverse conditions. Nevertheless, that

was not the only factor that determined Rome's success. Beyond the role that diplomacy also played in the process and the much-debated attitude of the Roman aristocracy towards war, one of the aspects that most contributed to consolidating and sustaining the empire was the Republic's singular ability to adapt its institutions to the circumstances and needs that were raised by its overseas policy. The decision made in 227 was only the first of a series of steps that enabled the Romans to construct a true administrative apparatus capable of governing an empire based on the limited institutions of the *res publica*. At the centre of those institutions, we must set the *provincia* as the command unit and essential administrative entity, which was destined to become the cornerstone of a whole empire. As the years passed, the *provincia*—namely installing a Roman commander endowed with *imperium* in a determined area—showed itself to be the most effective way of ruling and administering the communities living in that space and that, in one way or another, were subject to the will of Rome.

When dealing with the study of the Roman empire, modern historians have usually paid attention to the ambitious overseas policy followed by Rome during the years of the Republic and to the working of provincial administration, although in this case based on certain legalistic standpoints that have dominated the historiographical discourse. A good example of that is the account of the Roman administration presented by Theodor Mommsen in his *Römische Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1854-1885) and *Römisches Staatsrecht* (Leipzig, 1871-1888), as well as that given in subsequent works like the *Storia della Costituzione Romana* by Francesco de Martino (Naples, 1951-1964), and the more recent *Roma e le province* by Giuseppe Luzzatto (Naples, 1985). Similar points of view appear in the two classic works left to us by English scholarship under the authorship of William T. Arnold (*The Roman System of Provincial Administration to the Accession of Constantine the Great*, London, 1879) and George H. Stevenson (*Roman Provincial Administration till the Age of the Antonines*, Oxford, 1939), in which one can also sense the projection of the administrative outlines of the British empire onto the analysis of the Roman provincial system.



Despite the undoubted value of the aforementioned contributions, the study of the Republican provinces in those works was also subsumed within a much more general assessment of the Roman provincial government, wherein priority was inevitably given to the volume of documentation provided by the more complex—as well as better known—imperial administration. As a consequence, there has been a certain tendency to analyse the Roman provinces

from an *a posteriori* perspective, treating them almost as static entities not subject to evolution, and to deal with the Republican administration as a mere prelude to what would become the provincial system of the Principate. More recent contributions, like those of Werner Dahlheim (*Gewalt und Herrschaft. Das provinziale Herrschaftssystem der römischen Republik*, Berlin-New York, 1977) or Raimund Schulz (*Herrschaft und Regierung: Roms Regiment in den Provinzen in der Zeit der Republik*, Paderborn, 1997), finally put the focus on the Republican provincial administration as an object of study on its own terms. However, their works tend to draw on some of the topics and the legalistic views that have marked historiographic tradition in the matter.

During the last thirty years, various scholars have nonetheless reconsidered in their works concepts like those of *imperium* and *provincia*, at the same time as they have presented innovative perspectives on the guidelines of government applied by the Roman Republic in its provinces, emphasising the distinctiveness of the Republican administrative system compared with the subsequent stages in the history of Rome. The standpoints that had dominated historiography since the time of Theodor Mommsen have been giving way to less restricted views of the Republic and its institutions, views that—based on renewed readings of the sources—have brought into question many of the assumptions traditionally made by scholarship and that have contributed to giving more convincing answers to such relevant questions as what the Roman empire was and how it was conceived during the Republic, how Rome ran its overseas dominions, and what role the Republican institutions played within that administrative system.



Good instances of these renewed approaches—just to cite some titles—are works like those of Ella Hermon (see, in addition to her many contributions, her edited volumes *Gouvernants et gouvernés dans l'Imperium Romanum (III^e s. av. J.-C.-I^er s. ap. J.-C)*, Quebec, 1991, and *Pouvoir et Imperium (III^e av. J.-C.-I^er ap. J.-C)*, Naples, 1996), Andrew Lintott (*Imperium Romanum. Politics and Administration*, London, 1993), Frederik J. Vervaet (*The High Command in the Roman Republic. The Principle of the* summum imperium auspiciumque *from 509 to 19 BCE*, Stuttgart, 2014) and Fred K. Drogula (*Commanders and Command in the Roman Republic and Early Empire*, Chapel Hill, 2015), as well as the two notable collections recently edited by Nathalie Barrandon and François Kirbihler (*Administrer les provinces de la République romaine*, Rennes, 2010, and, *Les gouverneurs et les provinciaux sous la République romaine*, Rennes, 2011). Starting from the same perspectives, this book

tries to make its contribution to the endeavour to improve understanding of Republican Rome and of the changes undergone by the *res publica* during its conversion into an empire, placing emphasis on an element that was essential for building and strengthening Roman rule overseas: the *provincia*.

The nine papers presented in this volume are the result of an international workshop held on 5 and 6 October 2017 at the Museum of Málaga (Palacio de la Aduana), with invaluable help from the University of Málaga through the Department of Historical Sciences (Ancient History), the Vicerrectorado de Investigación y Transferencia (Plan Propio de Investigación, Transferencia y Divulgación Científica), and the Vicedecanato de Posgrado e Investigación (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras), as well as through the Research Project "Historiografía y geografía antigua: representación del espacio y transmisión de saberes" (HAR2016-76098-C2-1-P) and the "Grupo de Estudios Historiográficos" (HUM-394), Junta de Andalucía. The workshop, which was titled *Provinciae, imperatores et socii in the Roman Republic*, focused on the study of the provinces and the provincial framework of the Republic, with the aim of offering new perspectives for analysis that would contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms that led Rome to become the master of an empire of Mediterranean dimensions and create a government structure that lasted for centuries—albeit with constant adaptations—until the Empire ceased to exist.



The volume has been set out according to chronologic and thematic criteria. Fred K. Drogula (Ohio University) and Alejandro Díaz Fernández (Universidad de Málaga) dedicate the book's first two chapters to analyse the semantic and institutional conception of the *provincia*, as well as its development during the years of the Republic. Based on this premise, Drogula focuses on the decisive significance of the *provincia* as a method for allocating commands (*imperia*), and as the key element in Rome's military success, emphasising its essential role within the empire's administrative structure. In particular, the author goes in depth into the origin of that peculiar system of assignment based on *provinciae*, linking it to the ways of control that the leading *gentes* of the Early Republic used to try and control both private possessions and public domains against possible enemies.

Dealing with the same objectives, Díaz Fernández approaches the study of the concept of *provincia* focusing on its semantic and institutional development during the Republican period, and questioning some of the standpoints that scholarship has traditionally defended in relation to the term. Based on the study of some relevant cases, the author shows himself to be in favour of

considering that, over and above the permanent nature and the spatial link that characterised what we call *provinces*, the latter continued to be what they had basically been since Rome began to intervene beyond the limits of Italy: areas of responsibility assigned to magistrates with *imperium* in order to perpetuate Roman authority in those dominions, regardless of whether the latter had been more or less defined for operational reasons. Likewise, Díaz Fernández asserts that the idea of a standardised procedure for constituting provinces should be finally ruled out, that being an assumption based on very questionable interpretations of certain late sources more than on processes truly attested in Republican sources.

Whilst the first two contributions of the volume are focused on the genesis and conceptual development of the *provincia*, the thematic axis of the following chapters is the governance of the provinces, covering aspects that range from the methods of allotting provinces and proroguing commands to the roles taken on by Roman magistrates in matters of diplomacy and administration. Nathalie Barrandon (Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne) and Frédéric Hurlet (Université Paris Nanterre, Institut Universitaire de France) present a study of the procedures for assigning *provinciae* and armies to Roman magistrates during the years of the second century covered by Livy, an essential source for getting to know the institutional mechanisms of the Republic. The authors cover the separate stages from the ceremonies marking the start of the year to the magistrates' departure (*profectio*) for their *provinciae*, paying particular attention to the assignment and sortition of provinces and its repercussion for senatorial policy, as well as army recruitment procedures.



Cristina Rosillo-López (Universidad Pablo de Olavide) dedicates her chapter to the *prorogatio*, attending to the political constraints and intricacies that determined the decision to prorogue a governor's *imperium* in a province. As the author points out, prorogations were not carried out using a standardised method, but were dependent on the provisions adopted by the senate in each specific case; hence, communication between the various senators was a determining factor when it came to making the decision in one direction or another. As a specialist in the study of channels of communication in Roman politics, Rosillo-López focuses on the private conversations and negotiations that preceded the official debate in the Senate, underlining the effect of multiple constraints on the final decision, as well the flexibility of a procedure that allowed the Republic to respond effectively to the needs that the command of each province could present at a given moment.

Antoni Ñaco del Hoyo (Universitat de Girona-ICREA) analyses the links that Hispania maintained with Transalpine Gaul during the Republic. Taking as his starting point the thesis put forward by Charles Ebel (*Transalpine Gaul. The Emergence of a Roman Province*, Leiden, 1976)—who emphasised the many connections that had united Hispania Citerior and Southern Gaul, the author highlights the paramount importance of controlling the Gallic coast in relation to setting up a corridor between Italy and Hispania that would enable more fluid and effective communication between the two Peninsulas, especially at a time when Ligurian piracy was an ever-growing threat to commercial shipping. According to that perspective, the adoption of a series of measures aimed at improving control of the Gallic coastal strip and at establishing new communication links along the route of the so-called *Via Heraclea* (later *Via Domitia*), as is shown by the discovery of a number of milestones, are clear testimonies to the implementation of that policy by Rome.

The diplomatic activity of Roman commanders is the object of study in the chapter by Enrique García Riaza (Universitat de les Illes Balears), who focuses on the interviews and meetings (*conloquia*) held in person between Roman governors and local leaders in the western provinces of the empire, especially in Hispania and Gaul. The author distinguishes between four types of diplomatic meetings, based on the circumstances that gave rise to them, whether as part of a surrender to Rome, desertion to the Roman cause, as part of ratifying a previous agreement, or during negotiations with independent towns. Based on detailed work on the sources, García Riaza highlights the fact that diplomatic activities carried out by the Romans in the western provinces were at least as complex as those carried out in the east, as is shown by the existence of a series of steps recorded before the personal meeting between the two authorities. However, contrary what scholarship has maintained on occasion, the sources show that it was not a case of purely personal interviews and agreements, but genuinely official diplomatic activities that, in the final instance, involved the *res publica*.



Hispania is once again the protagonist in the chapter from Francisco Pina Polo (Universidad de Zaragoza), who deals with the study of the foundations established by some Roman governors in the Peninsula before Caesar pushed forward his colonisation policy. Pina Polo centres on the case of a series of cities that were apparently named for their founders, such as Caepiana, Brutobriga, Valeria, Metellinum, Pompelo and Gracchuris (of which Livy's *periochae* say that it was a *monumentum* to Tiberius Gracchus' achievements), while analysing the political and military circumstances that could have been

involved in each of the foundations. As the author points out, giving the Roman commander's name to those cities meant keeping everlastingly alive the memory of the *imperator*'s military achievements in his province, whilst cultivating in its inhabitants—probably Hispanians, possibly even deportees—the memory of their subjection to Rome.

Alfonso Álvarez-Ossorio Rivas (Universidad de Sevilla) deals with the role played by a series of pirate leaders—raised to the status of dynasts by the Roman authorities themselves (mostly by Pompey)—in controlling some corners of Asia Minor not directly administered by Rome. Given the impossibility of exercising direct and systematic control over those areas, the Romans delegated the government thereof to figures with a dubious past, such as Antipater of Derbe and Archelaus of Cappadocia, who—as part of a game of mutual interests—were possibly encouraged to give up their piratical activities in the Eastern Mediterranean to become rulers under the aegis of Rome, as well as contributing gradually to the acculturation and integration of the communities they governed within the orbit of Rome.

The volume ends with a detailed work by Alberto Dalla Rosa (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne) on the nature of the *imperium* and the *provincia* of Augustus, and the institutionalisation of his powers in the light of classical sources (most especially by Cassius Dio) and of discoveries like the *senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* and a papyrus fragment of Augustus' *laudatio funebris* for Agrippa. Despite of being a question that is much debated by scholarship, the author tries to overcome the polarised views that have dominated the historiographical debate and offers an interpretation whereby he tries to reconcile the standpoint of Cassius Dio (who favoured emphasising the groundbreaking nature of Augustan powers) with the intended restoration of the Republican institutions that Augustus sets out in his *Res Gestae* and the institutional practices that are shown by the sources in the opening years of the Principate. Dalla Rosa concludes that the Republican tradition possibly carried more weight than is suggested by Cassius Dio, and that the *imperium maius* of Augustus was still subject to certain limitations, in spite of having the right to intervene in the proconsular provinces.

Beyond the theme of each chapter, the contributions presented in this book propose, above all, a renewal of studies on Roman provinces and Republican institutions based on the ancient evidence. We scholars have sometimes tended to entangle ourselves too much in modern theoretical debates rather than basing on assessment of what are the historian's real work tools: the sources. No one can dispute that we are dwarves standing on the shoulders of

giants, as a wise man once said; however, that does not mean that we always need to look at history with the eyes of those giants. What is more, it is essential to sometimes climb down from their shoulders and, in any case, look at the sources with our own eyes, since only by doing so shall we be able to make progress in understanding the Ancient World. This book is a small contribution to that aim.

Last, but not least, I want to sincerely thank the colleagues who have played a part in this volume for the infinite patience and kindness they have shown during the editing process, as well as all those who have contributed in one way or another to its publication for their valuable collaboration. Most especially, I am indebted with my dear coworkers in the Area of Ancient History of the Department of Historical Sciences of the University of Málaga, particularly with Clelia Martínez Maza, Fernando Wulff Alonso, and Gonzalo Cruz Andreotti, for the unconditional help that we were given in relation to holding the workshop of which this book is the result. My gratitude also goes to Cristina Rosillo-López, Francisco Pina Polo and Antonio Caballos Rufino for their always attentive support, and to the reviewers at *Libera Res Publica* for the advices and comments provided in improving the quality of the manuscript.

To all of them, my heartfelt thanks.



Alejandro Díaz Fernández

When the Roman Republic became the master of an overseas empire, the Romans had to adapt their civic institutions so as to be able to rule the dominions that were successively subjected to their *imperium*. As a result, Rome created an administrative structure mainly based on an element that became the keystone of its empire: the *provincia*. This book brings together nine contributions from a total of ten scholars, all specialists in Republican Rome and the Principate, who analyse from diverse perspectives and approaches the distinct ways in which the Roman *res publica* constituted and ruled a far-flung empire. The book ranges from the development of the Roman institutional structures to the diplomatic and administrative activities carried out by the Roman commanders overseas. Beyond the subject on which each author focuses, all chapters in this volume represent significant and renewed contributions to the study of the provinces and the Roman empire during the Republican period and the transition to the Principate.

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