

IMPACT OF EMPIRE · VOLUME 15

COINING IMAGES OF POWER

*Patterns in the Representation
of Roman Emperors
on Imperial Coinage,
A.D. 193-284*

Erika Manders

BRILL

Coining Images of Power

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By

Erika Manders



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To my parents
To Robert-Jan

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PREFACE

In all past and present societies leaders represent(ed) their power. This book focuses on the ways in which rulers reigning in a period of instability presented themselves to their subjects. With an analysis of the messages that third-century Roman emperors spread through their coins, the vehicle for imperial communications *par excellence*, I aim to shed some light upon the diachronic development of imperial representation in the period A.D. 193–284.

This project was part of the larger research program ‘Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power, A.D. 193–284’, which also encompassed the projects ‘Local *potentes* in the Roman Empire, A.D. 193–284’ (Daniëlle Slootjes), ‘Status and Power. Administration, Appointment Policies and Social Hierarchies in the Roman Empire, A.D. 193–284’ (Inge Mennen) and a synthesis (Lukas de Blois).¹

Financial support for this project was provided by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and in addition by the following institutions: the Radboud University of Nijmegen, the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome, the Stichting Fundatie van de Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude te ‘s-Gravenhage and the Stichting Dr. Hendrik Muller’s Vaderlandsch Fonds. An earlier version of much of chapter one was published in O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn and D. Slootjes eds., *Crises and the Roman Empire. IMEM 7* (Leiden and Boston, 2007) and parts of chapters one, six, seven and eight stood at the basis of two articles that will appear in the *Jaarboek Munt- en Penningkunde* (forthcoming, 2011) and *Lampas* (forthcoming, 2011).²

¹ See D. Slootjes, “Local *potentes* in the Roman Empire: a new approach to the concept of local elites”, *Latomus* 68 (2009), pp. 416–432; D. Slootjes, “Bishops and their position of power in the late third century CE: the cases of Gregory Thaumaturgus and Paul of Samosata”, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4 (2011), pp. 100–115; D. Slootjes, “Local elites and power in the Roman world: modern theories and models”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 42 (2011), pp. 235–249; I. Mennen, *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, A.D. 193–284* (Leiden and Boston, 2011).

² E. Manders, “Mapping the representation of Roman imperial power in times of crisis”, in: O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn and D. Slootjes eds., *Crises and the Roman Empire. IMEM 7* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), pp. 275–290; E. Manders, “Communicating messages through coins. A new approach to the emperor Decius”, *Jaarboek Munt- en Penningkunde* 98 (forthcoming, 2011), pp. 1–22; E. Manders, “Boodschappen van de keizer? Monetaire propaganda in de Romeinse keizertijd”, *Lampas* 44.3 (forthcoming, 2011).

Several people contributed to the completion of this book. I am deeply indebted to Olivier Hekster whose trust and enthusiasm, from the moment I started this project onward, were a constant motivation for me. Backed by his expertise I dared to go off the beaten methodological track. Moreover, I value greatly our frequent train journeys together from Nijmegen to Arnhem. Lukas de Blois has taught me everything I know about the third century and saved me from many factual errors. He was always extremely generous with his time and good advice. The support that I received from both of them was more than I could ever have hoped for.

Many others commented thoughtfully on my ideas and parts of my written work. I enjoyed working together with Daniëlle Slootjes and Inge Mennen. Their helpful comments as well as their encouragements along the way were indispensable. Conversations with Martijn Icks were always pleasant and his ideas valuable. I am grateful for his support during the years that we were both working on our PhD thesis. Lien Foubert, Simon Grote, Emily Hemelrijk, Tonio Hölscher, Janneke de Jong, Fleur Kemmers, Stephan Mols, Eric Moormann and Margot van Mulken generously provided me with suggestions during various stages of the process that eventually led to this book. I owe a special word of thanks to Hans Teitler who was always willing to help and read a large part of my book. Years ago, he gave me the confidence to become an ancient historian.

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The members of the History department at the Radboud University, and especially the staff of Ancient History, made me feel at home in Nijmegen. They provided me with the best circumstances in which a book can be

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I learned so much from my parents who serve in many respects as an example to me. I thank them for their unconditional love and belief in me. Without the help of my father, moreover, this book would not have looked the same; he carefully and patiently edited all the graphs and images.

It is nearly impossible to express all that I owe to Robert-Jan. I could not have done this without his enthusiasm, ideas, comments, humour and never-ceasing support. He is and will always be my source of inspiration.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AArchHung</i>	<i>Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
<i>AFLM</i>	<i>Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia, Università di Macerata</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>ANSMusN</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i>
<i>BABesch</i>	<i>Bulletin Antieke Beschaving</i>
<i>BJb</i>	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher des rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande</i>
<i>BMCRE</i>	H. Mattingly, C.H.V. Sutherland, E.A. Sydenham et al., <i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> (London and Oxford, 1923–)
<i>CAH</i>	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> (Cambridge, 1923–)
<i>CR</i>	<i>The Classical Review</i>
<i>DNP</i>	H. Cancik, H. Schneider und M. Landfester eds., <i>Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. 13 Bände Altertum A–Z, 5 Bände Rezeptions- und Wissensgeschichte A–Z, 1 Registerband</i> (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1996–2003)
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EPap</i>	<i>Études de Papyrologie</i>
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece & Rome</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HBN</i>	<i>Hamburger Beiträge zur Numismatik</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HZ</i>	<i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>IMEM</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire c. 200 B.C.–A.D. 476)</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>INC</i>	<i>Proceedings of the International Numismatic Congress</i>
<i>JEastCS</i>	<i>Journal of Eastern Christian Studies</i> (formerly known as <i>Het Christelijk Oosten. Tijdschrift van het Instituut voor Oosters Christendom</i>)
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JNG</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>

<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zürich, Munich and Dusseldorf, 1981–1997)
<i>LTUR</i>	<i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae</i> (Rome, 1993–2000)
<i>MediterrAnt</i>	<i>Mediterraneo antico: economie, società, culture</i>
<i>MÉFRA</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>NCirc</i>	<i>Numismatic Circular</i>
<i>NZ</i>	<i>Numismatische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>RE</i>	A.F. Pauly, G. Wissowa and W. Kroll eds., <i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Munich, 1894–1980)
<i>RIC</i>	H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham et al. eds., <i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> (London, 1923–)
<i>RIN</i>	<i>Rivista italiana di numismatica e scienze affini</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>SchwMbl</i>	<i>Schweizer Münzblätter</i>
<i>SNG</i>	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum</i>
<i>TG</i>	<i>Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis</i>
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig etc., 1905–)
<i>TMA</i>	<i>Tijdschrift voor Mediterrane Archeologie</i>
<i>TRAC</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference</i>
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZRG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Romanistische Abteilung</i>

The translation from the *Panegyrici Latini* is from C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1994) and the translation from the *Codex Theodosianus* from C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and novels and the Sirmondian constitutions: a translation with commentary, glossary, and bibliography* (New York, 1969). In addition, the translation from the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* is adapted from P.E. Brunt and J.M. Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* (Oxford, 1967), while translations from

the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle are either from D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay A.D. 180–395* (London, 2004) or from D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford, 1990). All other translations are adapted from the *LCL*.

INTRODUCTION

Thirty-five Augusti held sway over the Roman Empire during the troublesome years between 193 and 284. All broadcast messages through their coins. These messages on the obverses and reverses of imperial coins reveal how the thirty-five rulers presented themselves and their emperorship to the heterogeneous population of the vast Empire. They do not, however, present only individual images of the thirty-five Augusti. Examined as a whole, these third-century coins also demonstrate how imperial representation developed diachronically in that period.

While current scholarship has addressed both individual third-century rulers' self-representation through their coins and particular diachronic aspects of third-century imperial representation on imperial coinage, the diachronic development of the representation of Roman imperial power on imperial coins issued in the third century as a whole remains undiscussed. It is this lacuna that the present study aims to fill. It aims to describe and interpret the diachronic development of imperial representation on imperial coins issued from 193 to 284 by means of investigating whether patterns can be distinguished in how third-century emperors presented themselves on their coins.¹

A starting point for this analysis is formed by the appointment of the emperor Pertinax (193), who succeeded the murdered Antonine emperor Commodus. The accession of Diocletian (284) marks the end of the analysis. Two factors decided this chronological demarcation. First, the situation within the Roman Empire. The violent death of Commodus inaugurated a period of instability. From this moment onward, imperial succession often proved problematic, internal and external threats ended the peacetime that Commodus had effectuated, and the state's treasury became exhausted. When we add epidemics and banditry to this, the recipe for crisis was complete. The hardships reached a climax in the second half of the third century, and it was not before 284, with the accession of Diocletian, that problems were tackled successfully. Diocletian owed his success to the acknowledgement that he was not able to govern the Roman Empire alone; in the previous years, sole rule had proven ineffective since

¹ Here, patterns are defined as characteristic orders in which specific representational types occur on third-century coinage.