

TRADITIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE REIGN OF AURELIAN

The reign of Aurelian (A.D. 270–5) furthered the recovery of the Roman empire from the ‘crisis of the third century’. This recovery was represented as restoring the traditional Roman state, even though it also required a whole series of innovations. The latter, therefore, had to comply with what Aurelian’s contemporaries understood to be ‘traditional’. What follows will deal with two such instances, presenting them as reflections of the imperial image in the third century.

AURELIAN’S POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL AMNESTIES

Aurelian is said to have declared an ‘amnesty for offences against the state’. Neither the *Vita Aureliani* nor Aurelius Victor explicitly date this amnesty. In Victor’s text everything seems to occur after Aurelian’s return to Rome from his eastern wars. The *Vita* includes the amnesty in a summary of several of the emperor’s actions that are reported after Aurelian’s death.¹ However, both texts are notoriously suspect on many details. For example, Aurelius Victor mentions Aurelian’s amnesty as ‘decreed in a Greek manner’, whereas the *Vita Aureliani* says that it was decreed according to the example of the Athenians, with reference to Cicero’s *Philippics*. Cicero spoke of the decree of the Senate in 44 B.C., which granted amnesty to all those implicated in the murder of Caesar.² But, unlike Caesar, Claudius II Gothicus died a natural death, if a death from a disease can be counted as such.³ Additionally, Cicero spoke about the ‘Greek word’, not the ‘Greek manner’. Interpretations of Aurelian’s amnesty as ‘decreed in a Greek manner’ therefore fail for several reasons.⁴ Even more importantly, both texts are biographies presenting the material not so much chronologically as thematically and offering reflections on the emperor’s personality by collecting the same sort of information from different parts of his

¹ Aur. Vict. 35.7: ‘fiscal debts and charges of informers (*deletaeque fiscales et quadruplatorum*), which had unsettled the city, were suppressed and their records were burnt, and an amnesty was decreed in a Greek manner (*ad Graeciae morem decreta abolitione*)’; *HA Aurel.* 39.4: *amnestia etiam sub eo delictorum publicorum decreta est de exemplo Atheniensium, cuius rei etiam Tullius in Philippicis meminit*. It is for this reason, it seems, that E. Groag, ‘L. Domitius (36) Aurelianus’, *RE* 5 (1905), 1396–7 dated both this amnesty and Aurelian’s financial amnesty (see below) to 274.

² Cic. *Philipp.* 1.1: *Graecum etiam verbum usurpavi, quo tum in sedandis discordiis usa erat civitas illa, atque omnem memoriam discordiarum oblivione sempiterna delendam censui*.

³ *HA Claud.* 12.2, *Aurel.* 37.5.

⁴ For this instance of the ‘misuse’ of Cicero’s text, see A. Chastagnol, ‘*Dii immortales*: traces de Cicéron dans les *Vies* des empereurs illyriens’, in E. Frézouls and H. Jouffroy (edd.), *Les empereurs illyriens. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (11–13 octobre 1990)* (Strasbourg, 1998), 30. This confusion may have been caused, at least in part, by the later misunderstanding of ‘Greek undertones’ in Cicero’s speech; see esp. K. Sion-Jenkis, ‘Griechisches Denken im römischen Gewand: Überlegungen zu Ciceros Amnestie-Rede nach Caesars Ermordung bei Cassius Dio (44, 23–33)’, in N. Ehrhardt and L.-M. Günther (edd.), *Widerstand—Anpassung—Integration. Die griechische Staatenwelt und Rom. Festschrift für Jürgen Deininger zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 2002), 189–206, esp. 194–7 (on the *exempla*) and 204–6 (on the amnesty leading to a *homonoia*).

reign.⁵ As a result, grouping Aurelian's amnesty together with his later political actions offers by itself no reliable chronological indication of when exactly this amnesty took place.

Political amnesties had been a traditional practice in Roman imperial history. Claudius I declared an amnesty after the senatorial opposition to his accession to the throne in A.D. 41 had been crushed.⁶ More recent precedents were also to hand. Caracalla declared an amnesty after he had his brother Geta murdered and made himself sole emperor.⁷ The reality was quite grim: supporters of Geta, real and alleged, were prosecuted and exiled. But the fact remains that the amnesty was meant to heal the rift in a society torn apart by factional struggles for supreme power. The amnesty of Macrinus, which accompanied his acclamation as new emperor and concerned those who had suffered from Caracalla, followed along the same lines.⁸ The need to declare a new amnesty shows, among other things, that the amnesty of Caracalla had been just words. Philip is also known to have declared a general amnesty, similar to the one that took place in the reign of Severus Alexander,⁹ thus signalling the return of the 'good old times'.

All such amnesties marked the enthronement of new emperors and their desire, pretended or real, to reconcile warring factions inside the Roman élite. Since Claudius II died a natural death, Aurelian's amnesty may have been announced to consolidate the Roman political establishment after Aurelian seized imperial power from Quintillus, who inherited this power from his brother Claudius. Like many other 'losers' of the third century, Quintillus has remained a mysterious figure. Accounts differ as to the way he came to power, the time he remained on the throne, and the manner in which he lost the empire and his own life.¹⁰ The *Vita Aureliani*, which creates a very positive image of Aurelian, presents Quintillus as an usurper.¹¹ But another viewpoint, which we see in the *Vita Claudii*, the *Breviarium ab urbe condita* of Eutropius, and several other texts, refers to Quintillus as an emperor elected due to his many virtues and with the help of the Senate.¹² The rule of Quintillus probably lasted more than 'a few days', and probably more than 'seventeen days'—which is the period that ancient authors mention most frequently: Zosimus speaks of 'several months' and

⁵ For distinctions between such genres as history and biography, see e.g. R. Syme, *The Historia Augusta. A Call for Clarity* (Bonn, 1971), 25–33, who, however, did not discuss the ways of the organization of the material.

⁶ Esp. B. Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven, 1990), 60, 93–4.

⁷ D.C. 78.3.3: 'that the whole world may rejoice, let all the exiles who have been condemned, on whatever charge or in whatever manner, be restored'.

⁸ D.C. 79.12.1.

⁹ E.g. *CJ* 9.51.7: *generalis indulgentia nostra*; cf. 9.51.6: Gordian III commenting on the *indulgentia* of Severus Alexander.

¹⁰ For brief summaries of evidence, see Groag (n. 1), 1354–5, 1363; R. T. Saunders, 'A biography of the Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270–275)', dissertation (Cincinnati, 1991), 137–49; A. R. Birley, 'Quintillus', *NPau* 10 (2001), 721.

¹¹ *HA Aurel.* 37.5: *sumpsisse imperium*. Cf. Oros. 7.23.2: *ab exercitu imperator electus*; Eutr. 9.12 (see next note); Malal. 12.29: he was elected 'because of dire necessity' (*pro summa rerum necessitate*).

¹² *HA Claud.* 12.3: *delatum sibi omnium iudicio suscepit imperium, non hereditarium sed merito virtutum, qui factus esset imperator, etiamsi frater Claudii principis non fuisset*; Eutr. 9.12: *consensu militum imperator electus est, unicae moderationis vir et civilitatis, aequandus fratri vel praeferendus. consensu senatus appellatus Augustus, septimo decimo imperii die occisus est*; Zonar. 12.26; Jord. *Rom.* 289 p.37M: *a senatu Augustus appellatus octavo decimo imperii sui die Aquilaia occisus est*; Cassiod. *Chron.* p.148M: *a senatu Augustus appellatus, qui XVII imperii sui die Aquileiae occiditur*; Jerom. *Chronic.* 304 F (p. 222 Helm).

the surviving coins of Quintillus appear surprisingly numerous, even including 'consecration coins' for him.¹³ The *consecratio* of emperors and members of their families, which was accompanied by issuing 'consecration coins', had to be sanctioned by the Senate.¹⁴ Quintillus' 'consecration coins' suggest, therefore, that he was a senatorial candidate, since Aurelian had no reason to venerate Quintillus or present him as his predecessor.¹⁵ Quite expectedly, accounts also conflict as to how Quintillus died: the *Vita Aureliani* reports both that Quintillus perished by his own hand and that he was murdered, while other texts say that he committed suicide, or refer to the natural causes of his death or give no such details.¹⁶

References to his many virtues and his comparison with Galba and Pertinax, both senatorial candidates, also indicate that Quintillus was supported by the Senate: 'on the seventeenth day of his reign he was killed, as Galba had been and Pertinax also, because he had shown himself stern and unbending toward the soldiers and promised to be a prince in very truth'.¹⁷ Quintillus was therefore a senatorial candidate, like Pupienus with Balbinus, and Tacitus, who all were 'good emperors' killed by soldiers.¹⁸ Numismatic evidence has already suggested to some that the ascendance of Quintillus strengthened the position of the Senate. Reference to the *Genius Populi Romani* on the coin commemorating *Divus Claudius* has been interpreted as signalling the period when the Senate had greater power over the state.¹⁹ In the imperial period, *Genio P(opuli) R(omani)* first emerged on the obverse of coins in the time of the civil wars of 68–9, while their reverse carried legends that included *Ob civis servatos*, *Pax*, and *SPQR*.²⁰ The coins from the early reign of Septimius Severus, when he still called himself Pertinax and therefore posed as the defender of the Roman state against

¹³ Zosim. 1.47 followed by H. Mattingly, *CAH* XII (1939), 297, among others; but see Saunders (n. 10), 140–5, incl. 144: 'a little more than a month', 'the short answer is that the apparent discrepancy between the brevity of his reign and the volume of his coinage must simply be accepted'. Numismatic evidence in *RIC* V.1, 238–47, incl. 240 with his 'consecration coins'.

¹⁴ For example, Julius Caesar: *CIL* IX, 2628. Augustus: Tac. *Ann.* 1.10.7–8. Livia: Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.4, 5.2.1; Suet. *Tib.* 51.2; D.C. 58.2.1. Claudius: Tac. *Ann.* 12.69.2–3; Suet. *Claud.* 45.2, *Nero* 9.1. Trajan: *HA Hadr.* 6.1. Hadrian: *HA Hadr.* 27.1. Cf. Caligula's demand that Tiberius should receive from the Senate the same honours as Augustus: D.C. 59.3.7 and, in general, Eus. 2.2; Tert. *Apol.* 5.1; S. G. McCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981), 98, 103; G. Bonamente, 'Il Senato e l'apoteosi degli imperatori da Augusto e Teodosio il grande', in K. Rosen (ed.), *Macht und Kultur im Rom der Kaiserzeit* (Bonn, 1994), 146; I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford, 2002), 261–71.

¹⁵ Cf. 'consecration coins' by Antoninus for Hadrian: *RIC* II, 385 (139). Marcus for Antoninus: *RIC* III, 247, 314–5. Commodus for Marcus Aurelius: *RIC* III, 397–8, 441. Septimius for Pertinax: *RIC* IV.1, 94 (193/194), 181 (193), for Commodus: 99 (196), 191 (196/197); see also *RIC* III, 397. Caracalla for Septimius: *RIC* IV.1, 239, 292 (211). Alexander for Caracalla: *RIC* IV.2, 128. Gallienus for Valerian: *RIC* V.1, 118–21; cf. *HA Aurel.* 8.1. Quintillus for Claudius: 233–7.

¹⁶ *HA Aurel.* 37.6: on the 20th day, by suicide (but see 16.1: murdered); Dexipp. *FGrH* 100, F23 = *HA Claud.* 12.6. Cf. Malal. 12.29: after seventeen days, by natural causes; Jerom. *Chronic.* 304 F (p. 222 Helm): after seventeen days; Zonar. 12.26: after seventeen days, by suicide; Aur. Vict. epit. 34.5: *in paucis diebus . . . interemptus est*.

¹⁷ Quintillus' virtues: *HA Claud.* 12.3; Eutr. 9.12 (see n. 12); Oros. 7.23.2. *HA Claud.* 12.5: *se gravem et serium contra milites ostenderat ac verum principem pollicebatur, eo genere, quo Galba, quo Pertinax interemptus est*.

¹⁸ *HA Max. et Balb.* 14.5–15.1, Tac. 13.5.

¹⁹ *RIC* V.1, 235: a commemorative coin with *Divo Claudio* (obv.) and *Genius Populi* (rev.). P. H. Webb, *RIC* V.1, 254 and P. Turcan, 'Le délit des monétaires rébellés contre Aurélien', *Latomus* 28 (1969), 958–9 connected this coin with the election of Quintillus. But see the editorial commentary in *RIC* V.1, 202–3: the provenance of such coins is uncertain.

²⁰ E.g. *RIC* I², 204–5, 207.

tyranny and oppression, carried references to the *Genius Populi Romani*.²¹ Similar coins are thought to have been issued after the death of Aurelian and before the election of Tacitus, when the Senate was effectively in command of the state.²²

Aurelian's amnesty was supposed therefore to eliminate the political conflict that emerged after Aurelian claimed imperial power from the candidate that had been backed by the Senate. The circumstances in which Aurelian ascended to the throne made it necessary for him to present the establishment of his rule in forms that would seem traditional to the Romans, such as declaring a general amnesty. As a part of this policy, Aurelian held the consulate of 271 with Pomponius Bassus, who had been the *princeps senatus* under Claudius.²³ But the rift in Roman society remained. The Senate was not satisfied with the amnesty that probably was such in name only. According to his *Vita*, Aurelian's defeat near Placentia by the barbarians invading Italy (winter 270–1) brought the friction between him and the Senate back to the surface in the form of a sedition at Rome.²⁴ Aurelian retaliated with repressions that started after his war against the Marcomanni was over.²⁵

Aurelian had also declared a financial amnesty by ordering the burning on the Forum of Trajan of public records of debts due to the state. The *Vita* and Aurelius Victor do not provide any explicit chronological indication of this amnesty.²⁶ As could be expected, here, too, Aurelian was acting in a traditional manner. In 118, soon after his accession, Hadrian (117–38) remitted all debts and had debt charters burned publicly 'in the forum'.²⁷ Marcus (161–80) likewise burned publicly all debt records 'in the forum' in 178. Cassius Dio says that Marcus 'remitted all debts owed by anyone to the emperor's private treasury or to the public treasury for a period of forty-five years, not including the fifteen years of Hadrian; and he ordered all the documents relating to these debts to be burned in the forum'.²⁸

Dio's words reveal that Hadrian had introduced fifteen-year census cycles.²⁹ Marcus

²¹ E.g. *RIC* IV.1, 95 (193/194), 97 (194/195).

²² E.g. *RIC* V.1, 35, 361 with Obv.: *Genius P(opuli) R(omani)*, and Rev.: *Int(erregnum) or -roitus) Urb(is)* (275).

²³ *PLRE* I, 155–6; W. Liebenam, *Fasti Consulares Imperii Romani von 30 v. Chr. bis 565 n. Chr.* (Bonn, 1909), 31.

²⁴ Defeat: *HA Aurel.* 18.3, 21.1. Sedition: 18.4, 21.5–6. D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie* (Darmstadt, 1996²), 234.

²⁵ E.g. *HA Aurel.* 18.4, 21.5–6; Eutr. 9.14: *plurimos nobiles capite damnavit*; Zosim. 1.49.2.

²⁶ *HA Aurel.* 39.3: *tabulas publicas ad privatorum securitatem exuri in Foro Traiani semel iussit*; Aur. Vict. 35.7 (see n. 1).

²⁷ D.C. 69.8.1: ἐλθὼν γὰρ εἰς τὴν 'Ρώμην ἀφῆκε τὰ ὀφειλόμενα τῷ τε βασιλικῷ καὶ τῷ δημοσίῳ τῷ τῶν 'Ρωμαίων, ἐκκαίδεκαετῇ ὀρίσας χρόνον ἀφ' οὗ τε καὶ μέχρις οὗ τηρηθήσεσσι τοῦτ' ἐμελλεν. *HA Hadr.* 7.6: *syngraphis in foro divi Traiani, quo magis securitas omnibus roboraretur, incensis*; Jerom. *Chronic.* 279 F s.a. 118 p.Ch. (p. 197 Helm): *Hadrianus reliqua tributorum urbibus relaxavit chartis publice incensis. Plurimos etiam ipsis tributis liberos praestitit*; *CIL* VI, 967.9–11: *cives suos sed et posteros eorum praestitit hac libertate securos* (118). The appearance of *liberalitas* on imperial coins in the reign of Hadrian was most probably connected with this financial amnesty. The earliest such coins refer to Hadrian as consul for the third time (*RIC* II, 355, 364–5, 414, 432), which dates them to 119: Kienast (n. 24), 129.

²⁸ E.g. *HA Marc.* 23.3; Jerom. *Chronic.* 289 F s.a. 178 p.Ch. (p. 207 Helm): *Imperatores multis multa largiti sunt et pecuniam, quae fisco debebatur, provinciis concedentes tabulas debitorum in medio Romanae urbis foro incendi praeceperunt*. D.C. 72.32.2: ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ. This was most probably the same forum of Trajan used by Hadrian and Aurelian for this purpose. The forum of Trajan was where Marcus auctioned imperial property when he needed money for the Marcomannic war: *HA Marc.* 17.4; Zonar. 12.1.

²⁹ D.C. 69.8.1 (see n. 27 above); *CIL* VI, 967.9–11 (see n. 27 above), which obviously referred to

declared a similar financial amnesty sixty years, or four such cycles, after Hadrian. Aurelian followed along the same lines. The date of Aurelian's financial amnesty could not correspond to Hadrian's cycles, but the resurrection of this practice obviously resulted from Aurelian's desire to smooth his takeover of imperial power against the resistance of the Senate. The *Vitae* of Hadrian and Aurelian explain the burning of the debt records as the desire of these emperors to increase the people's general sense of security. This parallelism also suggests that Aurelian declared his financial amnesty at the beginning of the reign. The insecurity could arise because of the political instability which accompanied his coming to power or the threat from the barbarians before Aurelian started to (re)build the walls of Rome in 271 (see below) or both.

In the first months of his reign, Aurelian did not express any need for more money than he had. His letter to the Senate, in which Aurelian urged the senators to consult the Sibylline books, looking for a way of stopping the advance of the Marcomanni, ends with the following sentence: 'You have under your own control the money-chest of the state, which I find more full than were my desire'.³⁰ Even if the letter as such is a forgery,³¹ the overall tone of this text fits well into the time of Aurelian's financial amnesty. However, just like his political amnesty, Aurelian's financial amnesty quickly proved to be a failure. After the Marcomannic war, Aurelian's repressions included confiscations which, as Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, were aimed against 'the rich', and were still remembered a century later. One could hardly expect a financial amnesty in such circumstances. According to Ammianus, the contemporaries of Valentinian I explained these confiscations as necessary due to the depletion of the treasury, because of the excesses of Gallienus. It is hard to say if this was an official excuse put forward by Aurelian.³² But 'the rich' most appropriately referred to Roman aristocracy, and especially the senators who wavered in the time of Aurelian's defeat at Placentia and were then punished by him. Examined together with similar amnesties from the past, those of Aurelian appear to have reflected his initial attempt to co-operate, at least nominally, with the Senate. But this proved not enough for the Roman political élite. The short period of a rapprochement between the Senate and Aurelian, who had attempted to base his rule on what then seemed traditional, was over.

THE WALLS AND THE *POMERIUM* OF ROME

Aurelian is said to have built, or rebuilt, walls around Rome.³³ Two questions that emerge immediately are whether Aurelian extended the walls of Rome and whether he also extended the *pomerium*, that is, the sacred boundary of Rome.³⁴ His *Vita* says

the provision that this measure was to be repeated every fifteen years. T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* II.2 (Leipzig, 1887³), 1015 n. 4.

³⁰ *HA Aurel.* 20.8: *est praeterea vestrae auctoritatis arca publica, quam magis refertam reperio esse quam cupio.*

³¹ For letters in the *Historia Augusta*, and in the *Vita Aureliani* in particular, see W. H. Fisher, 'The Augustan Vita Aureliani', *JRS* 19 (1929), 140.

³² Amm. Marcell. 30.8.8: *imperatorem Aurelianum purgare temptabant, id affirmando quod ut ille post Gallienum, et lamentabilis rei publicae casus, exinanito aerario, torrentis ritu ferebatur in divites.*

³³ For a description of these walls, see A. Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century* (London and New York, 1999), 145–52.

³⁴ For Aurelian as extending the *pomerium* of Rome, see, for example, L. Homo, *Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Aurélien: 270–275* (Paris, 1904), 305–6; M. Labrousse, 'Le *pomerium* de la Rome impériale. Notes de topographie romaine', *MEFR* 54 (1937), 170–6, 180; M. Andreussi, 'Pomerium', in E. M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 4 (Rome, 1999), 105;

that Aurelian 'extended the walls of the city of Rome. The *pomerium*, however, he did not extend at that time, but later. For no emperor may extend the *pomerium* save one who has added to the empire of Rome some portion of foreign territory. It was indeed extended by Augustus, by Trajan, and by Nero, under whom the districts of Pontus Polemoniachus and the Cottian Alps were brought under the sway of Rome.'³⁵

On the one hand, the absence of Claudius and Vespasian with Titus in this passage of the *Vita* is suspect. Only these men have been documented both in literary texts and through epigraphical evidence as the emperors who extended the *pomerium* of Rome; and they also held censorship on those occasions.³⁶ On the other hand, no other evidence exists which contains this sort of information about Nero and Trajan. Their presence in this part of the *Vita Aureliani* is, therefore, similarly suspect.³⁷ It would be helpful to see what happened to the *pomerium* before the reign of Aurelian. The so-called *lex de imperio Vespasiani* authorized Vespasian to extend the *pomerium* of the city of Rome 'whenever he deems it to be in the interest of the state', as Claudius had done.³⁸ Mommsen concluded that emperors had the same right as censors to extend the *pomerium*, offering two arguments. The first was that since the *lex* mentioned only Claudius, neither Augustus nor Tiberius had this right. Secondly, Mommsen argued that Claudius did not hold censorship in 49.³⁹ But no such evidence exists about Tiberius at all, and it would be reasonable to suggest that he did not extend the *pomerium*. The absence of Augustus in this part of the *lex* indeed poses a problem. Augustus' enlargement of the *pomerium* has been referred to by both Tacitus and Cassius Dio.⁴⁰ Augustus' *Res Gestae*, however, does not say anything about his extension of the *pomerium*. Seneca refers to Sulla as the person

A. Simonelli, 'Considerazioni sull' origine, la natura e l'evoluzione del *pomerium*', *Aevum* 75 (2001), 160–2. A. W. Lintott, 'Pomerium', *OCD*³, 1213 thought of Aurelian's extension of the *pomerium* as doubtful; H. Galsterer, 'Pomerium', *NPauly* 10 (2001), 86–7 mentioned neither Nero nor Trajan nor Aurelian among those who extended the *pomerium*.

³⁵ *HA Aurel.* 21.9–11: *muros urbis Romae dilatavit. nec tamen pomerio addidit eo tempore sed postea. pomerio autem neminem principum licet addere nisi eum qui agri barbarici aliqua parte Romanam rem publicam locupletaverit. addidit autem Augustus, addidit Traianus, addidit Nero, sub quo Pontus Polemoniachus et Alpes Cottiae Romano nomini sunt tributae.*

³⁶ Claudius: Tac. *Ann.* 12.24; Gell. *NA* 13.14.4–7 (Claudius included the Aventine, the last remaining of the seven hills of Rome, in the enlarged *pomerium*); *CIL* VI, 1231 (= *ILS* 213), 31537a–d, 37023–37024. Vespasian and Titus: Plin. *NH* 3.66 (the *pomerium* encircled all seven hills of Rome); *CIL* VI, 930.14–16, 1232 (= *ILS* 248), 31538a–c.

³⁷ See R. Syme, 'The *Pomerium* in the *Historia Augusta*', in *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1975/1976* (Bonn, 1978), 222–31. The circuit of the restored *pomerium* of Hadrian is thought to have been identical with that of Vespasian; see esp. Labrousse (n. 34), 167; cf. Andreussi (n. 34), 104. If this observation is correct, Trajan did not extend the *pomerium*.

³⁸ *CIL* VI, 930 (= *FIRA*² I no. 15).14–15: *utique ei fines pomerii proferre promovere cum ex re publica censebit esse, liceat ita, uti licuit Ti. Claudio Caesari Augusto Germanico* (decreed by the Senate in December 69 and approved by the assembly in January 70).

³⁹ Mommsen (n. 29), II.1, 435 n. 1 and II.2, 1052 n. 4: 'Bei der Termination des *Pomerium* erscheinen in der Kaiserzeit nur die Censoren und später der Kaiser selbst' and 1073 n. 1: 'dagegen sprechen theils die eben angeführten Worte des vespasianischen Gesetzes, theils dass Claudius in J. 49 nicht mehr Censor war', with reference (ibid., 1072 n. 5) to the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* 14: *utique ei fines pomerii proferre promovere, cum ex re publica censebit esse, liceat, ita uti licuit Ti. Claudio Caesari Aug. Germanico*. Also Augustus und Tiberius besaßen dieses Recht nicht'.

⁴⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 12.23: *et pomerium Urbis auxit Caesar, more prisco, quo iis, qui protulere imperium, etiam terminus Urbis propagare datur. nec tamen duces Romani, quamquam magnis nationibus subactis, usurpaverant nisi L. Sulla et divus Augustus*. D.C. 55.6.6: *τά τε τοῦ πωμηρίου ὅρια ἐπηύξησε*.

who most recently extended the *pomerium*.⁴¹ And, as we have seen, the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* mentions Claudius as the only emperor to have extended the *pomerium* earlier.

The conclusion that Augustus did not enlarge the *pomerium* is probably too radical.⁴² This part of the *lex* most likely did not mention Augustus because, when Augustus extended the *pomerium*, his status was different from that of Claudius in the same situation. Augustus is thought to have enlarged the *pomerium* in 8 B.C.⁴³ The *census* took place in the same year,⁴⁴ but Augustus only says the following: 'Then a second time, acting alone, by virtue of the consular power, I completed the taking of the *census* in the consulship of Gaius Censorinus and Gaius Asinius'.⁴⁵ Augustus was acting *proconsole*: according to Cassius Dio, Augustus obtained the *imperium proconsulare* for another period of ten years in 8 B.C.⁴⁶ He therefore did not have censorship in 8 B.C., and if he enlarged the *pomerium* in that year, he did so by virtue of his *imperium*. Mommsen's theory can therefore be questioned: although *imperatores* also had the right to extend the *pomerium*, they did not have the same right as censors. For this reason, the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* does not refer to Augustus as the one who extended the *pomerium*, thus implying that Vespasian should assume the censorship if he wished to extend the *pomerium*.

There is no indication that Aurelian ever held the censorship or conducted a census.⁴⁷ Further observations likewise raise suspicions regarding the information provided by the *Vita Aureliani*. First, this text was correct when it said that the *pomerium* could be enlarged only by someone who increased the territory of the Roman state.⁴⁸ However, Aurelian did not add foreign territory to the Roman state, but only restored what had been in the hands of insurgents.⁴⁹ He even abandoned some parts of Roman territory, such as Dacia to the north of the Danube.⁵⁰ The association

⁴¹ Sen. *De brev. vitae* 13.8: *Sullam ultimum Romanorum protulisse pomerium, quod numquam provinciali sed Italico agro adquisito proferre moris apud antiquos fuit. Hoc scire magis prodest quam Aventinum montem extra pomerium esse, ut ille adfirmabat etc.* For the Aventine, see Gell. *NA* 13.14.4–7 and Plin. *NH* 3.66 (see n. 36 above).

⁴² For example, Labrousse (n. 34), 167–8 together with the scepticism expressed by Syme (n. 37), 220–1; Lintott (n. 34), 121; Galsterer (n. 34), 87.

⁴³ Esp. D.C. 55.6.6. See K. Fitzler and O. Seeck, 'C. Iulius C. f. Caesar (Augustus)', *RE* 10 (1919), 363; Kienast (n. 24), 64 (with a question mark); Simonelli (n. 34), 155–6; Andreussi (n. 34), 101.

⁴⁴ Fitzler and Seeck (n. 43), 362; Kienast (n. 24), 64.

⁴⁵ *Res Gestae* 8: (*iterum consulari cum imperio lustrum (s)olus feci C. Censorin(o et C.) Asinius cos.*

⁴⁶ E.g. D.C. 53.16.2 and 55.6.1 (τὴν ἡγεμονίαν).

⁴⁷ Kienast (n. 24), 234–5.

⁴⁸ *HA Aurel.* 21.9–11 (see n. 35 and in the text); Gell. *NA* 13.14.3: *qui populum Romanum agro de hostis capto auxerat*; Tac. *Ann.* 12.23 (see n. 40). Cf. Sen. *De brev. vitae* 13.8 (see n. 41).

⁴⁹ E.g. *HA Aurel.* 41.7–10. Cf. *HA Sev. Al.* 44.1: Aurelian 'and his successors' were thought to extend the empire. But did Aurelian, who referred to himself as 'Restorer' (*Restitutor*), and his contemporaries see it this way? See *Restitutor Orientis* and *Restitutor Orbis*: e.g. *RIC* V.1, 280, 290, 299, 304, 306–7, 309–10 together with E. Estiot, 'Aurélien: numismatique et épigraphie', in E. Frézouls and H. Jouffroy (edd.), *Les empereurs illyriens. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (11–13 octobre 1990)* (Strasbourg, 1998), 101–4, who associated *restitutor orbis* with Aurelian's victory over Palmyra, and *pacator orbis* with Aurelian's demolition of the Gallic empire, and 116–7: *restitutor orbis* emerged after Aurelian's success in the first campaign against Palmyra in 272. *Restitutor Saeculi*: e.g. *RIC* V.1, 270, 290.

⁵⁰ Eutr. 9.15.1; Oros. 1.2.53; Jord. *Get.* 73. See H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley, 1988), 56; J. J. Wilkes, 'Dacia', *OCD*³, 425; cf. B. Gerov, 'Die Einfälle der Nordvölker in den

of Aurelian in the *Vita* with Augustus, Nero, and Trajan was therefore quite artificial. Secondly, if the circuit of the Aurelian walls was about twelve miles, as some have argued,⁵¹ then these walls went along the old boundary of the city, as it was established by Vespasian, and were restored in the late second and early third centuries.⁵² The 'new walls' of Aurelian could have been new in a very strict sense: they were physically new but followed the circuit of the old city border.

Finally, almost all accounts imply that Aurelian's walls were completed under this emperor,⁵³ and therefore were started quite some time prior to 275. The *Vita Aureliani*, which connected Aurelian's alleged extension of the *pomerium* with military successes of that emperor later in his reign (see above), also shows that he began building the walls soon after coming to power. The people of Rome went against Aurelian because, according to the *Vita*, they were afraid 'that what had happened under Gallienus might occur once more'. Aurelius Victor and the *Vita Aureliani* remind us that when Italy was assaulted by the Germans in 259–60, at the time when Gallienus was away with his army, the fear was so great that the Senate, which had to take the defence of Rome into its own hands, armed a part of the citizenry.⁵⁴ The words of the *Vita*, therefore, reveal that a similar sense of insecurity prompted Aurelian to strengthen the defence of the city at the very beginning of the 270s.⁵⁵

Ostbalkanraum im Lichte der Münzschatzfunde', *ANRW* II.6 (1977), 144: 271; T. S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths* (Bloomington, 1984), 30: 275; E. Chrysos, 'Von der Räumung der Dacia Traiana zur Entstehung der Gotia', *Bonner Jahrbücher* 192 (1992), 176–9.

⁵¹ H. Mattingly, *CAH* XII (1939), 300; Fisher (n. 31), 133; R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* II (Liverpool, 1983), 220 n. 78. See M. Todd, *The Walls of Rome* (Totowa, NJ, 1978), 22: eighteen kilometers in length; Watson (n. 33), 145: nearly nineteen kilometers in length; J. R. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (Oxford, 2000), 26: 'a circuit of thirteen Roman miles'. Cf. *HA Aurel.* 39.2: fifty miles in circuit and *Aur. Vict.* 35.7 (see n. 53 below).

⁵² F. Coarelli, 'La consistenza della città nel periodo imperiale: *pomerium*, *vici*, *insulae*', *La Rome impériale: démographie et logistique. Actes de la table ronde: Rome, 25 mars 1994* (Rome, 1997), 91–2 and Watson (n. 33), 145 n. 7, both with reference to *CIL* VI 1016a–c and 31227 which concern the *pomerium* of Vespasian.

⁵³ *HA Aurel.* 21.9: *muros urbis Romae dilatavit*, 39.2: *muros urbis Romae amplavit*; *Eutr.* 9.15.1: *urbem Romam muris firmioribus cinxit*. *Zosim.* 1.49.2: *ἐτειχίσθη δὲ τότε ἡ Πρώμη πρότερον ἀτειχίστος* οὐσα. *Aur. Vict.* 35.7: *ac ne unquam, quae per Gallienum evenerant, acciderent, muris urbem quam validissimis laxiore ambitu circumsaepsit*; *Malal.* 12.30: *hic quamprimum imperare coepit, moenia urbis Romae vetustate collapsa instauravit*; *Jerom. Chronic.* 305 F (p. 223 Helm): *Romam firmioribus muris vallant*; *Oros.* 7.23.5: *urbem Romam muris firmioribus cinxit*. Only *Zosimus* says that the walls were finished under Probus; *Zosim.* 1.49.2: *καὶ λαβὼν τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐξ Αὐρηλιανοῦ συνεπληρώθη βασιλεύοντος Πρόβου τὸ τεῖχος*, followed by W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1965), 443 and most other scholars, including Todd (n. 49), 22: 'Though the work began in 271, it was to take about a decade to complete in its original form'; *Saunders* (n. 10), 360–1 (with n. 291), and *Watson* (n. 33), 145: 'Probably the bulk of the project was achieved in Aurelian's reign but the whole not actually finished until the reign of Probus', 258 n. 2. Even if this were so, a year was clearly not enough time since, as these texts show, the walls were already in place by the time Aurelian was murdered in 275.

⁵⁴ *HA Aurel.* 18.4; *Aur. Vict.* 35.7 (see n. 53). Cf. *HA Gall.* 4.6; *Zonar.* 12.24; *Zosim.* 1.37.2.

⁵⁵ The *Vita Aureliani* 21.9 referred to the building of the walls after describing the Marcomannic war and repressions against the senators. For the date, see *Homo* (n. 34), 80: early 271; H. Mattingly, *CAH* XII (1939), 300; Todd (n. 49), 22: the work on the wall began in 271; *Saunders* (n. 10), 357–61: after 270–1; D. F. Buck, 'The reign of Aurelian in Eunapius' *Histories*', *AHB* 9.2 (1995), 86–7: the building of the wall was started in the summer of 271. A. R. Birley, 'Imperator Caes. L. Domitius A. Augustus', *NPauly* 2 (1997), 318: 271/272; *Curran* (n. 51), 26: 'work probably began in 271'.

Since the *pomerium* designated the territory on both sides of the city wall,⁵⁶ irrespective of whether Aurelian extended the walls of Rome or not, he could not extend the *pomerium* after the walls had already been laid out. How can we, then, explain the words of the *Vita Aureliani* (21.10–11) that this emperor ‘extended the *pomerium*’ only some time after he ‘extended the walls’ of Rome? It would be easy simply to discard these words as another fabrication of the *Vita*,⁵⁷ but its reference that Aurelian paid attention to the *pomerium* later in his reign does not look like mere fantasy. The most convenient explanation would be that Aurelian first fortified Rome with the walls which he started to build in 271, after his war against the Marcomanni. The money came, at least in part, from confiscations that accompanied the repressions unleashed by Aurelian after he came to Rome from the Marcomannic war in early 271.

A few years later, Aurelian renovated the *pomerium* of Rome, which was likely linked with his foundation of the temple of Sol after the Roman victory over Palmyra.⁵⁸ Aurelian was following in the footsteps of Hadrian, who renovated the *pomerium* in 121,⁵⁹ most likely in connection with the consecration of the temple of Venus and Rome.⁶⁰ The significance of this temple is revealed by the fact that it was usually referred to as ‘the temple of the City’ (*templum Urbis*).⁶¹ The year 121 was also marked by the medallion with the image of the sow and her piglets, and by coins with the legend *Saec(ulum) Aur(eum)*,⁶² which all carried the same message of the symbolic refoundation of Rome.⁶³ The coins of Commodus, who planned to refound Rome as Colonia Lucia Aurelia Nova Commodiana, carry the images of that emperor, veiled as priest, ploughing, and the images of the new state deity Hercules Romanus ploughing with a bull and a cow; some such coins feature Commodus in the likeness of

⁵⁶ E.g. Varro *LL* 5.143 and Liv. 1.44, who described the situation as it was in the Republican period; cf. Gell. *NA* 13.14.1. See B. Liou-Gille, ‘Le *pomerium*’, *MusHelv* 50 (1993), 96–8; Andreussi (n. 34), 96–8; Simonelli (n. 34), 119–36.

⁵⁷ Syme (n. 37), 223–4 argued that this passage was added by the author of the *Vita Aureliani*.

⁵⁸ Homo (n. 34), 184–95; Saunders (n. 10), 344–51; Watson (n. 33), 188–202; W. Liebeschuetz, ‘The significance of the speech of Praetextatus’, in P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (edd.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. (Oxford, 1999), 189–90. Cf. Homo (n. 34), 305–6, who suggested that Aurelian extended the *pomerium* in 274, when he consecrated the *templum Solis* at Rome.

⁵⁹ *CIL* VI, 1233: *collegium augurum auctore imp. .. Hadriano .. terminos pomerii restituendos curavit*; P. Romanelli, ‘II.—Roma. Reg. IX.—Via della Toretta.—Cippi del pomerio’, *Notizie degli scavi di antichità. Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei* 9 (1933), 240–3; E. Rodriguez-Almeida, ‘Il Campo Marzio settentrionale: *Solarium* e *Pomerium*’, *Atti della Pontifica Accademia romana di archeologia. Rendiconti* 51–2 (1978–9/1979–80 [1982]), 200; Andreussi (n. 34), 104.

⁶⁰ D.C. 69.4.3; *HA Hadr.* 19.12; Athenae 8, 361. The date of the consecration, or inauguration, of this temple has been debated, but the majority opinion inclines to 121; see, for example, J. Beaujeu, *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'empire I* (Paris, 1955), 128–33 (‘l’inauguration du terrain choisi’) and M. T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the City of Rome* (Princeton, 1987), 122–3 (consecration). The completion of this temple has been dated to 135; for bibliography and opinions, see A. Cassatella, ‘Venus et Roma, Aedes, Templum’, in E. M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (Rome, 1999), 121.

⁶¹ E.g. *HA Hadr.* 19.12; Amm. Marcell. 16.10.14; Serv. *Aen.* 2.227; Cassiod. *Chron.* 142 (Momm.). Athenae. 8, 361: *ἔτυχεν δὲ οὐσα ἐορτὴ τὰ Παρίλια μὲν πάλαι καλουμένη, νῦν δὲ Ῥωμαία, τῇ τῆς πόλεως Τύχῃ ναοῦ καθιδρυμένου ὑπὸ ... βασιλέως Ἀδριανοῦ* and Beaujeu (n. 60), 128–39, incl. 130 n. 3 connected the foundation of this temple with the establishment of the Parilia which was the celebration of the birthday of Rome.

⁶² See Boatwright (n. 60), 122–3. See also A. R. Birley, *Hadrian. The Restless Emperor* (London and New York, 1997), 111–2.

⁶³ For Hadrian’s similar activity throughout the Roman empire, see, for example, S. Follet, ‘Hadrian *ktistēs* kai *oikistēs*: lexicographie et *realia*’, in *La langue et les textes en grec ancien: actes du colloque Pierre Chantraine, Grenoble 5–8 septembre 1989* (Amsterdam, 1992), 244–50.

Hercules.⁶⁴ Neither Hadrian nor Commodus held censorship on such occasions. But what they did was only to renovate the *pomerium*. It is possible that the extension of the *pomerium* attributed to Aurelian by his *Vita* similarly was a renovation. The building of the Roman walls by Aurelian and his renovation of the *pomerium* were not only chronologically distinct acts but also of different character. The walls had military importance, whereas the renovation of the *pomerium* came as part of Aurelian's religious reform only later.

CONCLUSION

Aurelian is usually remembered in connection with his important religious innovations, which have been interpreted as his attempt to strengthen the imperial power. The establishment of the cult of Sol, which was now Aurelian's patron deity,⁶⁵ reflected important social and political changes during his reign. Coins featured Sol as *Sol Dom(inus) Imp(erii) Rom(ani)* and the emperor as *Aurelianus Aug(ustus) Cons(ervator)*, thus blurring the lines between human and divine.⁶⁶ Other coins showed Sol giving Aurelian a globe in a symbolic 'Solar investiture',⁶⁷ which disconnected his rule from any human predecessor: his power came from a divinity, and was thus divine itself. Quite appropriately, Aurelian is said to have once subdued a mutiny of his troops by declaring that only the god had the authority to invest emperors with purple and establish the limits of their rule.⁶⁸ He was also the first emperor who publicly wore a diadem together with jewelled and gilded robes. Aurelian also established a new college, the pontifici Dei Solis, whose task was to venerate Sol and, by extension, the emperor.⁶⁹

However, Aurelian's religious and political innovations appear to have been founded on old Roman traditions. His political and financial amnesties were modelled on

⁶⁴ The images of Commodus, veiled as a priest, ploughing: *Col(onia) L. Au(relia) Com(modiana)* in *RIC* III, 430 and 431 (190). The images of Hercules Romanus plowing: *Herc(uli) Rom(ano) Conditori* on 436 (Commodus presented as Hercules) and 437 (192). The two animals depicted on such images have been interpreted as 'two oxen': for example, H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *RIC* III, 394 (ad no. 247) and 436 (ad no. 616); H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* IV (London, 1968), 825 (ad no. 643), 827 (ad no. 658), 845 (ad no. 725); A. S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet. University of Glasgow. II. Trajan to Commodus* (London, 1971), 442 (ad nos 159–61). But cf. D.C. 73.15.3: the golden statue representing Commodus with a bull and a cow. All this imagery related to Commodus' plan to refound Rome as *Colonia Lucia Aurelia Nova Commodiana*; cf. J. Aymard, 'Commode-Hercule Fondateur de Rome', *REL* 14 (1936), 350–64, esp. 356–8. Prior to that, Commodus had experimented with the image of Romulus Conditor: *RIC* III, 361 (189).

⁶⁵ E.g. *CIL* VIII, 5143 = *ILS* 580 (275), and suppl. 4, 23924 (undated). Aurelian also introduced a new type of coins with *Conservat(ori) Aug(usti)*, which carried the anthropomorphic image of Sol: *RIC* V.1, 307–8.

⁶⁶ *RIC* V.1, 301: *Sol Dominus Imperi Romani*, and 258–9, 264, 299. See *Deus Aurelianus: CIL* II, 3832 (after 275?), VIII, 4877 = *ILS* 585, VIII, 10217 = *ILS* 578 (274), XI, 556 = *ILS* 5687; *AE* 1938.24 (Valencia); G. Sotgiu, *Studi sull' epigrafia di Aureliano* (Palmero, 1961), 84 no. 15 = *Inscr.Lat. Tunis.* 777 (Senta).

⁶⁷ *RIC* V.1, 296–7, 305. For example, R. Göbl, *Die Münzprägung des Kaisers Aurelianus* (Vienna, 1993), 59–60: early 274; E. Estiot, 'Aureliana', *RN* 1995, 82: late 274; Watson (n. 33), 190: 'Solar investiture' of the inspiration for the emperor's valor.

⁶⁸ *FHG* IV, 197, no. 10.6 with a brief review by B. Saylor Rodgers, 'Divine Insinuation in the *Panegyrici Latini*', *Historia* 36 (1986), 70 n. 2. Cf. D.C. 72.3.4.

⁶⁹ His elaborate dress: *Aur.Vict. epit.* 35.5. The new college: e.g. *CIL* VI, 501 [= *ILS* 4149] (383), 846, 1779, 2151 (late fourth century).

similar amnesties declared by his predecessors. By declaring such amnesties, Aurelian presented his rule as abiding by old practices and attempted to improve his relations with the senators who regarded him as an usurper. Aurelian's most visible reform, which introduced the cult of Sol as the new state cult, included the traditional renovation of the *pomerium*, thus offering us another glimpse at a peculiar blend of innovations and traditions at this stage of the transformation of the Roman empire.⁷⁰

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⁷⁰ I am indebted to the anonymous reader for very helpful comments and suggestions.