THE TRANSFORMATION OF VICTORY INTO POWER: FROM EVENT TO STRUCTURE

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THE VICTOR’S TASK: TRANSMISSION AND TRANSFORMATION

Wars are waged by states and their leaders primarily for two reasons: first, to expand or defend by military force the state’s political domain against external enemies; and second, to establish by military success and glory both the state’s political stability and its leader’s authority against internal opposition. Military victory and political power are, however, less commensurable notions than they might at first sight appear. A victorious battle is a momentary factual event, limited in space and time, and is achieved by means of physical, technical, and economic force. It may have limited consequences for the actual military strength and economic resources of the defeated enemy. Political power, by contrast, is a long-term structural concept, based on political, social, and religious institutions as well as on ideological foundations. Its aim is general stability for the leader and his regime over space and time. Therefore, in order for military victories to be more than just short-term successes, they have to be transformed into political power. This is achieved through practical political measures that ensure the exercise of power by strong institutions, and through symbolic manifestations that fix and perpetuate conceptually the victor’s superiority and dominance. Both of these means depend a great deal on the general conditions of society and culture within which these functions are fulfilled. In Greek and Roman antiquity, the symbolic transformation of military victories into political power, external as well as internal, was achieved on the one hand by significant actions, such as rituals and celebrations, and on the other hand by visual signs, above all by powerful monuments.

Political monuments are signs of power. They “re-present” political entities, states, and statesmen in a very literal sense: making them “present” in public spaces.
This presence is inevitable and unceasing. There is no escape, no space from which to view a political monument from a neutral, disinterested point of view. Every spectator is forced either to accept and celebrate the monument and the power it “re-presents” – or to oppose and destroy it. Monuments are thus at the same time both powers and weapons.

Why were monuments of such political force needed in antiquity? In archaic and classical Greece, political power was based on weak foundations. Regarding exterior enemies, the military victories of the various city-states did not normally have long-term consequences, due to the lack of substantial power structures. They were short-term successes with limited effect that gave the enemy the opportunity to recover quickly and to resume hostilities; and within the political communities of Greece, where there was neither a dynastic structure of monarchies nor a religious structure of strong priesthods, political power had to be won and legitimated by individuals over and over again through a combination of collective conviction, personal charisma, and successful operations – above all by victories in war. The challenge for each leader was, therefore, how to transform concrete military achievements into a lasting position of power.

All this changed dramatically in Hellenistic times. From the time of Philip II and Alexander the Great, Hellenistic monarchs and army leaders undertook ambitious military campaigns, the aims of which were to conquer or defend large territories, “spear-won land,” for lasting political dominion. Within their own realms, the Hellenistic kings had to strengthen and legitimate their own exceptional positions through individual military success and glory. However, even with exceptional military, economic, and institutional power, their military strength and dominance proved to be very unstable, governed by the great goddess Tyche – even the mighty monarchies of the Ptolemies, Seleucids, Antigonids, and Attalids were governed by the great goddess. Thus, Hellenistic leaders too needed to find a way to stabilize and solidify their political power and transform concrete successes into structural concepts of rule.

Similar efforts to consolidate power occurred also in Rome, which had come to dominate the ancient world through military campaigns of unprecedented dimensions, ambitions, and risks. Single military victories do not, however, guarantee a general conquest; even less do they guarantee political rule. Moreover, within the Roman state, the great army leaders and all later emperors had to legitimate their extraordinary ambitions and positions against the background of the traditional res publica with its firmly rooted republican mentality and ideology. The combination of these two factors necessitated not only successful warfare but also an immense
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effort to turn these successes into a stable state in which political predominance of
the victors was assured.

Thus, varying historical circumstances conditioned to a high degree the use and
function of victory monuments in Greek and Roman antiquity. In crucial periods of
the history of these peoples, monuments were not secondary reflections of military
victory but primary factors and weapons of political life.

AGAINST EXTERNAL ENEMIES

Victories have to be fixed, defined, secured, and perpetuated against external ene-
emies. In early Greece, warfare was a highly formalized and, therefore, a rather
ephemeral enterprise. Military campaigns culminated in and often consisted of a
single battle of two opposing phalanx armies. Victory was achieved by putting the
opposite phalanx to flight. Defeat rarely had any irreversible consequences, such as
the annihilation of the enemy or annexation of the enemy’s territory. The Greeks
later made idealistic interpretations of this kind of warfare, and modern scholarship
has gladly followed them, but more realistic reasons should not be overlooked. The
relatively small military forces and the equilibrium of small autonomous city-states
did not lend themselves to large-scale violence or extensive and long-term domin-
ion. Under such circumstances, warfare in early Greece often took on the character
of a tournament rather than war in the sense we understand it today. In a hoplite
battle the main goal was to remain master of the battlefield.

As a consequence, the outcome of battle was frequently ambiguous and ephemeral.
It was often a matter of dispute who had won the match, and the vanquished recov-
ered quickly from their defeat so that hostilities could be resumed. To counteract this
ambiguity and ephemerality, the Greeks turned to symbols of victory, as symbols are
a means of stabilizing cultural situations that are fluid in character. Thus, beginning
in archaic times, at the latest in the sixth century B.C., a visible sign would be erected
in order to demonstrate the victor’s mastery over the field of the encounter: the
tropaion (trophy) enemy armor attached to a tree trunk forming a sort of monu-
mental mannequin. Erecting a tropaion where the enemy had turned to flee was not
merely a symbolic confirmation of the victor’s “real” success; it was the act of success
itself. If a battle was not finished by a clear victory of one of the opposing armies, it
could be continued on the level of symbolic manifestations. Revealing in this respect
are several cases in which one side claimed victory by trying to erect a trophy, while
the other side contested this claim. They did so, however, not by fighting another
battle in order to “correct” the outcome of the first encounter but by opposing the symbolic act: either immediately attacking those who were in charge of erecting the trophy or tearing down the “illegitimate” trophy and erecting an alternative trophy at a place where they had stood firm. The symbolic act was part of military reality: erecting the trophy was the final stroke that decided the battle.

Since military victory was often more or less ephemeral and had relatively few manifest and lasting consequences, it must have been all the more important to establish a monumental sign that made victory manifest and, moreover, visible over great distances and lasting into the future. The trophy’s duration was conditioned on the strength of the victor: if a vanquished weaker enemy questioned the legitimacy of a trophy, he ran the risk of being attacked by the victor’s superior force. In this sense trophies are transformations of victory into power. And their value could be enhanced by sacrality, as trophies were dedicated — whether regularly or only in specific cases — to a god or goddess to whose help victory was ascribed.

Battle trophies were originally made of perishable material, such as wood, and differed from the monuments that were erected to convey “immortal” glory and “everlasting” memory to gods and men. These monuments were made of durable material and took the form of temples made of stone, huge votive offerings crafted in precious metals, and architectural tombs with sepulchral stelai and statues. The modesty of the battle trophies corresponds to a basic concept of early Greek warfare and policy: victory was to be transformed, beyond the ephemeral event, into stable power, but it was not meant to last forever. This view is explained in later sources as a religious and ethical concept, ensuring “that the memorials of the enmity... should quickly disappear,” “for a single moment, a slight turn of Fortune, often brings low the arrogant” (Diodorus Siculus). At the same time, however, the relative ephemerality of battle trophies acknowledged the generally unstable situation among early Greek city-states, with their permanently changing constellations of dominion and subjugation.

The situation was different, however, when Athens, as the first Greek polis, developed into a large-scale political state. Athens had defeated the most powerful enemy of the entire world – the Persians – and claimed to have saved thereby the highest religious, ethical, and social values of mankind. As a result it created an extensive system of political rule over other states, aiming at dominance over the whole Greek world and conceiving its political realm as expanding and invincible. In this historical situation the visible symbols of the founding victories of Athens’ new ambitious political power were transformed into enduring monuments. After the great battles of the Persian Wars the Greek victors had probably erected traditional
"medium-term" trophies, but one generation later, around 460 B.C., Athens erected huge new monuments on the battlefield of Marathon and at the seashore of Salamis, claiming the glory of these victories for itself—and forever.\(^8\) This was a result, and at the same time an expression, of the transformation of democratic Athens into a "world power."

Evidence of a further step toward a purely symbolic use of trophies is provided by a monument described by Pausanias at the northern edge of the agora of Athens. There, between the statue of Hermes Agoraios and the Stoa Poikile, the exit of a street leading to the agora area was framed by a gateway carrying a \textit{tropaion} in celebration of an Athenian victory against Pleistarchos, the brother of Cassander, set up probably in 304 B.C.\(^9\) The place of this combat is disputed; it was probably somewhere near Athens rather than inside it: the enemy could hardly have penetrated so far into the city. Even if it had, the place for the \textit{tropaion} was clearly chosen not to reflect the military events but for reasons of representative decoration; for this is the earliest known example of the very common practice of adorning the spots where streets open out into larger spaces with gateways, arches, and so on. The separation of the trophy from the turning point of the battle had its forerunners in representations of \textit{tropaia} erected by Nikai, goddesses of victory, on reliefs, vases, coins, and other media.\(^10\) The trophy had thus become a pure symbol of commemoration, detached from its actual circumstances and not so much testifying to the victorious outcome of a specific battle as asserting the city's success and glory. It was directed not to the beaten enemy but to its own citizens. From this time through the Hellenistic age and into the Roman imperial period \textit{tropaia/tropaeae} were increasingly used for the visual orchestration of public spaces within the cities.

Even those \textit{tropaia} that continued to be erected by Greece on the stage of war, attesting successful combat and conquest, changed significantly. Warfare itself changed, beginning in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., dropping many of its archaic conventions and employing complex tactics and strategies and large-scale pursuit, capture, and annihilation of enemy troops. Thus the topographically fixed spot of a battle's turning point no longer played a significant role. The new style of warfare in the Hellenistic period led, however, to many new ambiguities and uncertainties, which generated new demands for symbols of victory, dominance, and rule. As military campaigns and strategies extended in space and time, the route from victory and conquest to political power and rule became more difficult than ever.

Alexander the Great had cut a swath across wide regions of Asia with his invincible army, without any realistic policy for establishing an efficient and lasting political dominance. When he had reached India, the extreme limits of his enterprise, his
soldiers mutinied and demanded to return home. Alexander, at that point, is reported not only to have made a solemn sacrifice to the twelve Olympian gods but also to have erected for that purpose twelve altars, “as high as the greatest towers, and in breadth even greater than towers would be, as thank-offerings to the gods who had brought him so far as a conqueror, and as memorials to his own exertions.” The altars must have stayed there long after the ephemeral occasion of their origin. In this situation of utmost uncertainty of what would become of his immense “spear-won land,” Alexander’s act was the only recourse that was left to him: setting up an endurable and visible sign as a testimony of his claim to possess and rule these lands. Since he had not actually won a battle in India and since moreover the erection of tropaia seems not to have been customary in his homeland of Macedonia, he did not choose a tropaion but a structure of sacrifice. The sacred character of the sign secured its permanence and far exceeded the sacrality of normal tropaia. Above all, it defined the realm of all those Greek gods to whom he ascribed his superiority to his “barbarian” enemies.

This was precisely the condition under which Rome adopted the tropaenum as a symbol of military victory beginning in the late second century B.C. – the phase of aggressive and extensive imperialism that culminated in the claim to worldwide rule. Here, too, the crucial point was the transformation of conquest into political dominion, and in this context tropaea assumed a primary significance. The first monumental trophies in Roman warfare, after their introduction in the late third century B.C. for the victoriatas coins, were erected by Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Quintus Fabius Maximus after their defeat of the Arverni and Allobrogi in 121 B.C. Significantly, these monuments were combined with two temples dedicated to Mars and Hercules, the gods of war and of far-reaching virtuous enterprise. They were placed on the field of the decisive battle but are obviously much more than the traditional Greek battlefield tropaia. Victory monuments and cult sites add up to a complex ideological presence of the Roman state, which, with the annexation of the province Gallia Narbonensis, expanded for the first time far to the West, into “barbarian” parts of the world. The situation of Roman dominance, before the installation of any efficient administration, must have been particularly unstable: the first step, therefore, was to claim unequivocally the possession of this land by a monumental symbol of Roman presence.

Later army leaders and conquerors followed these examples. When Sulla erected two huge tropaea at Chaironeia, marking the place of his decisive victory against Mithridates in 86 B.C. (one on the plain where the armies had clashed, the other on Mount Thourion where he had encircled a detachment of the enemy), he too
adressed the gods of Rome, dedicating his monument to Ares/Mars, Nike/Victoria, and to his personal tutelary goddess Aphrodite/Venus. Again, this was far more than a local demonstration of military success, as is attested by the fact that Sulla also chose these *tropaea* for his coin types in both Athens and Rome, thus addressing the whole Greek world in addition to the capital of the empire. By erecting the Chaironeia trophies, Sulla claimed not only to have vanquished a terrifying foe but also to have included the Greek East into the realm of Roman rule.

To this symbol of Roman dominance over the Greek East, Pompey answered with a counterpart in the West in which the claim to worldwide rule is expressed even more clearly. After the Spanish War against Sertorius in 71 B.C., Pompey placed a colossal victory monument, showing his own portrait statue between two *tropaea*, not on the field of any of his battles but in the Pyrenees, at the side of the Via Iulia Augusta, where it entered the province of Spain. This was not only a sign of victory but a message about rule, transmitted at the border of the western “end of the world,” directed to all those who entered this part of the empire.

All later great “landscape trophies” are variations of this type of territorial monument: Caesar’s trophy at Zela, celebrating his victory against Pharnakes, by which, according to Cassius Dio, he “overshadowed and in a sense overthrew” a nearby trophy of Mithridates, thus securing Roman superiority against Eastern barbarism; Octavian’s monument at Actium/Nikopolis, by which he marked the central place between East and West, where he had saved the unity of the empire; the huge trophy of the Alpes at La Turbie, dedicated by the Senate to Augustus, placed at the side of the Via Iulia Augusta, with an inscription that enumerated all tribes of those mountains he had brought under Roman control; Trajan’s hundred-foot *tropaenum* near Adamklissi, erected at the side of an altar for the fallen soldiers of a major Roman defeat, thus compensating for an earlier military catastrophe at the site, but also claiming the restoration of Roman political dominance over the whole province of Moesia. And so on.

The specific character of all such territorial monuments was a universal and almost abstract imperialism. They surely aimed to impress immediately all those who confronted them, as did all traditional public monuments of Rome and its empire; and they answered, by commemorating important achievements of conquest, the traditional Roman interest in the great history and glory of the res publica Romana. But there is more. Whoever passed one of these monuments was supposed to have in mind the universal space of Roman dominion and rule. Sulla’s Chaironeia trophy implied rule over the entire “Greek” world, Pompey’s Pyrenees trophy opened the way to the whole Iberian peninsula, extending the Sullan concept of Rome
and Greece into a universal concept from East to West. The Nikopolis monument implied the reunification of the eastern and the western part of the empire, while the *tropaeum Alpium* presupposed the knowledge of the vast extension of those mountains and its multiple populations.

What the viewers actually saw was just one part of the message. On a second level, “territorial monuments” referred to a general idea of the geographical dimensions of the *orbis Romanus*. In this sense, these trophies are not only symbolic ex post documentations of “actual” victories won by “real” military force: they are also concrete means of subjugation – and the first act of vanquished enemies revolting against political oppression must be to liberate themselves from these symbols of dominace.

**TOWARD INTERNAL AUTHORITY AND POWER**

Within political communities, wars are highly important agents in the formation of collective mentality and social stratification. Here, too, the concrete results of military actions have to be transformed into general political structures. Those who wage a war for the security, prosperity, and stability of their common state develop community by this action and – particularly by an eventually successful outcome – a state of intense psychological and mental coherence. In the face of a common adversary they experience and create their common identity. This state lasts, as a rule, beyond the time of war and, therefore, affects for some time the general field of political mentality and practice. Thus, the “intense” phase of a collective feeling of political identity in Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. was based on continual wars. In Rome, the creation of a specific set of “Roman” cultural patterns, including the core virtues of the *mos maiorum*, was achieved during the main imperialistic phase of military expansion from the fourth to the second centuries B.C. Often, such increase of political coherence and identity was not just an accepted result of a given historical situation but was intentionally promoted by the community or its leading statesmen for more or less obvious collective or personal purposes.

In Greece, as in Rome, wartime achievements were considered major qualities of general political leadership. Such achievements served to win, legitimate, and secure political power for political groups and individual persons against the claims and ambitions of opposing groups and individuals. Most leading statesmen of classical Athens as well as of republican Rome had excelled as army leaders. The honor of public portrait statues was given in Athens almost exclusively to successful
generals, the normal type being the *strategos* with Corinthian helmet. In republican Rome, public honorary statues were set up mostly for the army leaders of Roman expansionism; only with Augustus, was military *virtus* balanced by a complementary ideal, *pietas*, as the highest political qualifications. But even Hadrian, in giving up intentionally his predecessor’s policy of expanding the empire, had to preserve in his public monuments the iconography and message of military prowess. Warlike virtue was still the primary foundation of individual political power.

This general significance of war and victory creates, however, enormous problems of participation – that is of transmission and transformation – all the more in great territorial states like the Roman Empire. Wars were local and short, while the empire was immense and eternal. When in far away Spain, Africa, Syria, or Germany, at the margins of the world, a decisive battle was won or a campaign successfully concluded, how could these events be transmitted throughout the Roman world so that its population could participate in them? And if such successes were conceived to be the foundation of the “eternity” of Roman rule, how could they be transmitted as efficient messages to future times? Moreover, wars were fought by a marginal group of socially inferior people, whereas the empire comprised millions of inhabitants of various social ranks, few of whom were affected, positively or negatively, by the consequences of such wars. How could these barriers to personal involvement be overcome? How could a worldwide audience with different social and cultural experiences be made to be concerned with these issues? Last but not least, military combats and campaigns were simply events, astonishing or exciting ones maybe, but far less complex than the concepts of the state and its political community, the promotion of collective identity, and the legitimization of political leadership. These were themes of much greater complexity, of cultural values and norms. How could the crude facts of war, in order to fulfill their task of shaping the mentality and attitudes of the society, be imbued with significant political messages, understandable and convincing for the heterogeneous members of the multicultural empire?

What was needed under these circumstances was an enormous effort of transmission and transformation: from a particular success, limited in space and time and achieved by a specific small group of people, to an unlimited good, universal and eternal for the population of the whole empire. Concrete military achievements had to be transformed into social and political values; collective warlike success into political solidarity and identity; and individual bravery into social rank and political authority. This transformation could be achieved through various means: first, through festivities and rituals by which the population could participate in the celebration of wars; second, through the erection of public monuments by which the
memory of glorious deeds was perpetuated; third, through the foundation of public buildings, temples, theaters, baths, and so on, from the booty by which the military success was turned into a lasting benefit for the whole community; and fourth, by the creation of an ideological atmosphere in which wars and victories were conceived and commemorated as the foundation of collective welfare.

The extent to which such means of transmission and transformation were conceived and adopted depends heavily on the numerical and geographical extension of the respective community and, moreover, on the ideological concept of its state. Thus in archaic and classical Greek poleis the situation was different from that in imperial Rome. First of all, citizens themselves fought, in a citizens’ army; and they fought normally within reach of their own city and their own cultural world. There was no need, therefore, to transmit information to a faraway audience that had no knowledge of where and how the campaign had been waged. Second, the Greek citizen-soldiers did not go into combat for the idea of an empire that was not theirs, for a future that they would not live to see, but rather for themselves, their families, and their fellow citizens; that is, for their own sakes, here and now. Those who did the fighting did it for their fathers who had fought before them, for their wives who gave birth to new fighters, and for their sons and daughters who would follow them. Warriors and those for whom war was waged were one and the same. They all had to face death, and they knew what death was. So there was no demand for explanation of the vital experience of war. Third, the qualities of fighting were identical with the highest values of the civic society. Arete, the ideal of mythical heroes as well as of living men, was a very immediate physical virtue. There was no need to transform war into some higher ideal concept.

Transmission of information about war campaigns and victories through space and time, as well as transformation of successful achievements into general political power and rule, became necessary in the Roman Empire, where the citizens of Rome itself, of Italy, and of most parts of the provinces had neither experience of war at all nor any knowledge of those faraway regions in which the war campaigns were conducted; where the normal soldiers of the army had no concrete relation to the center of the empire and its political institutions and mostly also no connection with the region they were fighting in and for; and where nevertheless the whole empire depended — in part physically, in part ideologically — on the force of those troops that were stationed at the borders of the Roman world.

An enormous effort was therefore made, by political manifestations, collective actions, as well as public monuments, to transmit the glory of war and victory throughout the empire, above all to the capital of Rome, and to transform military
victory and conquest into political power and lasting rule. The uniqueness of this
transmission and transformation was a result of the uniqueness of the Roman Empire.
It originated in the first phase of Roman expansion from a city-state to a vast
territorial power. And it developed into a wide spectrum of media and forms in
which this was realized. A short sketch may demonstrate how these devices were
conceived to make collective participation in military affairs possible and to shape
public opinion and mentality by their glorification.

*Rituals for Participation.* The first and most immediate way of involving fellow citizens
in the results of war is to make them participate personally in rituals and celebrations
of victory. Since archaic times, the triumph was an established ritual of return from
the realm of war into the civic space of the *urbs,* of reintegration of the imperator with
his army into the body of citizens, of common sacrifices and festivities in gratitude
toward the gods, of presenting the captives and booty taken from the enemies, and
of celebrating the glorious deeds of the army and its leader.20 Significantly, from
the fourth and third centuries B.C. – that is, from the initial period of large-scale
territorial expansion – this solemn religious ceremony developed more and more
into a spectacular show of captured riches and a descriptive demonstration of specific
incidents of the campaigns. After the defeat of Pyrrhos in 275 B.C. the victorious
imperator Marcus Curius Dentatus is reported to have displayed captured Molossians,
Thessalians, Macedonians, Bruttians, Apulians, and Lucanians, as well as booty of
gold and purple, statues, paintings, precious products of Tarentine handicraft, and –
above all, and most spectacularly – Pyrrhos’ war elephants.21 Whatever exaggeration
the report of Florus may contain, this must have been among the first instances of the
transformation of the triumph into an impressive mass spectacle. In this, Rome clearly
followed the magnificent processions of Hellenistic kings, but at the same time it
fulfilled an evident need within its own social context: to document the number and
kind of defeated enemies, the terrifying power of the Roman war machine, and the
fabulous riches now in Roman possession. Shortly afterward, other elements were
introduced, by which more and more detailed information on the war campaign
could be presented: paintings of decisive battles, conquests, and military measures;
models of captured cities; personified images of submitted lands, rivers, or mountains;
portraits of defeated foes; *tabulae* inscribed with information on conquered sites;
and so on. This aim to give concrete information on war campaigns developed
precisely in the period when Rome's imperialistic ambitions expanded, when wars
were conducted in increasingly distant lands, of which the population of Rome had
no personal experience, and when its army was recruited to an increasing extent

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from its allies, who reported their experiences not in Rome but among their own fellow citizens. These postwar campaigns were waged to the highest possible degree with spectacular and vivid details. The effect is summed up by Flavius Josephus, in his description of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus: “The art and magnificent workmanship of these structures now portrayed the incidents to those who had not witnessed them, as though they were happening before their eyes.”

The path of the triumphal procession was long, and it passed many large meeting sites where crowds of people could attend and watch these manifestations: the Circus Maximus, the Forum (which, significantly, in the late fourth century B.C. was equipped with “Maeniana,” or balconies for spectators), and the vast area of the Capitoline, where the final sacrifice was performed. In later years there was added, outside the pomerium, the Circus Flaminius, where the triumphal processions started, and the theater by the temple of Apollo, where they passed in front of the stage facade. Large parts of the population would have had good opportunities to participate. And participate they did, in one way or another. There were instances of highly emotional responses: at Caesar’s triumph, for example, the people groaned at the paintings depicting Caesar’s Roman enemies committing suicide but laughed at those that showed the deaths of foreign foes. Triumphal celebrations were also good occasions for erotic contacts, as Ovid implies, when he recommended that young lovers impress their favorite girls with details about the procession — real or made up, it didn’t matter. The triumph was an event for everybody.

As time went by, occasions multiplied. When there was no triumph to celebrate, the arrival of a successful army leader in Rome could be celebrated as an adventus; a departure to war could be observed as a formal profectio. These rituals originated in the late Republic but reached their first peak under Augustus. Their success was attributable to the fact that the celebrations were less constrained by old traditions and, therefore, more open to new forms of active veneration for the emperor. How much collective participation was achieved by such manifestations is proudly attested to by Augustus himself on the occasion of his return from the East in 19 B.C.: “part of the praetors and of the tribunes of the people, together with the consul Quintus Lucretius and the leading men of the state, were sent to Campania to meet me.” Normally, parts of the population went “spontaneously” to meet the emperor outside the city gate. It was like the epiphany of a common “savior.”

The increasingly numerous and lavish festivities of victory were also occasions of collective participation in the glory of war. From republican times on, victorious generals celebrated their return to Rome with theater performances, circus games, gladiatorial spectacles, and venationes — which, after the strain of war, offered general
entertainment and enjoyment to the whole population and often also referred to the particular situation of military triumph that was being celebrated: public executions of captured enemies, condemned ad bestias or crucified in the amphitheater, or put to death in more sophisticated spectacles by "mythical charades" on the stage of "classical" theaters. A strongly allusive as well as a clearly commemorative character is evident in the performances Augustus sponsored at the inauguration of his new Forum in 2 B.C.: a great "naumachia," staging the battle of Salamis between Greeks and Persians as a retrospective metaphor of his own triumph at Actium, and a venatio with 260 lions and 36 crocodiles, symbols of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra. On a more general level, the killing of wild beasts in the arena could be seen as a demonstration of "Roman" superiority over the "evil" forces in the world, clearly equating the ferocity of animals with that of the barbarians. Other emperors made their messages more direct. Most striking were the spectacles of Claudius after his campaign in Britain, when "he gave representations in the Campus Martius of the storming and sacking of a town in the manner of real warfare, as well as of the surrender of the kings of the Britons, and presided clad in a general's cloak." However, even on such festive and lavish occasions transmission was a delicate matter. At the pompa circensis for the ludi of the newly installed goddess Victoria Caesaris in 45 B.C., people refused even to applaud for the statue of this goddess. The event shows clearly that even on these occasions of mass entertainment people did not forget that they were attending not only entertaining spectacles but also celebrations for a particular individual's military accomplishments that had had specific political aims.

All such manifestations and events immediately after the conclusion of war were imbued with a strong occasional character. Participation by physical presence at the crowning celebration of victory was a matter of transmission, not of transformation. The event of victory itself had just to be prolonged and thereby transferred to those who had not witnessed the fight but were nevertheless to be involved in its outcome. It did not need to be interpreted and legitimized, or transformed into any theoretical concept. This is the reason for the striking, spectacular "realism" of all manifestations concluding the actual activities of warfare — in sharp contrast to those monumentalizing features that perpetuate the glory of victory into the future and transform the event of triumph into a structure of power.

Monuments for Memory. The monumentalization and perpetuation of military triumph and glory are well-known and intensely explored features of Roman culture that cannot be dealt with in the space of this chapter. However, a brief overview of the essential features of Roman victory monuments may demonstrate how much
and how specifically they were determined by the aim of transforming momentary victory into lasting and comprehensive power.

There are several threads leading in this direction, of course interconnected with each other, but for clarity they may be distinguished. One thread leads from information to memory. The paintings that were carried around in the triumphal procession for occasional information of the spectators were afterward permanently displayed in temples and public places. There they could be observed and commented on, as at the beginning of Varro's *De re rustica*, where a group of upperclassmen meet in the Temple of Tellus and look at a painted map of Italy, which stimulates a conversation on the advantages of this country in comparison with other parts of the world. Thus the function of these paintings was changed from a concrete temporary service to a general conceptual message. Similarly, the booty that had been presented in the triumph could be transformed into permanent memorials in the major sanctuaries and even in the Forum itself, like the Antium rostra on the orator's platform at the Comitium or the Samnite shields at the front of the *tabernae*. In imperial times, the display of precious pieces of booty became a central motif of vast architectural projects, like the Templum Pacis of Vespasian or the Forum of Trajan. Booty and paintings could both be monumentalized in an analogous sense: Marcus Fulvius Flaccus in 264 B.C. set up a monument of captured bronze figures in the Sanctuary of Fortuna and Mater Matuta at the beginning of the triumphal road; one year later, Manlius Valerius Messalla responded with a painting of his victorious battle against Hieron and the Carthaginians on the wall of the Curia, toward the end of the triumph's route; Scipio Asiaticus, meanwhile, displayed a battle painting in the Capitoline temple, which was the prominent place for ambitious booty offerings. These are the most obvious examples of the transformation from the function of momentary information and impression to that of permanent glorification.

Another thread leads from booty to public splendor. Real pieces of booty could be used, in a more or less concrete way, to produce new monuments of the conquering power. Thus Spurius Carvilius erected on the Capitoline in 293 or 272 B.C. a colossal statue of Jupiter, which could be seen from the sanctuary on the Mons Albanus. It was made from the melted weapons of the defeated Samnites; the size of the god's statue advertised the sheer quantity of spoils from the successful campaign, thereby expressing the far-reaching political claims of the state itself. Regularly, successful generals were expected to spend part of their booty on the erection of public buildings — above all, of temples for specific gods to whom they owed their victory. The characteristic features of such temples were, first, that they were dedicated to gods and goddesses with warlike character and qualities, often more or less closely
linked to the specific event of glory, such as Iuppiter Stator, the “Averter” of the enemies, or the Tempestates, the helpful “Storms” of a naval battle, or even “abstract” ideological powers like Victoria or Fides or Honos and Virtus, which were essential elements in the powerful collective ideology of the *mos maiorum*; and second, that they remained firmly connected with the memory of their historical origin.

There are precursors to this practice in Greece, the best-known example being Themistokles’ sanctuary of Artemis Aristoboule – the “best advisor” of this general’s famous stratagem – erected after the battle of Salamis; but these were rare exceptions, suspiciously opposed by egalitarian polis societies. In Rome, the practice began in republican times and was continued by Augustus, with the Forum dedicated to Mars Ultor, the Avenger of Julius Caesar’s death, god of the battle at Philippi (42 B.C.); and by Vespasian, with the Templum Pacis, dedicated to the goddess of Peace after the subjugation of the Jews (69 A.D.). The capital of the imperium obtained thereby a religious topography of historical victory memories. A decisive element in these sites was that they were places of regular state cults, where the memory of the temple’s founder and his historical feats was implied in solemn rituals with more or less numerous attendance of official and spur-of-the-moment participants. But at the same time such cult places were much more than specific memorials. They installed throughout the city of Rome an incomparably wide spectrum of divine forces of victory and power – independent of their historical origins – as timeless elements of public splendor.

Another element of splendor was works of art. Here again, the transition from specific messages of victory to more general devices of decor is evident. The 2000 bronze figures of Marcus Fulvius Flaccus, which he had captured in 264 B.C. from Volsinii, had been mere pieces of booty and were displayed as such in great numbers on common pedestals. But when Quintus Caecilius Metellus in 144 B.C. brought the famous bronze group of Alexander and his twenty-five mounted companions from Dion to Rome, setting it up in the Porticus Metelli in front of the temple of Iuppiter Stator, it became a very different enterprise. On the one hand, Metellus took possession of his enemy’s greatest hero; on the other hand, he claimed Alexander as a model for Rome’s military power, not least for himself. This emphatic message was enhanced by the artistic fame of the work of art and its sculptor, Lysippus.

The artistic aspect of monuments was never valued for its own sake; Rome never became anything like a “museum.” When at the same time L. Mummius brought from Corinth to Rome the celebrated painting of Dionysos by Aristeides, it was not treated as art, in the modern sense: he dedicated it in the temple of Ceres and her cult companion Liber, the Roman equivalent of this Greek god. All famous
works of Greek art were displayed in Rome in places where their specific message was appropriate and where they could give significance to the social space. But, as in the temple buildings, this social significance often transcended the occasion of their original setting, assuming a more general character of politically significant decor.44

The same phenomenon is evident in the great buildings of public culture and entertainment. Many of the most magnificent architectural projects of this kind were financed with spoils of war, but again we find the slide from explicit celebration of a particular triumph to general display of pleasure and splendor. The theater of Pompey, built with the profits from the Mithridatic war, was crowned by a temple of Venus Victrix and by shrines of Felicitas, Virtus, and Victoria, while the annexed porticus garden contained a “triumphal” arch and the statues of the fourteen nations conquered by Pompey.45 Vespasian’s Colosseum contained a relatively small inscription recording the building’s financing ex manubis of the Jewish war,46 and the gladiatorial games presented therein could be seen as general metaphors of the fight against “barbarism,” but these were rather faint reminiscences, which, for the normal spectators enjoying these spectacles, must have been of secondary importance or almost irrelevant. In other cases, the origin of such buildings from war booty may have been known only to a few of the users, as for example in the Baths of Caracalla, which were supposedly erected with spoils of the wars in Germania.47 A similar range, from explicit inscriptions to general splendor, may be observed in the imperial fora. While Caesar’s forum, notwithstanding its financial basis in the Gallic wars, was almost free of martial semantics, Augustus’ forum referred explicitly and precisely to the revenge for the murder of Caesar and the loss of the signa by Crassus and Marcus Antonius, and Trajan’s forum was orchestrated as a manifold visual celebration of the emperor’s Dacian triumph.

This uncleanness of commemorative reference is not to be seen as an ambiguity of intention; it is, rather, a crucial ingredient of the emperors’ building strategies. For if the central public areas of the city were to become spaces of consent to the Princeps, those areas had to display their qualities without referring directly to specific glories of the founder that were alien to their functions. Military victories might be associated, explicitly or implicitly, with a forum, an amphitheater, or a public bath, but this message remained potential, not actual; visitors would primarily appreciate and enjoy the facilities for their own sake, and would have seen them as reflecting in a general way the power and greatness of the emperor, rather than any specific victories.

Finally, a third thread can be traced from triumph to ideology and glory. The triumphal celebration had a collective significance primarily as an event of spontaneous
spectacular impact. In this, it corresponded to the actual experience of soldiers in active warfare, the final stage of which entailed the active participation of the whole population. Monuments, however, were designed to perpetuate the memory of war and victory for future generations; thus they had to transform the immediate impact celebrated in a triumph into some generalizing ideological concept. The most efficient means to achieve this end are images. There are two principal ways of conceptualizing feats of military glory and other deeds of prestige in images: either by a deliberate choice of significant subjects of representation or by the iconographical and stylistic language of that representation. Both means were exploited in Roman triumphal art to an extreme degree.

The choice of subjects is particularly revealing. In most Roman victory monuments, war is represented in a set of stock scenes that are repeated in almost stereotypical form over the centuries. The most complete series of this kind is preserved in eleven (out of probably twelve) relief panels from an arch erected in 176 A.D. after the Marcomannic war in honor of Marcus Aurelius. The striking feature of these relief scenes is the fact that they represent the whole campaign without any reference to battles, sieges, conquest, or other events of specific and dynamic warfare. Instead, they contain scenes of more or less static ritual character, aiming at demonstrating timeless ideological values of Roman conduct, superiority, and rule: the emperor's departure from Rome, the profectio, stands for his virtus; a purifying sacrifice, lustratio, for pietas and religious providentia; a speech to his soldiers, adlocutio, for concordia and fides; the surrender of enemies for clementia and iustitia; the installation of a client king for political providentia; the solemn arrival in Rome for virtus and felicitas; the triumph for victoria; the final sacrifice on the Capitoline for grateful pietas; and the final distribution of money for liberalitas. Even the detailed narrative war reports of the Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius derive their compositional framework from such ritual stock scenes, which make these campaigns appear an almost prearranged sequence of demonstrations of infallible military and political qualities. Such rituals occurred, indeed, as typical elements in the real conduct of Roman wars. They conveyed ideological significance to what the Roman army actually did and experienced in their war campaigns, and they made these ideological notions efficient factors of their military and political decisions. Rituals helped to transfer ideology into reality and, vice versa, to imbue reality with ideology. It was these aspects that were monumentalized and transmitted as memories to posterity.

The iconographic language by which victories were monumentalized in Roman art was in principle the same as that adopted in other state monuments. The basic concept since the beginnings of political monuments in the classical Greek polis had
been the celebration of actual persons and events with appropriate motifs, compositions, and stylistic forms. This practice continued in many public monuments of republican and imperial Rome. As soon, however, as certain states aimed at more ambitious and complex forms of large-scale political power and rule, they began to develop a more complex iconographic language in order to give these concepts an efficient visual expression. The most successful features in this context are political personification, allegory, and symbols.

Significantly, it was in classical Athens where political allegory was first applied in great state monuments, most spectacularly in the relief parapet of the temple of Athena Nike, about 420 B.C. The parapet represents an allegorical festival of Nikai, goddesses of victory, performing rituals such as removing their sandals in the sacred space, erecting trophies, and carrying out the sacrifice of bulls. Kings and other political powers of Hellenism further exploited these possibilities, but it was in late republican and imperial Rome that personification, allegory, and symbol developed into a coherent and complex iconographic language. During the late Republic, coinage was the most productive field of a multifaceted and extremely flexible spectrum of allegorical and symbolic motifs, which were invented, adopted, and combined with one another in an almost bewildering variety. Conversely, under Augustus, a few very powerful political symbols of extreme emblematic simplicity were created: Victoria on the globe, expressing world dominion; the oak crown, corona cívica, enhancing Augustus’ quality as the savior of the Roman state; the two laurel trees, originally planted in front of his palace, referring to his religious charisma; and last but not least the honorary shield, clúpes virtutis, exalting his cardinal virtues virtus, dementia, iustitia, and pietas, a sequence that implies in an exemplary way the transition from qualities of war to those of peaceful rule, from victory to power.

All these transformations were basic conditions for the transmission of victory to great parts of the Roman society: geographically, throughout the empire and, socially, in various spheres of life. Splendor, memory, and ideology are forms of conceptual monumentalization, and in such fixed forms the glory of victory and power could spread out materially and ideally. The geographical spreading of victory monuments began in the third and second centuries B.C. with the first booty dedications outside of Rome or the victor’s hometown, coming to a culmination first under L. Mummius, who was a pioneer in including large areas of the empire in his victories by distributing spoils from Corinth over Greece and Italy and as far as Spain. A new dimension of empirewide dissemination of war glory was reached by Octavian after the battle of Actium and the recovery of the signa from the Parthians, when a whole network of monuments and sacred buildings in the major centers of the
empire was erected, from Rome to Athens to Antioch in Pisidia. The sociological success of Augustan iconic symbols is obvious from their wide adoption in all realms of public and private life, from great state monuments to the decoration of private houses with antefixes and friezes of terracotta, down to small objects of personal life, such as finger rings and terracotta lamps.

CONCLUSION

The transmission and transformation of victory into power served to strengthen the political position of republican army leaders and of almost all later emperors. Max Weber, in his famous and influential typology of *Herrschaft*, distinguished three types of “legitimate domination,” which help us to define the character of Roman political power: (1) “legal” domination, which is based on correctly installed rules and laws and executed by competent, functional, “bureaucratic” administration; (2) “traditional” domination, which is founded on a “sacred” hierarchical order with a paternal or monocratic ruler; and (3) “charismatic” domination, which originates in the dedication or devotion of supporters and followers to an exceptionally bright, gifted, and successful person. In this theoretical framework, political ideology as a foundation of domination plays a surprisingly small role.

From the perspective of ancient Rome, the concept of collective ideological notions, the *mos maiorum*, as a ruling principle of state and society, is not easy to integrate into these categories. With “legal” domination, Weber’s first type, it has in common the strong foundation of a set of collectively acknowledged values, the power of which superseded the individual persons realizing these qualities. But the Roman concept differs from this type of legal domination, which in Weber’s sense is a specifically modern concept – by its nonrational and nonfunctional character. Roman power is akin to Weber’s second type, “traditional” domination, in that both affirm the importance of inherited “sacred” ethics, but only Roman power has a collective, nonpersonal character and does not culminate in an undisputed hierarchical ruler.

One could see extraordinary *virtus* and even the close relation to the gods implied by exemplary *pietas* as features of high personal charisma, Weber’s third type of legitimate domination. Indeed, the rule of the Roman emperor, as it was founded by Augustus, could be defined as a “charismatic” domination, which in the course of time assumed more and more elements of “traditional,” that is, dynastic rule and, to a lesser degree, elements of “legal” and “bureaucratic” power. But this explanation
of Roman imperial rule seems to cover only one of its aspects. For among the virtues of the Roman emperor there were others, such as concordia, clementia, iustitia, fides, constantia, and so forth, that are not the exceptional qualities of an individual charismatic “hero” but essentially collective models of normative political conduct. On the whole, these exemplary values had been developed within and for the upper class of the Republic (the nobilitas), as a mos maiorum, a common ideology of social coherence, inherited from common ancestors and transmitted from generation to generation.59 As a collective normative ideology, the mos maiorum was to some degree an autonomous “system” of virtues and values, a conceptual foundation of the state as such and an ideal measure of the character and deeds of the state’s representatives; its validity did not depend on its realization by individual persons. In this sense, this system was transferred to all Roman emperors. Each individual emperor was expected to realize these exemplary values more or less, with only slight individual variations, according to the same model. This collective state ideology, therefore, transcends by far Weber’s type of the individual charismatic person.

The question may be raised whether “ideological” domination should be established as an autonomous fourth category of power. Of course, “traditional” and even “legal” domination are based on ideological foundations in a general sense. Therefore, the fourth category should be defined in terms of domination by a collective and normative ideology to which even “charismatic” and “traditional” Roman rulers were subordinated. This suggestion will have to be judged in the frame of social theory. In the meantime, it seems clear that it was precisely this kind of domination that the leaders of imperial Rome employed in transforming ephemeral victory into lasting power.

NOTES

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2. “Hatred should exist between Greeks only until victory has been won and punishment only until the enemy has been overcome. And whoever goes farther and wreaks vengeance upon the vanquished who flees for refuge to the leniency of his conqueror is no longer punishing his enemy but, far more, is guilty for an offence against human weakness” (Diodorus Siculus 13.24.3–4, trans. C. H. Oldfather, ed. Loeb). This seems an idealizing interpretation of the often cruel mentality of archaic arete, but need not be rejected as unrealistic. For a healthy and refreshing revision, see Hanson 1989 and 1991.

3. On Tropaia/Tropea see Woelcke 1911; Lammert 1939 (not adequately appreciated in
later research); Picard 1957; Pritchett 1974, 246-75; Lonis 1979, 129-46.
4. For examples, see Lammert 1939, 665-6. 
5. Finley 1956, 132: “There could be no honour without public proclamation, and there could be no publicity without the evidence of a trophy.”
9. Pausanias 1, 15, 1. Habicht 1985, 78-80; Habicht 1995, 82-3. Foundations and reconstruction: Shear 1984, 19-24; Camp 1986, 164-5; Schäfer 2000, 329-30. There is no testimony to suggest that the troops of Cassander had invaded Athens and been repulsed only at the border of the agora, so the reason for the trophy’s placing seems to have been not the fixation of the turning point of fighting but the search for an epiphanestatos topos, a most conspicuous place. Unfortunately, there is not yet any evidence that would allow us to decide on whether this gateway had a horizontal architrave or a vault, which would bring it still nearer to Roman “triumphal” arches. I do not, however, see any reason to reconstruct this monument, in contradiction to Pausanias, with a crowning bronze equestrian statue, the fragments of which have been found nearby.
11. Arrian 5.29.1; Gehrze 1996, 78.
13. Florus 1.37.3; Strabo 4.1.11 (185); Picard 1957, 152-60.
14. Plutarch, Sulla 19.9-10; Pausanias 9, 40.
15. Sallust, Hist. 3.89; Strabo 3.4.1-9 and 4.1.3; Pliny, NH 3.18; 7.96; 37.6; Cassius Dio 41.24.3. Identification: Castellvi, Nolla, and Rodá 1995, and see p. 18 against the doubts expressed by Arc 1994.
20. Versnel 1970; Coarelli 1988, 363-437. For booty in earlier republican times, see Waurick 1975, 1-12. In general, see also Vogel 1953, 1200-13; Liou-Gille 1992. See also McDonnell (chap. 3), Klar (chap. 5), and Welch (chap. 4) in this volume.
23. See also Klar, chap. 5 in this volume.
24. For the practical and communicative aspects of the triumphal procession, see Künzl 1988, 69-84. The route of the triumphal procession as a ritual space will be treated in a monograph, now in preparation, by Sven Schipporeit.
25. Appian, De bello civili 2.101. See also Dillon, chap. 8 in this volume.
29. Coleman 1990. See also Klar, chap. 5 in this volume.
30. Cassius Dio 55.10.6-8; Hölscher 1984a, especially p. 201; Coleman 1993, especially p. 72; Spannagel 1999, 15.
32. Cicero, Ad Atticum 13.44.1.
33. See McDonnell (chap. 3), Welch (chap. 4), Klar (chap. 5), and Lusnia (chap. 9) in this volume.
34. Varro, *De re rustica* 1.2.1.
36. La Rocca 2000, 283–84; La Rocca 2001, 203.
40. Pietilä-Castrén 1987; Ziolkowsky 1992; Aberson 1994. See also Klar (chap. 5) and McDonnell (chap. 3) in this volume.
42. *Tirma Alexandri*: Velleius Paterculus 1.11.3; Pliny, *NH* 34.64; Coarelli 1981; Calcani 1989, especially pp. 21–30; Bergemann 1990, 77–8; see also McDonnell, chap. 3, in this volume.
44. On the concept of *decor* (The author is preparing a major study.) See also Welch, chap. 4 in this volume.
48. In general on this feature of Roman state art, see Hölscher 1980a.
51. A part of such rituals related to the whole population; others were confined to the army. See Rüpke 1990.
52. Hölscher 1997.
55. Waurick 1977, 12–40. A new base of L. Mummius has been discovered by F. Coarelli at Pompeii in the sanctuary of Apollo; this is the first case of an offering outside the realm of immediate Roman domination.
58. Weber 1922.