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Commanders and Command in the Roman Republic and Early Empire.

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Students of Roman history are well aware that “commanders and command” had a significant bearing on much of the politics of the *res publica*, through such key concepts as *imperium*, *auspicium*, *potestas*, and *provincia* as well as the duties of *imperium*-wielding magistrates—consuls, praetors, and dictators. This book, therefore, cuts to the heart of how Romans conceived of their *res publica* working and how they ultimately administered the empire they acquired.

Drogula commences his discussion of military command (chapter 1) by pointing out that tradition held that civilian and military duties were combined in one senior magistracy—the consulship—from the time that the Republic was founded (in 509 BCE). However, Romans knew that praetors were the first commanders (a *praetor maximus* is attested in the sources, for instance, and the general’s tent was always called the *praetorium*). Drogula posits here and develops later (chapter 4) the argument that the consulship was not established until 367 BCE, at which time the praetorship became the subordinate magistracy. In the early Republic, he adds, wars seem to have been fought by warlords with private armies, not by armies funded by the state, which indicates rather a separation of civilian and military duties.

The ramifications of this separation of civilian and military duties become clearer in Drogula’s discussion of the spheres of magisterial power and authority, *domi et militiae* (chapter 2), in which he is careful to distinguish the difference between the power that civilian authorities exercised within the *pomerium* (*potestas*), conferred by election in the centuriate assembly, from the power that military commanders exercised outside it (*imperium*), conferred by a *Lex Curiata*. Drogula also is at pains to show that magistrates could not exercise their *imperium* within the *pomerium*, as many ancient sources and modern scholars (beginning with Mommsen) have long contended (85–87). The magistrate assumed his *imperium* only after taking the auspices and exiting the city.

One exception to this rule prohibiting the exercise of *imperium* within the *pomerium* was the triumph, when a commander clearly had to possess *imperium* within the *pomerium* so that he could lead his troops in the ceremony and wear the

military insignia of the triumphing general. However, this exception to the rule was carefully regulated, and the privilege of a triumph was conferred only after a decree of the senate and law passed by the popular assemblies (111–13).

A second exception was the dictatorship. The distinguishing characteristic of a dictator was not was greater or supreme power (*imperium maius* or *summum*) vis-à-vis other senior magistrates, Drogula argues, but rather his ability to exercise his *imperium* within the *pomerium*, which also explains why dictators were often appointed to quell domestic unrest (118–21). Many early dictators were men of great distinction, and they largely ruled alone (with the assistance of their Master of Horse), which may have been why later authors assumed that dictators in general had greater power than consuls.

Drogula's discussion of the dictatorship touches on a recurring theme of this book, namely, that there was no such thing as *imperium maius* before the end of the Republic; rather all magistrates with *imperium* had equal *imperium*, but what distinguished the consulship, say, from the praetorship, was prestige—such as, the number of lictors and the *fasces* as well as the opportunity to win military renown (greater for the consul than the praetor). This hierarchy of the Roman military command structure evolved over time and was greatly enhanced by the development of the idea of *provinciae* as geographical areas (chapter 3). As is well known, the term *provincia* originally denoted a task to be completed, but as the empire expanded additional commanders were needed to administer it. The principle of prorogation, which was the extension of a *provincia*, not *imperium* (as Drogula argues), also contributed to the creation of permanent *provinciae* (chapter 4). Praetors, moreover, were usually assigned to *provinciae* which had become geographical regions with defensive garrisons (e.g., Sicily) and thus enjoyed fewer opportunities for military glory. Consuls, on the other hand, were still assigned *provinciae* as military tasks to be completed (chapter 5).

The analysis to this point in the book lays the groundwork for the chapter on the late Republic (chapter 6), which shows how the concepts of *imperium* and *provincia* came to be manipulated to the advantage of a few commanders. A few key developments in the late Republic were crucial: first, Gaius Gracchus passed legislation requiring that provinces be determined before consular elections were even held, resulting in permanent provinces with active wars being assigned to consuls and thereby hardening the hierarchy of command between consuls and praetors (298–301). Second, Marius had a political ally bring the matter of the provincial assignment of Africa during the Jugurthine War to the tribal assembly, which transferred this command to him. This legislative innovation set the stage for the supreme

commands of Pompey first against the pirates (*Lex Gabinia* of 67 BCE) and later against Mithridates (*Lex Manilia* of 66 BCE), and of Caesar in Gaul (*Lex Vatinia* of 59 BCE). Drogula insists that Pompey's apparent superiority over other commanders as a result of the *Lex Gabinia* was due not to the conferral of *imperium maius* but rather of the manipulation of the notion of *provincia*, whereby he was allowed to enter and take action in the *provinciae* of other commanders (322).

Augustus, as is well known, based much of his power and authority as Princeps on his division and administration of the provinces, controlling those with active wars ongoing and legions present (imperial provinces) through legates (using Pompey's command in Spain as an authoritative Republican precedent), and delegating to the senate the public provinces that contained defensive garrisons (chapter 7). As Drogula declares, the senatorial aristocracy should have been appalled at an arrangement that so severely curtailed its members' pursuit of military renown. But we should recall that the *legati Augusti* who commanded legions in the imperial provinces were also members of the same senatorial aristocracy, and, although the triumph was now closed off to them, they could still receive triumphal decorations (*ornamenta triumphalia*) as rewards for their military success. Drogula also points out that Augustus' legates were of praetorian status (*pro praetore*) while the governors of the public provinces ruled as proconsuls, thus enjoying a higher magisterial rank. Indeed, two public provinces, Asia and Africa, though peaceful, became crowning achievements of a senator's career.

One last note on *imperium maius*: Drogula argues that this concept was first broached, but never conferred, in 57 BCE by C. Messius in connection with Pompey's supervision of the grain supply (327). Cicero later proposed this unusual power for C. Cassius in 43 BCE (*Phil.* II.30) so that he would have supreme command in the war against the supporters of Caesar. Thus Cassius could avoid Pompey's predicament in the civil war against Caesar in 49 BCE when he could not command but could only cajole his fellow aristocrats to do his bidding, while his rival enjoyed undisputed command of a well functioning war machine (329). Augustus took advantage of this republican precedent, proposed by no less an authority than Cicero, in his second settlement (23 BCE) so that he "could legitimize his intentions to influence affairs in provinces not given to him by the state" (362–63).

Overall, this is a very impressive book, for it weighs in on controversial issues that are fundamental to our understanding of how the Roman Republic worked. Drogula's argument, while at times repetitive (a result, I think, of analyzing issues so closely intertwined that it is impossible to completely unravel them), is in the end remarkably consistent, lucid, and persuasive. This book should be essential reading

for anyone interested in how Romans conceived of magisterial power and authority and ultimately how this conception informed the governing of their city and the administration of their empire.

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