

IMPERIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF *CLEMENTIA*

IMPERIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF *CLEMENTIA*:

FROM AUGUSTUS

TO

MARCUS AURELIUS

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

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MASTER OF ARTS (2007)  
(Classics)

McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Imperial Representations of *Clementia*: from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius

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SUPERVISOR: Professor Michele George

NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 78

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines imperial representations of *clementia* from the time of Augustus to Marcus Aurelius. Since there is, to my knowledge, no study devoted exclusively to the examination of clemency's appearance in the material culture, it is meant to round out the study of the virtue's place in the Roman world by examining its depiction on the imperial monuments. With each consideration of a clemency scene, the thesis has three aims. 1) To set up the socio-political and historical context of the era and how the scene is reflective of or in response to that. 2) To examine the iconography in detail and to compare and contrast the scene to earlier or contemporary representations of clemency. 3) To consider the intent behind the production of the scene and intended viewer reaction. The study finds that an emperor used clemency to strengthen his position and to gain support from the people and the elite. It was also an opportunity to show the superiority and might of Rome, while depicting the enemy as defeated and begging for mercy. Moreover, the study reveals that the basic components of a clemency scene remain the same, but that the mood changes from calm and peaceful to more chaotic and violent with each emperor. Finally, the study shows that the *clementia* scene was meant exclusively for a Roman audience, evidenced by its absence on monuments outside of Rome. The viewer was intended to take away messages of Roman superiority, the inferiority of the barbarians, and of an emperor who was an able ruler and a capable military commander. Therefore, not only does this thesis round out the study of clemency's place in the Roman world, it also contributes to our understanding of the ways in which imperial monuments reflect the ideas and attitudes of the emperors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous people who have made this work possible. First and foremost, thank you to my advisor, Dr. Michele George, for suggesting the topic and for her guidance along the way. She kept me on track and also improved my writing. Thanks also to my committee members Drs. Claude Eilers and Evan Haley: Dr. Eilers for his insight and suggestions, particularly concerning Chapter One, and Dr. Haley for catching the errors that slipped by me. Thank you to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for their generous financial support, which allowed me to focus completely on my thesis. Thank you also to McMaster University for its financial support. Thank you to my colleagues, particularly Steven Russell and Mike Snowdon for lunchtime Thursdays and allowing me to talk about my thesis. Thank you to Serena Witzke for also writing a thesis and understanding, and for the distractions at the mall. Finally, thank you especially to my family: my siblings for their continued support and for letting me take advantage of them financially whenever possible, and above all my parents without whose unconditional support and belief in me this thesis would not have been possible.

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In 27 B.C.E, the Senate decreed the dedication in the new senate house of a shield devoted to the four virtues of Augustus, in honour of his victory at Actium. Augustus commemorates this event in his *Res Gestae*, stating the following:

...a golden shield was placed in the *curia Iulia*, which, as is attested by an inscription on this shield, was given to me by the senate and the Roman people on account of my virtue, clemency, justice, and piety.<sup>1</sup>

The shield was reproduced on works of art throughout the empire, which ensured widespread dissemination of this honour. The insertion of the virtue *clementia* refers first and foremost to the clemency that Augustus showed to his opponents, but it must also be viewed in a larger context. The emperor was providing insurance for the future, as a pledge that *clementia* would be shown to other defeated nations and conquered people, provided that they submitted to the might of Rome. Moreover, the appearance of clemency reflects the acceptance of the virtue after it had fallen out of favour under Julius Caesar, with Augustus attaching to it connotations of peace. The emphasis now was on the security that had been established on the empire's borders through the use of *clementia*, and representations of the emperor bestowing mercy on a defeated foe began to feature prominently in imperial art.

I intend to examine imperial representations of *clementia* on sculptural reliefs, imperial monuments, cups, and coins beginning with the age of Augustus and tracing them to the end of the Antonine period. Although the evolution of the idea in the Republican era will also be examined, the thesis will consider imperial clemency in state art as representations of the imperial persona. In the examination of each *clementia* scene, the thesis has three aims. 1) To examine the ways in which the scene is reflective of the immediate socio-political context of the era in which it was produced. 2) To examine the iconography of the scene in comparison to earlier or contemporary representations of *clementia*. 3) To consider the reasons for and the intent behind the production of the *clementia* scenes, and the potential effects they might have had on the ancient viewer.

Although the earliest extant representation of clemency dates to the time of Augustus, the virtue featured prominently in Rome's treatment of its enemies in the Republic, and has its origins in Greek philosophic thought.<sup>2</sup> It occupied the minds of ancient authors such as Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny the Younger, who praise or criticize a leader or general in possession of the virtue. Cicero alternates between first praising Caesar for his clemency and then later reprobating him for it.<sup>3</sup> Seneca, in his *De Clementia*, stresses the need for a leader to have the ability to show mercy to one's enemies and intended the work as a guide for Nero to follow.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Pliny the Younger

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<sup>1</sup> ... *clupeus aureus in curia Iulia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis causa testatum est per eius clupeus inscriptionem: RG 34.* Trans. Sarolta A. Takács.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 301.

<sup>3</sup> Praise: *Lig. 6*; reprobate: *Ad Att. 9. 16. 1.*

<sup>4</sup> *Clem. 1. 8. 6.*

extols Trajan's clemency along with his many other virtues in his *Panegyricus*. Consequently, modern scholarship on *clementia* has tended to fall in one of two categories: it considers only the historical and philosophical nature of the virtue with no treatment of the material culture, or, if the material culture is considered, clemency is examined alongside the other imperial virtues, with more emphasis being placed on the latter. To my knowledge, there is no work devoted exclusively to the examination of the imperial representations of *clementia*.

Dowling attempts to rectify this dearth in the scholarship in a 2006 study devoted exclusively to the evolution and use of clemency in the Roman world. She examines the tensions that arose when Julius Caesar made clemency a central component in his policy, which continued to exist throughout the imperial period. Furthermore, she argues that, beginning with Augustus, clemency became necessary in the attempt to Romanize the conquered world. Only through the use of *clementia* would there be peace and would the assimilation of the barbarians be successful.<sup>5</sup> Although Dowling does consider several representations of *clementia*, much like other authors she devotes most of her work to the historical and philosophical nature of the virtue, giving the material culture only a secondary and brief consideration. Thus, a study devoted exclusively to the iconography and evolution of the clemency scene is needed.

The lack of such a study may be explained by the fact that there is no clear, set definition of what a *clementia* scene is. Scholars often disagree with each other in the labeling of *clementia*, *submissio*, and *supplicatio* scenes, and it seems that there is no agreement amongst scholars as to what exactly a *clementia* scene should entail. Thus, for example, the main clemency scene on the Column of Trajan, discussed in Chapter Two, is identified as such by scholars such as Brilliant, Dowling, and Hannestad, but Ryberg identifies it as a *submissio* scene.<sup>6</sup> The Torlonia relief, discussed in Chapter Three, is identified as a *submissio* scene by Ryberg and Uzzi, but as a *supplicatio* scene by Cafiero.<sup>7</sup> Finally, a scene on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, discussed in Chapter Three, is identified as a *clementia* scene by Dowling, but Brilliant interprets it as a *donatio* scene.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it becomes important to clearly define the characteristics of the clemency scene for the purposes of the present study.

One of the reasons for this confusion may be attributed to the fact that the *clementia*, *submissio*, and *supplicatio* scenes all resemble one another. Moreover, in the *submissio* and *supplicatio* scenes it can be argued that the barbarians are pleading for the mercy and benevolence of the emperor, and that therefore the implication of *clementia* is present within such scenes. Taking this into consideration and given the similarities between the three types of renderings, it may be impossible to separate *clementia* from the *submissio* and *supplicatio* scene. The representation of clemency usually has three elements: the scene takes place after battle, the barbarians are in an inferior position, often on their knees and stretching out their hands to the emperor, and the emperor himself is placed in the dominant position and acknowledges the pleas of the barbarians

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<sup>5</sup> Dowling 2006 74.

<sup>6</sup> Brilliant 124; Dowling 2006 257; Hannestad 160; Ryberg 61.

<sup>7</sup> Ryberg 64; Uzzi 100; Cafiero 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Dowling 2006 261; Brilliant 150.

with his outstretched right hand. This gesture made with the right hand is key to the clemency scene, as it is this that signifies that the emperor is granting mercy to the barbarians. The right hand is always used because it is a sign of good fortune and the right is the favourable side.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars, such as Brilliant, try to see significance in whether the palms of the hands are facing up or down. He argues that the emperor's hand must face down as it is a sign of power, while the barbarians' hands must face up as it is a sign of their submission and inferior position.<sup>10</sup> This theory has its problems, however, as in the majority of the clemency scenes extant the palm of the emperor's hand faces up. Only in the representations produced in the time of Marcus Aurelius does the palm of the emperor's hand face down.

A further problem occurs when making the right-handed gesture of the emperor a necessary component of the clemency scene. On a coin clearly defined in the legend as a *clementia* type dating to the time of Marcus Aurelius, discussed in Chapter Three, the emperor makes no gesture in response to the barbarian's submission. This, however, may be explained by the limited space of the medium, or it may be attributed to the variation to the clemency scene that occurred under Marcus Aurelius. For the purposes of this thesis, I take into consideration all scenes that feature the three elements described above. The idea of clemency is implied in representations identified as *submissio* and *supplicatio* scenes, even if the barbarians are only pleading for it and the emperor has not yet made his decision.

## Chapter One

Although this is not meant to be a study of the historical and philosophical nature of *clementia*, some discussion of that is necessary in order to place the representations in their proper context. Most of this will occur in Chapter One, which is devoted to exploring the development of *clementia* as a virtue in Hellenistic times as well as how it came to be taken up by the Romans. The chapter will describe several instances of Late Republican generals bestowing mercy on defeated enemies, and the tensions that arose between Julius Caesar and the elite when he granted clemency to his fellow Roman citizens. The virtue reemerged under Octavian, who defined it along different lines and who displayed more caution in its use than his adoptive father. The shield of virtues, decreed to Augustus in 27 B.C.E., along with two bronze figurines count amongst the earliest extant references to clemency. A detailed examination of the clemency scene on one of the Boscoreale Cups then follows, along with a description of the *clementia* coin types produced under Tiberius. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the virtue's uses under the rest of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors.

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<sup>9</sup> Brilliant 38.

<sup>10</sup> Brilliant 152.

## Chapter Two

The majority of Chapter Two will focus on the Column of Trajan, which commemorates the emperor's Dacian campaigns. The *clementia* scenes on the Column mark the return of the virtue to imperial art after its neglect under the Flavians. First, the Column and its surroundings will be described, followed by a description of Trajan's Dacian campaigns in order to place the scenes in their proper context. I will describe in detail all the *clementia* and *submissio* scenes, in comparison to the scene on the Boscoreale Cup, and I will consider the juxtapositioning of these scenes of Roman benevolence with scenes of Roman brutality and violence. The possible intent and messages of the scenes will be taken into consideration, and the chapter will conclude with a comparison of the Column to the Tropaeum Traiani erected in Adamklissi.

## Chapter Three

Chapter Three is devoted to the representations of clemency under the Antonine emperors, although most of the chapter will deal exclusively with the monuments of Marcus Aurelius. Although Hadrian was known for his promotion of the imperial virtues, including *clementia*, there are no extant monuments that feature representations of the virtue. The chapter will consider several *clementia* coin types produced under Hadrian on which the virtue is personified. This is followed by a description of the coin types produced under Antoninus Pius, and a description of the Torlonia relief, which was originally on an honorary monument dedicated to his adoptive father. The Column of Marcus Aurelius will take up the bulk of the discussion, with a comparison of the *clementia* scenes to those on the Column of Trajan, and with a consideration of the increase in violence on the Column. Next, I will discuss the *clementia* coin types that were developed, in particular the first time the emperor himself appears on the coin instead of the personification of the virtue. The chapter will then consider the *clementia* and *submissio* panels from Marcus Aurelius' triumphal arch, along with the new security problems that developed in his reign. The chapter will conclude with a brief consideration of clemency's appearance in private art.

*Clementia* was a central component in the foreign policy of the Roman emperors, and the fact that they included it on their imperial monuments is a testament to its importance. Taking into account the numerous studies on the imperial virtues, and the political and historical nature of clemency, it is surprising that there is, to my knowledge, no work devoted exclusively to the representations of *clementia* on the imperial monuments. These representations reveal as much, if not more, about the imperial persona as the study of the philosophical musings of the ancient authors. No study of the place of clemency in the lives and policies of the Roman emperors can be complete without a detailed consideration of the iconography. The fact that care was taken to include representations of the emperor bestowing mercy attests to the virtue's significance in Roman thought. A close examination reveals Roman attitudes towards the empire's place in the ancient world and towards the barbarians dwelling beyond the borders, in addition to elucidating further the relationship between the emperor and his

subjects. Therefore, this thesis is not only meant to round out the study of clemency's place in the Roman world, it is also meant to contribute to our understanding of the ways in which imperial monuments are able to reflect the ideas and attitudes of the emperors.

## Chapter 1: *Clementia*: From the Hellenistic Age to the End of the Flavians

### *Clementia* in the Hellenistic Age

In order to better interpret the imagery of *clementia* that was produced during the reign of Augustus, it is first necessary to examine the origins of the concept in the Hellenistic period by tracing its development in Late Republican Rome, especially under Julius Caesar. Although the notion of *clementia*, to show mercy or forgiveness to someone, existed in Republican Rome, its origins can be traced back to Greek philosophical thought. Greek philosophers had a canon of virtues that included ἀνδρεία (bravery), σωφροσύνη (moderation), δικαιοσύνη (justice), and φρόνησις/σοφία (wisdom), which were Socratic in origin.<sup>11</sup> In his *De Clementia*, Seneca identifies it as a virtue of the Stoics and Epicureans, calling it the most human of all, and the most fitting for man.<sup>12</sup> Hellenistic authors, in their treatises on kingships, used terms such as σωφροσύνη (moderation), φιλανθρωπία (benevolence), ἐπιείκεια (leniency), and πραότης (mildness) to describe the quality of self-control and self-restraint that a king shows to his subjects. This in turn led to the security of the state and of the king, because he is mild and able to rule fairly.<sup>13</sup> The desirable qualities in a king were conceived by philosophers, who wrote a set of treatises on how a leader could successfully rule over many. Σωφροσύνη and φιλανθρωπία were listed among such qualities.<sup>14</sup> When kings wrote to the citizens of various states they often drew attention to these qualities, and cities chose to honour kings and benefactors with crowns and statues, on which were inscribed honours.<sup>15</sup> Although the idea of clemency was applied mainly in its philosophical and moral sense, Hellenistic kings also used the virtue in the public sphere in legal and military settings.<sup>16</sup> To associate oneself with the virtues that would make for the best possible rule, as outlined by philosophers, was a way to secure and maintain power.<sup>17</sup> Even in its Greek sense, clemency had the idea of guilt associated with it. When someone was granted clemency, the person was being pardoned for his wrongdoing, and the power and rightness of the victor was implied. It could only be bestowed upon those of lower status, as the subsequent relationship would be unequal

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<sup>11</sup> The Greek translates into Bravery, Temperance, Justice, and Wisdom: Wallace-Hadrill, 301.

<sup>12</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1.3.2: *Nullam ex omnibus virtutibus homini magis convenire, cum sit nulla humanior, constat necesse est non solum inter nos, qui hominem sociale animal communi bono genitum videri volumus, sed etiam inter illos, qui hominem voluptati donant, quorum omnia dicta factaque ad utilitates suas spectant.*

<sup>13</sup> Griffin 144-5.

<sup>14</sup> Charlesworth 106. Antigonus Monophthalmus was a figure who was well-known for moderation and clemency: Teodorsson 381.

<sup>15</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 306.

<sup>16</sup> Dowling 2006 3.

<sup>17</sup> Charlesworth 106-7.

with the implication that the victor is superior.<sup>18</sup> The Stoics were the ones to settle on the traditional canon of four, and it is this canon which survives until Late Republic Rome.<sup>19</sup>

### Clementia in the Republican Era

Although the idea of the virtue existed in Roman times, the term *clementia* is not an old word and it took some time for it to emerge in Roman texts. The earliest extant reference by a Latin author is in Terence's *Adelphi*, written in the first half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>20</sup> Mercy was shown to defeated foes and in the law-courts, and the idea developed further when the Romans became more involved in Greek and Eastern affairs. Roman policy was to use leniency whenever possible when it came to dealing with defeated enemies, as can be seen in Cicero's *De officiis*. He stresses the need for moderation, especially concerning enemies who voluntarily laid down their arms.<sup>21</sup> When a general conquered a city, the city lost its freedom and the general became the patron of that city upon its reestablishment. The victorious general now made decision about important matters concerning the defeated, and he was the one who held authority.<sup>22</sup> Seneca, writing to Nero, stresses that the use of *clementia* leads to safety and security: "yet kings by clemency gain a security more assured, because repeated punishment, while it crushes the hatred of a few, stirs the hatred of all."<sup>23</sup> Excessive cruelty eventually causes animosity, while clemency is meant to ensure the support of the conquered. Although Seneca is writing this in the first century A.D., it is reasonable to hypothesize that similar attitudes were present in the Late Republic. Moreover, considering that conquered people became slaves to Rome, clemency, in addition to ensuring security, was also intended to ensure funds.

Many prominent speakers and political figures used or referred to leniency, as a few key examples illustrate. At the conclusion of the second Macedonian war in 197 B.C.E., Titus Quinctius Flaminius and the Aetolians discussed what they would do with Philip V. The Aetolians advocated that the Romans either kill Philip or exile him from his kingdom, as that would be the only way that the Romans would have peace and Greece would have her liberty. Quinctius reminded them that this was not the way the Romans behaved toward their defeated foes, who were always shown mercy. He cites as an example the peace which had been offered to Hannibal and the Carthaginians, and adds that it is the greatest minds that show clemency.<sup>24</sup> Polybius narrates a similar discussion between the Aetolians and Titus Quinctius Flaminius at the conclusion of the battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C.E. The Aetolians mention Greek liberty and Roman peace, while Quinctius, emphasizes that it is not the Roman way to utterly vanquish a

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<sup>18</sup> Dowling 2006 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 301.

<sup>20</sup> Ter. *Ad.* 865; Weinstock 235.

<sup>21</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.35.

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.35; Eilers 34.

<sup>23</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1. 8. 6. Trans. John W. Basore and subsequent Seneca passages.

<sup>24</sup> Livy, 33.12.7.

defeated foe, again citing the mercy shown to Hannibal and the Carthaginians.<sup>25</sup> In an other example from 167 B.C.E., Cato the Elder delivered a speech to the Senate on behalf of the Rhodians, entitled *Pro Rhodiensibus*. When the Romans defeated Perseus of Macedon in 168 B.C.E., the Rhodians became worried that prior discussion in the assembly would be interpreted as a sign of disloyalty to Rome. As a result, they sent representatives to plead their case in the Roman Senate and it was then that Cato the Elder delivered his speech, which stressed the use of *clementia* toward the Rhodians, since its use made Rome great.<sup>26</sup>

When considering these examples it is important to keep several ideas in mind. First, *clementia* was something that was shown in a political or military context toward non-Romans. Second, the examples of Carthage and Macedonia are placed in this military context, one in which the Romans were the ultimate victors. Third, mercy was a trait possessed by a much greater power and exercised to the vanquished people, who were much weaker. In a way, *clementia* in these instances became an exercise of power in itself, since it was the Romans who had the power to decide the fate of the defeated. By accepting the bestowal of mercy, the defeated entered into a relationship of submission to the conqueror. As mentioned above, the conqueror now had the authority to make important decisions regarding the vanquished. Considering that the restraint of the self was an essential characteristic of *clementia*, the conqueror was restraining himself from exercising absolute vengeance over the defeated. By choosing not to kill them, the defeated not only owed their lives to the victor, but they also lost control over their lives to him. By demonstrating that the vanquished had nothing that was worth taking, not only was the bestowal of *clementia* an exercise in absolute power, it was also a method of exacting vengeance.<sup>27</sup>

Before the appearance of the word '*clementia*', authors used corresponding terms such as *miser cordia*, *mansuetudo*, *lenitas*, *comitas*, *parcere*, and *ignoscere* to express the idea.<sup>28</sup> The virtue, used in a political sense, became more prominent in the Late Republic, with leading figures such as Sulla, Pompey, and Julius Caesar. In the case of Sulla and Pompey, ancient authors often employed their *crudelitas* as a literary trope to heighten the contrast between them and a leading politician's *clementia*. Even though Sulla was known for his clemency, especially in his early years as a general, it is cruelty for which he has been remembered by both some ancient and modern authors.<sup>29</sup> In tracing the references to Sulla made by ancient authors, Dowling observes that Sulla's good qualities are still remembered by the Late Republican authors such as Cicero and Sallust. Cicero at first represents the general as ignorant of the cruelties that were being carried out in Rome, and only later acknowledges the brutality of the proscriptions, but implies that Marius and Cinna deserved their fate for crimes committed against Rome. He contrasts the *crudelitas* shown by Sulla with the savage and terrible deeds of Catiline, and in the *Catilinarians* draws a deliberate connection with Marius and Cinna to Catiline

<sup>25</sup> Polyb. 18.37.7.

<sup>26</sup> Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 6.3.

<sup>27</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1. 21. 2-4; Plass 163-4.

<sup>28</sup> Weinstock 235.

<sup>29</sup> Dowling 2002 303.



himself.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Cicero notes the *clementia* that Sulla showed to his political enemies, who received it if they asked for it.<sup>31</sup> Later, during the civil wars, Sulla's actions are repeatedly used to contrast those of Pompey and Caesar. Pompey is equated with Sulla: someone who will seize power and commit many horrific atrocities just like the general.<sup>32</sup> Cicero uses the actions of Sulla, however, to show how the earlier years were so much better than the current times. No matter what Sulla did, his actions are consistently portrayed as those of a man who was good by nature, but who was forced to commit terrible acts because of the pressures of traitorous politicians. The behaviour of the men of the later civil war is always depicted as much worse.<sup>33</sup>

Sallust also remembers the favourable qualities of Sulla that include his *clementia*. Much like in Cicero, Sulla is depicted as a good general, who was only corrupted once he seized power. Sallust uses Sulla to show how the Republic used to be good and glorious, but his leadership is a turning point between that and the steady degradation of the times. Again his cruelty is used as a comparison to the cruelty of others, and in Sallust as well that cruelty is much worse than it had been when Sulla exhibited it.<sup>34</sup> The treatment of Sulla by these writers indicates that, although his acts of kindness and clemency were remembered, they were manipulated along with his acts of cruelty to compare and contrast them with the acts of other generals and politicians. The cruelty of Sulla is meant to heighten and bring out the cruelty which is so much worse in later men.<sup>35</sup>

Sulla's acts of *clementia* are also remembered by some of the Augustan authors, who include Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. Diodorus Siculus depicts Sulla as a good general with positive qualities who only reacted to the terrible deeds and vices of Marius and Cinna. He was completely justified in his actions as they were punishment given out by the gods.<sup>36</sup> He recounts a story where the consul, L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, was abandoned by his army, upon whom Sulla came while he was marching to Rome. He gave orders to give Scipio safe passage and to spare his life.<sup>37</sup> When Sulla defeated the tyrant, Aristion, who, having been placed in Athens by Mithridates, was oppressing the city, he made sure to pardon the city.<sup>38</sup> These two examples are significant. In the latter, Sulla bestowed clemency on a defeated city, Athens, an action which up until this point had been common in the Hellenistic world and in Roman treatment of defeated foreigners. The significance in the former example lies in the fact that Sulla had bestowed *clementia* not on a defeated, foreign foe, but on a fellow Roman aristocrat. An action such as this is uncommon before Julius Caesar, and is an important element in tracing the evolution of the virtue in the Roman political context. Sulla is showing

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<sup>30</sup> Cic. *In Cat.* III.10; Dowling 2002 307.

<sup>31</sup> Cic. *Sul.* 72.

<sup>32</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 9.7.3.

<sup>33</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 11.21.3; Dowling 2002 311.

<sup>34</sup> Sal. *Hist.* 3.48.1, 9 ; Dowling 2002 313-15.

<sup>35</sup> Dowling 2002 315.

<sup>36</sup> Diod. 38.6 ; Dowling 2002 319-20.

<sup>37</sup> Diod. 38.16.

<sup>38</sup> Strabo 9.1.20.

respect to a man of equal status even though, as the granter of clemency, he is far superior and is the one who holds the power. He did not have to pardon Scipio, but when he did, his deed was deemed honourable and even unusual.<sup>39</sup>

### The *clementia Caesaris*

In the late Republic, before Julius Caesar rose to prominence, the bestowal of *clementia* remained an act which was conferred on someone of lesser status. Once clemency was given, the bestower was placed in a position of power over the defeated. As long as this use of clemency was exercised in a foreign setting among defeated foes, the rules implicit in such a relationship held true. However, in the late Republican setting, in the midst of the civil wars, the rules concerning who could receive *clementia* and who could bestow it began to change. As the virtue was transferred into a political context, no longer was it the defeated, foreign enemy receiving mercy from the benevolent and powerful victor. Now the bestower was a Roman and the recipient was his fellow Roman citizen. Such a change had a profound impact on the civil wars that were waged in the final decades of the Republic, and on how generals and political figures would treat their fellow citizens. To understand the implications of this shift it is first necessary to examine its origins.

Cicero can be credited with defining the term *clementia* in its political context, with it first appearing in his *Verrines* in 70 B.C.E.<sup>40</sup> He uses it in connection with past kindnesses that were bestowed upon the Sicilians, only to have them be treated cruelly in the present age.<sup>41</sup> Cicero chooses the Latin words *fortitudo*, *iustitia*, *prudentia/sapientia*, and *temperantia/continentia* to correspond to the Stoic canon of the four cardinal virtues, further dividing *temperantia* into *continentia*, *modestia*, and *clementia*.<sup>42</sup> However, in his discussions and speeches concerning political figures and the ideal general, Cicero continues to use words more common from the period before Caesar rose to prominence. When extolling the qualities of Pompey, Cicero chooses words like *humanitas* and *mansuetudo* as virtues ideal in a general.<sup>43</sup> At this point in time, *clementia* is still a rare word, not appearing very much in Cicero's work at all. Authors still use other words that are closely related to the idea of clemency when describing the virtues of politicians and generals. One possible reason for this may be that this was still a virtue that was used in a foreign context in connection with a defeated enemy, but this changed when Julius Caesar rose to prominence.

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<sup>39</sup> Dowling 2002 321.

<sup>40</sup> Weinstock 236; Cic. *Verr.* 2. 5. 115.

<sup>41</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2. 5. 115: *indigne ferunt illam clementiam mansuetudinemque nostri imperi in tantam crudelitatem inhumanitatemque esse conversam...*

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Inv.* 2.164: *Temperantia est rationis in libidinem atque in alios non rectos impetus animi firma et moderata dominatio. Eius partes continentia, clementia, modestia.* Cicero goes on to write that *clementia* is the virtue that restrains *odium*.

<sup>43</sup> Cic. *de imp.* 42: *humanitate iam tanta est ut difficile dictu sit utrum hostes magis virtutem eius pugnantes timuerint an mansuetudinem victi dilexerint.*

Before 46 B.C.E., *clementia* appeared in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* twice, with the defeated begging for the mercy of the general,<sup>44</sup> but the word never appeared in his *Bellum Civile*.<sup>45</sup> Except for two instances in the *Verrines*, one of which was mentioned above, Cicero used it only three times in his legal speeches. It was not until the start of the Civil War that Cicero began to use the word frequently. The term can be found in his letters and thirteen times in his three speeches for Caesar in 46 and 45 B.C.E.<sup>46</sup> This sudden shift in the use of the term indicates that the appearance of Caesar inspired the high frequency, and also suggests that his particular type of mercy needed its own definition.<sup>47</sup> The first example of Julius Caesar's *clementia* comes with the defeat of Pompey's troops at Corfinium in 49 B.C.E. Caesar vows to act with the greatest moderation, since, in his opinion, cruelty and hatred did not guarantee a lasting victory. He wanted to act with kindness and even set free several of Pompey's officers.<sup>48</sup> Caesar goes on to emphasize the friendship that he is offering to Pompey, and stresses that it is in his best interest to take that offer. Caesar does not stop there; he holds true to his pledge at the battle of Pharsalus as well. Caesar calls on his men to spare the Roman citizens fighting on the losing side, and promises to act with mildness.<sup>49</sup> Cicero takes note of the release of the prisoners at Corfinium, and mentions that people who had left Rome began to return.<sup>50</sup> Caesar's policy caused great surprise in Rome, and Cicero wondered about his true intentions. Soon, however, even he wrote to Caesar praising his actions at Corfinium.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the orator called for Caesar to be honoured in the literary tradition and also by various monuments.<sup>52</sup> However, Cicero's adulation of Caesar's *clementia*, exemplified in this letter to Atticus, in the words "*cum eius clementiam Corfiniensem illam per litteras collaudavissem*"<sup>53</sup>, contains traces of irony, and Cicero is not always entirely sincere.<sup>54</sup>

When Caesar set free the prisoners at Corfinium, he was bestowing *clementia* not on defeated barbarians, but on his fellow Roman citizens. This action is significant as such a bestowal had always carried with it certain connotations. Seneca writes that someone who has been spared "has lost his life who owes it to another... he is a lasting spectacle of another's prowess."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Seneca defines clemency as "the leniency of a superior towards an inferior in fixing punishment."<sup>56</sup> Thus, the idea itself

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<sup>44</sup> BG. 2.14.5: *Petere non solum Bellovacos, sed etiam pro his Haeduos, ut sua clementia ac mansuetudine in eos utaturi*; BG. 2.31.4: *Unum petere ac deprecari: si forte pro sua clementia ac mansuetudine, quam ipsi ab aliis audirent, statuisset Atuaticos esse conservandos, ne se armis despoliaret.*

<sup>45</sup> Weinstock 236.

<sup>46</sup> Weinstock 236.

<sup>47</sup> Weinstock 237.

<sup>48</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 9. 7c.

<sup>49</sup> Suet. *Caes.* 75. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 9. 8. 1.

<sup>51</sup> True intentions: Cic. *Ad Att.* 7. 20. 2; praise to Caesar: *Ad Att.* 9. 16. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Cic. *Lig.* 6, *Deiot.* 40.

<sup>53</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 9. 16. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Griffin 279.

<sup>55</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1. 21. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 2. 3. 1.

carried with it notions of an unequal relationship between a superior and an inferior, in which the spared now owed his life to the person who granted clemency. An offer of mercy “upholds the worst class of men, since it is superfluous unless there has been some crime, and since it alone of all the virtues finds no exercise among the guiltless.”<sup>57</sup> Since the bestowal of clemency implied the commitment and the pardoning of a crime, there was the expectation that the defeated would show loyalty. An example of this can be found in Cicero, in his speech on behalf of King Deiotarus, who had been accused of plotting against Julius Caesar:

This man, then, who was not merely freed by you from peril but advanced to the highest dignity, is accused of having desired to murder you in his house; a suspicion which, unless you deem him an utter madman, you assuredly cannot entertain. For, not to advert...to the inhumanity and ingratitude of behaving like a tyrant towards one by whom he had been entitled King.”<sup>58</sup>

Since Deiotarus had been spared by Caesar, the charge that he had plotted against the general did not seem likely, as his loyalty was expected.

Therefore, clemency’s connotations, when used in connection with foreign foes, were not a problem, but showing mercy to one’s fellow citizens made the relationship between the victor and the conquered more problematic. It is for this reason that *clementia* was not a part of a democratic government, such as in Athens, since all citizens were considered equal.<sup>59</sup> Although a significant turning point, it does not seem that Caesar’s grant of mercy to Pompey’s soldiers had a deep impact since the men were used to being under the control of someone. When it came to bestowing *clementia* on the elite members of society, however, the granting of it became dangerous. Since clemency carried with it associations of defeated enemies and an inferior status, the aristocracy resented being the recipients of such an act. Julius Caesar was supposed to be their equal, and the implication that he was now their superior, that he now had power over them, caused them to feel bitter towards him.<sup>60</sup> For example, in the writing of Cicero, the orator can be seen to feel both gratitude, as he was a recipient of Caesar’s clemency, but also unease with the dictator’s actions. In his speech on behalf of Ligarius, Cicero praises Caesar’s clemency: “O marvelous clemency and worthy to be adorned by every commendation and advertisement that literature and historical record can supply.”<sup>61</sup> Yet Cicero also reveals his discontent and doubt. His claim that he “had written praising to the skies [Caesar’s] kindness, his clemency at Corfinium,”<sup>62</sup> contains traces of insincerity, as does his statement that Caesar “thought mild measures would win popularity.”<sup>63</sup> Such feelings were probably not uncommon amongst the elite class, who

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<sup>57</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1. 2. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Cic. *Deiot.* 15.

<sup>59</sup> Pisistratus may have shown mercy to the Athenians, but he was a tyrant: Dowling 2006 3.

<sup>60</sup> Dowling 2006 22.

<sup>61</sup> Cic. *Lig.* 6. 3, trans. N. H. Watts (Cambridge, 1964).

<sup>62</sup> Cic. *Ad. Att.* 9. 16, trans. E. O. Winstedt (Cambridge, 1966).

<sup>63</sup> Cic. *Ad. Att.* 10. 4. 8.

did not consider themselves to be of a lower status than Caesar.<sup>64</sup> These examples also indicate that part of elite disapproval stemmed from Caesar using clemency as a means to gain the favour of the people. It seems that the elite were willing to tolerate Caesar's clemency as long as it did not encroach on their authority, and some even benefited from it. The moment when they felt that their authority was compromised or that Caesar was elevating himself above them, they quickly denounced his clemency.

One possible example of elite discontent with Caesar's policy is that of Cato the Younger. Plutarch and Appian write that, having sided against the dictator, Cato made up his mind to end his life rather than accept any overtures of friendship. At Utica, Cato's men offered to approach Caesar on his behalf, but Cato refused this.<sup>65</sup> Cato later stabbed himself, and he died when he tore open his wound, which had been patched up by his attendants when they initially found him.<sup>66</sup> His refusal to accept Caesar's *clementia* hints at a deep resentment of the dictator and such actions. Rather than enter into an unequal relationship, a relationship in which Cato would be indebted to Caesar, Cato decided to end his life. His suicide can be interpreted as a disapproval of Caesar and his dictatorial regime.<sup>67</sup>

The *clementia Caesaris* proved to be Caesar's undoing when the very people to whom he had shown mercy formed the conspiracy to murder him. Cicero, in his speech *pro Ligario*, succeeded in obtaining pardon for Quintus Ligarius, but ironically Ligarius may have been involved in the plot to assassinate Caesar. That his policy of clemency was a failure is conceded by Cicero:

Moreover, their constant theme is that a man of the most illustrious character has been killed; that by his death the constitution has been thoroughly shaken; that his *acta* will be rendered nugatory as soon as we cease to be frightened; that his clemency did him harm; and that if he had not shewn it, nothing of the sort would have befallen him.<sup>68</sup>

In the end, it was this virtue that stirred up enough resentment among the senatorial elite that they killed him. Moreover, this text illustrates that the *clementia Caesaris* was yet another example of the way in which the dictator alienated the elite and threatened their authority, which contributed to his downfall. Caesar, with the help of Cicero, redefined the term '*clementia*' in the Roman political context. Although his policy was popular among the soldiers whom he spared and the people of Rome, it was resented by the elite members of society. In the aftermath of his assassination, there was a distancing away from the policy and the concept, before it would reemerge again under the emperor Augustus, once it was safe to bring out.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Dowling 2006 25.

<sup>65</sup> Ap. *BC.* 2. 14. 98; Plut. *Cato* 64. 4-5.

<sup>66</sup> *Bellum Africum* 88; Ap. *BC.* 2. 14. 99; Plut. *Cato* 70. 5-6.

<sup>67</sup> Dio writes that Cato loved freedom so much that he could not bear to be defeated by anyone: 43.10.3.

<sup>68</sup> Cic. *Ad. Att.* 14. 22. 1, trans. Evelyn Shuckburgh.

<sup>69</sup> Dowling 2006 28.

Clementia under Augustus

Octavian did not immediately take up the policy of *clementia* from his adoptive father, opting instead to employ *severitas* while avenging the death of Julius Caesar.<sup>70</sup> When *clementia* did finally reappear, it did so in a limited form. One of the first examples of this occurs at the siege of Perugia in 41-40 B.C.E. Initially, Octavian granted *clementia* to deserters from Lucius Antonius' army, which he then extended to ambassadors sent to beg for mercy. Finally, Lucius himself went to Octavian to state his and his followers' case. When the soldiers from the opposing sides saw and recognized each other, they embraced and implored Octavian to spare their lives. Octavian did so, but he was still under pressure to avenge Caesar's death. His solution was to spare Lucius, his followers, and the townspeople, and to condemn only the town councillors.<sup>71</sup> The significance of this lies in the fact that those of the upper classes were spared since their deaths may have sparked outrage, while those of middle class rank were not spared since it was unlikely that their deaths would be avenged. Octavian was able to gain a reputation for *clementia* while still avenging the death of his father by making an example out of those who did not rank high enough to cause him long term harm.<sup>72</sup>

*Clementia* did not become a regular part of Octavian's policy until Sextus Pompeius began employing it as a regular part of his. Sextus offered Sicily as a safe refuge to those fleeing the proscriptions in Rome, promising to those who spared the proscribed double the amount of money that had been offered to kill them. To some of the men whom he saved he even offered a place in his army or navy.<sup>73</sup> Since this policy made Sextus a more formidable opponent, Octavian had to incorporate some of these ideas partly to undermine Antony, but both men used their own clemency as a contrast to the other's cruelty. Antony admonished his men that if Octavian could not spare his allies or even show kindness to someone who had once been his colleague, then he certainly would not spare them. Octavian, on the other hand, charged that Antony was responsible for the deaths of many of his friends, and that even his own troops condemned him.<sup>74</sup> One significant departure from his father's clemency by Octavian was that he did not celebrate the deaths of Romans who had not obtained mercy from him.<sup>75</sup> He coupled his *clementia* with occasional examples of *severitas*, recognizing his father's mistake of placing too much trust in those whom he pardoned.<sup>76</sup> After he defeated Antony, Octavian spared the lives of some Senators, equestrians, and other prominent men, while putting to death others.<sup>77</sup> He did extend clemency to members of the elite

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<sup>70</sup> RG 2; Dowling 2006 38.

<sup>71</sup> Ap. BC. 5.5.45-48.

<sup>72</sup> Dowling 2006 48-51. Appian writes that after a fire had destroyed Perugia, Octavian made the decision to make peace with the inhabitants, but his soldiers did put to death his personal enemies: BC. 5.5.49.

<sup>73</sup> Ap. BC. 4.6.36.

<sup>74</sup> Antony: Dio 50.20.4-8; Octavian: 50.27.7.

<sup>75</sup> In a triumph in 46 B.C.E., Caesar paraded pictures of Pompeians who were in the act of suicide: Ap. BC. 2.15.101.

<sup>76</sup> Dowling 2006 63.

<sup>77</sup> Dio 51.2.4.

class, but in a limited manner and only to those whose loyalty would prove to be beneficial to him later on. Not only that, amongst those who received a grant of *clementia*, many appeared again in high ranking positions, in an effort to secure their support for the new government.<sup>78</sup> Seneca writes that much of Octavian's inner circle was made up of those who had opposed him, and that he ensured their loyalty in this way.<sup>79</sup>

When Augustus waged wars against foreign enemies, if *clementia* could be given securely, he preferred to spare them.<sup>80</sup> Dowling suggests that *clementia* was an integral element in battles with foreign enemies in order to not only conquer them but also to Romanize them. The policy was to ensure long lasting stability and peace throughout the empire. Just as Augustus involved Romans who had received his clemency in the new government for support and stability, so conquered enemies were granted clemency in order that they would assimilate into the empire, ensuring peace and stability.<sup>81</sup> This hypothesis is plausible and can be seen in the imagery that gave *clementia* a visual representation under Augustus.

The first indication that Augustus' policy of a restrained *clementia* had been a success came in 27 B.C.E. The Senate decreed that a shield devoted to the four virtues, one of which was *clementia*, of the emperor be placed in the new senate house, honouring his victory at Actium.<sup>82</sup> The reference to clemency is significant. Two decades earlier the senatorial elite had resented the *clementia* of Julius Caesar, and now they were honouring Augustus for this very virtue. Perhaps clemency was more attractive after decades of civil war. The inclusion of *clementia* may also be viewed in a larger context. In addition to it being symbolic of the peace that followed after the battle at Actium, the shield was meant to provide insurance for the future, as a promise that mercy would be shown to foreign people who submitted to the might of Rome.<sup>83</sup> Significant as well is the date when the shield was decreed, 27 B.C.E., right after Octavian had voluntarily offered to relinquish his powers only to have them be restored by the Senate. The underlying message may be that there was a need and a place for *clementia* in Rome, and that the Senators hoped that Augustus would continue such a policy.<sup>84</sup> That this came four years after Actium suggests that *clementia* was a virtue that was integral to the peace that Rome now enjoyed. It is at this point where the idea of clemency leading to peace, security, and prosperity is brought out. Rather than the focus being on the war that necessitated the bestowal of mercy, the focus was now on the peace that was achieved after clemency was granted.

The shield was reproduced on countless works of art throughout the empire such as on coins, altars, gems, and lamps, demonstrating an approval for the policy of *clementia*. It appears on the Belvedere Altar (Fig. 1.1), for example, dedicated by the

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<sup>78</sup> Dowling 2006 72-73.

<sup>79</sup> Sen. *Clem.* 1. 10. 1.

<sup>80</sup> *RG* 3.

<sup>81</sup> Dowling 2006 74.

<sup>82</sup> *RG* 34.

<sup>83</sup> Galinsky 82.

<sup>84</sup> Dowling 2006 131.

*vicomagistri*, and now in the Vatican museum. A flying victory appears on one side, bearing the shield, with an olive tree on either side. The imagery on the altar represents the peace that Augustus brought to the empire thanks to the four virtues. A denarius from Spain also portrays a flying victory bearing the shield, and its appearance on coins would have ensured widespread dissemination of the decree.<sup>85</sup> The representations of the shield on private monuments signify that the negative connotations of *clementia* that had existed for Julius Caesar were no longer applicable during the time of Augustus. The countless reproductions of the shield ensured that Augustus' policy would reach people in all places of the empire, with the message of peace and stability implicit.

When considering the Augustan representations of *clementia*, it is important to note that the battle in progress is never depicted. Only the events that happened after the battle are displayed. Two bronze figurines (Fig. 1.2), one of a kneeling barbarian from Paris, the other of Augustus or a general granting clemency from Venice illustrate this. Although the two are not part of the same ensemble, Brilliant believes that they were part of a group very similar. The kneeling barbarian is in a suppliant position, with both arms stretched out perhaps to implore the victor for mercy. He is wearing barbarian dress, and that, along with his position which automatically places him in an unequal relationship with the victor, indicates that he is a foreigner who has just been defeated. The figurine from Venice is of a general or of the emperor himself, wearing military dress, with a friendly expression on his face, extending out his right hand in a gesture of *clementia*.<sup>86</sup> The very position of the barbarian already implies his lower status, while the very gesture of the conqueror is indicative of his power over the life of the barbarian. The iconography of the barbarian submitting to the victor is not new under Augustus. The motif appears on Late Republican coinage, such as on a denarius minted by Sulla's son in 62 B.C.E. (Fig. 1.3). Sulla is enthroned and the dominant figure in the scene, while Bocchus, the king of Mauretania, kneels before him stretching out an olive branch. Behind the throne sits a bound Jugurtha, who had been captured by Sulla in 106 B.C.E.<sup>87</sup> The right-handed gesture, signifying clemency, was added in the Augustan imagery, placing the emphasis directly on the benevolence of the victor. Not only are the bronze figurines symbolic of Roman dominance and control, they are also representative of the peace that will be brought about as a result of this victory, which subsequently ensures stability in the empire.

### *Clementia* and the Boscoreale Cups

The Boscoreale Cups, dated to the age of Augustus, feature the earliest extant example of *clementia* (Figs. 1.4 and 1.5). The representation on the cup is significant because it is with this rendering and the ideas of *clementia* associated with it that the virtue and its representation under subsequent emperors must be discussed. The silver cups, now on display in the Louvre, were part of a hoard discovered in 1895 at the Villa

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<sup>85</sup> Galinsky 82.

<sup>86</sup> Brilliant 74.

<sup>87</sup> Brilliant 41.



of Boscoreale destroyed by Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The original owner may have been connected to the imperial family in some way, and the cups may have been a gift, commissioned especially for him.<sup>88</sup> Both cups are decorated with imagery related to Augustus and Tiberius. One cup features on one side Tiberius involved in a sacrificial scene, and on the other side a triumph celebrated by Tiberius. The cup displaying the *clementia* scene has on its other side an image celebrating Augustus' world rule.

Reading the *clementia* scene on the cup from left to right there is a group of barbarians in Celtic dress moving towards the right. The man on the far end carries a child on his shoulders, while the man in front of him bends forward to hold on to a small child with one hand as he is guiding an adolescent youth with the other. The child stands in front of a man in military garb, who is positioned immediately beside the adolescent male. Next there is another barbarian male on his knees holding a small child with outstretched hands out in front him. Both are directly in front of Augustus, togate and seated on a military tribunal. Augustus is the central figure of the scene, and the man to whom the barbarians are moving and stretching out their hands. In his left hand he is holding a *rotulus* while stretching out his right hand towards the figures before him in a gesture of *clementia*. In the background, surrounding the scene, are seven lictors carrying axes, and immediately behind Augustus, at the far right end, is the Praetorian Guard. Kuttner identifies the man in military garb among the barbarians as Drusus the Elder, and indicates that his fitted cuirass is identical to the one worn by Mars on the other side of the cup.<sup>89</sup> Based on the Celtic dress of the barbarians she identifies the scene as set after the Gallic wars, and it is one of the reasons why she dates the cups to the last decade of the first century B.C.E.<sup>90</sup>

The *clementia* scene on the cup is different from later *clementia* scenes, which will be examined in greater detail below. These later representations feature barbarians, often wearing terrified and fearful expressions, in a pose of submission before the victorious emperor or general, who is physically distanced from them by being on a horse or a higher platform such as a tribunal. The emperor or general is depicted in full military garb, soldiers surround those submitting, and often the barbarians are treated with complete complacency and indifference by the Romans. The scene on the Boscoreale Cup does not follow this formula. Rather than in military dress, Augustus is togate, the lictors are placed in the background, and the scene is calm and composed.

The unique characteristics of the scene on the cup have led Kuttner to the conclusion that the stance of the barbarians is not one of submission, but rather she

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<sup>88</sup> Kuttner 6-12.

<sup>89</sup> Kuttner 95. Kuttner based her analysis on the original photographs taken by Héron de Villefosse (1899), but the cups have been damaged significantly since their original discovery. Charles Brian Rose therefore advises caution in identifying the figure as Drusus the Elder, and contends that the face of the figure is not clear enough in the photo to identify it positively: 220 n. 71. Brilliant identified the figure as Tiberius, but he was basing his analysis on the same photographs that Kuttner used: 74.

<sup>90</sup> Kuttner 5-6. She identifies the setting as Lugdunum and dates the scene to either 13 or 10 B.C.E.: 119-22. The dating of the cups is controversial. Zanker states that the cups may date to the final few years of Augustus' reign but admits that the dating is uncertain: 228-9. Uzzi believes that the cups date to the reign of Tiberius: 88. Since she does not give sufficient reason for this date, and since Rose does not disagree with Kuttner's identification of the barbarians, I will accept Kuttner's dating of 13 or 10 B.C.E.

interprets it as the barbarians bending down to assist their children. She writes that Drusus “physically cherishes their [barbarian] children”, that the adults standing “stand at dignified ease”, that the children “greet the emperor joyfully” and carry “wide smiles”, and that the emperor himself is “affable”.<sup>91</sup> For these reasons she interprets this scene as barbarian nobles handing over their children to Augustus to be educated in Rome. This act was a sign of their loyalty, so that the children might be brought up with Roman customs and later return to their home countries as leaders friendly to Rome.<sup>92</sup> The sending of young, foreign children to Rome was a common practice in the Augustan period, as can be seen from the example of King Phraates of Parthia who sent his sons to Rome to be educated.<sup>93</sup> Kuttner suggests that the same happened in Gaul and that the men are Gallic chieftains.<sup>94</sup> The scene represents the chieftains, willingly handing over their eager children to Augustus as a sign of loyalty, who welcomes them to his *domus*. For the Romans, the children represent the future rulers of these regions who will return fully Romanized and friendly to Rome.

The identification of this scene as barbarians handing over their children is plausible, but that does not mean that this cannot be a *clementia* scene, as elements pertaining to such scenes are still present. Augustus is seated on a *sella castrensis*, indicating the military setting, and is shown on a higher level.<sup>95</sup> The lictors with their axes, as well as the presence of the Praetorian Guard, also indicate the military setting. The barbarians are clearly identified as foreigners by means of their dress and their beards, and not one is shown taller than Augustus. The children’s heads are tilted back to look up to the emperor and their arms are raised towards him in a submission gesture. The raised arms gesture is echoed by the barbarian men who hold the children, as well as by the first non-Roman pair, with the child having raised his arms to grasp his father’s hair.<sup>96</sup> Rather than welcoming them, Augustus’ raised right arm and open hand is the gesture of *clementia*, and it is this that he is bestowing upon the barbarians.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, the military setting indicates that they were defeated, their appearance indicates that they are non-Roman, and the bestowal of *clementia* indicates that they will live but they will live as slaves to Rome.

The scene makes every effort to set the barbarians apart from the Romans, and their non-Romanness is symbolic of their servility to Rome and the subsequent relationship of subservience. Although the scene may be calm and composed, the barbarians are still shown in a position of humility and the difference between the Roman

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<sup>91</sup> Kuttner 99-100.

<sup>92</sup> Kuttner 100.

<sup>93</sup> *RG* 32. Although Augustus represented the act as a sign of friendship and loyalty from the king, Strabo writes that the real reason was to protect his reign and his life: 16.1.28.

<sup>94</sup> Kuttner 116.

<sup>95</sup> The *sella curulis* is used for Romans while the *sella castrensis* is used to receive non-Romans: Uzzi, 85.

<sup>96</sup> Uzzi 89. Although Kuttner, in describing the second pair, interprets the gesture as the father aiding his son in walking (95), Uzzi suggests that the man may be raising the child’s arms into the submission gesture: 89.

<sup>97</sup> Brilliant 74.

and the non-Roman is clear.<sup>98</sup> The affection, described by Kuttner, between the cuirassed soldier and the children is not apparent, and in fact his face is turned away and is thus not even looking at them. Apart from Augustus, the other officials do not seem to be paying attention to the barbarians either. Such gestures seem to indicate indifference to the subjugated people, which heightens their hopelessness and humility.<sup>99</sup> For the Romans, people that they considered far inferior to themselves were objects of disgust. It was their intention to put as much distance as possible between themselves and these objects of disgust, and such a decision was symbolic of the power that they had over these people.<sup>100</sup> This is not a scene of Roman soldiers cherishing barbarian babies or of the subjugated entering into a loving relationship with the victor. Instead, this is a scene of vanquished people entering into a relationship where they are subject to the authority of the emperor, who has the power to make decisions of life and death where they are concerned. It is not clear from the photographs whether the children are going to the emperor willingly and whether they are smiling. Close inspection of the scene does not reveal with certainty that the children have joyful expressions on their faces and the adults are not cheerful.<sup>101</sup>

If this scene does indeed represent children being handed over for education in Rome, to interpret it as a representation of friendliness and benevolence is problematic. The image on the Boscoreale Cup allows for the examination of two points of view: that of the barbarians and that of the Romans. The Roman intent may have been to represent a scene that is peaceful and composed, with the barbarians in submissive poses, and with all the figures showing friendliness and affection, but, the reality behind such a representation is far more bleak. On the Boscoreale Cup the artist portrayed the moment as calm and the adults as offering no protest, but foreign children sent to Rome in the Augustan period to be educated did not all fare well when they eventually returned home. In reality, the *clementia* that Augustus showed by sparing them led to problems for them later when they return home fully Romanized. A number of anecdotes from Roman history demonstrate these difficulties. Vonones was one of the four Parthian princes sent by Phraates IV in 10 B.C.E. to Augustus to be educated. In A.D. 6 Parthian envoys traveled to Rome to ask Augustus to send back Vonones, as Parthia was in a state of unrest due to civil war. Although the Parthians initially welcomed the prince and celebrated his arrival, soon Vonones' Roman upbringing became too much for them to bear. They resented his lack of interest in hunting and horses, the litter in which he insisted he be carried, and his disdain for Parthian festivities. They felt ashamed at having had to ask Rome for a king, a Parthian, but someone who was raised with Roman habits and customs. Vonones was eventually rejected by his people and a rival king was introduced.<sup>102</sup> The same result is seen later, in A.D. 36, when Tiridates III was dispatched by Rome. On the day of his inauguration, powerful nobles mocked the prince's time in Rome and pointed out that it would not be a true Parthian who would

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<sup>98</sup> Uzzi 157-60.

<sup>99</sup> Uzzi 108.

<sup>100</sup> Kaster 130.

<sup>101</sup> Uzzi 210 n. 48.

<sup>102</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 2.2-3.

hold power but someone who was raised in a foreign setting.<sup>103</sup> One final example is that of Italicus, whom Claudius sent in A.D. 47 to be king of the Cherusci. Italicus had been born and raised in Rome, the son of Arminius' brother, and he was initially welcomed by the tribe. However, just like the princes who were sent to Parthia, the Cherusci grew to resent Italicus' Roman habits and viewed Rome's involvement as an encroachment on their liberty.<sup>104</sup> The similarities in the description of these events make clear that princes raised and educated in Rome were doomed to failure once they returned home. Contact with Rome had tainted them and they were viewed by their fellow countrymen as having been servile to Rome and as a threat to their homeland's liberty.

The reality of these situations runs in sharp contrast to the depiction on the Boscoreale Cup. On this cup, Augustus grants clemency to defeated barbarians who offer their children to him. He lets them live, but for them *clementia* means humiliation and being subject to Rome for the rest of their lives. The depiction on the cup does not show the fear of the Gauls and their children, nor is the process of handing over the children for education in Rome depicted as a violent event done against the will of the barbarians. The historical examples provided above indicate that the Gauls resented these Romanized princes when they returned, and viewed the process of Romanization as a threat to their *libertas*. However, their *libertas* had been compromised long before these princes returned home. It was compromised from the moment that they were defeated by the Romans, and by the very act of having to ask Rome for a king.<sup>105</sup> As I have shown, the reality of the situation is far more grim than the tone and mood of the scene depicted on the Boscoreale Cup, but the Romans would not have viewed it in this way.

In order to properly consider Roman reaction to the scene, the use and context of the cups must be considered. They were meant to be viewed and used in a social setting. The fact that there are two cups instead of one indicates that they were to be used at a social gathering by the owner and his friends. The decoration on the cups was meant to stimulate discussion amongst the guests as they mused over or celebrated what was depicted. The owner may have been connected to the imperial family in some way, perhaps having served Tiberius or Drusus the Elder.<sup>106</sup> If this was the case then he likely

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<sup>103</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 6.43. Further Parthian examples include that of Phraates V who was sent to Parthia in A.D. 35 by Tiberius. When he arrived he promptly threw off his Roman habits and adopted Parthian customs. This was too much for his body to bear, and Phraates grew ill and died: (*Ann.* 6.32). In A.D. 49 Claudius selected Meherdates as a king for Parthia. As with the princes before him, Meherdates was mocked for having been raised in Rome and his rival, Gotarzes II, accused him of being a foreigner and a Roman: (*Ann.* 12.14). The final prince to be sent East was Tigranes V, whom Nero selected in A.D. 60 to assume the Armenian throne. While ravaging the borders of Armenia, Tigranes was accused by the leaders of the tribes that he had been a hostage at Rome and considered a slave while there (*Ann.* 15.1).

<sup>104</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 11.16.1-3.

<sup>105</sup> I do acknowledge that the events, as narrated by Tacitus, are arranged and told with a specific agenda in mind. He uses the failure of these client kings to set up the tensions between Tiberius and Germanicus, and to highlight the failure of Roman policy and the ignorance of the Julio-Claudian emperors. For more on this see Gowing 315-331 and Tylawsky 254-258. Despite Tacitus' agenda, these accounts still serve as a good example of the discontent and humility felt by the barbarians at receiving a king raised with Roman habits.

<sup>106</sup> Kuttner 9-12.

received these cups as a gift or had them specially commissioned; moreover, he also had a personal interest in the events celebrated. Such a connection and the rich iconography would provide material for a lengthy discussion.<sup>107</sup> Kuttner argues that since the *clementia* scene is unique in Roman art, and since this motif is not continued after Augustus, it must follow an established genre in order for people to understand the iconography. She suggests that an imperial monument with reliefs, no longer extant, must have existed and served as a prototype for the scenes on the Boscoreale Cups.<sup>108</sup> If this theory is correct, the monument that stood in Rome might have been known by the owner's friends but they may have never seen it.

The purposes, then, of the cup are threefold. 1) The *clementia* scene as it appears on the cup is symbolic of the peace brought by Augustus. The cup need not have shown the emperor in military dress, surrounded by terrified barbarians, as the rendering is consistent with Augustus' emphasis on peace rather than military events. The mercy that Augustus is bestowing upon the defeated enemies represents the successful conclusion to the battle that came before it and the security that Rome now enjoys. 2) The scene on the cup also places the emphasis on foreign events rather than events at home. The focus is on the superiority of the Romans over her enemies, perhaps in an effort to take minds off of the civil wars that had ended two decades before. 3) The *clementia* scene portrays Augustus as a kind and benevolent leader. He has successfully managed affairs abroad and, by sparing the enemies' lives, he has further secured the peace, security, and prosperity of Rome. The downplaying of the grim reality of the barbarians' situation is also consistent with how Augustus commemorates the sending of barbarian princes to be educated in Rome. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus represents the subjugation of nations, the education of foreign children, and the placement of client kings on foreign thrones as a tremendous success.<sup>109</sup> Much as he ignores the troubles that the client kings face from their own people, so the artist downplays these issues on the cup. The owner and his friends were not concerned with the subjugation of the barbarians and the troubles that the children might face later on as a result of having been educated in Rome. The cups were meant to celebrate the achievements of Augustus, Tiberius, and Drusus the Elder, and also to highlight the emperor's *clementia*, a virtue for which Augustus, following his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, was celebrated. Moreover, the scene highlighted Rome's dominance over her foreign foes, with the barbarian submission being the logical conclusion to the war. As the earliest extant *clementia* scene the representation on the Boscoreale Cup is significant, and it is with this rendering in mind that the representation of the virtue under subsequent emperors after Augustus must be discussed.

### *Clementia* under the Julio-Claudians

The subsequent Julio-Claudian emperors chose to take up a selected number of virtues associated with Augustus, not only associating themselves with the imperial

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<sup>107</sup> Kuttner 12.

<sup>108</sup> Kuttner 164-5. She also cites examples from coins of barbarians offering children as proof that they all must derive from a common source (107-11).

<sup>109</sup> *RG* 27-33.

family, but also ensuring that each reign was characterized differently by the choice of a different virtue.<sup>110</sup> *Clementia* was one of the virtues with which Tiberius chose to align himself, perhaps in an attempt to gain support since he was not as popular as Augustus had been. Although Tiberius might have initially been known for his clemency, his later reign was characterized by the absence of that very virtue. According to Tacitus, in A.D. 28 the Senate sought to flatter the emperor by spontaneously decreeing the altars to Mercy and Friendship.<sup>111</sup> Although the altar is no longer extant, Sutherland proposes that the *ara Clementiae* was meant to serve as a reminder to the emperor. At this point in his reign Tiberius had withdrawn from Rome, and Sejanus was a powerful and influential figure there.<sup>112</sup> The intention of the Senate may have been to remind Tiberius of his natural inclination to clemency, something they could not do in person with the emperor on Capri.<sup>113</sup> Perhaps rather than celebrating the emperor's *clementia*, the altar was dedicated as a reminder of the need of clemency.<sup>114</sup>

In addition to *clementia*, Tiberius also chose to associate himself with *moderatio*. Both these virtues are depicted on coinage from the Tiberian period, with *clementia* reflecting a direct continuation of one of the virtues associated with Augustus. The *dupondii* (Fig. 1.6) display on one side the head of Tiberius, and on the other his small bust encircled by a wreath with thick petals. The legend CLEMENTIAE is visible in the margin above.<sup>115</sup> The dating of these coins is controversial, with Mattingly and Sutherland dating them to A.D. 22/3, while Grant dates them to c. A.D. 34-7.<sup>116</sup> Depending on where they are placed in the chronology the significance and meaning of the coins change significantly.

It has been conjectured that Tiberius was presented at some point in his reign with shields of *clementia* and *moderatio*, and the use of the genitive form on the coins indicates an understood noun such as *clupeus*.<sup>117</sup> If the earlier date of the coins is accepted then the issues may coincide with the presentation of these shields, a period when the emperor had waived several *maiestas* charges and was known for his clemency and moderation. Sutherland proposes that the Senate issued these coins in commemoration of such an event, and that the dedication of an *ara Clementiae* in A.D. 28 was meant to bring to mind the issues of A.D. 22/3.<sup>118</sup>

If the later date of the *dupondii* is accepted, then they might have been anniversary issues in commemoration of Tiberius' *vicennium*, the anniversary of

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<sup>110</sup> Fears 890.

<sup>111</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.74.3.

<sup>112</sup> Sutherland 140.

<sup>113</sup> Dowling 2006 179.

<sup>114</sup> Sutherland 140.

<sup>115</sup> Mattingly 1923 132.

<sup>116</sup> Mattingly vol. 1, cxxxiv 132. He bases his dating on style while Michael Grant rejects that conclusion and believes the iconography on the coins to be more consistent with the later period in Tiberius' reign: 1950 47.

<sup>117</sup> Mattingly vol. 1, cxxxvi; Sutherland 138.

<sup>118</sup> Sutherland 139-40.

Augustus' death, and the celebration of the half-centenary of the *saeculum*.<sup>119</sup> Grant makes a connection between the shields on the coins issued celebrating the new *saeculum* and the medallions on the *dupondii* minted fifty years later. He deduces that these *dupondii* were also meant to commemorate the dedication of an *imago clipeata* to Augustus in 17/16 B.C.E., but acknowledges that these are all conjectures and other explanations might be available.<sup>120</sup> The coins might also have been issued to celebrate the anniversary of the dedication of the *ara Clementiae*, and the later date might be explained by the fact that Caligula, at the beginning of his reign, continued to issue coinage associated with Tiberius.<sup>121</sup>

Regardless of the correct dating of the *dupondii*, the significance of highlighting the virtue *clementia* remains the same. Not only is Tiberius associating himself with a virtue connected to Augustus, he is also sending out the message that his *clementia* is significant to the preservation of the empire.<sup>122</sup> There is irony in commemorating this specific virtue, especially if the later date is accepted. Although Tiberius might have initially been known for his clemency and moderation, his later reign, according to Tacitus, was characterized by the absence of those very virtues. As mentioned above, Sutherland proposes that the *ara Clementiae*, which he asserts was dedicated to commemorate the *dupondii*, was meant to serve as a reminder to the emperor of the need for clemency.<sup>123</sup> If the *dupondii* date to c. A.D. 34-7, then the need for clemency is all the more apparent. The final few years of Tiberius' reign were marked by the trials and execution of political figures, and Tacitus mentions the execution of all those connected with Sejanus.<sup>124</sup> The events of this time period might have led to the issue of these coins for the specific purpose of reminding the emperor of the need of *clementia*.

It is during the final few years of Tiberius' reign and the start of Caligula's that the negative connotations associated with *clementia* are brought to the forefront, as the virtue itself becomes somewhat of a fancied notion. At Agrippina's death, Tiberius boasted that he had not killed her or had her thrown on the Gemonian Steps, and the Senate voted him thanks for the lack of those very actions.<sup>125</sup> In an address to the Senate in A.D. 39, Caligula criticized the senators for their treatment of Tiberius and for their condemnation of men who were later put to death. He reminded them of their fickle manner and reinstated the charge of *maiestas*. Although the Senate was fearful, the men were grateful to be alive. On the next day they praised Caligula's leadership and voted that an annual sacrifice to *Clementia* be made on the anniversary of his address. In addition, a golden image of the emperor was to be conveyed in a procession to the Capitol and hymns were sung in praise of Caligula.<sup>126</sup> Nero initially promised *clementia*

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<sup>119</sup> Grant 48. The new *saeculum* was celebrated in A.D. 17 with the *ludi saeculares*, and coins were issued celebrating this event: Grant 44.

<sup>120</sup> Grant 50-1.

<sup>121</sup> Grant 48.

<sup>122</sup> Grant 51.

<sup>123</sup> Sutherland 140.

<sup>124</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 6.19.

<sup>125</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 6.25.

<sup>126</sup> Dio 59.16.1-10.

in several speeches, but in A.D. 55 Britannicus was killed and the artificiality of his pledges was revealed.<sup>127</sup> It is in this context that Seneca's *De Clementia* must be placed. He most likely composed the work after the death of Britannicus with a two-fold purpose. Not only did the work serve as a reminder to Nero about what *clementia* entailed and as a guide for the emperor to follow, but it also served as a reassurance to the public that the virtue was still very much a part of Nero's policy and that recent events would not change that.<sup>128</sup> However, Nero took the idea of *clementia* a step further by reviving the *maiestas* trials in A.D. 62. The praetor Antistius Sosianus was accused for the specific purpose of allowing the emperor to veto the Senate's verdict in order that he could show his clemency.<sup>129</sup>

Although there are few representations of *clementia* extant for this period, the literary texts indicate that *clementia* became more synonymous with its opposite, *crudelitas*, during the reigns of the final Julio-Claudians. The virtue was revived under these emperors mainly because it had been associated with Julius Caesar and Augustus, and therefore served as a connection to them, but the examples listed above indicate that the idea of *clementia* was not fully understood in the same terms and the practice of the virtue became a farce.<sup>130</sup> The transformation of *clementia* under Julius Caesar from something that was shown to defeated foes to something that was shown to fellow citizens is fully seen during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero.<sup>131</sup> Having considered the negative connotations that *clementia* took on, it is not surprising that the virtue does not appear in connection with Galba and Otho.

### *Clementia* after the Julio-Claudians

Vitellius, perhaps as a way to distinguish himself from his rivals and predecessors, did take on several imperial virtues, one of which was *clementia*. During the civil wars it was crucial for these men to take on an image that the public would support, and coinage was an effective medium to get across this message.<sup>132</sup> On coins issued by the mint of Tarraco in Spain the laureate head of Vitellius is on one side while on the other side the personification of *Clementia* is depicted, seated, draped, with a branch in one hand and a sceptre in the other (Fig. 1.7). The legend on one side reads A VITELLIUS IMP GERMANICUS and the other side reads CLEMENTIA IMP GERMAN.<sup>133</sup> The fact that these coins came from the mint in Spain demonstrates that Vitellius was trying to convince the people, who had been hesitant, to come over to his side.<sup>134</sup> The choice to personify the virtue may suggest a desire on the part of Vitellius to distance himself from his predecessor, Tiberius, who had represented *clementia* with a

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<sup>127</sup> Promise of *clementia*: Tac. *Ann.* 13.11; Death of Britannicus: Tac. *Ann.* 13.15-16.

<sup>128</sup> Griffin 135-8.

<sup>129</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.48.

<sup>130</sup> Fears 890-3.

<sup>131</sup> Weinstock 239.

<sup>132</sup> Hannestad 118.

<sup>133</sup> Mattingly 1937 384.

<sup>134</sup> Mattingly vol. 1, ccxxviii.



wreath on his coinage. Although the virtue had appeared on Tiberian coinage, by representing it as a personification, perhaps Vitellius hoped to create enough of a difference between him and the now unpopular Tiberius. As well, the emperor had a good reason to represent himself as merciful because he had spared Otho's family.<sup>135</sup> According to Tacitus, much of Vitellius' brief reign was characterized by an extreme decadence that put him on a similar footing as Nero. At this point the use of *clementia* as an imperial virtue declined, or the Flavians chose to distance themselves from it focusing on other virtues.<sup>136</sup> *Clementia* would not return to imperial art until Trajan.

### *Clementia* under the Flavians

In A.D. 70, Vespasian and his son Titus succeeded in defeating the Jews and captured Jerusalem. This victory was significant as it gave Vespasian *auctoritas* and *maiestas*, both of which he needed to secure his rule. He and his sons subsequently used it to justify their reign, and thus reminders of this victory are represented in imperial imagery. Vespasian took up the Augustan policy to promote his establishment of peace throughout the empire. A Temple of Peace was dedicated in the imperial forum in A.D. 75, and was meant to signify the age of peace and happiness that Vespasian brought. This is a concept that was also reproduced on coins.<sup>137</sup> Since the empire had just gone through a period of civil war and unrest, much like Augustus, Vespasian wanted to focus on peace. Just as Augustus could not immediately take up *clementia* because of the failure of the policy under his father, so Vespasian decided to distance himself from a virtue that had acquired negative connotations under the Julio-Claudian emperor. His emphasis on peace, especially by promoting a victory over a foreign enemy, was perhaps a way of softening the harshness of war. Stability had been brought to the empire, and *clementia* for the Flavians did not play a significant part in their promotion of this fact.

From its earliest extant representation on the Boscoreale Cups to the coinage of Vitellius, *clementia* is depicted in military contexts towards defeated foes, in a political context on coinage to celebrate the virtue and the need for it, and by emperors towards their fellow citizens. For Augustus, promoting clemency also allowed him to promote Roman dominance over foreign enemies, as well as the peace that the empire enjoyed, all due to his able leadership. However, with each emperor there was a bleaker dimension to the policy. *Clementia* may have been viewed as an act of kindness by the Romans, but it probably was not viewed in this way by the barbarians. Augustus may have spared the defeated barbarians, but they were slaves to Rome for the rest of their lives. Royal princes, captured and granted mercy, may have been educated in Rome, but their Romanized ways were ridiculed once they returned home. Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero all associated themselves with the virtue, but under them it became a farce and often indistinguishable from *crudelitas*. Vitellius used it to secure the support of the people in Spain, but his decadence was too reminiscent of Nero's. *Clementia* was a way for the

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<sup>135</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.75.

<sup>136</sup> Hannestad 118.

<sup>137</sup> Hannestad 120-21.

emperor to connect himself to earlier leaders, but each seemed to lack a full understanding of the virtue. By the death of Vitellius *clementia* had attached to it enough negative connotations that it did not figure very much in the art of the Flavians.<sup>138</sup> It does not appear again until Trajan, and by that point it had evolved into a representation different from that of the Boscoreale Cups. It is during his reign that the calm and composed tone of the piece would be replaced by a more violent motif.

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<sup>138</sup> Charlesworth 112-3.

## Chapter 2: *Clementia* in the Age of Trajan

After its introduction into the imagery of Augustus and its neglect under the Flavians, *clementia* returned to imperial art during the reign of Trajan. The iconography had changed since the time of Augustus, and a virtue that had been removed from images of battle now returned to a war-like context, and was juxtaposed with scenes of violence. This development can be seen most clearly on the Column of Trajan, and the form that *clementia* took on this monument must be considered in detail since it is against these representations that later images of clemency will be compared. This chapter will examine the Column in detail, especially the *clementia* and *submissio* scenes that appear on the frieze. The immediate context of the Column will first be considered, with a description of Trajan's forum and the immediate surrounding buildings. This will be followed by a summary of the wars that Trajan waged against Dacia, and a description of how these events unfold on the Column. The many scenes that feature ambassadors meeting with Trajan and the barbarians subjugated before the emperor will be examined, with special emphasis given to the main *clementia* scene after the first war. I will consider the iconography in detail in comparison to the earlier scene of clemency on the Boscoreale Cups, and possible meanings of and messages behind the depiction will be described. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the Column to the Tropaeum Traiani erected in Adamklissi, where there is a notable lack of clemency.

### Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus*

Trajan came to power after being adopted by Nerva, who reigned for only a short time. In contrast to Domitian, Trajan was considered an able and just ruler, who was loved by the Senate and people alike.<sup>139</sup> Pliny the Younger, in his *Panegyricus*, praises Trajan's good leadership and mentions at least thirty-five virtues in his speech that Trajan possesses, one of which is *clementia*.<sup>140</sup> The emperor's good qualities are contrasted with the bad qualities that Domitian possessed, such as Trajan's clemency in comparison to Domitian's cruelty.<sup>141</sup> Pliny writes that people celebrated Trajan for his clemency, his generosity, and for the moderation of his reign. Trajan represented himself not above people, but as their equal, and as someone from whom they have nothing to fear. Not only did Trajan show mercy to foreign enemies, he also showed mercy at home in legal matters.<sup>142</sup>

It is important to note that the clemency for which Trajan was praised and which Pliny stresses is an important quality in a good leader represents the opinions of the elite. They had selfish reasons for wanting their emperor to be merciful, since he had the power

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<sup>139</sup> Cass. Dio 68.6.2; 68.7.3.

<sup>140</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 312. He also mentions that Pliny discusses twenty virtues in the opening chapters.

<sup>141</sup> Pliny *Pan.* 3, 18.

<sup>142</sup> Trajan's clemency and moderation: Pliny *Pan.* 2; generosity: 25, 26; equality: 2, 13, 24, 64; no fear: 27, 53, 66; kindness to foreign enemies: 16, 56; clemency at home: 80.

to decide whether they lived or died.<sup>143</sup> In lauding his clemency, they hoped to influence the way in which Trajan ruled, much like the Senators under Augustus who voted to him the shield of virtues. Alternatively, an emperor, by advertising his own clemency, sought to gain the support of the elite by showing them that they had nothing to fear from him.<sup>144</sup>

### The Column of Trajan

Following the two wars with Dacia in A.D. 101-2 and 105-6, Trajan embarked on a massive building program in the city of Rome. A grand gateway to the north-west of Augustus' imperial forum, upon which stood a statue of Trajan in a six-horse chariot, marked the entrance to the emperor's forum. Cassius Dio relates that the Quirinal hill had been leveled, and that Column's height matched the height that had been cleared away.<sup>145</sup> A visitor going through the gateway would enter a colonnaded, rectangular yard with two exedrae on either end. This courtyard, measuring 120 by 90 metres, featured an equestrian statue of Trajan in the middle. The markets of Trajan to the north-east, which were built into the slopes of a leveled Quirinal hill, featured a market-hall and about one hundred and fifty shops. Immediately to the north-west of Trajan's forum stood the Basilica Ulpia, which took Trajan's family name and measured about 176.28 by 58.76 metres.<sup>146</sup> Various types of business occurred here, including law cases, poetry-recitals, and the manumission of slaves. On the north-east side of the Basilica two doors, relatively close together, led to Latin and a Greek libraries, located on either side of the Column of Trajan. The libraries were constructed out of brick-faced concrete, most likely to protect against fire. The courtyard which contained the column may originally have featured a wall on the north-eastern side, but after Trajan's death it was removed to allow access to the Temple of Trajan, which was built by Hadrian. Its exact dimensions are not known, as in modern times two churches stand on this spot, but the area provides a quiet place for worship with the noise blocked out by the Basilica Ulpia.<sup>147</sup>

It is in this context, then, in which the Column of Trajan must be placed. The impact that this building program was meant to have is not readily apparent now, since the modern view of the imperial forum is interrupted by Benito Mussolini's road, which runs straight through the middle. Trajan's Column is the only monument that remains mostly unaltered and intact, and as such it stands out immediately to the modern visitor. A careful reconstruction of the forum, however, reveals that it is unlikely that this was the effect on the ancient viewer. Flanked on both sides by two libraries, situated behind the Basilica Ulpia, and about 29.38 metres in height, most of the Column would not have

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<sup>143</sup> Dowling 2006 247-9.

<sup>144</sup> Dowling notes that it was in the emperor's best interest to have the support of the elite since they would be responsible for his legacy upon his death: 2006 248.

<sup>145</sup> Cass. Dio 68.16, 3. Excavations in the forum area have revealed that the hill that had been cut back was situated in the forum area, and that the total height may have been half that of the Column: Davies 60.

<sup>146</sup> It had a central nave, a double colonnade, a timber roof, a ceiling of gilded bronze, and clerestory windows: Lepper and Frere 9-12.

<sup>147</sup> Lepper and Frere 9-12.

been visible to someone entering the forum. As the Column was topped by a gilded statue of Trajan, which had an estimated height of four metres, the top may have been visible rising behind the Basilica.<sup>148</sup> However, there is evidence that suggests that the focal point of this building complex was the Column, and that attention was meant to be directed to this point. Since the entrance to the forum was situated on the southwest end, the ancient visitor passing through the entrance stood on the same axis as the Column. Moreover, in order to obtain access to and view the Column properly, one had to pass through the Basilica, and then through one of the two entrances on either side of the Column.<sup>149</sup>

The Column stood in a small courtyard that measured about 25 by 20.20 metres, and was surrounded by an enclosure. It stood on a base which was 6.16 metres high made of eight blocks of Luni marble and was decorated with Dacian weapons meant to resemble trophies.<sup>150</sup> The Column itself measures one hundred Roman feet, or about 29.76 metres, is of the Doric/Tuscan order, and stands on a torus that resembles a laurel wreath. The echinus features twenty-four eggs and has a square abacus immediately above it, while the Column has twenty-four flutes and eighteen drums, which weigh about thirty-two tons each. One hundred and eighty-five steps were carved out on the drums, while forty-three windows were also put in to light the stairwell. The Column gets narrower at the top, measuring 3.70 metres in diameter at the bottom and 3.20 metres at the highest point. As mentioned, the Column features a winding stairway that culminates into a door at the top at the east end. The door may have been strategically placed in this direction so that the visitor could look out over Trajan's building program and admire it.<sup>151</sup>

The Column's best known feature is the spiral sculptural frieze that runs around it recounting the various exploits of Trajan and his army while fighting the Dacians. The frieze is 200 metres in length, and runs around the Column twenty-three times counter-clockwise. To improve visibility, the frieze gradually increases in height from bottom (.80m.) to top (1.25m.) along with the figures, which increase from .60m. to .80m. There are one hundred and fifty-five scenes in total, and a great amount of precision also left room for the insertion of metal objects such as weapons.<sup>152</sup> Although there has been much debate concerning the shape of the frieze, it resembles either an illustrated *volumen* or a piece of cloth.<sup>153</sup> Since Trajan wrote his own work called the *Dacica* on the wars, it is probable that one of the functions of the Column was to serve as an illustrated companion to this work, which was likely housed in the Latin library.<sup>154</sup> Scholars have also pointed out the problems and difficulties of viewing this frieze, which demands that the viewer walk continuously around the Column with his or her head inclined at an uncomfortable angle. Not only that, only so much of the frieze could be viewed from

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<sup>148</sup> Davies 64.

<sup>149</sup> Davies 64.

<sup>150</sup> Coarelli 21.

<sup>151</sup> Coarelli 24-26.

<sup>152</sup> Coarelli 27.

<sup>153</sup> Coarelli 11.

<sup>154</sup> Coarelli 11-14.

ground level, which was severely limited by the fact that the Column was enclosed on three sides by the libraries and the Basilica Ulpia.<sup>155</sup> Some have proposed that the visibility was not a problem since many scenes can be viewed on the same vertical axis, and that a whole, complete viewing was not necessary. However, both Coarelli and Davies believe that a full viewing of the Column is important. Coarelli argues that since the story is told in chronological order, a vertical reading would not make sense. He states that the frieze was meant to be an illustrated accompaniment to Trajan's *Dacica*, and thus needed to be viewed in its proper order.<sup>156</sup> Davies, on the other hand, argues that walking in a circle was part of the funerary ritual and the perpetuation of memory. By carving the frieze in this manner, the viewer was encouraged to walk continuously around the Column, and thus was coaxed to take part in the necessary funerary ritual. The small courtyard and the low relief of the frieze only further encouraged the viewer to perform this action close to the Column.<sup>157</sup>

The frieze recounts the wars that Trajan undertook against the Dacians, but it is noteworthy for how few actual war scenes are depicted. There are *adlocutio* scenes in which Trajan addresses his troops, scenes of the troops marching, scenes of sacrifice, many scenes of the troops at work building various structures, scenes of foreign embassies seeking an audience with the emperor, and most importantly, scenes of *clementia* and *submissio*. Another point worth noting is that Trajan, although he appears fifty-nine times, is never depicted in a battle scene.<sup>158</sup> A reason for this may be that when Trajan came into power, war against the Dacians was an unpopular idea with the Romans. This was partly due to the policy of the previous emperor, Domitian, who had mismanaged relations with them. Decebalus, king of the Dacians, had caused problems, prompting Domitian to move against him. However, the emperor suffered a serious defeat against the Marcomanni, and was forced to make a truce with Decebalus, who had previously asked for a truce from Domitian several times.<sup>159</sup> The emperor represented this as a victory back home in Rome, but in reality the war had been a costly one. Domitian reportedly did not even take part in battle, opting instead to stay in a city nearby and feed his luxurious appetite while sending out others to conduct the war for him.<sup>160</sup> The objects that he displayed as captured war booty came from a personal supply, and Decebalus actually profited financially from the war. Domitian had given him money and artisans, and continued to give him money after the war was done.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, even though wars were generally costly, this one had been needlessly expensive. Nero's debasement of the currency and Domitian's excessive activities had left Trajan with an empire that was suffering from financial difficulties. With Domitian's disastrous war against the Dacians added to that, Trajan needed to find a way to change

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<sup>155</sup> Davies 44.

<sup>156</sup> Coarelli 19-20.

<sup>157</sup> Davies 59.

<sup>158</sup> Coarelli 27.

<sup>159</sup> Dio 67.6-7, 2.

<sup>160</sup> Dio 67.6, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Dio 67.7, 4.

the public's perception of war back to a favourable one.<sup>162</sup> This is one reason why there is less of an emphasis on the actual battles against the Dacians on the Column, and more of an emphasis on the other activities that Trajan and his troops undertook such as sacrifice, the *adlocutio* scenes, and the building projects. Moreover, there is also an emphasis on scenes of *clementia*, *submissio*, and prisoners because the profits made from the eventual sale of the slaves would fund Trajan's building program in Rome.<sup>163</sup> The message was clear: this war had been a profitable and beneficial undertaking. It was this war that allowed for such magnificent structures to be built, and these newfound resources would be of great interest to the city of Rome.

It is with this latter point in mind that I shall examine the *clementia* and *submissio* scenes on the Column in greater detail. First, however, it is useful to briefly summarize the events that led to the war, and the actual activities that were taken up by Trajan and his troops while in Dacia. When he came into power, he was disturbed by the amount of money Decebalus was receiving from the Romans each year, and thus decided to move against the Dacians in an effort to curb their growing power.<sup>164</sup> In the initial battles, many men on both sides were wounded, causing Decebalus to send envoys to Trajan to sue for peace. However, since the Dacian king was unwilling to meet with the emperor or his representatives in person, nothing was accomplished. The war turned in Trajan's favour when he captured a fortified mountain belonging to the enemy along with arms, siege engines, and Decebalus' sister. The Dacian king came to Trajan, supplicated himself on the ground before the emperor, and agreed to make peace. The terms of the treaty required Decebalus to surrender his arms, to demolish his forts and withdraw from captured territory, and not to give shelters to deserters or to employ Romans whom he had persuaded to come over to his side. After Trajan had established garrisons in strategic areas, he returned to Rome.<sup>165</sup> Meanwhile, back in the city of Rome, Decebalus' envoys had gone before the Senate, put down their arms, and after making a submissive gesture spoke words of supplication. The Senate ratified the peace and the envoys were given back their arms, while Trajan was awarded a triumph for his efforts.<sup>166</sup> The peace after the first Dacian war is commemorated on the Column first by a *clementia* scene, to which I will return below, and then by the representation of a winged Victory, who inscribes a shield and is surrounded by shields and trophies. The Victory appears on the northwest side of the Column at the almost exact middle of the frieze, and thus marks the end of the first war and serves as a useful divider between the representation of the two wars.<sup>167</sup> One aspect worth noting about the *clementia* scene is that to the far right, in stark contrast to the supplicating prisoners before Trajan, stands Decebalus, his weaponless arms reaching towards the emperor but standing straight. This alludes to the

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<sup>162</sup> Davies 62.

<sup>163</sup> Davies 62. The different, new types of marble used also gave the impression of new wealth from a distant, conquered territory: Davies 62.

<sup>164</sup> Dio 68.6, 1. Dio goes on to write that Decebalus was worried about facing Trajan and his army since previously he had never truly conquered the Roman people, only Domitian: 68.6, 2.

<sup>165</sup> Dio 68.9ff.

<sup>166</sup> Dio 68.10, 2-3. Trajan was given the name Dacicus, and also held gladiatorial games.

<sup>167</sup> Lepper and Frere 121 and plate LVII.

fact that, although Trajan had been victorious this time, Decebalus was unwilling to adhere to the terms of the peace treaty warranting a second war.<sup>168</sup>

Soon, however, Decebalus broke the terms of the treaty and started to collect arms, repair forts, receive deserters, and annex portions of neighbouring territories. The Roman Senate declared him an enemy and Trajan went to war against the Dacians a second time. When numerous Dacians started to go over to Trajan's side, Decebalus panicked and sued for peace, but this was for naught as the Dacian king was unwilling both to lay down his arms and to give up himself. Decebalus tried to rally surrounding nations around him to his cause, reminding them that they were fighting for freedom, and that the Romans would go after them once the Dacians had been subjugated.<sup>169</sup> Trajan constructed a stone bridge over the Ister, and crossing it he made war on the Dacians, finally defeating them.<sup>170</sup> Before Decebalus could be captured, he committed suicide and his head was brought back to Rome, while Dacia became part of Roman territory with Trajan founding many cities there. Moreover, the treasures of Decebalus, which included hidden gold and silver, now belonged to the Romans.<sup>171</sup>

Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, the Column performs several functions. It celebrates Trajan's victory in the Dacian wars, and serves to illustrate Trajan's military prowess and sound leadership. To a war-weary audience that had just experienced the despotism of Domitian's reign, this served to legitimize Trajan's leadership and to prove his capabilities as a military commander and emperor.<sup>172</sup> The other function that the Column performs is that it symbolizes the wealth that Rome acquired with the defeat of the Dacians. As mentioned above, the profits from the sale of the prisoners as slaves contributed to the building program, and thus one look at the forum was enough to highlight the positive effect that the war had had on Rome. Furthermore, the shape of the Column and its function as a belvedere allowed visitors to climb to the top and survey the construction that had been undertaken.<sup>173</sup>

For these reasons actual battle scenes are not emphasized on the Column, and instead the focus is on the disciplined Roman army, which undertakes various construction projects, and on the able generalship of Trajan, who can be seen in various scenes addressing his troops and demonstrating his *pietas* by sacrificing to the gods.<sup>174</sup> The Roman army is seen as always in control of the situation, in contrast to the chaotic

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<sup>168</sup> Lepper and Frere 117 and plates LIV and LV.

<sup>169</sup> After failing to kill Trajan, Decebalus managed to capture a Roman leader of the army, Longinus. Decebalus saw this as an opportunity to use Longinus as a bargaining tool, but Longinus managed to drink poison and Trajan decided that having his body returned was not as important as securing the safety of the freedman who had given Longinus the poison: Dio 68.10-12.

<sup>170</sup> Dio 68.13-14. Hadrian later dismantled the bridge because of fears that the barbarians might use it to cross into Roman territory: 68.13, 6.

<sup>171</sup> Dio 68.13-14.

<sup>172</sup> Dowling 2006 258.

<sup>173</sup> Lepper and Frere 13, 20; Davies 60; Claridge 10. Only about twelve to sixteen people could fit on the top of the Column (Claridge 10), which indicates that access was restricted, maybe only to the elite: Davies 60.

<sup>174</sup> Coarelli 27. There are both eight *adlocutio* and eight sacrifice scenes on the Column in total: Coarelli 27.



disorder of the barbarians. It is the barbarians who appear frightened, the barbarians who resort to drastic measures such as torturing Roman soldiers, and the barbarians who turn to flee from their villages.<sup>175</sup> The Romans are presented as calm and restrained, and as the bringers of peace and order to the region.

Crucial to the idea of peace is the supplication of the barbarians. It is their submission to the emperor of Rome that makes the idea of peace possible, that secures the borders of the empire, and that highlights their respect for and obedience to Rome. It is the emperor's *clementia*, which is bestowed upon the barbarians, that allows for the profits of their sale to be used for his building project. This mercy that he shows to them also is intended to make the barbarians grateful to Rome as he has just spared their lives. The ideas of *submissio* and *clementia* are thus central to the peace, wealth, and prosperity of the empire. It is not surprising, then, that there is a fair amount of space on the Column devoted to scenes depicting these ideas. The following paragraphs will be devoted to describing and discussing these scenes in detail, and the concept of *clementia* as it appears on the Column will be of especial importance.

First, the *submissio* scenes from the first war as they appear on the Column will be described up to the *clementia* scene, followed by a detailed discussion of the iconography. One scene early on comes when a Dacian prisoner is brought in while the Roman soldiers are constructing a fort (Fig. 2.1). The prisoner, who is wearing military dress, is held before Trajan by both arms, and a submission gesture is implied by the fact that his knees are bent and that he bends forward slightly. The next scene worth considering involves the reception of Dacian ambassadors (Fig. 2.2). Cassius Dio mentions that early on in the war Decebalus had sent envoys to Trajan to sue for peace, and this scene could be representative of that.<sup>176</sup> These men have been identified as long-haired nobles, and they are meeting with the emperor outside the military camp. Lepper and Frere interpret them as having non-suppliant gestures, but the viewer can see that one of the Dacian nobles is slightly bent forward and has his hands outstretched towards to the emperor.<sup>177</sup> Therefore, the hunching over, however slight, and the outstretched hands still suggest some sort of obeisance to Trajan, but this will be seen more explicitly once fortune does not go the Dacians' way.

The first *clementia* scene immediately follows the previous scene of the ambassadors (Fig. 2.3). To the far left, Roman soldiers cut down barbarians, while to the far right Trajan sees off a Dacian noblewoman followed by a group of more women with children. Trajan's right hand is extended towards the female figure with a suggestion that he has spared her life and those of the other women and children pictured. Noteworthy is

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<sup>175</sup> See plate XXXIV of Lepper and Frere for the torturing of Romans; plate XXXII for flight of the Dacians.

<sup>176</sup> Dio 68.9.

<sup>177</sup> Lepper and Frere 76. If they are indeed carrying a non-suppliant attitude, then the scene is foreshadowing of the war that is to come.

the sharp contrast that is presented between Roman soldiers cutting down barbarians and the *clementia* extended towards several Dacian women and children.<sup>178</sup>

Later, more ambassadors are sent to Trajan and they are depicted inside a military fort, wearing Phrygian caps.<sup>179</sup> As with the ambassadors in the earlier scene, their shoulders are slightly hunched, and they hold out their hands to the emperor. Trajan is depicted as taller than them, in military dress, and he extends his right hand to the envoys. These gestures can be interpreted in the same way as the one above, in that the hunched shoulders and outstretched hands appear to be in a sign of deference to the emperor. A scene of explicit supplication occurs with Trajan embarking on a ship.<sup>180</sup> Several men kneel before and reach for the emperor, who extends his right hand to them. The identity of the barbarians is unknown, but the open-handed gesture of Trajan's right hand suggests that he is extending mercy to them.<sup>181</sup> Yet another embassy appears before the emperor, with Dacian nobles extending their hands toward Trajan, who holds out his right hand toward them. Although the barbarians stand up straight, the stretched out hands indicates that Trajan has control over the interaction.<sup>182</sup>

A noteworthy scene comes a little later when another ambassador appears before Trajan (Fig. 2.4). This time the iconography is much different from the previous scenes of envoys. The barbarian is on his knees before the emperor, looking up at him, and stretching out his hands to him. Trajan appears to be extending his right hand towards the man, although it is difficult to make out as his hand has broken off. This scene comes after several depictions of battle which culminates in an attack on a Dacian village and an image of barbarians fleeing. Whereas before ambassadors had been standing, the current one on his knees indicates that matters have not gone well in the war for the Dacians, and that the desperate situation calls for a more explicit display of deference to the emperor. The battle scenes that follow show what became of the ambassador's pleas, although Trajan's possible extended right arm hints at the *clementia* that is soon to follow.

After a series of battle images, the war ends with the subjugation of the Dacians and with the bestowal of *clementia* upon them (Figs. 2.5 and 2.6). This first, proper *clementia* scene stands out for its sheer size alone. The emperor is to the far left, seated and surrounded by his staff-officers, auxiliaries, and standard-bearers. The barbarians stretch out from right to left before Trajan, and may be divided into three groups. The men in the group to the far right are standing and stretching out their hands toward Trajan. Immediately before them, men in a second group are on their knees and also stretch out their hands to the emperor. These two groups are separated by a group of prisoners, some who have their hands tied behind their backs, and have been variously identified as deserters and engineers or the ambassadors who were to go to Rome and

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<sup>178</sup> Lepper and Frere, 76-77. Some see the Dacian noblewoman as representing Decebalus' sister, but Lepper and Frere point out that her capture came later in the war and thus her appearance this early is out of place: 77.

<sup>179</sup> Lepper and Frere 88; plate XXX.

<sup>180</sup> Lepper and Frere, plates XXXIV-V.

<sup>181</sup> Lepper and Frere 98.

<sup>182</sup> Lepper and Frere 100; plates XXXVII-III.

negotiate the terms of the peace with the Senate.<sup>183</sup> The men in the group closest to the emperor are also on their knees, but almost seem as if they want to reach out and touch him, with one barbarian taking hold of Trajan's knees. The emperor himself is seated on a platform, and is thus a taller and more imposing figure in contrast to the barbarians. He stretches out his right hand to them in a gesture of *clementia*, representative of the peace that was established immediately after the first war. To the far right stands a tall figure, identified as Decebalus. Although he stretches out his hands to the emperor, he does not bow, and this perhaps alludes to the fact that he has no intention of adhering to the terms of the peace treaty, warranting another war.<sup>184</sup>

Trajan is immediately identifiable as the main figure since all the barbarians are looking at him, and all gestures are aimed at him. He is the one responsible for defeating them, but he can also bring them peace and spare their lives.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, the *submissio* poses and gestures of the barbarians further heighten the military prowess of Trajan and his able leadership.<sup>186</sup> The humiliation of the barbarians is fully brought out by the fact that they are barely acknowledged by the Romans. Most of the auxiliaries and the standard-bearers barely look at them and instead either stare out of the scene or are glancing behind them. One staff-officer immediately behind Trajan seems to be in conversation with another man behind him. All their expressions are those of restraint and indifference. In contrast, the barbarians are portrayed as disheveled and desperate.<sup>187</sup> They seem to be almost frantically pleading with the emperor, and their unkempt appearance further highlights the desperation of their situation. Although Trajan does acknowledge their pleas with his right-handed gesture of clemency, he too seems somewhat indifferent much like his soldiers. He does not even react to the barbarian immediately before him, who reaches out and touches his knees. In this way the artist fully brings out the defeat of the Dacians, and their reliance on and deference to the emperor.<sup>188</sup> It is Trajan who now decides on matters of life and death, and his gesture of clemency binds the Dacians to him in an unequal relationship. He has spared their lives, thus they are now obligated to him.

The size and location of the *clementia* scene mark it out as an important moment of the first war. Not only is the scene situated at the almost exact halfway point on the Column, it is also visible from the ground and much larger than some of the other scenes.<sup>189</sup> This scene of clemency, the first extant after the depiction of *clementia* on the Boscoreale Cups (Figs. 1.4 and 1.5), presents a notable change in iconography. The representation of *clementia* on the Boscoreale Cups is unique as far as clemency scenes go in imperial art.<sup>190</sup> When comparing the scene on the cup to the scene on the Column, notable differences stand out at once. On the Boscoreale Cup, Augustus is togate

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<sup>183</sup> Lepper and Frere 117.

<sup>184</sup> Lepper and Frere 117.

<sup>185</sup> Brilliant 125.

<sup>186</sup> Brilliant 123.

<sup>187</sup> Brilliant 122.

<sup>188</sup> Brilliant 123.

<sup>189</sup> Dowling 2006 257.

<sup>190</sup> Kuttner 99.

whereas Trajan is depicted in military dress. The lictors are placed in the background on the cup, in low relief while auxiliaries and standard-bearers surround the barbarians on the Column. Augustus is seated on a *sella castrensis*, but he is not depicted as that much taller than everyone else. Trajan, on the other hand, is seated on a higher dais, and is shown as a much more imposing figure. The scene on the cup is calm and relaxed, with the barbarians not appearing frightened nor pleading in desperation with the emperor. By contrast, on the Column, there is much more of a sense of desperation and panic amongst the Dacians.

With that said, there are also notable similarities between the two representations. Much like on the Column, the barbarians are depicted in three groups. Moving from left to right, each group crouches a little lower before Augustus. The group on the far left is standing straight, the man in the middle is hunched over a little while helping his son walk, and the man closest to the emperor is on his knees. The same progression occurs on the Column. Moreover, although it seems the barbarian men are merely crouched forward and holding out their arms to help their children along, these gestures serve to put all focus on the emperor. Their gazes are fixed on Augustus and their hands are stretched out towards him as well. This too occurs on the Column, but here there are no children depicted to allow for the alternate interpretation that the men are merely helping them along. Although both Augustus and Trajan wear fixed expressions on their faces and seem indifferent, Augustus' gesture of clemency is more pronounced than that of Trajan. His arm is raised slightly higher and his gesture is more open-handed, although this may be partly due to the fact that Augustus is seated facing left, which thus puts his gesture in the background.

A notable change also occurs with the context of the *clementia* scene on the Column. Augustus had sought to remove clemency from the context of war, choosing to only display the moment after battle.<sup>191</sup> Although clemency scenes still occurred in military settings, Augustus only showed the moment after battle, where peace had been brought about by the grant of mercy. On the Column, *clementia* is not only in a warlike context, it is also depicted side by side with images of battle, destruction, and death. The bestowal of mercy comes after numerous scenes depicting Roman troops advancing, fighting, attacking Dacian fortresses, presenting Dacian heads to the emperor, and battle imagery with the fallen lying on the ground amidst the chaos. If one chooses to read the Column frieze vertically, the *clementia* scene appears on the southeastern side. Immediately below it, Roman troops attack a fort, Dacians turn to flee, and the dead are lying on the ground.<sup>192</sup>

A reason for the juxtapositioning of the *clementia* scene with images of battle may be that on the Column *clementia* is meant to symbolize the success that the Romans achieved in this war.<sup>193</sup> As already mentioned, after the reign of Domitian, the Romans may have been cautious of war and of the heavy expenditure involved. By depicting battle scenes in which the Roman army is shown as having complete control, and in

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<sup>191</sup> Dowling 2006 131.

<sup>192</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate L. For the scenes of heads being presented to the emperor and the battle imagery with the dead on the ground see Lepper and Frere, plates LI and LII.

<sup>193</sup> Dowling 2006 258.

which the Dacian barbarians are presented fleeing, subjugated, or dead, the artist is minimizing the danger that the Romans faced and highlighting their skills and precision. The numerous *submissio* scenes of Dacian ambassadors coming to talk to Trajan described above, merely illustrate this further. It is the Dacians who felt threatened, and it is the Dacians who thus felt compelled to negotiate with the emperor. Although they remain standing before Trajan, their slightly hunched frames and hand gestures suggest that the emperor has complete control over the situation. This further reinforces Trajan's sound leadership and abilities as a general. The juxtapositioning of the battle scenes and the eventual *clementia* scene also serves as a message to the barbarians. In contrast to the fortress being stormed, enemy heads being presented to the emperor, Dacians forced to flee from their village, and the dead lying on the ground, the offer of *clementia* looks like a much more favourable alternative. Rather than being killed and living amidst violence, the Dacians were now subject to and part of the Roman peace. This was a positive message for the Romans as well, as the security of the borders of the empire had been brought about with the bestowal of clemency.

Finally, the *clementia* scene represents the wealth that was brought into the empire because of success in the war. The profits made from the sale of prisoners as slaves contributed to the large-scale building project in the city of Rome. It was the clemency of the emperor that brought about this new wealth. Being granted mercy probably was not viewed by the recipients as the benevolent act that is portrayed on the Column. The pleading for and then acceptance of mercy brought with it new obligations. The barbarians lost their freedom in exchange for their lives, and they were now subject to Rome for the rest of their lives. Was the bestowal of *clementia* really such a magnanimous and benevolent act if to the barbarians being slaves to Rome was on the same level as being dead? The prisoners might have some feelings of resentment at the way the war turned out, but to the Romans and to the artist responsible for the execution of the frieze on the Column, mercy was represented as a fair and generous act. To be made a slave and sold was probably not viewed as such a terrible thing by the Romans, especially when the alternative had been death. The image of the barbarians pleading for mercy from the emperor further illustrates the belief that a grateful suppliant only proves that Roman rule is beneficial and that the granting of clemency had been successful.<sup>194</sup> Granting mercy to the vanquished foe also had its benefits for practical reasons. Dead barbarians do not bring in money to Rome, nor do they ensure the security of the borders of the empire.

Despite success in the first war, Decebalus would not adhere to the terms of the peace treaty, and soon a second war was warranted. After several depictions of Trajan and his troops sacrificing, marching, and battling the Dacians, an embassy scene is depicted.<sup>195</sup> Much like the early embassy scenes from the first war, the envoys stand straight and hold out their hands to the emperor. Trajan extends his right arm to the ambassadors, who have been variously identified as either Dacians or as the people

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<sup>194</sup> Dowling 2006 259.

<sup>195</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate LXXIII.

neighbouring the Dacians, who are pledging their allegiance to Rome.<sup>196</sup> Their different styles of dress, and the fact that, despite their hand gestures, they are not at all bowing before Trajan, seems to suggest that they are neighbouring people promising their loyalty. After several scenes of the Roman army advancing, besieging fortresses, and battling the enemy the next *submissio* scene features a lone figure kneeling before Trajan.<sup>197</sup> On his knees, he stretches out his hands in supplication to the emperor, who in turn extends his own right hand. It is not known whether this Dacian man came on his own accord or is representing Decebalus. It is also unknown from the gestures whether Trajan has accepted the man's pleas or whether he has rejected them. Considering the scene in light of the depiction of the mass suicide which follows suggests that the barbarian's pleas were rejected.<sup>198</sup>

The depiction of the mass suicide comes following a scene where the Dacians burn down their own fortress.<sup>199</sup> The scene features a mass of people crowding around a figure towards the right, handing out a liquid from a jar. This figure has been interpreted as being Decebalus dispensing poison to his men for suicide. The crowd of people is chaotic as the barbarians bear agonized expressions on their faces, gesture wildly to the sky or to Decebalus, and are surrounded by the dead. The interpretation of this as a mass suicide is not supported by everyone. Some see this scene as a representation of Decebalus handing out the last remains of water to his men, thus highlighting the desperation of the situation and explaining why Decebalus stays alive. On the other hand, suicide is attractive to those men who are too sick and wounded to fight anymore.<sup>200</sup> A mass suicide makes sense as a rejection of Roman mercy. Perhaps these Dacian men were too proud to accept Roman dominance and refused to spend the rest of their lives as slaves to Rome. By choosing death, they have refused the possible granting of Roman *clementia*, and are suggesting that being dead is preferable to being subject to Rome.

The mass suicide scene is immediately followed by an image of fleeing Dacians and then a group of barbarians who submit to the emperor (Fig. 2.7). The men seem to have emerged from the forest and are portrayed as unarmed.<sup>201</sup> The men in the back remain standing, while those in the front and closest to the emperor are on their knees, while gazing at the emperor and stretching out their hands towards him. Trajan himself stands before them, on slightly higher ground, but in this particular scene does not seem to be extending his right hand, or, if he does, he only does so slightly. Soon after, another group of Dacians kneels before the emperor (Fig. 2.8). Trajan, surrounded by some of his men, is on notably higher ground than the barbarians, and while the Dacians reach out for him, the emperor extends his right hand. Some interpret these gestures to mean that Trajan is surprised because the Dacians before him have just revealed the location of

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<sup>196</sup> Lepper and Frere 151.

<sup>197</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate LXXXIX.

<sup>198</sup> Lepper and Frere 168.

<sup>199</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate XC-I.

<sup>200</sup> Lepper and Frere 168-9.

<sup>201</sup> Lepper and Frere 169.

Decebalus' treasure.<sup>202</sup> However, it is difficult to read what exactly the gestures are meant to communicate, and it is just as likely that Trajan is accepting the submission of these individuals.

After a few more battle scenes, there is another depiction of suicide.<sup>203</sup> On the left end, Decebalus seems to be encouraging his troops either to flee or to kill themselves, and on the right exactly this is depicted. Some men attempt to flee while others stab themselves with their swords.<sup>204</sup> Much like the previous suicide scene, the depiction of these men killing themselves can be interpreted as the Dacians rejecting Roman clemency. Immediately after this, another group of Dacians appears before Trajan (Fig. 2.9). The man closest to the emperor is crouched on his knees and seems to be halfway in the fort and halfway out. The group behind him gestures towards Trajan, while the emperor himself is depicted on a higher elevation than them. Although Trajan does not make his right-handed *clementia* gesture towards the group, this scene is noteworthy for the fact that this is the emperor's last appearance on the frieze.<sup>205</sup> That he would be last shown in a scene that depicts barbarians in a *submissio* pose before him further reinforces the idea that clemency was a central aspect of Roman foreign policy.

The Roman soldiers are next shown pushing forth into the mountains, chasing the Dacians who are fleeing. When the troops finally catch up to Decebalus, he is pictured committing suicide.<sup>206</sup> The soldier at the head of the group reaches out towards the Dacian king, who has a knife positioned at his throat ready to make the cut. This is followed by a barbarian about to be killed by a Roman soldier, and two boys apprehended by the Romans.<sup>207</sup> The two young boys are most likely the sons of Decebalus, and will probably be sent somewhere far away from home to be educated, although they are not mentioned by our ancient sources.<sup>208</sup> While Decebalus evidently thought it a better alternative to kill himself rather than be brought back to Rome as a prisoner, the apprehension of his two sons are reminiscent of the Boscoreale Cup scene. Although their lives are being spared, they are being uprooted from their homeland, and will spend the rest of their days in a foreign location. It is significant that while Trajan's last appearance was in the context of receiving the subjugation of a barbarian, the Roman soldiers are depicted as continuing to pursue the Dacians and about to kill those whom they catch.<sup>209</sup> Trajan's able generalship is demonstrated by the mercy which he can bestow upon his enemies, while his soldiers are depicted as in complete control of the situation. Both representations bring about the peace and security that the empire needs.

The second Dacian war, then, does not feature as many *submissio* and *clementia* scenes as the first, and does not culminate with a representation of the subjugation of the

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<sup>202</sup> Lepper and Frere 172.

<sup>203</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate CII.

<sup>204</sup> Lepper and Frere 175.

<sup>205</sup> Lepper and Frere 175.

<sup>206</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate CVI.

<sup>207</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate CVII.

<sup>208</sup> Lepper and Frere 177.

<sup>209</sup> Some see Trajan making a final appearance in a badly damaged scene in which Decebalus' head is presented to the Roman troops, although Lepper and Frere disagree with this view: 178-9.

Dacian people. A possible reason may be that since clemency had been extended to the Dacians after the first war, and since they did not adhere to the terms of the treaty, Trajan was not as forthcoming with his mercy this time. This is supported by an image from the first war that depicts Dacian women torturing two Roman soldiers.<sup>210</sup> The *clementia* that would soon follow falls in sharp contrast to this barbaric treatment of a Roman. Such actions render any kind of treatment of the barbarians as optional, since any moral rights that the Dacians had are now gone.<sup>211</sup> But another possible reason for the decreased amount of emphasis on clemency in the second war is that Trajan had to bring about a decisive end to the war. Domitian's policy had not worked out well and the terms of the treaty after the first war had been broken. To ensure the security of the empire and the achievement of peace, the Dacians had to be represented as suffering a decisive defeat. This may explain the increase in suicide scenes. The barbarians are portrayed as worthy opponents,<sup>212</sup> making their defeat all the more glorious, and the death of Decebalus and apprehension of his sons symbolizes a decisive conclusion to the war. The subjugation of the barbarians still holds an important place on the Column, as is attested by the fact that Trajan's last appearance is in a *submissio* scene, but in the second war *clementia* to the prisoners is more implied on the Column. The fact that mercy was granted is suggested by the large-scale building project that took place, and by the erection of the Column.

One aspect that must be kept in mind is who the intended audience was meant to be. As already discussed, the intended audience for the Column was the Romans to whom it was necessary to justify the war. The intent was to show off the amount of wealth the war had brought in, and a climb to the top of the Column was sufficient for the viewer to survey the new buildings that were erected by Trajan. But visitors or those who had business to do in the forum would presumably also be looking at the frieze. This area attracted a wide variety of people, ranging from those who bought or sold at the Markets or those who had official business in the Forum such as lawyers who were trying cases. The manumission of slaves took place in the Basilica Ulpia, and the emperor distributed gifts to the people in the Forum. The Latin and Greek libraries no doubt attracted scholars, who could gaze out the windows and at the scenes on the Column.<sup>213</sup> Thus, many different people had the opportunity to admire the Column on a daily basis. A point worth noting is the fact that slaves were manumitted in the Basilica. To them a depiction of *clementia* carried a whole set of different meanings than to ordinary Roman citizens. On the one hand, they were slaves to Rome because of the bestowal of clemency, but on the other hand they had been granted their lives and were now free. The Column, then, was intended for people from many different backgrounds, and the emphasis on *clementia* reminded them that the peace, wealth, and security that they now enjoyed was made possible by Trajan's sound judgment and able generalship. Trajan possessed virtues that all good emperors must possess, and it is because of these virtues that he was successful.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Lepper and Frere, plate XXXIV.

<sup>211</sup> Hannestad 162.

<sup>212</sup> Hannestad 162.

<sup>213</sup> Davies 59.

<sup>214</sup> Dowling 2006 258.



### The Tropaeum Traiani

The frieze on the Column of Trajan was only intended for those who lived in Rome and who visited the Forum, but the victory in the Dacian wars was represented differently outside of Rome. The following paragraphs will examine a victory monument erected in Adamklissi, and compare the scenes of the metopes on this monument with the scenes on the Column of Trajan. The Tropaeum Traiani is situated in modern day Adamklissi, but what was in the Roman era the province of Moesia Inferior. In addition to this trophy, in close proximity can also be found an altar and a mausoleum, all erected near the area where some of the fighting had taken place.<sup>215</sup> On the altar was inscribed the names of Romans who had lost their lives, while the Tropaeum Traiani was dedicated to Mars Ultor.<sup>216</sup> The monuments are strategically located at the place where the roads from Bessarabia and southern Europe cross, a location that ensured maximum exposure.<sup>217</sup> The Tropaeum has been subject to much debate regarding its date and the meaning behind the sculpted metopes. It has been connected to Crassus, Domitian, or Constantine, or has been thought to commemorate either a third Dacian war or a battle during the first Dacian war.<sup>218</sup> For the purposes of this topic, I will accept Rossi's viewpoint that the monument was erected after a battle in the first Dacian war, in which the Romans recovered standards previously lost. This was a practice that had also been taken up by Augustus when he recovered the standards taken by the Parthians.<sup>219</sup>

The Tropaeum Traiani consisted of a circular monument with a diameter of one hundred feet and height of fifty feet that was placed on a platform with seven steps. The roof had a cone-like shape, while the actual trophy in the shape of a tree-trunk was placed on top of that. Shields and spears were hung from this tree-trunk while images of four barbarians sat at the base, chained. The upper part of the drum features fifty-four metopes, fifty of which are known, forty-nine of which are extant, while forty-four are in a condition where they can be reasonably read.<sup>220</sup> Decorated friezes appear above and below these metopes, while higher still appear twenty-six panels on which were carved images of prisoners.<sup>221</sup>

The metopes feature images of war, with the action moving in a westward direction. The scenes are at once noteworthy and different from the depiction of events on the Column of Trajan in that they are much more violent. Whereas on the Column the artist took pains to emphasize non-battle related scenes such as the troops marching, the soldiers building various structures, and the emperor sacrificing or addressing his troops, the metopes of the Tropaeum offer an uncompromising look at the realities of war. There are no scenes of barbarians subjugating themselves before the emperor, who extends his right hand in an offer of *clementia*. Here, the metopes do depict barbarians in *submissio*

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<sup>215</sup> Rossi 41.

<sup>216</sup> Rossi 55-6.

<sup>217</sup> Rossi 56.

<sup>218</sup> For a full summary of the different theories see Rossi 57.

<sup>219</sup> Rossi 57-8.

<sup>220</sup> Richmond 47.

<sup>221</sup> Rossi 56.

poses, but there is no hope offered for their survival. One metope depicts a Roman on horseback, trampling an enemy underfoot.<sup>222</sup> Others show the barbarians being speared, hacked down, or lying dead on the ground amidst chaos.<sup>223</sup> A *submissio* scene worth noting features a family in a wagon pulled by an ox stretching out their hands in supplication to the emperor (Fig. 2.10). It seems that the initial advancements that the Roman army made had not gone well for the Dacians, and they are now offering their support. It is not known whether the emperor accepted or rejected their pleas, but this same wagon is depicted again and the scene suggests that their pleas were rejected (Fig. 2.11). A Roman soldier is driving his spear into the barbarian male, while the woman sits on the wagon and stretches out her hands in subjugation. A child is shown in the bottom right corner, fleeing from the scene.

On the Tropaeum Traiani, mercy is not bestowed upon the defeated, and scenes of the enemies being killed, lying on the ground dead, and pleading for their lives appear all around the monument. A natural question that arises is why the Romans would choose to place these particular scenes on a monument in a recently subjugated area. The defeated enemies may not have wanted to be reminded of their recent hardships, nor see their fellow countrymen and women being killed. A scene of the emperor bestowing *clementia* upon the enemies would have served as a reminder of his benevolent nature and of their obligation to Rome. Clemency would have alluded to the peace that the region now enjoyed and to the prosperity that was soon to come now that the people had been brought into the Roman Empire. In light of this, it is interesting that *clementia* cannot be found anywhere on the Tropaeum, and there may be several reasons for this. First, this is a monument dedicated to Mars Ultor, and thus the idea of vengeance is central.<sup>224</sup> Second, if the metopes on this monument document a battle in the first war to get lost standards back, then mercy is not the central theme here. There would be plenty of time for that at the end of the first war. Third, perhaps *clementia* and the benefits associated with it was not a message that was designed for the barbarians to see at all. Maybe the reason that it occupies such a central place on the Column is that it was meant to be seen by a Roman audience. The Romans were meant to think about the benefits of clemency such as peace, security, and wealth, which in turn justified the efforts made during the war. It may be that since the barbarians were granted mercy they were expected to already be well aware of and grateful for the benefits of clemency, while the Roman audience needed a reminder. Whatever the reason may be, what is clear is that the Dacian wars were represented in different ways in Rome and abroad. The Romans seemed to think that much less of an emphasis should be placed on mercy on the Tropaeum in comparison to the Column of Trajan.

Under Trajan, *clementia* began to be depicted alongside scenes of battle and destruction, but the images were still relatively composed. Battle scenes were not the central focus of the Column of Trajan, and instead the emphasis was on the peace, security, and prosperity that were brought about because of the grant of mercy to the

<sup>222</sup> Richmond, plate 19a.

<sup>223</sup> The enemy being speared: Richmond, plate 20b; the enemy being hacked down: plate 21a; the enemy lying dead: plate 22b.

<sup>224</sup> Richmond 51.

barbarians. This is something that would change under Marcus Aurelius, who chose to place the emphasis on the cruelties of war on his Column. This will be considered in detail after a survey of images of clemency under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

### Chapter 3: *Clementia* under the Antonine Emperors

The period of security that Rome enjoyed under Trajan changed under Marcus Aurelius, who will be considered later in this chapter after a consideration of *clementia* in the time of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. Although Hadrian was known for promoting clemency, along with many other virtues, there are no extant images of it during his reign. He did personify *clementia* on his coins, and thus these types will be examined. Antoninus Pius, in addition to featuring the personified virtue on his coinage, also promoted clemency on the Torlonia relief, which was originally part of an honorary monument dedicated to his adoptive father. Finally, the Column of Marcus Aurelius and the panel reliefs from his triumphal arch will be considered in light of the new security problems that developed in his reign.

#### Hadrian's Early Years

Trajan proved to be an able general and was known for his excellent relations with the Senate. In A.D. 118, while on campaign in the East, Trajan fell ill and died, leaving no clear successor.<sup>225</sup> He had had no sons of his own and had not adopted. According to Cassius Dio, Hadrian became emperor with the help of Trajan's widow, Plotina, and by the virtue that he had married Trajan's niece, Sabina. Plotina claimed that Trajan had adopted Hadrian on his deathbed, which was further consolidated by the fact that the troops hailed Hadrian as emperor.<sup>226</sup> Hadrian's reign began poorly since he immediately put to death four men of consular rank, an act which did not endear him to the Senate.<sup>227</sup> Furthermore, the Senate was suspicious of the story that Trajan had adopted Hadrian on his deathbed and then subsequently died, and it was further bothered by the fact that Hadrian did not consult it before taking on his role as emperor.<sup>228</sup> Therefore, from the beginning, Hadrian was in a position in which he had to legitimize his claim as emperor, especially since Trajan had been a popular leader.<sup>229</sup> Hadrian embarked on a building program, and he tied himself closely to the imperial family in an effort to show that he was worthy of his position.<sup>230</sup>

It is in this context in which Hadrian's use of *clementia* must be placed. There are no extant Hadrianic images of clemency except for on the coins. The reason for this remains uncertain, but one explanation may be that clemency was not the only virtue which Hadrian was emphasizing.<sup>231</sup> Following Pliny's *Panegyric* to Trajan, described in

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<sup>225</sup> Dio 68.33.

<sup>226</sup> Dio 69.1.

<sup>227</sup> Dio 69.2.5; Boatwright 97 n. 68.

<sup>228</sup> Boatwright 97 n. 68. This is also evidenced by the fact that Dio Cassius writes that Trajan may have been poisoned (68.33.2), and then later states that the reason Plotina favoured Hadrian was because she was in love with him (69.1.2).

<sup>229</sup> Claridge 21-22. She believes that it was Hadrian who was responsible for erecting the Column of Trajan as a way to legitimize his leadership.

<sup>230</sup> Boatwright 97.

<sup>231</sup> In A.D. 128, *Clementia*, *Indulgentia*, *Iustitia*, *Liberalitas*, *Patientia*, and *Tranquilitas* all appeared on Hadrianic coinage: Wallace-Hadrill 312.

the previous chapter, the ideal qualities in a ruler were a popular topic. It is worth noting that the Antonine emperors all found ways to show that they were in possession of the qualities described by Pliny.<sup>232</sup> Hadrian may have chosen to highlight many different virtues as a way to show that he was indeed an able and competent emperor.

### Clementia on Hadrian's Coins

The personification of virtues was not a new concept, as seen in the first chapter with Vitellius' coinage, but it did become standard under Hadrian,<sup>233</sup> which is not surprising since this was something that the Greeks used to do, and since Hadrian was an admirer of Greek culture.<sup>234</sup> Late Republican coinage did feature personifications, but they disappeared on the coinage of Augustus, and were only used occasionally under the other Julio-Claudian emperors, usually as an opportunity to place imperial women on the coins. During the civil wars of A.D. 68 and 69, the personification of virtues was taken up again, and a pattern of taking up the virtues advertised by one's predecessors or rivals, in addition to one's own virtues, began. New virtues continue to be added, which reached a climax during the reign of Hadrian.<sup>235</sup> Whereas *Clementia* appeared on Vitellius' coins as a seated figure, she appears on Hadrian's coins as a standing figure. As on Vitellius' coins, she is draped and holds a sceptre, but on Hadrian's coins she also stand next to an altar (Fig. 3.1). This coin type closely resembles the types for *Iustitia*, *Patientia*, and *Tranquillitas*, who all bear sceptres, and only the legend on the reverse, which reads PM TR P COS III CLEM, allows for a positive identification of the virtue.<sup>236</sup>

The reason for this sudden appearance of so many virtues during the reign of Hadrian may have something to do with the emperor's weak relationship with the Senate, and with the fact that the elite members of society needed reassuring that Hadrian was indeed in possession of the qualities that they considered good rulers needed. Since Pliny praised Trajan for having many different types of virtues in his *Panegyric*, Hadrian may have felt a need to show to the people and to the Senate that he too possessed these virtues, and that he was thus Trajan's rightful successor and an able leader.<sup>237</sup> His rise to power occurred under suspicious circumstances in the opinion of the Senators, and Hadrian tried to show that his qualities were similar to those of Trajan. Moreover, the promotion of these virtues was meant to indicate to the people in which ways Hadrian's reign would benefit them. Since he embodied all these virtues, the public was assured that the emperor's reign was in the best interest of them all, and that they would enjoy great prosperity under Hadrian.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 313.

<sup>233</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 311-2.

<sup>234</sup> Hännestad 194.

<sup>235</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 310-11. He goes on to write that this pattern becomes more stable under Marcus Aurelius and subsequent emperors, and that the coinage in that period can be described as dull: 311.

<sup>236</sup> Mattingly vol. 3, cxli, 271.

<sup>237</sup> Dowling 2006 260.

<sup>238</sup> Fears 938.

Furthermore, the emperor was considered to embody many different virtues, and thus people had to pray to him for whatever virtue they desired, as he had the ability to bring it about. Therefore, it is especially significant that there was never a temple to *Clementia* in Rome. If people wished for leniency and mercy, they prayed to the emperor, who was in possession of that virtue and could bring it about.<sup>239</sup> This is also an example of the way the elite sought to protect their own interests. They were not able to control whether they had an emperor or not, thus at the very least they tried to influence the way that he behaved towards them.<sup>240</sup> Pliny's *Panegyric* to Trajan is a good example of this. By praising Trajan for all his ideal qualities, subsequent emperors attempted to show that they too were in possession of these virtues. By lauding the merciful emperor, the elite tried to ensure that he would show mercy towards them. In turn, by displaying that he was in possession of *clementia*, the emperor attempted to gain the support of the elite by proving to them that he was an able and competent leader. Thus, the appearance of *clementia* on Hadrian's coinage represents the evolution of the virtue, since it now became the norm to personify this notion in the coinage, and it is also indicative of the importance of the virtue, since Hadrian used it to solidify his role as emperor.

Hadrian's reign, therefore, is noteworthy for his continuation of the virtues for which Trajan was lauded. He had to prove himself an able and competent leader, someone who was benevolent and merciful to his subjects. In issuing the *clementia* coinage, Hadrian was sending the message that his possession of that virtue ensured the well-being of his people, and that the empire under him would continue to prosper. In this manner, he was also directly addressing the concerns of the elite, as it was in their best interest that the emperor be merciful in his dealings with them. When Hadrian died in A.D. 138, there was the same expectation that his successor would also possess the imperial virtues.

### Antoninus Pius

Antoninus Pius was adopted by Hadrian near the end of his reign after his initial choice for successor, Lucius Commodus, died. According to Cassius Dio, Antoninus did not desire to be emperor but accepted his new position.<sup>241</sup> He was said to be a good ruler, who was benevolent to his people and lenient in his punishments. Early on in his reign, he refrained from punishing certain men against whom many accusations had been made, and because of this the Senate voted to him the title Pius.<sup>242</sup> He was also known for continuing the policy of clemency, making it an important component in his dealings with his subjects and with barbarians.<sup>243</sup> Despite the fact that Antoninus was concerned about *clementia*, much like Hadrian it is notable that there are not many extant representations of the virtue, except for a relief that belonged to an arch on the Via di Pietra and the personification of *clementia* in the coinage.

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<sup>239</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 315-6.

<sup>240</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 317-8.

<sup>241</sup> Dio 69.20.4-5.

<sup>242</sup> Dio 70.2-3.

<sup>243</sup> Fears 903.

### Torlonia Relief

The Torlonia relief (Fig. 3.2), although it depicts Hadrian receiving a group of barbarians, has been interpreted as having been executed in the time of Antoninus Pius.<sup>244</sup> The relief from Villa Torlonia features a group of barbarian men and an adolescent boy supplicating before the emperor.<sup>245</sup> The barbarian man in the foreground is carved in high relief, and he is on his knees stretching out his hands to the emperor. The youth behind him is also carved in high relief, and although he stretches out his hands, he remains standing. The two barbarian men in the background are carved in low relief, their slightly hunched shoulders indicating an inferior position, and they too stretch out their hands to the emperor. The group to the right consists of three men. The middle figure is the emperor, who looks at the group of barbarians while stretching out his right hand to them, palm facing up. The two men on either side of him have been identified as the *Genius Senatus*. This is significant since, according to Cafiero, this removes the scene from a military setting to a setting in Rome, making this a *supplicatio* scene rather than a *submissio* scene. The group is presumably a foreign delegation, perhaps recently defeated, which has come to Rome to beseech from the emperor goodwill and leniency in his treatment of them.<sup>246</sup>

The inferiority of the barbarians in comparison to the Romans is emphasized by the fact that the Roman group is depicted as much larger than the foreign group. Their unequal status is further brought out by the fact that one of their members is on his knees and that all of them stretch out their hands in supplication to the emperor, who remains standing. If they were recently defeated, one of the favours for which they may be asking is mercy towards their people. The emperor's openhanded gesture indicates that he is prepared to extend this to them. The scene is unique in that it is the only one extant that takes place away from a military setting.<sup>247</sup> The inclusion of the adolescent boy may be diplomatic in nature and may indicate the granting of hostages to Rome, or he may have been brought along for pity as he was symbolic of the defeat that the barbarians had suffered.<sup>248</sup>

The Torlonia relief can be compared to the *clementia* scene on the Boscoreale Cup. The two scenes are similar in that a depiction of the battle which led to this moment is missing, in contrast to the Column of Trajan. This may have been deliberate since Hadrian looked back to Augustus as opposed to Trajan, who looked back to Caesar.<sup>249</sup> In both scenes the plight of the barbarians is brought out by their inferior poses, by their hands that stretch out to the emperor, and by the presence of children. The two emperors stretch out their right hands to the non-Romans with the palms facing up. The scene on

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<sup>244</sup> Cafiero 15.

<sup>245</sup> Cafiero 14 fig. 3. Kuttner identifies the youth as being about twelve years of age: 167.

<sup>246</sup> Cafiero 14-15.

<sup>247</sup> Uzzi 209 n. 39. Although the scene on the Boscoreale Cup did not depict the battle itself, the military setting was still brought out by the soldiers and the *sella castrensis* on which Augustus sat.

<sup>248</sup> Hostages: Uzzi 100; symbolic of defeat: Kuttner 167.

<sup>249</sup> Hannestad 190.

the Torlonia relief has been simplified, although this may have something to do with the medium, and the action takes place in Rome rather than a military camp.

Problems with interpreting the Torlonia relief arise because the scene has been restored. Although identified as originally belonging to a monument of Hadrian, the head of Hadrian has been replaced with that of Lucius Verus, and it remains uncertain when exactly this switch was made. Antoninus Pius, who has been identified as responsible for this relief, may have sought to honour his predecessor, while at the same time lending legitimacy to his own position.<sup>250</sup> Who exactly this group of barbarians was meant to depict is unknown, as Hadrian's reign was known for the general maintenance of the status quo.<sup>251</sup> He did put down a revolt in Judaea, but what is notable here is the very lack of clemency that was shown.<sup>252</sup> It may be that Antoninus was simply continuing the tradition of the motif of the merciful emperor and the defeated barbarians, begun by Augustus and continued by Trajan.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *clementia* scene was meant to be viewed by a Roman audience. It depicted the benevolence of the emperor, who was in complete control of a situation, while the foreign enemy was shown as humiliated and humbled, pleading for mercy. This promoted the might of the Roman army and the stability and superiority of the empire. The Torlonia relief may depict a generic *supplicatio* scene, which was intended to further reinforce ideas of peace, security, and prosperity. Moreover, if indeed Antoninus Pius was responsible for this relief, he was honouring his predecessor, while making the statement that he possessed this virtue as well. Cassius Dio writes that Hadrian had been so disliked that upon his death the Senate refused to vote him any of the usual honours.<sup>253</sup> A possible reason for Antoninus being responsible for the Torlonia relief may be that he wished to portray his predecessor in a positive light. He was said to have convinced the Senate to eventually vote the usual honours to Hadrian<sup>254</sup>, and the relief may have been a part of his intention to return Hadrian to favour. The replacement of the head with that of Lucius Verus represents a continuation of the Antonine policy of clemency, and it demonstrates that L. Verus too was showing himself to be in possession of a virtue considered essential in a Roman emperor.

### *Clementia* on Antoninus Pius' Coinage

Once Hadrian placed the personified *Clementia* on his coinage, it became a regular feature for subsequent emperors. The coinage which featured this virtue under Antoninus Pius resembled closely the form that *Clementia* took on Hadrian's coinage. She stands draped, holding a sceptre in her left hand and a *patera* in her right hand (Fig. 3.3). The legend on the reverse reads CLEMENTIA AUG.<sup>255</sup> That Antoninus would put the personification on his coinage is not surprising, since he gave *clementia* an important

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<sup>250</sup> Cafiero 15.

<sup>251</sup> Hannestad 189.

<sup>252</sup> Dio 69.13.

<sup>253</sup> Dio 69.23.3.

<sup>254</sup> Dio 70.2.

<sup>255</sup> Mattingly vol. 4 30.



place in his policy. The fact that this representation is so similar to the representation on Hadrian's coinage is indicative of the mood of the era and the attitude towards the imperial virtues. Once Hadrian had set the standard, subsequent emperors did not deviate from it too much, with the exception of a coin type introduced by Marcus Aurelius. When a new type was introduced it remained, which allowed Antoninus to display that he indeed was in possession of this imperial virtue.<sup>256</sup>

During the reign of Antoninus Pius, his coinage also featured the head of Marcus Aurelius, with *Clementia* on the reverse. These coins are similar to the coins discussed above, except for some minor variations in the *Clementia* figure. One coin type dating to A.D. 148-9 features the personification of the virtue, standing and draped, carrying a *patera* in her right hand and corn-ears in her left hand (Fig. 3.4).<sup>257</sup> The inclusion of the corn-ears is curious as that is an attribute not normally seen with *Clementia*. Since clemency was meant to secure the prosperity for the empire, a possible interpretation of the corn-ears is that the use of clemency has led to abundance.

Another coin type from A.D. 150-1 features *Clementia*, standing and draped, with a *patera* in her right hand and holding the folds of her dress in her left hand (Fig. 3.5).<sup>258</sup> This slight variation may just reflect experimentation with different forms, but it also shows that the attributes of different personifications are interchangeable. The *clementia* types resemble other virtues, making it difficult to positively identify them if the name was not featured in the legend. By featuring Marcus Aurelius along with *clementia* on his coinage, Antoninus Pius was sending the reassuring message that his heir would carry on his policy, thus lending legitimacy to his choice of successor.

### Marcus Aurelius' Early Years

When Antoninus Pius died in A.D. 161, Marcus Aurelius became emperor and named as his co-emperor Lucius Verus, who had married his daughter, Lucilla. Cassius Dio was an admirer of M. Aurelius, and described him as a man interested in philosophy and writing, while L. Verus was much more able to carry out war.<sup>259</sup> But the good fortune and prosperity that the empire had enjoyed under Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus, came to an abrupt halt with the ascension of M. Aurelius. Marcus' reign was plagued with problems on the borders and constant warfare. At the beginning of his rule, King Vologaesius of Parthia made war in the Roman buffer state, Armenia, and managed to destroy a Roman legion. Lucius Verus was sent to bring the situation under control, and, after two years, he beat the Parthians, burning Seleucia and sacking the capital Ctesiphon.<sup>260</sup>

During the war with Parthia, there had been some problems in the north, and thus, once the troubles in the east had been settled, the Romans went to war against the northern barbarians on the Danube. But the Romans were defeated, and enemies took

<sup>256</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 311.

<sup>257</sup> Mattingly vol. 4 302.

<sup>258</sup> Mattingly vol. 4 113, pl. 16 no. 13.

<sup>259</sup> Dio 71.1.1-3.

<sup>260</sup> Dio 71.2.1-3; Morris 34.

advantage of the situation by invading Italy, which was the first time since Hannibal that Italy had been invaded.<sup>261</sup> Marcus and Lucius dealt with these invaders, but Lucius died suddenly on the trip back south in A.D. 169. Later that year, Marcus returned north, but, realizing the current weak state of Rome, the tribes of the Marcomani and the Quadi entered into an alliance and managed to prevail against the Roman army. There were also problems with the Moors in Spain, and war broke out again in the east.<sup>262</sup> Marcus Aurelius hastily launched an offensive against the barbarians in the north, managing to defeat them and secure the borders in A.D. 172, and coming to terms with some tribes such as the Quadi.<sup>263</sup> From A.D. 172 to 175, Marcus Aurelius fought to consolidate Roman territories, which included the defeat of the Marcomani in A.D. 172, and an attack on the Quadi, who had gone against the terms of the peace with Rome.<sup>264</sup>

At about this point a rumour spread to the east that Marcus had died in battle, and Avidius Cassius, the governor of Syria, immediately claimed the empire for himself. He was supported by his troops and some civilians, but when they realized that the rumour was false, Cassius was killed by one of his own soldiers.<sup>265</sup> Marcus had wanted to create new provinces in the Danube region, but was forced to make peace with the enemies so that he could go to the east. In A.D. 176, he celebrated a triumph and then went back on campaign to the north in A.D. 177 in order to create the provinces that he had previously wanted, but he died in A.D. 180 before he could do this.<sup>266</sup>

### The Column of Marcus Aurelius

The Column of Marcus Aurelius, in the Piazza Colonna, commemorates the wars waged against the different German tribes. It is unknown in which year construction began on the Column, although the commonly accepted view in recent scholarship is that it was voted by the Senate after Marcus died and that Commodus oversaw its erection.<sup>267</sup> The Column was clearly meant to recall that of Trajan, although this later structure was not meant for funerary purposes. Both stand one hundred Roman feet tall, and both feature a sculpted frieze that winds all the way around the columns, commemorating wars that were fought against barbarians along the Danube frontier. But, whereas the frieze on the Column of Trajan commemorates a war of expansion that resulted in the acquisition of new territory, the frieze on the Column of Marcus Aurelius commemorates a defensive war that resulted in a peace agreement.<sup>268</sup> Both columns are of the Doric/Tuscan order and stand on a pedestal, and are further similar in that both have a staircase with fourteen steps for each turn and function as a belvedere.

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<sup>261</sup> Dio 71.3.2; Morris 35.

<sup>262</sup> Birley 250; Morris 35.

<sup>263</sup> Birley 250; Morris 35.

<sup>264</sup> Dio 71.8, 13; Birley 250; Morris 36.

<sup>265</sup> Dio 71.17, 23, 27.2; Morris 36.

<sup>266</sup> Dio 71.17, 20, 33; Morris 37.

<sup>267</sup> Morris 43; Birley 266; Scheid and Huet 9.

<sup>268</sup> Elsner 264.

Although the architect of the Column of Marcus Aurelius seemed to admire the design of that of Trajan enough to make a similar column, he also introduced several changes. The entasis on Trajan's Column has been reduced here, and the problem of the visibility of the frieze is also addressed.<sup>269</sup> It appears that the frieze on the Column of Marcus Aurelius was meant to have more of an effect on the viewer, since there are fewer coils than on Trajan's Column, which allowed for larger figures.<sup>270</sup> This is further supported by the fact that the Column of Trajan was carved in low relief, with a depth of about four millimetres, whereas that of Marcus Aurelius was carved in high relief, with a depth of about ten centimetres.<sup>271</sup>

The frieze on the Column commemorates the campaigns of Marcus Aurelius against different groups of German barbarians. The subject of the frieze and the way in which the campaigns are represented have been a matter of much discussion, as the style and mood represent a significant departure from the way the campaigns are rendered on the Column of Trajan. There is an increased frontality of the figures, and the style is seen by scholars as the turning point between classicizing and late antique.<sup>272</sup> Trajan's Column is noteworthy for how few actual battle scenes are represented, with depictions of building, marching, and submission being favoured instead. As explained in the previous chapter, part of the reason for this was due to the public's unfavourable attitude towards war. The scenes stress the discipline of the Roman army and the able generalship of Trajan, which brought about a successful conclusion to the wars. In the instances when battles are depicted, the Romans are represented as in complete control. The *clementia* scenes signal the submission of the barbarians to Roman might, and symbolize peace, security, and wealth. Scenes of unnecessary violence are, for the most part, avoided.<sup>273</sup>

Under Trajan, the Romans enjoyed undisputed control with a barbarian threat not felt. For this reason, the barbarians on Trajan's Column could be represented as worthy adversaries, who fought well but ultimately were no match for the superiority of the Roman army. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the threat of the barbarians was all too real. The continuous troubles in the east and the united tribes in the north resulted in a breach of the borders for the first time in recent memory. The long, difficult war that followed further contributed to the already low morale, with the previously held sense of security now gone. Not only that, but the barbarians had learned how to fight. No longer was the Roman army superior in terms of organization, tactics, and technology, with the barbarians using siege engines for the first time.<sup>274</sup> This newfound anxiety of the barbarian threat is reflected in the mood on Marcus Aurelius' Column. Out of the approximately one hundred and sixteen scenes, forty-seven depict battles or some type of violence, while scenes of building appear two times. Pirson counts about 470 figures in the battle-scenes, of which dead or about to die barbarians account for 27 percent, fleeing

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<sup>269</sup> Wilson Jones 38.

<sup>270</sup> Pirson 171.

<sup>271</sup> Wilson Jones 38.

<sup>272</sup> Pirson 141.

<sup>273</sup> Pirson 172.

<sup>274</sup> Morris 46.

barbarians for 25 percent, and fighting barbarians only 13 percent.<sup>275</sup> In addition to the increased number of battle-scenes, there is also an increased amount of brutality and violence. The destruction of villages and extermination of people occurs with greater violence than on Trajan's Column. While the prisoners are taken away in a calm manner on Trajan's Column, they are being dragged away on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, and women and children are cut down by the Romans when they try to escape.<sup>276</sup>

The reason for this increase in violence and brutality is that Roman discipline, organization, and virtues were no longer enough to ensure the security of the empire as they had done in the past. In this age of increased anxiety and self-doubt, it became necessary to show undisputed Roman dominance in order to restore confidence in the Roman army. The barbarians who had penetrated the borders were no longer deserving of kindness or Roman clemency, and they had to be utterly defeated and exterminated. Everywhere, the message of Roman might and superiority is emphasized. The barbarians bear terrified expressions on their faces, they do not know how to use their weapons properly, and they have inferior fighting skills. Thus, defeating them does not require any particular effort on the part of the Romans. What is important is that the defeat of the enemies is depicted as thorough as possible. They needed to be humbled and humiliated so that they did not present a further threat to the security of the empire.<sup>277</sup> Thus, part of the intended message of the subject matter of the frieze on the Column was that, through the able generalship of Marcus Aurelius and through the superiority of the Roman army, the barbarians were utterly defeated. Through the repetition of images of violence, destruction, and extermination, the barbarian threat is eliminated, and the safety of the empire is restored.

Another possible reason for the increase in violence is that the area in which Marcus Aurelius fought did not become a province, whereas Dacia did become one under Trajan. The amount of violence and brutality was probably the same in both wars, but it is significant that care was taken not to depict this on the Column of Trajan. It was more important to show the benefits that this new province presented for the Romans, and that the barbarians accepted this incorporation into the empire.<sup>278</sup> Since Marcus Aurelius was not successful in his attempt to create a new province, and since these barbarians remained outside of Roman rule, they did not enjoy the benefits of clemency and their extermination was acceptable.

The number of *submissio* scenes is greatly reduced on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, and there are only a few positively identified *clementia* scenes. In light of the increased representation of fighting and the mood of the times, it is surprising that clemency appears at all. The reason for this is uncertain, but perhaps, as Dowling argues, the inclusion of the *clementia* scene was meant to convey the need for such a virtue in an

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<sup>275</sup> Pirson 158-9, figs. 15-16.

<sup>276</sup> Dowling 2006 239-41. Destruction of villages: Pallattino tav. XIV, fig. 29; extermination of people: tav. XXXVIII, fig. 76; prisoners dragged away: tav. XLIII, fig. 86; women and children cut down: tav. LXII, fig. 123.

<sup>277</sup> Weapons and fighting skills: Pirson 161; Roman effort: 154; clear defeat of enemies: 174.

<sup>278</sup> Whittaker 122.

age of increased warfare and violence.<sup>279</sup> Another possible explanation is that the lack of such scenes is reflective of the attitude that these barbarians were not worthy recipients of Roman clemency. It is significant that most of the submission and clemency scenes appear early on, and, as the battles wear on, it is more important to represent the complete defeat of the enemy. In one early clemency scene, the emperor stands in the upper level of the space, surrounded by his soldiers (Fig. 3.6). One barbarian, or perhaps more<sup>280</sup>, kneels before him, and Marcus Aurelius stretches out his right hand towards him. At a lower level, a group of barbarian men, women, and children all stand looking up to Marcus and awaiting his mercy. The inferiority of the enemy is brought out by the fact that the group is not placed on the same level as the Romans, and by the fact that the emperor does not look at them. Immediately preceding this scene is the representation of the rain that miraculously poured on the Romans when they needed it most. Dio Cassius writes that the rain gave them the strength they needed to win an important victory against the Marcomani and the Quadi, and that some barbarians submitted to the Romans.<sup>281</sup> The *clementia* scene that follows most likely represents this.

In another clemency scene, the emperor stands on a platform surrounded by soldiers, receiving the submission of barbarians (Fig. 3.7).<sup>282</sup> The barbarians are hunched forward with their knees bent, and look up at the emperor while stretching out their hands to him in submission. Marcus Aurelius extends his right hand towards them in a gesture of clemency. Again, Roman superiority is immediately brought out with the placement of the Romans at a higher level than the barbarians. The Roman soldiers do not look at the barbarians, and even Marcus Aurelius does not seem to make eye contact with them.<sup>283</sup> The scenes which precede this representation of clemency depict the destruction of a village and the subsequent pursuit of the barbarians in a marsh.<sup>284</sup> Presumably, the Romans were superior in this pursuit, and the enemies subsequently submitted to the emperor.

As mentioned above, it is surprising that these two clemency scenes are included, since the artists preferred to emphasize the battle-scenes in which the inferiority and humiliation of the enemy was fully brought out. There are several possible reasons for their inclusion. They come early on in the war when the Romans had won a key victory, and they follow scenes of battle in which the enemy was at a disadvantage. The bestowal of mercy represents a logical conclusion, Roman control, and the final humiliation of the enemy. All throughout the scenes on the Column, the artists have taken pains to fully emphasize Roman superiority in contrast to barbarian inferiority, and the composition of the clemency scenes reflects that. As on the Column of Trajan, the *clementia* scenes of the Column of Marcus Aurelius are juxtaposed with images of death and destruction, which further serve to emphasize the complete dominance of the Romans. By the time the emperor is ready to bestow mercy, the barbarian humiliation is already complete.

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<sup>279</sup> Dowling 2006 261.

<sup>280</sup> The scene has been significantly damaged.

<sup>281</sup> Dio 71.8-10.

<sup>282</sup> For a cast of the same scene: Dowling 2006 fig. 21a-b.

<sup>283</sup> Close-up of scene: Dowling 2006 fig. 21b.

<sup>284</sup> Pallottino tav. XXIX figs. 58-60.

They are unequal in battle, their villages are being destroyed, and they have watched others die around them. Their plea and desperation for the emperor's clemency thus becomes even more pathetic.

Another possible reason for the clemency scenes is that the idea of the virtue leading to peace, security, and prosperity still remained. After Trajan's Dacian wars, the borders were secured, the barbarians caused no further significant problems for him, and the sale of slaves brought large funds into the treasury, which was used for an ambitious building program. If the Roman viewer was meant to understand this from a *clementia* scene, the inclusion on the Column of Aurelius may have been meant to have the same effect, although in this instance it may have been merely intended to lessen the anxiety and fear of the Romans. If *clementia* had led to security and prosperity in the past, perhaps it would do so again in this era.

Although there is a significant reduction in *clementia* and *submissio* scenes on the Marcus Aurelius' Column in comparison to that of Trajan, several instances of the barbarians submitting before the Roman emperor are included throughout the frieze. The main difference between the *submissio* scenes on both columns lies in the fact that on the Column of Trajan submission led to clemency, whereas on the Column of Marcus Aurelius submitting before the emperor was no longer sufficient. These scenes are instead included to portray the desperation of the barbarians, and to further degrade them. For this reason they will not be discussed in as great amount of detail as they were in the previous chapter, and a few examples will suffice.

One scene that appears early on features three registers of action (Fig. 3.8). In the lower level dead bodies are piled up, immediately above that, barbarians on horseback submit before the emperor, and a Roman soldier kills a barbarian in the upper level. Despite the fact that they are on horseback, the artist has still managed to make them as smaller than the emperor and his soldiers. They are hunched forward and stretch out their hands to him. The futility of barbarian fighting is brought out by the surrounding scenes of the dead bodies and the Roman soldier in the act of killing.<sup>285</sup> They are no match for the superior fighting skills of the Romans, and thus submit before the emperor. Moreover, the representations of violence are depicted on a larger scale than the barbarian submission, which further serves to emphasize the degradation of the enemy.<sup>286</sup>

On the original base of the Column, one relief, now lost, depicts a barbarian being presented to the emperor by a soldier (Fig. 3.9).<sup>287</sup> The barbarian is on his knees and stretches out his hands to Marcus Aurelius to the right of the scene. The fact that this scene appears on the base of the Column, and thus visible immediately to the viewer, indicates that the theme of the Column was the complete defeat of the enemy at the hands of the superior Roman army.<sup>288</sup>

The reasons for the erection of this Column and its intended purposes are worth examining. Trajan's Column was part of a massive building program that was made possible by the emperor's campaigns abroad and that celebrated his successes there. The

<sup>285</sup> Pirson 146-7.

<sup>286</sup> Pirson 149.

<sup>287</sup> Brilliant 155, fig. 3.127.

<sup>288</sup> Brilliant 154-6.

Column, with its unique design and a frieze that was not visible in its entirety to the viewer, was an expression of Roman power and dominance. The intention was to depict the positive effects of war, to represent the able generalship and effective leadership skills of Trajan, and to praise the prosperity of the Roman Empire. For all its similarities to the Column of Trajan, the purposes of the Column of Marcus Aurelius were not the same. If the Column was indeed voted by the Senate after the emperor's death and its construction overseen by Commodus, then one of its functions may have been to lend legitimacy to the new emperor. The barbarians along the Danube were still a threat, and Commodus was not much of a military emperor, thus he may have felt to the need to portray himself as an able successor. Moreover, the deliberate allusions to the Column of Trajan served to remind the Romans of a time of superiority and victory over the barbarians.<sup>289</sup> Finally, the repeated images of defeated and dead barbarians, who had created such fear and insecurity, would have been particularly satisfying to the Roman viewer, who had just begun to realize the vulnerability of the empire.<sup>290</sup>

### Clementia on Marcus Aurelius' Coins

Although Marcus Aurelius seemed to have had little opportunity to practice *clementia*, he did continue to issue coin types that featured the virtue. A *sestertius* from A.D. 176-7 depicts the personification of *Clementia*, standing and draped, carrying a *patera* in her right hand and a sceptre in her left (Fig. 3.10). Noteworthy about this coin type is the legend on the obverse which reads M ANTONINUS AUG GERM SARM TR PXXXI.<sup>291</sup> The fact that Marcus Aurelius chose to emphasize *clementia* on his coins, with a reference to the German wars in the north on the obverse is interesting. He did command successful campaigns against those tribes between A.D. 172 to 175, but he was forced to make peace because Cassius in the east had proclaimed himself emperor. Once the situation in the east had been restored, Marcus returned to Rome to celebrate a triumph in A.D. 176 before returning back to the north.<sup>292</sup> This coin type may have been released in commemoration of Marcus' successful campaigns and triumph.

A coin type issued in A.D. 178 moves away from the personification of the virtue for the first time. A *sestertius* depicts on the reverse Marcus Aurelius in military dress facing left, with his right hand on his chest and holding a spear in his left hand (Fig. 3.11). Before him kneels a barbarian with a shield in his left hand and extending his right hand. The legend on the reverse reads CLEMENTIA AUG IMP VI COS III S C.<sup>293</sup> Since there is no acknowledgement of the barbarian by Marcus Aurelius, it is only the legend that identifies this as a *clementia* scene. The reason for this may be that this type originally signified *victoria* on the coinage of Domitian before being used as *clementia* under Marcus.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Elsner 264.

<sup>290</sup> Pirson 175.

<sup>291</sup> Mattingly vol. 4 656.

<sup>292</sup> Dio 71.17, Morris 37.

<sup>293</sup> Mattingly vol. 4 621.

<sup>294</sup> Ryberg 14 n. 30.

Both coin types described above, in addition to the war in the north, may also allude to the situation with Cassius in the east. When Cassius was killed by one of his own officers, Marcus Aurelius asked the Senate not to put to death those involved, and executed very few himself. Dio Cassius admired this action and praised Marcus for it,<sup>295</sup> and both coin types may very well be in commemoration of the clemency that Marcus showed to these men. This demonstrates that the elite still considered *clementia* an ideal virtue in an emperor, and sought to praise it whenever possible in hopes that the emperor would continue to possess such a quality when it was needed.

### The Panels of Marcus Aurelius

When Marcus Aurelius celebrated a triumph in A.D. 176 in honour of his victories over the Germanic tribes, a triumphal arch was also erected. This arch no longer survives, but eleven panel reliefs are still extant, eight of which have been reused on the Arch of Constantine and three of which are in the Conservatori Museum. Two of these panels are of interest here: one in the museum, which shows a scene of *clementia*, and the other on the arch, which shows a *submissio* scene.<sup>296</sup> This allows for a good opportunity to examine the iconography of both scenes in order to determine how a *clementia* scene is different from a *submissio* scene in the Antonine period.

The *clementia* relief in the Conservatori Museum depicts Marcus Aurelius coming into the scene from the left on horseback (Fig. 3.12). He is surrounded by soldiers, and it seems as if he is about to trample over the barbarians on their knees immediately before him. The barbarians look up at the emperor and stretch out their arms towards him, while Marcus Aurelius glances at them and extends his right hand towards them, palm facing down. Although Marcus' gesture is a restoration, this relief may be identified as a *clementia* scene due to the pleading gesture made by the barbarians, and due to Marcus' acknowledgement of this with his own right-handed gesture. By placing the emperor on a horse, the artist has managed to make him the most imposing figure in the scene<sup>297</sup>, and the representation of the horse bearing down on the barbarians adds a threatening element. The defeat and humiliation of the enemies is further brought out by the lack of acknowledgement of them on the part of the Roman soldiers. The inclusion of an emperor on horseback is new to the *clementia* scene, and recalls the triumphant, heroic emperor from Greek art and Flavian art.<sup>298</sup> This new addition may reflect the sombre and anxious mood during Marcus Aurelius' reign. Due to the increasing threat that the German barbarians presented the artist may have felt it necessary to portray the military prowess of the emperor, with the enemy being absolutely no match for the superior Romans.

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<sup>295</sup> Dio 71.28-30.

<sup>296</sup> Ryberg 1-2. The date of the reliefs and which of those belong to the original monument remains controversial. See chapter one of Ryberg for a full discussion on this.

<sup>297</sup> Ryberg 9.

<sup>298</sup> Ryberg 12.



The *submissio* scene on the Arch of Constantine depicts the emperor seated on a high tribunal on the left (Fig. 3.13). One attendant stands behind him,<sup>299</sup> while the other soldiers stand on ground level surrounding a barbarian male and his son. The emperor, whose head has been replaced with that of Constantine, holds a scroll in both hands, while the barbarian male stretches out his right hand. The high tribunal immediately serves to put the barbarians in an inferior and humiliation position. The submission of the enemies is further brought out by the slight hunching over of their bodies and the bend in their knees, which is new in Antonine art. In earlier representations, submission is made much more explicit in the pose of the enemies. The seated emperor also deviates from previous scenes and recalls Augustus on the Boscoreale Cup. The scroll which the emperor is holding may contain the terms of the treaty that he is about to read aloud.<sup>300</sup> This submission scene has more of an emotional impact than the clemency scene, due to the fact that the soldiers are looking directly at the barbarians, and due to the fact that the adolescent boy bears an anguished expression on his face. The presence of the boy recalls the Boscoreale Cup and the Torlonia relief. His inclusion may represent an attempt to gain sympathy or an attempt to depict the complete defeat of the enemies.

The main element that divides the *clementia* and *submissio* scenes is the lack of a gesture on the part of the emperor. All representations of clemency examined up until now have contained a right-handed gesture from the emperor. The submission scene on the Arch of Constantine, however, must still be examined in the context of clemency. The setting is after the battle, and the Romans have won. The father and son appear before the emperor, with the gesture of the barbarian male indicating that he is looking for some type of benevolence from Marcus Aurelius. The scroll that Marcus holds may contain terms of the treaty and the fate of the barbarians. Therefore, although clemency is not explicitly represented here, the virtue is still implied. If mercy is granted, this scene is representing the very moment before such a bestowal, the moment when the barbarians are pleading for it.

In the Antonine period, *clementia* became a central component in the policy of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, confirmed by numismatic evidence. Each emperor took up the virtue used by his predecessor to lend legitimacy to his reign, especially since Pliny's *Panegyric* to Trajan. Hadrian and Antoninus enjoyed a period of prosperity and thus had little opportunity to bestow clemency upon foreign foes, yet they still needed to show to the elite that they were in possession of the virtue. Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, was faced with countless barbarian troubles, and his imperial art reflects an age of increased anxiety and insecurity. Although the representation of *clementia* still had a place, it now needed to be shown with barbarians who had been unequivocally defeated in order that the competence and might of the Roman army was not brought into question. Consequently, there is a decrease in the amount of clemency scenes that appear on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, and an increase in the amount of brutality and violence. Keeping this in mind, it seems odd that on the panels of Marcus Aurelius appear scenes of both *clementia* and *submissio*. Perhaps, since the Column is a

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<sup>299</sup> Ryberg identifies him as Ti. Claudius Pompeianus, Marcus' son-in-law and chief-of-staff: 61.

<sup>300</sup> Ryberg 61-5.

documentation of the war and since the panels on the arch commemorate the successful completion of the campaigns, the panels were meant to mark the beginning of a new era.<sup>301</sup> The years under Marcus Aurelius had been difficult for the empire, marked by unstable borders and constant warfare. The arch may have been a reminder to the Romans that the empire was as strong as it ever was and that the army remained superior over all others. If clemency had evoked notions of peace, stability, and prosperity in the past, then its appearance on one of the panels of the arch may very well have been meant to provoke such a reaction again amongst the Romans.

One final issue remains to be considered. In a recent study on the appearance of the imperial virtues on the coinage, Norena discovered that *clementia* appeared on only two percent of imperial *denarii*.<sup>302</sup> If it was essential that an emperor demonstrated that he was in possession of clemency, and if the bestowal of mercy led to peace, security, and prosperity, it seems strange that this virtue is not more common in the numismatic evidence, considering that the coinage is the best way to spread ideas all over the vast empire. It may be, as Norena thinks, that there were other messages that the emperor wished to express on the coins, and that he had discovered alternate ways to display his *clementia*.<sup>303</sup> But the low frequency of the virtue's appearance in the coinage indicates instead that clemency was not a message intended for those outside of Rome. Since this was primarily a virtue about which the elite were concerned, the emperor was careful to show to them that he was in possession of it, and that they had nothing to fear from him. Moreover, the notion of a secure, wealthy empire that *clementia* represented was meant for a Roman audience, which is why it appears on imperial monuments. This is further indicated by the fact that in the provinces we have no extant representations of clemency. On the Tropaeum Traiani in Adamklissi, which commemorates the same campaigns as on Trajan's Column, *clementia* is absent. Therefore, it was not the case that emperors had found alternate means by which they could promote clemency, it was just that they did not think it an essential Roman virtue to promote outside the immediate Roman context.

### *Clementia* in Private Art

By the second century A.D., *clementia* was a virtue commonly featured in imperial, as well as private art. It was part of a large canon of virtues, which emperors claimed and were expected to possess. Given the importance of a good emperor possessing clemency, and given its frequent appearances on the monuments of Rome, it is not surprising that the iconography was taken up by the people and imitated in private art. In the Antonine period, the depiction of a successful general bestowing *clementia* upon a group of submitting barbarians appears regularly on sarcophagi, as on an example in the Los Angeles County Museum (Fig. 3.14). This sarcophagus, dated to A.D. 160 – 180, features four scenes: a battle scene on the left, followed by a clemency scene, then a representation of sacrifice, and finally a depiction of a *dextrarum iunctio*. The clemency

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<sup>301</sup> Dowling 2006 261.

<sup>302</sup> Norena 156.

<sup>303</sup> Norena 157.

scene closely resembles the imperial scenes in that it features a group of barbarians submitting to the victorious general, who is standing on a platform in a superior position. The barbarians look up and stretch out their hands to him, while the general appears to extend his right hand to the group before him.<sup>304</sup> As on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, this scene follows a depiction of battle in which the barbarians have been defeated. This motif and the arrangement of the scenes are similar to other sarcophagi produced in this period, which is indicative of the mass production of this type and of the popularity and importance of clemency.<sup>305</sup>

The influence of the motif remains, as is evidenced by the Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus dated to ca. A.D. 260 (Fig. 3.15). The clemency scene is placed on the lid, perhaps to indicate the successful conclusion to the battle depicted on the sarcophagus. The general is seated and stretches out his right hand to the group of barbarians before him. This scene is reminiscent of the image on the Boscoreale Cup in that it is removed from the context of battle, children are present amongst the barbarians, and it is relatively calm and composed. That such similarities should be repeated almost three hundred years later attests to the endurance of the Augustan representations. Two notable differences in this scene in comparison to the imperial representations are that the barbarians are not in explicit submission poses, and that the general's gaze is directed out of the scene rather than to the group before him. The general, however, is seated on a platform, making him notably taller than the barbarians, and the change in the direction of the gaze is indicative of the trends of that time period.<sup>306</sup>

The similarities of the private clemency scene to the imperial clemency scene reveal the influence of these representations and the desire to imitate the emperor. Clemency was an ideal trait in the ruler, revealing him to be a competent general and a benevolent leader, making it only natural that such a virtue along with its associations would filter down into the private realm. If a gesture of clemency marked the emperor's military prowess and good leadership capabilities, then its appearance on the sarcophagi reflects a desire that these same connotations apply to the deceased.

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<sup>304</sup> It is difficult to interpret what gesture the right hand is making, since the scene has been badly damaged.

<sup>305</sup> Kampen 51-3.

<sup>306</sup> Hannestad 292-3.

## Conclusion

By the second and third centuries A.D., *clementia* had become commonplace in imperial and private art, with a different attitude prevailing towards the virtue in comparison to the attitudes of the Late Republic. In Republican Rome, clemency had always been employed in connection with the battlefield and a defeated foe. It could only be exercised from a position of absolute power on those who were weaker and of a lesser status. The victor had the power to make the decision of life and death, and, in owing their lives to this victor, the defeated were indebted to him. The tensions that arose in the Late Republic, mostly amongst the elite, in response to Julius Caesar's use of clemency towards fellow Romans were a direct result of the connotations of the virtue of inferiority and defeat. The *clementia Caesaris* in part contributed to the hostility that existed between Caesar and the elite, which eventually led to his assassination. Octavian was much more cautious. He limited his use of *clementia*, pardoning those who would be useful to him later on, as well as granting to many whom he pardoned high ranking positions in order to secure their loyalty. The fact that in 27 B.C.E. the Senate voted to Augustus a shield of virtues, one of which was *clementia*, is reflective of the shift in attitude of the elite. Moreover, the use of clemency may have been welcome and preferred after decades of civil war.

The appearance of the *clementia* scene in Augustan art is indicative of Augustus' intent to focus on clemency's association with peace. The iconography of the clemency scene was not new. The image of a barbarian on his knees, stretching out his hands in submission to the victorious general already existed on Republican coinage, and is similar to the image found on the Boscoreale Cup. The only element that was added was the right-handed gesture of the emperor, marking this image as a *clementia* scene. This small addition, however slight, is significant because not only does it mark a subtle shift in emphasis in the image, it is also reflective of Augustus' policy of peace and desire to move *clementia* away from the context of war. The *submissio* scenes placed the emphasis on the humiliation of the barbarian, who has prostrated himself before the victor. The fact that the enemy is in such a position indicates that he has been defeated in war, and thus brings out the associations with violence. Although these same associations are also brought out in the *clementia* scene, the focus is now directly on the emperor, who makes the gesture of mercy. With this gesture, not only is the superiority of the Romans suggested, the benevolence of the emperor is emphasized as well.

Although Augustus set the precedent for subsequent representations of clemency, in many ways the scene on the Boscoreale Cup is unique in Roman art. The scene on the Boscoreale Cup does not follow the formula of the later clemency scenes, as the emperor is togate, rather than in military dress, and the scene is calm and composed. A reason why such a representation of *clementia* does not appear in later imperial imagery may be related to the fact that the policy of sending children to Rome and its celebration was abandoned by later emperors. Emperors may have realized the problems that arose with sending a Romanized king back to his home country. Furthermore, subsequent emperors such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius took a more militaristic and expansionist attitude towards the empire. The rendering of *clementia*, as it appears on the Boscoreale Cup,

was no longer consistent with the new policies, and new iconography was developed that better represented these new customs.

This is best seen on the Column of Trajan. Having seemingly fallen out of favour with the later Julio-Claudian emperors, and having been largely ignored by the Flavian emperors, *clementia* appeared again in imperial art in the reign of Trajan. On his column images of *clementia* are juxtaposed with images of destruction and violence, in contrast to Augustus, who took care to only show the moment after battle rather than the battle itself. Even though the Column of Trajan is notable for how few battle scenes are shown, when the Roman army is depicted in battle it is portrayed as always in control of the situation. After Domitian's failure to handle the Dacians in a proper manner, which resulted in a war-weary Roman audience, Trajan had to show to the people that he was an able leader and general, and that the decision to go to war against the Dacians had been the right one. For these reasons the scenes on the Column focus more on the Roman army marching and building fortifications rather than in the midst of battle. When there is a battle scene, the army is in complete control, and there is never a moment when it seems as if the barbarians might win. The numerous *submissio* and *clementia* scenes further emphasize the control of the Romans and the hopelessness of the barbarians. The clemency that was bestowed upon these barbarians was representative of the peace and security the empire now enjoyed, as it marked the end of battle and the submission of the enemies to the Romans.

Trajan also showed the advantages of war. The funds from the sale of slaves after the war paid for Trajan's Forum, in which the Column stood. It is due to the mercy of the emperor that the empire enjoyed prosperity, and that the city of Rome saw a lavish building program. The message behind the *clementia* scenes on the Column was that it led to peace, security, and prosperity. At the time, not much thought went to the people that dwelled beyond the borders. Under Trajan, Rome enjoyed a period of security with no serious breaches of the borders, which is the reason for the composure of the Roman army on the Column.

In the Antonine period, *clementia* became a central component in the policy of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, confirmed by numismatic evidence. Each emperor took up the virtue used by his predecessor to lend legitimacy to his reign. Hadrian and Antoninus enjoyed a period of prosperity and thus had little opportunity to bestow clemency upon foreign foes, yet they still needed to show to the elite that they were in possession of the virtue. Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, was faced with countless barbarian troubles, and his imperial art reflects an age of increased anxiety and insecurity. Although the representation of *clementia* still had a place, it now needed to be shown with barbarians who had been unequivocally defeated in order that the competence and might of the Roman army was not brought into question. Consequently, there is a decrease in the number of clemency scenes that appear on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, and an increase in the amount of brutality and violence. On the panels of Marcus Aurelius, however, appear *clementia* and *submissio* scenes. The years under Marcus Aurelius had been difficult for the empire, marked by unstable borders and constant warfare. The arch may have been a reminder to the Romans that the empire was as strong as it ever was and that the army remained superior over all others. If clemency

had evoked notions of peace, stability, and prosperity in the past, then its appearance on one of the panels of the arch may very well have been meant to provoke such a reaction again amongst the Romans.

The appearance of *clementia* in private art represents the overall success and popularity of the virtue. The endurance of the *clementia* scene in Roman art, and the resemblance of later representations in private art to earlier scenes in imperial art, is a testament to the popularity of the motif. It had become a regular fixture in funerary art, perhaps in a desire to imitate the emperor, but also because of the connotations that clemency carried with it. Clemency represented victory in battle and thus good leadership, while the sparing of lives was indicative of the benevolence of the victor. Moreover, it was reflective of the peace and security secured in favour of the Romans, which led to the prosperity of the empire. Clemency's appearance in the private realm is reflective of how much these connotations had been accepted by the Roman people.

This study on imperial representations of *clementia* in Roman art, including the development of and changes in the iconography, has further elucidated the intentions of the emperor in his use of clemency. Its appearance on monuments predominantly in Rome suggests that it was meant to be viewed by Romans rather than barbarians. It was meant to inspire confidence in the emperor, the army, and even the empire itself amongst the people. The emperor used it as a way to placate the elite since they desired a merciful emperor rather than a cruel one. Finally, the message was one of superiority. No matter the emperor, the Romans were the ones in control, and it was only they who had the power to decide matters of life and death when it came to their enemies. Regardless of whether Rome was truly the dominant power or whether the barbarians began to take advantage of the empire's weaknesses, the message of control and domination on the monuments remained the same.

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### Illustrations

Fig. 1.1 Belvedere Altar



Fig. 1.2 Bronze figurines

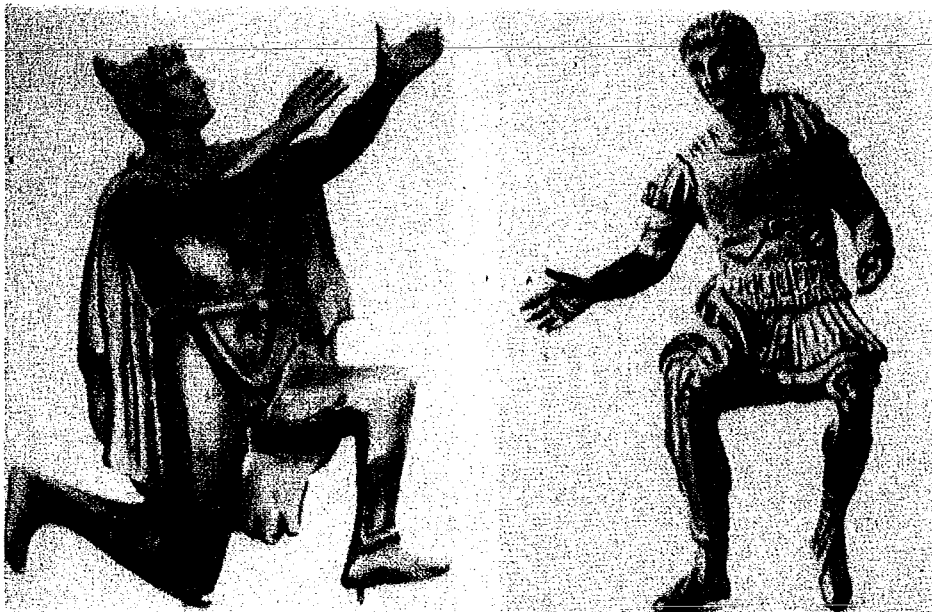


Fig. 1.3 Denarius of Sulla



Fig. 1.4 Boscoreale Cup



Fig. 1.5 Boscoreale Cup whole



Fig. 1.6 *Dupondus* of Tiberius

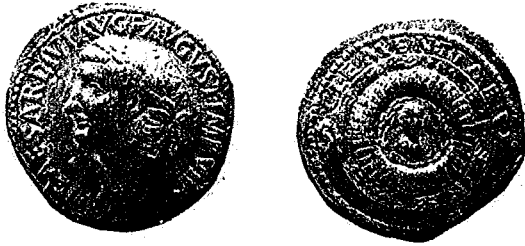


Fig. 1.7 *Aureus* of Vitellius



Fig. 2.1 Prisoner before Trajan, Column of Trajan



Fig. 2.2 Dacian ambassadors, Column of Trajan



Fig. 2.3 Clemency scene, Column of Trajan



Fig. 2.4 Ambassador before Trajan, Column of Trajan

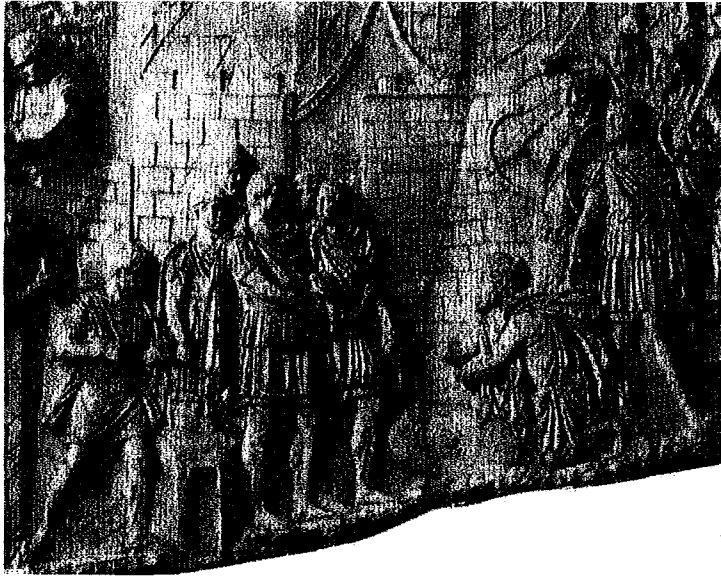


Fig. 2.5 Main clemency scene I, Column of Trajan

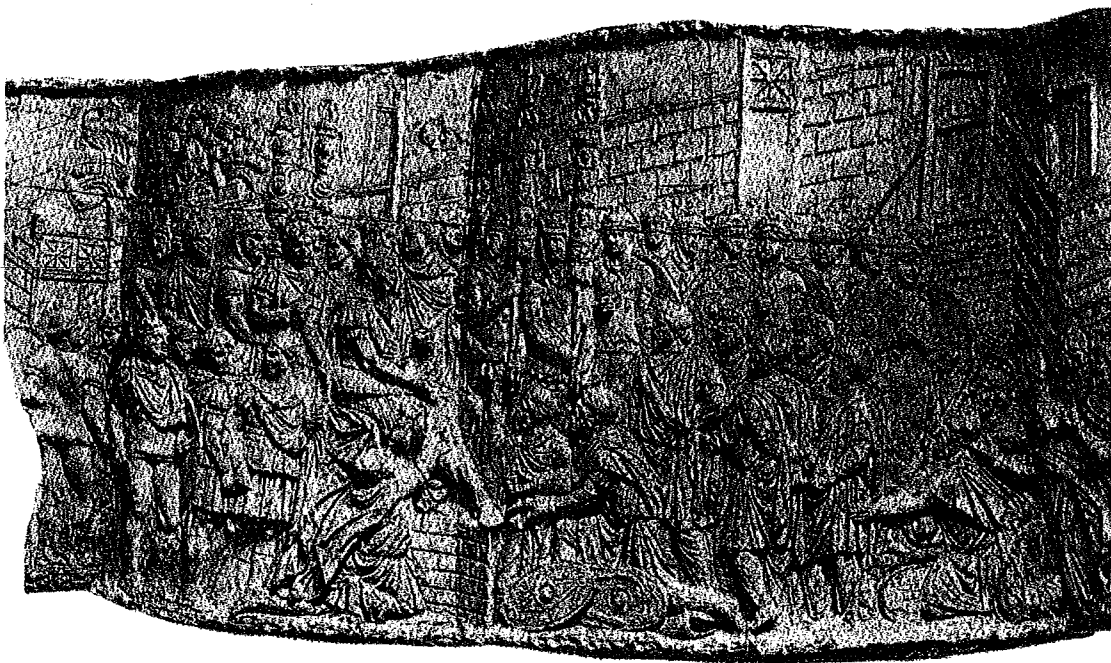


Fig. 2.6 Main clemency scene II, Column of Trajan

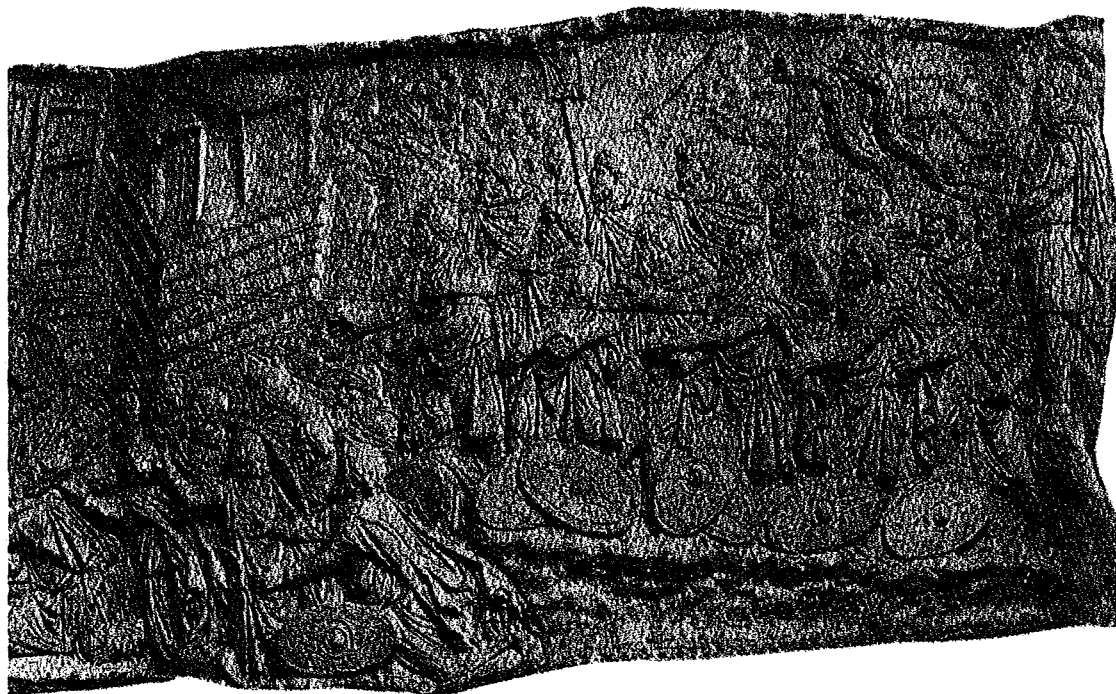


Fig. 2.7 Barbarians submit to Trajan, Column of Trajan



Fig. 2.8 Dacians kneel before Trajan, Column of Trajan



Fig. 2.9 Dacians kneel before Trajan, Column of Trajan





Fig. 2.10 Submission of family to Trajan



Fig. 2.11 Roman soldier killing family



Fig. 3.1 Personification of *Clementia*



Fig. 3.2 Torlonia Relief



Fig. 3.3 Coin from Antoninus Pius



Fig. 3.4 Coin depicting Marcus Aurelius



Fig. 3.5 Coin depicting Marcus Aurelius



Fig. 3.6 Barbarians before emperor, Column of Marcus Aurelius



Fig. 3.7 Submission of barbarians, Column of Marcus Aurelius

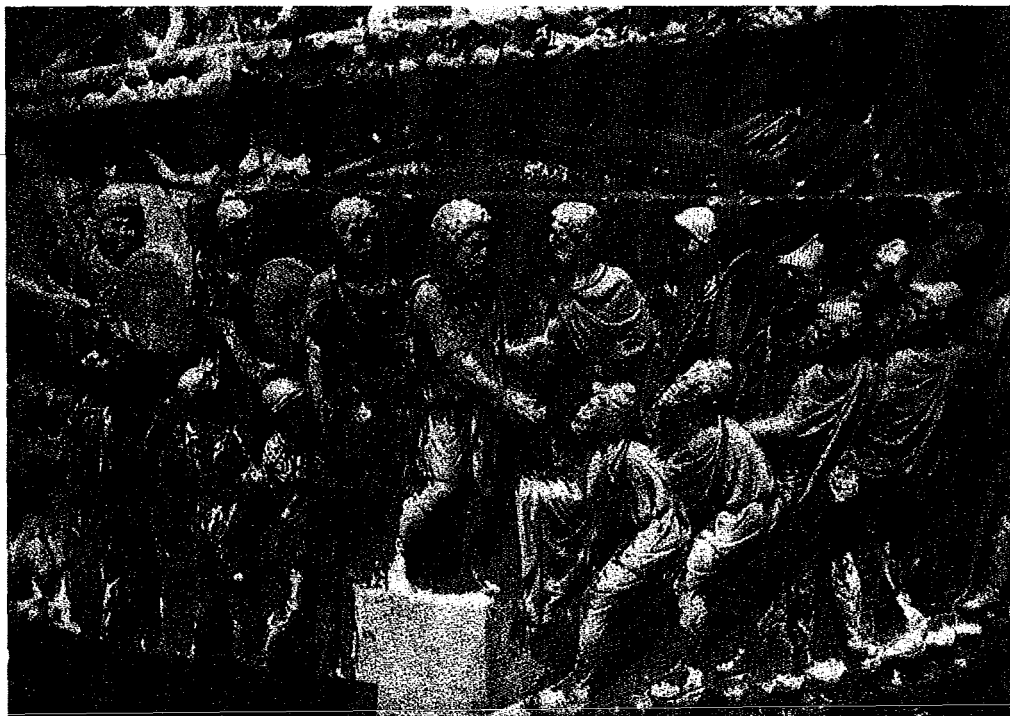


Fig. 3.8 Barbarians on horseback before the emperor, Column of Marcus Aurelius

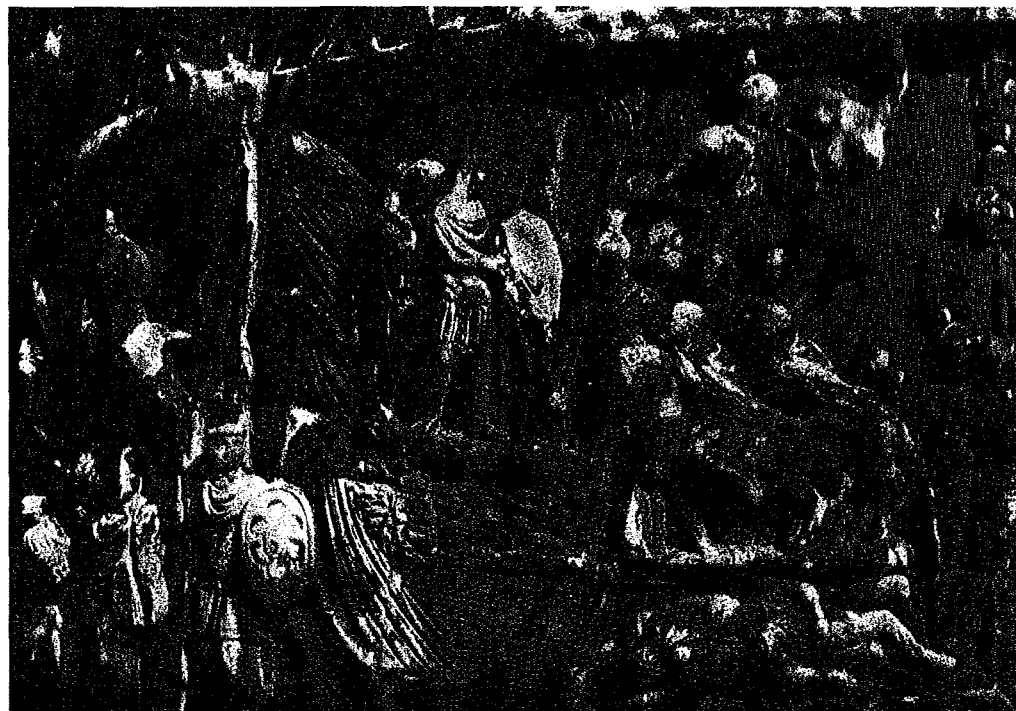


Fig. 3.9 Submission scene on Column of Marcus Aurelius base

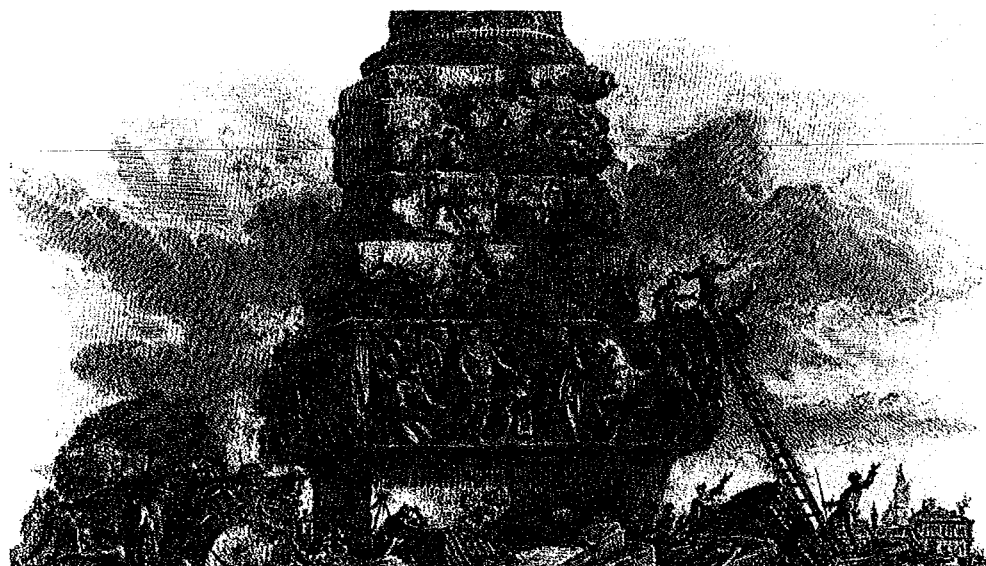


Fig. 3.10 *Sestertius* of Marcus Aurelius from A.D. 176-7



Fig. 3.11 *Sestertius* of Marcus Aurelius from A.D. 178



Fig. 3.12 *Clementia* panel



Fig. 3.13 *Submissio* panel



Fig. 3.14 Los Angeles County Museum sarcophagus



Fig. 3.15 Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus

