

THE EXPANSION OF TRIUMPHAL IMAGERY BEYOND ROME: IMPERIAL MONUMENTS AT THE HARBORS OF OSTIA AND LEPICIS MAGNA

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This article analyzes the architectural remains and associated artistic evidence primarily from the imperial harbors of Ostia and Lepcis Magna. This analysis leads to the conclusion that emperors beginning with Claudius utilized harbor monuments for the creation and projection of triumphal imagery—contrary to Roman tradition that kept that imagery sited on and associated with the triumphal route in Rome. Further, this evidence reveals a pattern of emperors rejecting Augustan practice in favor of the model of behavior of Mark Antony with deliberately specific associations of Claudius, Trajan, and Septimius Severus with Dionysos and Antony's Alexandrian triumph initiated in 34 B.C. This material provides tangible evidence of the intentions of emperors and their administrations in monumentalizing the harbors they built, restored, enlarged, and elaborated. The repetition of forms and the effort and expense that went into advertising the construction of such monuments—in addition to that which ensured their foundation—reinforces the conclusion that the role harbor monuments played in imperial propaganda was significant and differed considerably from terrestrial building programs.¹

1. Claudius, Lighthouses, and Portus Augusti

The earliest evidence for triumphal monuments outside Rome comes from the principate of Claudius and consists of a series of five lighthouses built to mark his *reditus*, his return from the successful conquest of Britain. These, at Dover, Boulogne, Ravenna, Brundisium, and finally Portus Augusti, are examined below as precedent-setting monuments, but it is important to note that Claudius was also developing a pattern established by a previous emperor. Specifically, the use of lighthouses as markers of imperial movement and presence is first seen explicitly under Tiberius with the lighthouse at Capri.

The Capri lighthouse, notably the only Roman imperial one that does not mark a harbor, city, or similar facility, was a working seamount.² It also provides the earliest evidence of the association of emperors with lighthouses. It was constructed on Capri on the highest point of the island closest to the mainland and adjacent to the Villa Iovis, the villa in which Tiberius lived.³ Probably only lighted

¹ Roman attitudes toward and conception of the sea, particularly from an urban perspective, are explored in Purcell 1996. The importance of port monuments in defining Roman territory and their unique contribution as liminal markers are accepted by many modern scholars. Horden and Purcell 2000, 126 make the point, "Port monuments such as lighthouses and moles or the famous colossus of Rhodes all belong in this context—as only the most developed expressions of

the idea that the identity of a powerful Mediterranean figure depends on how his territory is perceived from its maritime approaches."

² Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.100.

³ Suet. *Tib.* 65.15–18.

during Tiberius's presence at the villa, the lighthouse was so closely associated with Tiberius that its collapse, caused by an earthquake and described by Suetonius in a list of omens of Tiberius's imminent demise, was considered a portent of Tiberius's death, which occurred a few days later.⁴ The identification with the emperor establishes the relationship between an emperor and the lighthouse building type. It provided a concrete marker of the princeps's location, thus reflecting his movements and presence. While the degree of private versus public actions for elite Romans is a debatable issue, it is clear that the movement and acts of the emperor were never "private" in our understanding of the word.⁵

The Claudian lighthouses develop this theme through direct association with the emperor and his achievements as well as his presence. The lighthouse at Ravenna arguably belongs in this category.⁶ Pliny the Elder mentions the lighthouse at Ravenna together with that at Portus, opening the possibility that they were contemporary foundations.⁷ Certainly there is good reason to accept that the two were conceived together since Ravenna was the point at which the Claudian triumphal procession from Britain entered Italy. Claudius, having constructed the Via Claudia Augusta into the city, made his ceremonial exit from the harbor on a vast floating palace:

The mouth nearest to Ravenna forms the large basin called the harbor of the Santerno; it was here that Claudius Caesar sailed out into the Adriatic, in what was a vast palace rather than a ship, when celebrating his triumph over Britain.⁸

Claudius is performing some imperial ceremonial theater here; the *reditus* obviously recreates—for the audience of northern Italy—his departure from Britain while explicitly extending, as noted by Pliny, his triumph outside of Rome. This is the first instance we have of this extension of triumph beyond its traditional route within the *pomerium* of Rome, and the fact that it is so specifically connected with both the actions and constructions of Claudius supports the notion that they were deliberately conceived of in concert.

In addition to the twin monuments at Portus and Ravenna, the lighthouses at Dover and Boulogne were probably Claudian foundations, which simultaneously marked the expansion of the empire and the *reditus* route of Claudius.⁹ These are less certain in their chronology than the Italian examples but fit the pattern of Claudian construction. Based on the testimony of Suetonius, the lighthouse at Boulogne has been traditionally assigned to Caligula.¹⁰ This seems unlikely and, although it may have been begun by him, the short term of his principate and apparent lack of sustained need for

⁴ Suet. *Tib.* 74.4–6, *Et ante paucos quam obiret dies, turris phari terrae motu Capreis concidit.*

⁵ See D'Arms 1970, 84.

⁶ Purcell 1991, 22 first drew this conclusion. His brief discussion of this point and the work of Potter 1987 did much to stimulate my thinking on issues of symbolic foundations at harbors and boundaries in general.

⁷ Plin. *HN* 36.83, *Quales iam compluribus locis flagrant, sicut Ostiae ac Ravennae.* ("Similar beacons now burn brightly in several places, for instance at Ostia and Ravenna.")

⁸ *HN* 3.16.120, *Proximum inde ostium magnitudinem portus habet qui Vatrei dicitur, qua Claudius Caesar e Britannia triumphans praegrandi illa domo verius quam nave intravit*

Hadriam. Purcell 1991, 22 translates the passage as Claudius's entry into the harbor. Pliny, however, says that Claudius sailed out into the Adriatic, indicating that the "floating palace" was the vehicle for the middle stage of the triumphal passage: the entry into Portus. The fact that it was a ceremonial exit, rather than entrance, does not diminish the prestige given to the harbor at Ravenna; both the *adventus* and *profectio* were equally important and worthy of ceremony and monumentalization. In contrast to Pliny, Tac. *Ann.* 12.36 relates only those parts of the British triumph that occurred in Rome.

⁹ Strabo 4.1.9; 4.3.3 includes the concept of imperial embarkation points. On the construction date of Dover, see Hasenson 1980 and Wheeler 1929.

¹⁰ D'Erce 1966.

the lighthouse on the route between Britain and Europe make a Claudian date—or at the very least a Claudian completion—much more likely than a construction by Caligula. To extend the *reditus* route and the triumphal procession by sea in Claudius's floating palace, at least one additional harbor between Ravenna and Ostia should be involved.

A lighthouse at Brundisium is attested by Pomponius Mela; he describes it topographically by its place in the harbor parallel to that of the Pharos of Alexandria.¹¹ If the testimony of Pomponius can be accepted, the lighthouse must have been constructed early in the reign of Claudius since his work dates to no later than the 40s. It certainly cannot predate the lighthouse of Claudius at Ostia, which is so often described as the first of its kind in Italy. It is most likely that it was an otherwise unknown component of the Claudian lighthouse system at Portus, Ravenna, Dover, and Boulogne. Brundisium was a well-traveled route, which was repeatedly monumentalized—most notably under Augustus with the arch mentioned by Dio Cassius.¹² No contemporary accounts attest to Claudius's movement through the port city, although he certainly would have utilized it on his return from Britain, sailing between Ravenna and Portus Augusti.

Archaeological, literary, and numismatic evidence securely dates the lighthouse at Portus Augusti to the principate of Claudius and directly associates it with the emperor himself.¹³ This close association suggests the subject of the statues that adorned the lighthouses. The distant model was the Zeus Soter on the Pharos of Alexandria, where he served as the savior of those who entered the harbor.¹⁴ That role of savior of those who go to sea is transferred as early as the principate of Augustus to the emperors themselves. Suetonius makes it clear when, near the end of Augustus's life, a group of merchants sacrifice to him when entering the harbor at Puteoli rather than to the local temple for they clearly view Augustus as their new god.¹⁵ The Roman imperial lighthouses were probably decorated with statues of the emperors themselves. Because it closely copied the Pharos at Alexandria and was unprecedented among Romans for its size and decoration, it elicited much comment. Suetonius, in his description of the construction of the harbor, says of the lighthouse:

Before the entrance a breakwater was built in deep water. In order to provide more secure foundations for this he [Claudius] first sank the ship which had brought the great obelisk from Egypt . . . above this he set a very high tower on the model of the Alexandrian Pharos.¹⁶

Dio Cassius's account is briefer: "Next, in the sea itself he [Claudius] built great moles, one on each side, enclosing a large expanse of sea. He formed an island in the sea and built on it a tower with a beacon."¹⁷ Neither of these sources provides a detailed description of the lighthouse except that, by comparison with that at Alexandria, they suggest that it was a multistory tower. For the decoration of the lighthouse we need the evidence of art, which shows the multistory tower associated with a statue often a component of the penultimate story.

¹¹ Mela 2.7.113–114, *atque ut Alexandriae ita Brundisio adiacens Pharos*.

¹² Suet. *Aug.* 98.

¹³ Dio Cass. 51.19. Notably the arch at Brundisium under Augustus was linked in Dio's narrative with his victory arch in the Forum Romanum. While not explicitly creating an antecedent for Claudius's *reditus*, the notion of monumental linkage is already present under Augustus.

¹⁴ Suet. *Claud.* 20.3.

¹⁵ Dio Cass. 60.11.4. Juv. 12.75–78 also notes the construction of the moles and lighthouse but provides no further details. The descriptions of Dio and Suetonius have been confirmed by excavation; see Meiggs 1973, 154–156 for an account of the early explorations. The latter excavations are published by Testaguzza 1970 and Scrinari 1970; 1971.

¹⁶ Meiggs 1973, 54ff.

¹⁷ Fraser 1972, 194–195.



Fig. 1. *Torlonia harbor relief* (after Meiggs 1973, pl. XX; photo Fototeca Nazionale ICCD).



Fig. 2. *Nero's harbor sestertius* (photo author).

The many reliefs and mosaics that portray the lighthouse support this conclusion. The Torlonia relief, a Severan-period relief found along the edge of the harbor basin (fig. 1), is one of the largest and most detailed representations, but many smaller reliefs parallel the form on the Torlonia relief. Eleven of the portrayals collected by Reddé show the lighthouse at Portus as a four-story tower.¹⁸ Many of the reliefs, despite their small size, exhibit a statue on the uppermost or penultimate stage of

¹⁸ Reddé 1979, 845–872 has catalogued sixty-four representations of lighthouses on Roman coins, reliefs, and mosaics. The majority of these are multistory towers of three or four stories. The representations are not intended to be exact

copies, as evidenced by the varying number of windows and irregular appearance of the door. However, the number of stories seems to be a defining characteristic and is shown rather consistently.

the lighthouse, seen to best advantage on the reverse of the sestertii of Nero (fig. 2) and the Torlonia relief. Both show a standing male figure either nude or partially clothed. He stands in a contrapposto pose with a scepter or staff held in an upraised hand and the other hand outstretched.

While the identity of the statue is not attested in the literary sources, it is clearly the successor of the Zeus Soter on the Pharos of Alexandria. Who would the emperors display on such a monument? In the context of a harbor Neptune seems the natural choice and is, in fact, known to adopt this pose. Although the Lateran Poseidon type is much more common and replicated across the Mediterranean, a standing Poseidon leaning on a trident was a recognized type.¹⁹ Neptune, however, is already in evidence at Portus on the Torlonia relief, shown as a standing figure next to the lighthouse. More specifically, the figure on the lighthouse shows no sign of a beard or the "briny hair" or other attributes of Neptune, such as dolphins or a rudder.

The standing pose varies slightly among representations, particularly in the position of the extended hand. A Hellenistic antecedent is known from Rome in the colossal statue known as the "Hellenistic ruler."²⁰ The pose is also copied by Roman emperors; for example, it is known from two statues of Claudius. These are almost identical to the pose on Nero's sestertii, with the staff held in the left hand and the right extended.²¹ The statues of Claudius are crowned with an oak wreath. Such wreaths adorn, or are held over, the heads of emperors in many imperial statues and reliefs and were an exclusive perquisite of the emperors and deities under the Principate. It is impossible to say whether the figure on the sestertii is wreathed, but that on the lighthouse of the Torlonia relief has a wreath held over his head in the established manner.²² Since the lighthouse at Portus Augusti was so explicitly held to be in imitation of the Pharos of Alexandria, and Claudius presented himself as the new Jupiter or Zeus Soter, it requires little conjecture to conclude that the statue adorning the lighthouse of Portus was of Claudius. This association develops naturally from that between Tiberius and the lighthouse at Capri, where the lighthouse was accepted as a metaphor for Tiberius. It further serves to mark Claudius's place in the harbor as the terminus of the sea voyage of his triumphal return from Britain while operating as did his other lighthouses as a monument of imperial achievement as well as the personal presence of the emperor. While the literary sources do not refer to this as a triumph, it is clearly conceived of as such and may in fact have been the motivator for a closely parallel spectacle by Titus. On his return to Italy in 70, Titus passed through the eastern provinces, exhibiting prisoners and spectacles in the Syrian cities, according to Josephus. The *adventus* of the imperator through these cities seems to follow the pattern of Claudius.²³

¹⁹ See Pollitt 1986, fig. 290.

²⁰ See Pollitt 1986, fig. 74. The figure has also been identified as a Roman Republican *triumphator*, specifically as T. Quinctius Flamininus; see Pollitt 1986, 308, n. 23. The statue's identification as a Hellenistic ruler is upheld by Himmelmann 1989, who dates it to ca. 170 B.C. and sees it as a depiction of Attalos II as one of the Dioskouroi.

²¹ Kleiner 1992, figs. 106, 107. The statues show Claudius with the attributes of Jupiter, who was closely tied to the ideology of power of the Julio-Claudians; see Fears 1984a.

²² Good parallels of representations of emperors with closed

wreaths held over their heads include the Gemma Augustea and the Cancelleria reliefs.

²³ Ando 2000, 256–257 draws the logical conclusion that Titus conceived of this return as a triumph extended outside of Rome through the cities of the eastern provinces. The major distinction is one of audience. For Claudius, the audience is found in other Roman communities outside of Rome itself, thus extending the triumph to additional Roman space and spectators. For Titus, the audience seems more complex, for while local Romans in Syria would naturally view the spectacle, the Jewish prisoners are paraded presumably as exemplary models of Roman military success.

Fig. 3. *Torlonia relief detail (after Meiggs 1973, pl. XXIa; photo Fototeca Nazionale ICCD).*



2. Trajan, Triumph, and Portus Traiani

The second harbor basin at Portus founded by Trajan develops from the first and continues the triumphal associations of Claudius while creating more explicit imagery of triumph. Portus Traiani was constructed from 106 to 113 in the interval between the Dacian and Parthian wars.²⁴ The money from the Dacian war was used to pay for the construction, while the monuments of the harbor, I conclude, establish the justification for the Parthian campaign yet with presumptuously triumphal imagery. Portus Traiani is, in fact, the first harbor to contain explicitly military images of a princeps. An examination of the monumental component gives a picture of Trajan's plan. Portus Traiani enjoys neither systematic excavation nor detailed literary description as we find at Caesarea Maritima and Portus Augusti. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of monumentalization is fairly clear.

Sailing through the outer Claudian harbor and into the inner Trajanic Portus, one was presented with a series of monuments dedicated to Trajan. The first was a triumphal arch—seen here on the Torlonia relief found alongside the harbor itself (fig. 1). Perhaps the arch is a marker of Trajan's *profectio*, which might have taken him through the harbors of Portus on his way to the east in 113.²⁵

The archaeological evidence for an arch along the harbor basin at Portus is largely representational. One of the earlier surveyors of the harbor, Texier, found on both the right and left moles, opposite each other and ca. 950 m from shore, square foundations that would have been appropriate for arches. These were not precisely at the harbor entrance but instead where the moles began to curve to close the harbor.²⁶

However scant the archaeological evidence, it is supported by some representations of the harbor. One of the variants of Nero's harbor sestertii shows a shorter building along the right mole, which appears to be either an arch or a single-story building with an arched opening (fig. 2). The

²⁴ The dedication of the work is generally taken to be 112/113, corresponding with the Trajanic coin showing the harbor basin. On the date and the coin, see Mannucci and Verduchi 1996.

²⁵ Dio Cass. 68.17.3; on Trajan's movements in prosecuting his wars, see Halfmann 1986, 184–188.

²⁶ Texier 1858, 31; Meiggs 1973, 159.



Fig. 4. Harbor relief, Vatican Museums, Belvedere Gallery (photo author).

final arcaded section on the opposite mole does not appear to be architecturally distinguished in any way, although the coin field is a notoriously restricted canvas.

The Torlonia relief provides a rendering of a triumphal arch surmounted by a figure in a chariot drawn by four elephants (fig. 3). A number of problems arise from this image, including the identity of the occupant of the chariot and the arch's position within the harbor. The monument is identified as an arch because, although the passages cannot be seen, it is consistent with the flank view of an arch. From the position on the relief, the chariot group faces the lighthouse and thus the entrance to the Claudian harbor, where Texier found the remains he interpreted as foundations of arches.

Evidence in addition to the Torlonia relief places such a monument along the harbor basin. A relief in the Vatican (fig. 4), attributed by some scholars to Ostia, shows a harbor scene with an arch surmounted by an elephant *quadriga*.²⁷ More conclusive are some relief bowls of South Gaulish ware. The central medallion in the bowls shows an elephant *quadriga* with a single occupant in the chariot. The relief represents a monument, rather than an actual triumphal procession, because the chariot rests on a platform consistent with the attic of an arch. In the space below the ground line is a reclining harbor god identified by his pose and anchor attribute.²⁸ The specific harbor is identified by the inscription as Portus Augusti. The artistic evidence clearly supports the notion that there was an elephant *quadriga* in the harbor. Still unclear, however, are the identity of the occupant of the chariot and the purpose behind the monument.

Regrettably, the South Gaulish bowls with elephant *quadriga* do not completely preserve the body of the chariot occupant. For that it is necessary to rely on the Torlonia relief (fig. 1), which shows a single figure standing in the chariot wearing a cloak and what has been interpreted as a helmet, carrying a scepter in one hand and something unidentifiable in the other. The "helmet" is only a result of the small scale and shallow relief of this figure; it seems instead to be an incompletely carved wreath with unfinished hair above it. A parallel can be found on the, arguably contemporary,

²⁷ Robert 1911, pl. 1 attributes it to Ostia. I see it as a composite of many harbors, perspectives, scales, and topoi, with no suggestion of any coherent harbor scene.

²⁸ Two varieties of this bowl relief are illustrated by Alföldi 1965–1966, pl. 10; for harbor gods and their iconography, see Boyce 1958, 77, pl. 15.

arch of Titus spoils relief, where the figure immediately to the left of the menorah is in low relief, with the same unfinished head treatment.²⁹

The figure, if an emperor, could be no later than Trajan as he is unbearded. Meiggs suggests that it is Domitian, the first emperor known to have set up an arch in Rome surmounted by an elephant chariot.³⁰ In the scepter in his left hand Meiggs also sees an attribute of Domitian's: a scepter terminating in a human head, as seen on the coins of his second consulship in A.D. 73.³¹

Elephant chariots were used as a symbol by emperors from the time of Augustus.³² The origin of the symbolism was in the Indian Triumph of Dionysos, which frequently showed the deity in a chariot drawn by elephants. Augustus, and later Trajan, emphasized this iconography in their triumphal programs as the traditional iconography of Hellenistic monarchs establishing dominance over the East.³³ Domitian had a similar need to establish his authority over the East, especially following the reigns of his successful and popular father and brother.³⁴ There is, however, no archaeological, literary, or epigraphical evidence that shows any building or patronage activity by Domitian at Portus. Except for the evidence of the scepter, difficult to judge at this scale, Domitian does not appear as likely as Trajan to be portrayed in the *quadriga*.

Current scholarly opinion on the Portus Augusti is that it was still functional when Trajan's harbor was built.³⁵ Certainly it is reasonable to believe that Trajan would have erected personal monuments in the old, now outer harbor, as was done in the new inner harbor. The iconography of the chariot and its traditional ties to Dionysos also more closely match the decorative program of Trajan as the conqueror of the East, as determined from the decoration of the new harbor. In addition, the South Gaulish relief medallions contain a fragmentary and largely illegible inscription that reads, in part, FELICIS. The word was part of the official title of Trajan's new harbor: Portus Traiani Felicis, as attested in inscriptions and coins, but a title not associated with the Claudian harbor.³⁶ The evidence of the scepter admits another interpretation than that of Meiggs. It appears to be topped with the eagle commonly displayed on coins of the later emperors rather than a human hand.³⁷ Taken together, the evidence supports the conclusion that Portus Traiani Felicis was marked by at least a single triumphal arch at its entrance, probably serving as a marker of the passage between it and the Portus Augusti, which served as the outer basin for the new construction.

Across from the entrance were the two most impressive monuments surrounding and facing the harbor basin: a colossal cuirassed statue of Trajan and immediately behind it a temple to Dionysos.³⁸ In the center of the shorefront of the Portus Traiani opposite the entrance stood the colossal statue of Trajan in military dress.³⁹ The placement is notable because the colossus was between the harbor

²⁹ Kleiner 1992, fig. 155. On the carving style and identification of these figures, see Pollini 2003, 164.

³⁰ Meiggs 1973, 158; Matz 1952, 31.

³¹ BMC, 2:pl. 12, 2.

³² Matz 1952, 31. Augustus's use of the chariot appears only on coins; there is no evidence that he ever erected such a monument; see Kleiner 1985, pl. 6, 3.

³³ Matz 1952, 21.

³⁴ Suet. *Dom.* 2 and 6 discusses Domitian's attempts to orchestrate a military success in the East. He also describes in *Dom.* 13 the proliferation of arcades and arches adorned

with chariots and triumphal insignia across the city under that emperor.

³⁵ Meiggs 1973, 166; Testaguzza 1970, 123.

³⁶ Meiggs 1973, 162; Testaguzza 1970, 122, where he cites a coin of Antoninus Pius with the same legend. On Felix and Felicitas in the ideology of emperors in the second century, see Halfmann 1986, 146–147; Fears 1984b, 910–924, esp. 913 on Trajan.

³⁷ RIC 7.88–91.

³⁸ Meiggs 1973, 165–166.

³⁹ Meiggs 1973, 165–166.

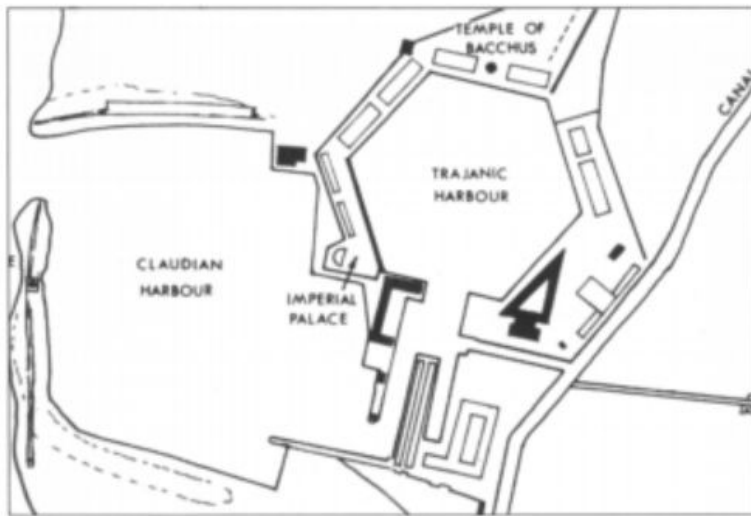


Fig. 5. Plan of Portus (after Tuck 1997, fig. 22).

entrance and the temple of Bacchus, set just off the edge of the harbor behind the colossus (fig. 5). This temple was effectively screened from view from the harbor entrance. Perhaps the axis from the triumphal arch at the entrance through the colossus to the temple created a deliberate subset of self-referential monuments within the harbor.

The colossus is one of only a few explicitly military images of an emperor yet found from a harbor.⁴⁰ Although the triumphal arch certainly assumed a military role for the emperor, even it showed the emperor as successful or former general, togated as on the triumphal monuments from Rome, rather than as an active one as Trajan is depicted here.⁴¹ Remains discovered of the statue were so fragmentary that the decoration of the cuirass could not be determined. Another over-life-sized statue of Trajan—this one from his harbor construction at Terracina, where it was found in a similar position along the edge of the harbor—provides a possible parallel and suggests that it may have had a nautical theme.⁴²

The placement of the colossus is especially remarkable as it fills the position usually taken by a temple to the emperor along the harbor edge. The temple, identified by inscriptions as dedicated to Liber Pater, is in the center of the northeast side of the hexagonal harbor of Trajan.⁴³ The numismatic issues of Trajan (fig. 6), probably minted to celebrate the opening of the harbor, do not explicitly distinguish the temple among the other buildings of the harbor basin, although it is probably the building with the rounded roofline just to the left of the colossus, itself visible on the best-preserved examples of this issue.⁴⁴ The figure of Liber Pater appears on the Torlonia relief (fig. 1) with the harbor monuments but, like the Neptune in the foreground, not on a base. It cannot, therefore, be considered to portray a statue but is probably a personification of the presence of the god and

⁴⁰ All of these military images are of the emperor Trajan; they include the colossus at Portus, a cuirassed over-life-sized statue at Terracina, and the statue on the arch at Ancona.

⁴¹ The inscribed base of another over-life-sized statue of Trajan (*CIL* 9.37) has been found at Brundisium, where it probably marked the termination of the Via Traiana at the harbor; see Ashby and Gardner 1916, 116, 170–171.

⁴² Fea 1802, 36 recorded the discovery of the statue and

described it as a grand statue of Trajan in armor all carved of Greek marble. It stood, he goes on to say, on a well-built, square pedestal over 6 feet high. None of the details of the decoration or possible inscription were recorded.

⁴³ The attribution is made by Lanciani 1868, 181 based on epigraphical evidence. The identification is accepted by all subsequent authors on the harborworks.

⁴⁴ Testaguzza 1970, 170.

Fig. 6. Trajan's harbor sestertius
(after Meiggs 1973, pl. XVIIIb).



the trade in wine in the harbor. As the figure stands in the background behind the ship off-loading amphoras, this would be a consistent message. Certainly the patron of wine is appropriate to oversee the trade and storage of the vessels, but the temple seems to be part of a larger program of monumentalization in the harbor.

Although Liber Pater is occasionally depicted with nautical familiars, he is primarily neither a naval or a trade god nor the object of sailors' prayers.⁴⁵ The reason for the presence and presentation of the temple in the harbor can be found in the ideological program of Trajan. In the tradition of past emperors, he associated himself with Dionysos.⁴⁶ Trajan was presented iconographically, particularly on numismatic issues, as the Neos Dionysos. He became the patron of the associations of Dionysiac actors, promoted the influx of easterners to Rome and, with his assimilation with Alexander, became the *domitor Orientis*.⁴⁷ The purpose of this was the establishment of a mythological basis and justification for the eastern campaigns against the Parthians. With the assimilation of Dionysos with Trajan, it became a sacred duty to liberate the East. In many ways Dionysos became essentially one aspect of the identity of Trajan. From this perspective it becomes clear why this particular temple was constructed within the program of monumentalization of Trajan's harbor. There was simply no place, programmatically, for another prominent figure in the harbor basin to compete with Trajan. Instead, the temple serves to reinforce the authority of Trajan.

Much evidence survives of Trajan's descriptions of himself as the Neos Dionysos—coins, inscriptions, etc. Unlike Augustus or Claudius, Trajan does not present himself explicitly as Jupiter

⁴⁵ The nautical association of Liber Pater occurs in Dionysiac iconography on a series of sarcophagi with Nereids and marine centaurs; see Foucher 1984, 697. Dionysos was, along with Hercules, one of the two most common traveling gods in the classical world. His aspect as the traveler could account, by itself, for the prominence of his worship in the harbor; see Bowersock 1990, 41–53 on this aspect of his worship. A possible temple to Hercules has also been suggested along the harbor basin, but the evidence is correctly concluded by Meiggs 1973, 386 to be “not decisive.”

⁴⁶ In fact, the syncretism of Dionysos the conqueror with a ruler can be traced back to Alexander the Great, whom the

Roman emperors may have, once again, been emulating in their ideological programs. Nock 1972 analyzes this relationship at length in his essays on “Alexander and Dionysus” and “Neos Dionysos.”

⁴⁷ All of the emperors, from Augustus on, were listed as the patrons of the acting guilds. More evidence survives that Trajan was proclaimed as such than for any other emperor. On the increasing number of easterners in Rome, see Foucher 1984, 700 as well as Hammond 1957, 77–79, whose table on p. 77 shows that the number of attested eastern senators under Trajan was double that under his predecessors Vespasian and Domitian.

or with his attributes but as "the subordinate of the divine father, ruling the earth in his behalf, the warrior vice-regent of Jupiter who holds the barbarians at bay," especially as his son, either Hercules or, here in the harbor, Dionysos.⁴⁸

The harbor admits no other deities than Trajan and Dionysos, and the latter appears as merely a component of Trajan's imperial personality. He serves to reinforce the *virtus* of Trajan as a successful military commander. The decorative/building program is designed to establish the justification for Trajan's Parthian war: Trajan as the Neos Dionysos had the right to eastern conquests; triumph is preordained.

While we do not know for certain the intended audience for these messages, we know that Portus Traiani was designed as the terminus for the grain fleet from Alexandria, providing one specific audience. These military monuments might have been designed to appeal most directly, however, to those soldiers and sailors who we know sailed out of Portus to launch Trajan's Parthian campaign, sending them to war with a triumphal message. This explicitly triumphal message serves as a bridge between the harbor monuments of Claudius and those of Septimius Severus at Lepcis Magna, which mark the development of imperial ideology from Parthicus to Parthicus Maximus.

3. *Septimius Severus, Triumph, and the Reconstruction of Lepcis Magna*

The Severan constructions at Lepcis Magna show an understanding of Trajan's harbor at Portus, as we see embedded in the architectural forms a message declaring Septimius Severus as the new Trajan—divinely led to rule and to conquer not as Parthicus but as Parthicus Maximus.

Septimius Severus's decision to aggrandize Lepcis Magna operates on many levels. First, one cannot overestimate the importance of announcing control of the resources of the empire through construction of an architectural wonder by a princeps whose position results from civil war. The example of Vespasian and the Flavian amphitheater exists as a marked parallel. We should resist the temptation to think of this as personal interest or an example of ancient "pork" in the lavish building of Lepcis Magna. I think that John D'Arms gave the correct assessment when he stated, "An emperor's presence . . . , his local administrative actions, his public works and his benefactions, should not be construed as expressions of his personal liking. . . . They were also, as with Augustus, acts of imperial policy."⁴⁹ And what we see at Lepcis Magna is a step along the route from empire to commonwealth as the monuments and messages previously exclusive to Rome become attached to other cities as triumphal monuments and images are so clearly established here.

A massive lighthouse—echoing those at Portus and Alexandria and certainly deliberately invoking them—on the right side to those entering the harbor marks the mouth of the new Severan harbor, with a companion tower across the harbor mouth (fig. 7). The entrance is flanked by two small distyle temples, while on the shore opposite the entrance is a large prostyle podium temple. We will examine the meaning of these buildings, beginning with the latter, most prominent one.⁵⁰

This large podium temple exists only in the podium, foundation, and associated blocks of the cella walls and architrave. The temple was founded in the most prestigious location in the Severan harbor: along the harborside, centrally opposite the harbor entrance. The form of the superstructure is unknown because little survives above the level of the foundation other than scattered blocks of

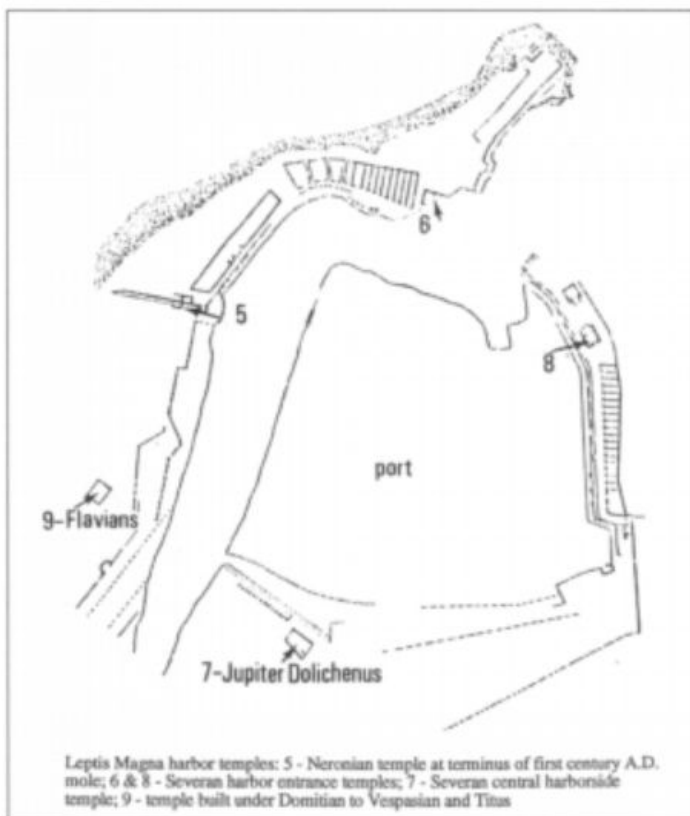
⁴⁸ Fears 1984a, 114.

imperial lands.

⁴⁹ D'Arms 1970, 84. His subject is the emperors on the Bay of Naples, but the point can be made anywhere in

⁵⁰ The major source for the understanding of the harbor is Bartoccini 1958, followed by Cafarelli and Caputo 1966.

Fig. 7. Plan of harbor at Leptis Magna
(after Tuck 1997, fig. 2).



the architrave.⁵¹ There is little doubt, however, that the temple would have dominated the Severan harbor; it was constructed on a high (4.47 m) podium above the upper terrace of the two-stepped quay. The front of the podium is a broad staircase of twenty-two steps. This central podium temple is dedicated to Jupiter. The altar before the temple, dated between 202 and 204, preserves in an inscription the dedication plan for the entire harbor complex. It is dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus and to the Augusti in triumph:

*I(ovi) O(ptimio) M(aximo) / Dolicheno/ pro salute et victoria domi/norum nostrorum
Augg[g(ustorum trium)] et / [C(ai) Fulvi Plautiani pr(aefecti) pr(aetorio) cl(arissimi) v(iri)] /
[necessari Augg(ustorum)] [e]t redi/tu [I]mppp(eratorum III) in urbem [s]uam/ T(itus) Flavius
Marin[us] c(enturio) leg(ionis) / [tertia]e Aug(ustae) / v(otum) l(ibens) p(osuit) /*

Right side: *D(e)d(icavit) Illidus Apriles*⁵²

This declaration of sovereign divinity is consistent with that in the programs of previous emperors, including Claudius and the early ideological propaganda of Augustus. Jupiter is an expected and critical deity promoted early in Septimius's principate as stabilizing the Roman state through consolidating the Severan dynasty. The emperor owed his position as princeps to the support of Jupiter and in his early coinage, before 194, stresses his divine election by Jupiter, who had appointed him monarch. These coins portray Severus in military dress as a "warrior vice-regent of Jupiter." This ideological observance is fairly straightforward. In fact, some assimilation between the roles of

⁵¹ Brouquier-Reddé 1992, 120.

⁵² Reynolds and Ward-Perkins 1952, 292.

Jupiter and Septimius Severus might be expected. Certainly Augustus was identified with Jupiter, as were Claudius and Trajan, the latter two addressed as *Optimus*.

What suggests that this temple should be identified with Septimius Severus personally? First, it is a component of a massive building campaign whose climax was a temple to the Genius of the Severans in the new Forum. The position the temple occupies in the harbor is that usually held by monuments to the emperors, generally to the reigning emperor. This combined with the fact that it replaced a previous temple to Titus and Vespasian—which dominated the prior harbor—argues continuity of use. That this place is taken by a temple to a deity so closely connected to the army and to the emperor's family strongly suggests that it was constructed, if not on his orders or as part of a program by his administration, then perhaps in an attempt to promote the worship of a deity favored by the emperor.³³ Certainly the dedicatory inscription attributes the construction to the Victory of the Severans. The construction of the temple implies a community of worshipers and priests to support it, but that community would not have existed if not for the reign of Septimius Severus. Because of Severus's ties to the army, it is unsurprising that the altar (and perhaps the temple) were dedicated by a centurion. The dedication of the major temple in the harbor to Iuppiter Dolichenus suggests the identity of the deities for the other two temples in the Severan-period harbor: the small distyle *in antis* temples on the ends of the moles. The evidence for them and the possible identities for their deities are addressed below. The evidence suggests that the Severan harbor restoration was constructed with an integrated plan of monumentalization, with the three temples dedicated to related deities: Iuppiter, Hercules, and Dionysos.

The temples directly face the harbor entrance, framing it from near the ends of the moles. On their low (1.5 m) socles and with small (ca. 6 m) cellas, they would not have dominated the harbor, as did the temple across from the harbor entrance, but would have been clearly visible to those entering or exiting the harbor. With the exception of the lighthouse and the tower opposite it, they represent the terminal monuments on either mole. Both are small Doric order temples (fig. 7, nos. 6 and 8) with the columns arranged distyle *in antis*, and they are very parallel in type, materials, orientation, and location within the harbor.³⁴ The archaeological evidence suggests that they were both part of the Severan rebuilding of the harbor and were conceived as part of the overall building program.³⁵

Many deities have been recommended in the past for the anonymous temples: candidates include Hercules and/or Bacchus (the divine patrons of the city), Neptune, Tyche, or the Capitoline triad.³⁶ The harbor entrance temples, subsidiary to the great podium temple yet components of the same plan, have been identified by their excavator, Bartoccini, with the worship of Bacchus and Hercules. These deities were the two divine patrons of Lepcis Magna, and certainly their worship would be appropriate here for that reason. Further, Dio Cassius relates (77.16) that Septimius

³³ The worship of Iuppiter Dolichenus is strongly connected to that of Sol Invictus, which also had close ties to the Severan family: Speidel 1978, 66.

³⁴ Bartoccini 1958, pl. 18, 47–48 restored both temples in this form based on the extensive remains found during excavation. Subsequent authors have all accepted the restorations.

³⁵ Brouquier-Reddé 1992, 118–119, 122–125. It has been suggested that the temple on the east mole dates to the period of Marcus Aurelius based on alleged similarities between the

façade and that of the temple of Fortuna Augusta at Musti: Romanelli 1925, 108. Both are in fact rather generic temples with Doric columns distyle *in antis*, with triglyph metope friezes as the only decoration relieving the plain façades.

³⁶ Brouquier-Reddé 1992, 125; the suggestion of Hercules and Bacchus has an attractive symmetry. Both were patrons of the city as well as the most famous and prominent of the traveling deities in the classical world; see, e.g., Bowersock 1990, 41–53 on the tradition of Dionysus the traveler. A temple to Hercules may have existed in a similar location to these temples at Portus according to Meiggs 1973, 386.

built an enormous temple to Bacchus and Hercules, possibly to be placed in the city of Lepcis Magna. Again, assimilation seems to be taking place between the deities and the Augusti. At Portus Traiani, Trajan was closely associated and assimilated with the worship of Dionysos. Here the temples to Hercules and Bacchus are as certainly associated with the imperial family. They might be the temples of Septimius Severus and Caracalla: the latter was raised to the rank of Augustus prior to their departure for the Parthian campaign, and thus the monuments, which celebrate that triumph, would logically honor the two Augusti, the major protagonists of the campaign. Perhaps we should see the temple of Bacchus as that associated with Septimius while Hercules is assimilated to Caracalla. The reverses of contemporary coins of 204 portray Bacchus and Hercules, thought by some to represent Severus and Caracalla. Certainly from 204 these Severan patron deities play a larger role in dynastic ideology.

The associations of the principals are not, however, explicit or exclusive. The inscription on the altar has room for a third G on the abbreviation for *Augustorum* and, in fact, *Imperatorum* preserves its three Ps. The damaged condition of the inscription face, largely owing to weathering, does not allow for absolute certainty, but it is likely that the third G was carved and then erased rather than a space left at this point. In fact, Geta as well as Caracalla is found with the title Augustus in Tripolitanian inscriptions as early as 201.⁵⁷ If the inscription is restored with reference to all three Augusti, then it is more supportable that the Jupiter Dolichenus is the Jupiter from the East—Septimius—aided by his two sons, Hercules and Bacchus, the supporters of his Parthian campaign. Is there additional support for this interpretation? It can, perhaps, be found again in coinage. After 196, Septimius alone issued Jupiter types, while from 204 on Hercules and Bacchus do not appear on his coins.⁵⁸ Instead, they are prominent on the issues of Caracalla and Geta, who are even shown crowned by Hercules and Bacchus respectively. These Severan patron deities are explicitly linked to the sons of Septimius from the 190s on, with Caracalla deliberately linked to Hercules in an assimilation of their personalities, not just as a patron deity.⁵⁹ Septimius's special patron continues to be Jupiter. Parallels to this use of Hercules and Bacchus can be found on the Severan monuments from Rome, specifically on the northwest and southwest keystones of the Severan Arch in the Roman Forum, as well as on the Arch of the Argentarii in the Forum Boarium.⁶⁰

This interpretation indicates a shift in meaning from that seen at Portus Traiani. In his harbor, Trajan constructed a space in which the ideological message established the religious basis for a future campaign, as it was *prior* to his eastern campaigns that Trajan promoted himself as the Neos Dionysos. Here at Lepcis Magna, the Severan building program instead commemorates the completed campaign and the subsequent triumph.

Up to this point the building program of this harbor and its association with Hercules, Bacchus, and Jupiter through direct assimilation with the members of the imperial house are supported by at least one inscription, but the military triumphal component has not been fully explored. This component arises from the buildings at the very mouth of the harbor: the lighthouse and the tower opposite it. These survive without decoration, although we would expect either or both to have served as platforms for statues of the emperor and imperial family, as did the lighthouses at Portus and Alexandria.

The lighthouse at Lepcis Magna was clearly conceived of, however, as a component in the overall scheme of construction and is portrayed as a triumphal monument in honor of the Severan military

⁵⁷ Reynolds and Ward-Perkins 1952, 292.

⁵⁹ This point is well established in Kleiner 1992.

⁵⁸ McCann 1968.

⁶⁰ Brilliant 1967.



Fig. 8. *Leptis Magna relief from Severan arch (photo author).*

campaign in the East. The evidence for this appears on the reliefs of the Severan arch in the Forum at Leptis Magna. The lighthouse is portrayed on the arch as a three- or four-story tower, with arched openings in each story acting as windows to allow light into the barrel-vaulted chambers.

One of the four relief panels depicts the entrance of the Augusti into the city: the central, frontal figure of Septimius Severus sharing the *quadriga* with his sons Caracalla and Geta as he shared the religious monuments of the harbor with them (fig. 8). The lighthouse provides the only architectural context in the scene as the Augusti pass through the harbor into the city. The lighthouse establishes the location of the triumphal procession as commencing along the Severan harbor, from whence it will proceed through the arch to the Forum. Visually and ceremonially the two major public spaces in the city constructed under Severus are connected through this monument; the lighthouse acts as a marker for the beginning of the procession and a shorthand for the entire harbor project. The lighthouse fills the position that on previous monuments would have been occupied by the *porta triumphalis* as the architectural marker of a triumph. Its use here compares to the Arch of Titus, which shows the *porta* as the architectural context for the triumphal procession, in fact defining the procession as triumphal. The other details of the chariot, patron deities, emphasis on victories, and especially the presence of captives all support the argument that this is a triumph and not just an *adventus* or *reditus*.

What we see at Leptis Magna is a programmatic display of building types whose polysemic nature establishes them as both triumphal and religious and marking the triumphal return of the Augusti into Leptis Magna, supported by their divine patrons. Septimius Severus adopts the dual meaning of military triumph combined with religious sanction. This adoption exists to grant authority to his rule and establishes him as the successor of Trajan, implying the inception of a new period of peace and stability for the empire. The monuments in the harbor transform the pattern of imperial ideology found in Portus Traiani into one appropriate for the founder of a dynasty. The multiple levels of meaning and deities into whose identity the Severans assimilated themselves were appropriate to mark the growth of the princeps from Parthicus to Parthicus Maximus and to greatly expand the notion of triumph outside the traditional boundaries of the *pomerium* of Rome. As such the constructions at Leptis Magna are a leading indicator of the future of the Principate. Within a hundred years Rome would become primarily symbolic, and the active capitals of the Augusti and Caesari were to be found at more strategic sites, completing the shift from empire to commonwealth that developed throughout the Principate.

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