

## CIVILIS PRINCEPS: BETWEEN CITIZEN AND KING\*

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When the emperor Claudius decided, at the instigation of his freedman Pallas, to make a highly unconventional marriage with his niece, he manoeuvred the senate, through the agency of his staunch *amicus* Vitellius, into passing an 'unsolicited' request that he marry Agrippina. He declared that his hesitations would be overcome if the senate put pressure on him: who was he to resist the will of the community, being but a citizen like the rest? Some senators even rushed to the palace promising to compel him by brute force.<sup>1</sup> The incident encapsulates an ambivalence in the emperor's role familiar to all readers of Tacitus. On the one hand the autocratic reality: a decision of high political moment (it was no surprise that Agrippina's son subsequently acceded to the throne) taken in the palace on the counsel of freedmen, potent and resented, involving a violation of the *mos maiorum*. On the other hand the elaborate and yet transparent republican façade: the senate decrees, the princeps submits to the will of the citizen body.

Modern historians have chosen to emphasise different aspects of this ambivalent role. For long the viewpoint of Mommsen and the English 'constitutionalist' school was dominant, seeking to define the emperor by the powers legally conferred upon him. From this point of view the 'republican' nature of the 'Principate' is seen in sharp contrast with the later 'Dominate'. But already in the 1930s Alföldi suggested a rival image, using the details of imperial ceremonial and self-presentation to evoke the monarchical reality, the religious awe that distanced ruler from ruled.<sup>2</sup> The dominant image of the 1970s is closer to Alföldi than to Mommsen. Millar's emperor enthroned in his seat of judgement, responding to petitions, has little time for pretence: the events of 31–27 B.C. 'all marked steps towards, not away from, the establishment of a monarchy; and no good evidence suggests that anybody at any time claimed, or supposed, otherwise'.<sup>3</sup> Veyne's emperor is no less unrepublican: ruling by 'droit subjectif' he justifies his supremacy by voluntary acts of liberality, enhancing his own majesty and distance from senatorial competitors by the useless extravagance of games and circuses in the City.<sup>4</sup>

There is a danger in so peeling the husk of the supposedly superficial from the kernel of reality. The ambivalence itself may be of the essence. For Veyne the urban structure of imperial Rome reflects its autocratic essence: no longer centred, like a true *polis*, on forum and acropolis, but on the complex of imperial palaces.<sup>5</sup> Yet the imperial fora stretch as far as the palatia, and Augustus, Vespasian and Trajan pumped more money into these 'republican' spaces than into their own city residence. Thus imperial Rome has a twin centre, part republican and part autocratic. The coinage may serve as another example of ambivalence. Imperial obverses bear the emperor's head, as hellenistic obverses had borne the king's head; only deities appear on the coins of a free polis. Yet the iconography of the principate emphasises the emperor's 'republican' status: his titulature draws attention to the legal formalities, while the often bare-headed image bespeaks the 'simple citizen'. Contrast the overlaid imagery of the dominate, the emperor represented, for instance, in the language of the catalogues 'diademed, wearing trabea, with eagle-tipped sceptre in right hand'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* 12, 5–7.

<sup>2</sup> A. Alföldi, 'Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells', *Röm. Mitt.* 49 (1934), 1–118, and 'Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser', *Röm. Mitt.* 50 (1935), 3–158. Now reprinted to-

gether as *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (1970); citations below are from this edition.

<sup>3</sup> So F. Millar, *JRS* 63 (1973), 67. His *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1977) is cited below as Millar, *Emperor*.

<sup>4</sup> P. Veyne, *Le Pain et le Cirque* (1976), particularly ch. 4, 'L'empereur et sa capitale'. Cited as Veyne, *Le Pain*.

<sup>5</sup> Veyne, *Le Pain*, 683.

<sup>6</sup> On the symbolic value of the bare head see Mattingly, *BMCRE* III, xxii; C. H. V. Sutherland, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy* (1951), 156. The numerous types of regalia on the Constantinian coinage are summarized at *RIC* VII, 88–91.

The aim of this paper is to explore the ambivalence by looking at just one of its manifestations, the aspects of the behaviour of emperors towards their subjects which were designed to indicate their relative status. Certain types of conduct suggest that a man is the equal of his fellows; others serve to create social distance. In Latin terms, the behaviour of emperors fluctuated between *civilitas*, the conduct of a citizen among citizens, and *superbia*, the disdainful bearing of a king and superhuman being. The ideas and practice of hellenistic kings provide a starting-point and contrast with the empire (I). Next the ways emperors sought to distance themselves from their subjects or to level themselves will be analysed (II). This leads to examination of the ideals that motivated this behaviour (III). Finally we can ask what made such behaviour desirable or necessary, what social realities lie behind the 'ideology' (IV).

## I

The younger Pliny depicts Trajan greeting successful candidates for the consulship man to man with an embrace and a kiss. He comments that the emperor stands in no danger of humiliating himself: 'when a man has no higher peak of distinction to which he can rise, the only way he can augment his stature is by condescension that displays his self-confidence'.<sup>7</sup> We may miss how paradoxical (and therefore how flattering to Trajan) this aphorism is unless we make an imaginative effort to recall how vulnerable the autocrat is, how easily challenged by the eminence of his subjects. The point emerges more sharply from Greek sources than from Roman.

Aristotle, examining the causes of the overthrow of the various types of constitution, considers that there are two main circumstances that bring the monarch into danger: hatred and contempt.<sup>8</sup> To save himself from contempt a monarch must grow a protective shell. Since the first function of a ruler is the possession of power, he must conceal his actual human frailty, blow himself up into a being larger than life, above the common run of humanity. The falsity of the protective shell has often been seen by satirists: whether in Thackeray's cartoon, illustrated by Kantorowicz, which contrasts Louis XIV grand in robes and wigs with the small, bald, bandy-legged actuality; or by bishop Synesius of Cyrene who scathingly attacks the ceremonial of Arcadius' court, likening the emperor's lifestyle to that of a mollusc which clams up for self-protection.<sup>9</sup>

Yet some Greek authors also acknowledge the necessity of such a shell. In the *Cyropaedia* Xenophon undertook a rationalizing apology for Persian court style which had clear relevance for contemporary Greek monarchies. Cyrus reduces his accessibility to petitioners by refusing to accept petitions except indirectly through his officers: the alternative is an insupportable burden of work (VII, 5, 37 f.). The king shuts himself away in his palace: when he does manifest himself to his people, it is with the pomp and circumstance of a Royal Progress (*exelasis*). This is the way to enhance his majesty (*semnotēs*) (VIII, 3, 1-23). Ceremonial style includes the enhancement of personal appearance by such techniques as rouge, eye-shadow and high-heels, and strict rules of comportment, inflexible bearing and abstention from natural functions like spitting. The trick is that of a wizard: the audience must be deceived, beguiled into believing the converse of reality, that they see a man like themselves (VIII, 1, 40 f.).<sup>10</sup>

The sources attest numerous cases of hellenistic rulers who in practice borrowed such techniques.<sup>11</sup> Demetrius Poliorcetes was perhaps the most adept at achieving theatrical effects. As in war he stunned his opponents by his vast battleships and siege-engines, so in peace he produced a stunning effect (*kataplexis*) by his appearance. He wore a blue mantle spangled with stars like the firmament. His lifestyle set a gulf between himself and his subjects: orgiastic, degenerate, yet brilliant and enviable. He showed himself remote to

<sup>7</sup> Plin., *Pan.* 71, 4 'cui nihil ad augendum fastigium superest, hic uno modo crescere potest, si se ipse summittat securus magnitudinis suae'. The thought is echoed at SHA *Pius* 6, 4, cf. *Hadrian* 20, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Politics* 1312 b 17 for hatred and contempt of tyrannies; cf. 1313 a 12 for kingships.

<sup>9</sup> E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (1957),

fig. 26; Synesius, *Peri Basileias* (ed. Terzaghi) 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> This passage appears to be directly imitated in Ammianus' classic description of the *adventus* of Constantius in Rome (xvi, 10, 1 ff.), see J. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike* (1939), 175 f.

<sup>11</sup> See the list of such rulers in Duris, *FGH* 76 F 14.

petitioners, dramatically illustrating his contempt for work by emptying a lapful of petitions into a river.<sup>12</sup>

If Demetrius offers a sample of hellenistic practice, for theoretical recommendations to a Greek ruler we must turn to certain pseudo-Pythagorean tracts excerpted by Stobaeus. For 'Diotogenes' kingship is something that mimics the divine (*theomimon*). The good king to avoid contempt must aim at *semnotēs*. This involves doing nothing base, nor imitating one's lessers or equals, but setting oneself apart from human failings and approximating to the gods. By impressive appearance, converse, comportment and adornment the onlookers should be left astonished.<sup>13</sup>

Despite Goodenough, we should not be tempted into elevating the fragments of Diotogenes into an 'official ideology'.<sup>14</sup> It is important to realise that Greek attitudes towards regal pomp and ceremonial were not ones of wholehearted approval. In fact there is a degree of ambivalence that goes some way towards anticipating Roman attitudes. The same Xenophon who idealized the Persian Cyrus wrote in panegyric of the Spartan Agesilaus. Here we find antithetical contrast between the pretentiousness of the Persian king, rarely seen, hard of access, slow to transact business, and the energetic and modest Agesilaus (*Ages.* 9). His tough regimen contrasts with Persian self-indulgence. He is readily accessible, has the gift of geniality, despite his power is never pompous, is attentive to his friends and cheerful in their company. The point is put again more forcibly: he despised the pompous but outdid the moderate in humility. His finery was his army, not the meanness of his own physique (11, 11). Humility (*tapeinotēs*) is a remarkable word to find as praise in a pagan author: in general humility was a virtue only known to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Yet Xenophon's picture of his lame hero exercised a strong influence in the kingship literature, an image still potent eight centuries later for Synesius.<sup>15</sup>

The accounts of the finery of kings like Demetrius are mostly critical in tone. Most of our evidence comes from Athenaeus' illustrations of luxury. For the hellenistic historians he excerpted, *týphos* or *tryphē* was no good thing, even if it can be argued that in practice kings deliberately used it to bolster their image.<sup>16</sup> Plutarch, drawing heavily on hellenistic predecessors, gives the fullest picture of the conduct of hellenistic rulers. He is highly critical of Demetrius: he believes that by his excessive pomp (*onkos*) and his contempt of business he failed to fulfil the central function of a king, the distribution of justice (*Demetr.* 42). He approves warmly of the simple behaviour of Cleomenes III, almost certainly here reflecting the contemporary historian Phylarchus. While other monarchs won admiration by their extravagance, they also engendered loathing by their arrogance. Cleomenes was a model of simplicity, his unpretentious way of life in no way setting him apart from ordinary people (he ate black broth with the rest). There was no purple and pomp, no crowd of attendants, no difficulty in transacting business. People were charmed and won over.<sup>17</sup>

If hellenistic kingship literature were less fragmentary, we would surely hear much in Plutarchan vein. The letter of 'Aristeas' urges the king to avoid pride (*hyperēphania*): 'he should preserve equality, remember that he rules as man over men; for God puts down the proud and exalts the humble and meek'. Even if the last remark is clearly Jewish, what precedes is authentic Greek.<sup>18</sup> The peripatetic Ariston of Ceos wrote a whole treatise *On Pride*. Adapting traditional views about excess and *hybris*, he points to the success of

<sup>12</sup> See Plutarch, *Demetr.* esp. 18; 41-2. Duris F 14 on his mantle. On the dramatic effect produced, Diodorus XIX, 81, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Stobaeus, *Ecl.* IV, 7, 62 p. 267 for Diotogenes. Edited by L. Delatte, *Les Traités de le Royauté d'Ephante, Diotogène et Sthénidas* (1942), 39 f. Estimates of the date of these curious pieces vary wildly: H. Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (1961) for a hellenistic date; F. Taeger, *Charisma* 1 (1957), 398 for third century A.D.; Delatte (p. 108) more plausibly for second century A.D.

<sup>14</sup> E. R. Goodenough, 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship', *YCS* 1 (1928), 58 ff. The Diotogenes passage is taken as 'official' by K. Welwei, *Könige und Königtum im Urteil des Polybios* (Diss. Köln, 1963), 160 f.

<sup>15</sup> Synesius, *Peri Basileias* 19. On Xenophon's

influence, K. Münscher, 'X. in der griechisch-römischen Literatur', *Philol. Suppl.* 13 (1920). On humility in ancient ethics, see A. Dihle, *Reallexikon Ant. Christ.* III, s.v. *Demut.*

<sup>16</sup> Athenaeus XII, 510-50 is a collection of passages on 'those famous for luxury'. The defence of *tryphē* put up by Heraclides Ponticus is surely devil's advocacy: Athen. 512A = Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, fr. 55. Clearchus certainly thought *tryphē* led to ruin, Athen. 522D-524F = Wehrli fr. 46-8. Taken as an official philosophy by J. Tondriaux, 'La Tryphé. Philosophie royale ptolemaïque', *Rev. Et. Anc.* 50 (1948), 49 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Plut., *Cleom.* 13, based on Phylarchus, *FGH* 81 F 44, cited by Athen. IV, 141-2.

<sup>18</sup> Aristeas, *Letter to Philocrates* 263; cf. 191 and 211. On the work, O. Murray, *JTS* 18 (1967), 337 ff., esp. 356 f. on pride.

great men who in positions of elevation behave in company as equals, 'contract' themselves rather than puffing themselves up and set themselves against pomp. The exempla he uses are kings, Alexander, Dionysius, Demetrius and Pyrrhus.<sup>19</sup> The thought is not far from that of Pliny in the *Panegyric* (above).

How then are we to resolve this conflict: understanding and encouragement of regal *semnotēs* on the one hand, disapproval of pomp and remoteness on the other? No need to balance the two attitudes out, or to assign greater authority to the one or the other. What is illuminating is to grasp the source of the conflict, for it is here that the gap between Greek and Roman is shown up. The Greek tradition feels no hostility to the institution of monarchy (only to the selfish autocrat, the *tyrannos*). If kings were acceptable, so was their need to stand above their subjects and so were the ceremonial techniques for achieving the required distance. But in the hellenistic world it was through diplomatic contact that Greeks most frequently had dealings with kings. Regal approachability, willingness to listen and to transact business with dispatch were essential for the smooth running of the familiar pattern of honours and benefactions (*euergesiai*).<sup>20</sup> The same situations are met again and again in discussions of regal behaviour: the conduct of business (*chrēmatismos*), the reception of petitioners (*enteuxis*), the royal progress which opened another opportunity for petitions (*exelasis*), and social contact as over the dinner table (*homilia*). The virtues of a king who responded to Greek diplomatic pressure, rather than devoting his time away from the battlefield to drinking and sex, were to be approachable (*euprosodos*) and affable (*euprosēgoros*). The price was a sacrifice of distance. A compromise, such as that recommended by Isocrates to Nicocles, was necessary, steering between the dangers of pomp and humiliation. Best that the king should be magnificent not in externals but in spirit: *megalopsychia* is a favourite regal virtue, and of course compatible with the benefactions of a *Euergetes*.<sup>21</sup>

## II

Much about the situation of the hellenistic king is also applicable to the Roman emperor, as Millar has demonstrated. Certainly Greek authors of the imperial period, from Plutarch to Themistius and Libanius continue to emphasize the hellenistic virtues of approachability to petitioners.<sup>22</sup> Since emperors inherited the mantle of diplomatic relations with the Greeks from their hellenistic predecessors, that is appropriate enough. Yet there are substantial differences between Roman attitudes and Greek, and the quite different nature of Roman ambivalence reflects the different nature of the Roman monarchy.

There is a lack of concern in the Latin sources with the issues prominent in the Greek. *Semnotēs* is not a quality Roman emperors are felt to need to any special degree.<sup>23</sup> Of course *gravitas*, *auctoritas* and *dignitas* and even *maiestas* should mark their comportment. Claudius' *auctoritas* was said to desert him whenever he rose from his seat: but that was unseemly in any Roman magistrate, not just an emperor.<sup>24</sup> On the other side, imperial reactions to petitioners attract little attention. There are few anecdotes to compare with that on the affable Augustus, who teases a bashful petitioner that he is not offering a penny to an elephant. The story of Vespasian and the muleteer who stopped the car is told to illustrate the emperor's wit, not his attitude to petitioners.<sup>25</sup> The Latin authors turn the limelight on other issues.

In reality the power of the Roman emperors was absolute and autocratic. Did they

<sup>19</sup> Ariston's work survives in a précis in the Herculaneum papyrus of Philodemus, *Peri Kakiōn*, ed. Jensen, 1911. Text in Wehrli, *Schule* vi, Ariston fr. 13-14.

<sup>20</sup> e.g. Veyne, *Le Pain*, 228 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Isocrates, *ad Nic.* II, 32-4. *Megalopsychia* is particularly prominent as a regal virtue in Polybius: see Welwei (above n. 14), 143; in general U. Knoche, 'Magnitudo Animi', *Philol. Suppl.* 37, 3 (1935).

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Plut., *Polit. Parang.* 31, 823A-D (on the statesman rather than emperor); Aristides, *Eis Bas.* IX, 23-4; Menander Rhetor, p. 375, 9 f. Spengel; Themist., *or.* xv, 190C, etc.

<sup>23</sup> For a Greek recommendation of imperial

*semnotēs*, cf. Dio of Prusa, I, 70 ff. contrasting Basileia and Tyrannis. Marcus, *Meditations* VI, 30, 1 contrasts genuine *semnotēs* and false *týphos*.

<sup>24</sup> The idea of *maiestas* perhaps comes closest to *semnotēs*: see esp. Plin., *Pan.* 4, 6 on the *dignitas* and *maiestas* of Trajan's appearance, emphasizing that 'nihil maiestati humanitate detrahitur'. On the 'auctoritas dignitasque formae' of Claudius, Suet., *Claud.* 30. Similarly *Vesp.* 7, 2 for the lack of these qualities; *Tit.* 8, 2 for his behaviour at the games 'maiestate salva'.

<sup>25</sup> Suet., *Aug.* 53, 2 for his *comitas* to petitioners; *Vesp.* 23, 2 on the muleteer.

feel the need of the trappings of absolute power? Alföldi, working in the Continental tradition that produced Schramm, Kantorowicz and Weinstock, was very sensitive to the ceremonial elements expressing autocratic remoteness. Taking issue with the Mommsenian image of the Principate as a republican magistracy and with the traditional polarisation of Principate and Dominate, he was able to argue that many of the ceremonial elements of the late empire were emerging from the first century onwards. Even discounting 'bad' or 'mad' rulers like Gaius, it is clear that the court style of such 'good' princes as the Antonines served to surround the autocrat with semi-religious awe: the imperial presence is protected by *admissionales*, shielded, as he argued, from disrespectful babble by *silentarii*.<sup>26</sup> The palace with its long corridors and apsidal reception room was a mysterious *adyton*.<sup>27</sup> The complicated gradations of the imperial wardrobe ensured that the wearing of the simple citizen's toga was an exception.<sup>28</sup> The pragmatic imperial procurator Pliny admits openly that it is the practice to approach his master *religiose*.<sup>29</sup> For Alföldi the religious ceremonial represents the essence of Roman monarchy, while the republican element, the conduct of the princeps as a simple citizen, is a subordinate modification. Only a minute fraction of the population, the senate, cared about that sort of thing.<sup>30</sup>

But in so discounting the voice of a minority, we abandon the evidence of the main sources for the Principate; we suppose that their ideology was atypical, shared neither by the majority of the population nor by the emperors themselves; and we are then able to conclude that in reality the Principate shared the characteristics of other ancient (or mediaeval) monarchies. What is lost in this attempt to resolve ambivalence by rejecting one side of the evidence is the peculiar historical situation which marks off the Principate from other manifestations of autocracy. The Principate was established by an act of denial (*recusatio*), ritually perpetuated from reign to reign.<sup>31</sup> It is this pose of denial that itself constitutes the dominant feature of imperial ceremonial; and though 'monarchical' elements seeped in inexorably, they were only admitted in so far as they were deemed not to contradict the basic pose. One should not be afraid to attribute a large degree of voluntary self-deceit to the actors. The younger Pliny managed to address his letters to Trajan as 'Domine' after publicly praising him for refusing the name.<sup>32</sup>

The salient features of imperial behaviour are well-attested in the sources. True, the senatorial sources make clear which behaviour they approve or disapprove, and are themselves the interested parties. But they do record how emperors actually did conduct themselves, and so reveal that the majority of them paid close attention to senatorial feelings. True too that much of the behaviour is no more than a matter of social etiquette, and becomes more palpably so with the passage of time. But the anthropologist has taught us to neglect the ritualized act at our peril. Ritual and the apparently superficial may be read as expressing underlying truths about a society. The argument of the final section (IV) is that imperial etiquette does express such truths. We may start by summarizing the most familiar features of this etiquette. All flow from the fact that in his sixth and seventh consulships Caesar Augustus having acquired total control returned, so he claimed, the Republic to the hands of the senate and people—a claim which posterity has often found baffling.<sup>33</sup>

### *Recusatio*

Alexander's successors advertised their magnificence by taking the title of *basileus*. Augustus and his successors advertised their magnificence more by what they refused than

<sup>26</sup> On the elements of the *salutatio*, Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 27–38. The material was collected by L. Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*<sup>9</sup> (1922), I, 90–103. Note however that *silentarii* are only attested under Hadrian, and we have no evidence on their function.

<sup>27</sup> Compare Pliny's description of Domitian's palace at *Pan.* 49, 1, 'arcana illa cubilia' etc.

<sup>28</sup> *Repräsentation*, 127 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Plin., *NH praef.* 11 'te quidem in excelsissimo generis humani fastigio positum . . . religiose adiri etiam a salutantibus scio'. Cited at *Repräsentation*, 45.

<sup>30</sup> *Repräsentation*, 25–8 plays down the 'bürgerlich-einfach' style.

<sup>31</sup> J. Béranger, *Recherches sur l'aspect idéologique du principat* (1953), 137 ff. on the ritual of refusal is illuminating, even if more than ritual was involved in 'Tiberius' case.

<sup>32</sup> On the self-contradictory evidence on the address 'Domine' see Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 91 f.; Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, 557 f.

<sup>33</sup> For denial of even the pretence of restoration see F. Millar, *JRS* 63 (1973), 50–67; E. A. Judge, 'Res Publica Restituta: a modern illusion?' in *Studies in honour of E. T. Salmon* (1974), 279–311. On the significance of ritual, Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*<sup>2</sup> (1973) has important insights to offer.

by what they accepted. Augustus takes pains to remind posterity of powers and titles he never took, the dictatorship offered twice, and the guardianship of morals and laws with supreme power. He is elusive on the subject of what he accepted. Tiberius' panegyrist praises him more loudly for the triumphs he turned down than for the few he celebrated. Trajan's panegyrist praises him at inordinate length for only taking three consulships—as yet, for he presses him to a fourth.<sup>34</sup>

Refusal was not just Béranger's accession ritual. It was a ritual performed throughout the reign of each emperor, in an astonishing variety of contexts. Not to be a king, not to be a god incarnate was not enough. Each title was worth turning down or abstaining from: consul, *Pater Patriae*, the *praenomen Imperatoris*—all except the modest power of *tribunicia potestas* that veiled the reality.<sup>35</sup> The emperor's victory was perpetual; and the fact best advertised by refusing triumphs. Too many triumphal arches implied defeat.<sup>36</sup> It was a glorious gesture to reject cults and temples; but it was even worthwhile to melt down silver statues to emphasize what you were not.<sup>37</sup> Of course not every emperor was equally effective at this ritual; aberration is a sure sign of insecurity.<sup>38</sup>

What makes the refusal ritual more striking is that it had not been previously thought of, let alone practised. It never occurred to hellenistic kings to rebuff offers of *isotheoi timai*; had they done so, in the context of diplomatic contact it would have been no more than a snub, a hint to look elsewhere for *euergesiai*.<sup>39</sup> Equally important, there is nothing republican about the practice of refusal. Honours were fought for tooth and nail and did not fall into the laps of the unwilling.<sup>40</sup> Philosophy perhaps required that the electorate should invite the candidate, rather than letting him canvass them; but, as Cicero points out to Cato, this simply did not square with the facts of political life.<sup>41</sup> It is only with the great dynasts of the late republic that refusal becomes a possibility: Pompey with his implausible show of unwillingness, and the dictator Caesar with a series of refusals and denials for which he gets no credit.<sup>42</sup> Refusal is not republican: it is a gesture designed to substantiate an elaborate pretence that things are not as they seem.

### *Senatus populusque Romanus*

The emperor's power involved the loss of control of the traditional organs of government, the senate and the *populus Romanus* constituted in various assemblies. A studied display of respect for senate and people sustained the illusion of the supremacy of those bodies, while in fact it ceremonially demonstrated the supremacy of the emperor.

Towards the senate in session and its officers, a show of deference became traditional. The emperor rose to his feet at the right moment, greeted his colleagues by name. His respect showed in his address of the high assembly: Tiberius at least called the senators 'Masters', forbidding the use of the same term of himself, as he forbade any language

<sup>34</sup> *Res Gestae* 5–6 on honours refused; Velleius 11, 122; Plin., *Pan.* 56–60 on Trajan's recalcitrance against a third consulship; 78, the senate 'commands' him to take a fourth.

<sup>35</sup> The *praenomen Imperatoris* was refused by Tiberius and Claudius, but accepted by Nero, Vespasian and his successors: R. Combès, *Imperator* (1966), 151 f. *Pater patriae* was regularly deferred, explicitly attested for Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Pius: A. Alföldi, *Der Vater des Vaterlandes im römischen Denken* (1971), 98 f. For etiquette on consulships, M. Hammond, *The Antonine Monarchy* (1959), 87 f.

<sup>36</sup> See Plin., *Pan.* 16–17 for dismissiveness of Domitian's triumphs. Suet., *Dom.* 13, 2 for the witticism on his triumphal arches, *arkei* ('Enough!').

<sup>37</sup> M. P. Charlesworth, 'The refusal of divine honours: an Augustan formula', *PBSR* 15 (1939), 1 ff. with Chr. Habicht in *Le Culte des Souverains* (Fond. Hardt xix, 1972), 55 ff. Honorific month-names were also worth refusing: K. Scott, *YCS* 2 (1931), 199 ff. On the etiquette over statues see Plin., *Pan.* 52, 1–4, with K. Scott, *TAPA* 62 (1931),

101 ff. This too is an Augustan formula: Suet., *Aug.* 52.

<sup>38</sup> See Veyne, *Le Pain*, 717–19 on the insecurity of Gaius and the other 'mad' Caesars.

<sup>39</sup> See Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte*<sup>2</sup> (1970), 160 ff.

<sup>40</sup> So Béranger, *Recherches*, 157 f.

<sup>41</sup> *Pro Mur.* 74 'usus, vita, mores, civitas ipsa respuit'. Cato lost his consulship by this attitude according to Plut., *Cat. min.* 49, 3 f.

<sup>42</sup> On Pompey, Dio xxxvi, 24, 5 f. with the sceptical comment of Caelius *ap. Cic.*, *ad fam.* viii, 1, 3. That Caesar as dictator made a practice of refusal is implied by Dio xlii, 19, 3–4, though he fails throughout to specify (cf. xliii, 14, 7; 46, 1; xliii, 7, 2). The prime instance of refusal for self-advertisement is the Lupercalia incident: Cic., *Phil.* ii, 87 'populi iussu regnum detulisse, Caesarem uti noluisse'—he resists an official command. Note also the complaint at Suet., *Jul.* 79, 1, 'ereptam sibi gloriam recusandi'. Cicero refusing divine honours (*ad Q.f.* i, 1, 26) sits oddly in this company; but he was very vain, and admits he won praise thereby.

that suggested his superiority in anything but dedication.<sup>43</sup> The ritual exhortation to the senate to undertake the burdens of government meant more in practical terms under the earlier emperors; but for all of them it had the effect of emphasizing not only the pretence of the senate's superiority, but the actuality that this lay in the autocrat's gift.<sup>44</sup>

The people lost its function of an elective assembly in A.D. 14. But the *comitia* were preserved for their ceremonial value, 'longum illud carmen', tedious but powerfully symbolic. Even before the abolition, Augustus had turned canvassing into ceremonial, 'supplicabat more solemniori'; Vitellius and Trajan kept up the ritual. Again, there is nothing republican about this. The nobles loathed canvassing, the humiliation of kneeling before the rabble 'fracto animo atque humili'. Only an emperor could regard self-degradation as magnificent.<sup>45</sup>

But the turn-out for the *comitia* was poor: and for a mass audience emperors looked to the games and circuses. Veyne interprets imperial *spectacula* as a venue for the display of magnificence, serving a function analogous to that of a royal court. Yet an essential part of the peacock display was the show of deference.<sup>46</sup> Claudius addressed his audience as 'Masters', as Tiberius had addressed the senate (Suet., *Claud.* 21, 5). This is surely because the theatre and *spectacula* in some sense replaced the *comitia* as an 'official' assembly of the *populus Romanus*: one sign of that is the rapid extension of hierarchical seating arrangements from Augustus on, separating not only senate and equites from plebs, but married from unmarried, civilian from soldier and even, in all likelihood, tribe from tribe as at the elections themselves.<sup>47</sup> Games offered the best opportunity for expressing the will of the people: Augustus heard protests against his marriage laws, Tiberius and Caligula against their taxes. To refuse was churlish; to demand silence was insolent. The emperor as president then did well to make a ritual of conceding trivia like the lives of gladiators, or the victory of his least favourite team of horses.<sup>48</sup> The ritual emphasized that the emperor had the power to say 'no'.

### *Libertas*

In so far as the individual citizen had any rights and freedoms under the republic, it was the laws that guaranteed them. The laws were powerless against the will of the emperor: the *libertas* of the empire was only what the autocrat voluntarily conceded to his subjects. *Libertas Augusta* could be advertised at Claudius' accession because Claudius had made himself the guarantor of freedom by suppressing the senate's fumbling attempts to assert its own sovereignty.<sup>49</sup>

Freedom of speech was an area that attracted much attention. Since the execution of Cicero, no man had been free to speak against the dynast with power of life and death, except to the extent that he permitted it. Two opposed tendencies are observable under the Principate. Emperors could curb disrespectful speech by invoking the law of *maiestas*; and could be reassured of the loyalty of their subjects by flattering address at every opportunity. Yet again and again emperors refuse to admit an unambiguous application of the *maiestas* law, and periodically claim to abolish it. Moreover, they advertise the restoration of freedom of speech by setting their faces against *adulatio*, and enduring critical remarks.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Esp. Suet., *Tib.* 27-31, cf. Dio LVII, 11, 3; Dio LX, 6, 1 (Claudius); Suet., *Ner.* 10, 2; Dio LXVI, 10, 5 (Vespasian); SHA *Hadr.* 8, 1-11; *Pius* 6, 5; *Marcus* 10, 2-9; Dio LXXIV, 3, 4 (Pertinax).

<sup>44</sup> For the ritual exhortation, Plin., *Pan.* 66 'omnes ante te eadem ista dixerunt, nemini tamen ante te creditum est' (1). See Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 131-3; contra P. A. Brunt, *PBSR* 43 (1975), 24-5.

<sup>45</sup> Plin., *Pan.* 63 describes the ceremony and Trajan's participation. Augustus and Vitellius: Suet., *Aug.* 56, 1; Tac., *Hist.* 2, 91. Cic., *pro Planc.* 12 and 49 f. for the aristocratic attitude.

<sup>46</sup> Veyne, *Le Pain*, 682-701. In stressing the peacock element (684) he ignores *civilitas*, excellently documented in this context by A. Cameron, *Circus Factions* (1976), 157 ff.

<sup>47</sup> Suet., *Aug.* 44 'spectandi confusissimum ac solutissimum morem correxerat ordinavitque'. The

idea of the *spectacula* as a sounding board for popular opinion is already in Cic., *pro Sestio* 106. Further, C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (1980), 363 ff. On hierarchical seating arrangements, T. Bollinger, *Theatralis Licentia* (1969), 13 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Protest under Augustus, Tiberius and Gaius: Suet., *Aug.* 34, 2; Tac., *Ann.* 1, 77-8; Jos., *A.J.* XIX, 24-7. Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 162 ff. for the etiquette.

<sup>49</sup> So Chr. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome* (1950), 136-8.

<sup>50</sup> Evidence for abolitions of the *maiestas* charge is assembled by R. Bauman, *Impietas in Principem* (1974), 191 ff. It should be stressed that the issue was the reaction to verbal attack; the emperor's right to suppress overt treason was unquestioned.

Doubtless there was a real contrast between the reign of a Domitian and a Trajan. Yet the truth was that *libertas* was only conceded on the assumption that the subjects would voluntarily use their freedom to speak in favour of the emperor. Moreover, the grant of *libertas* could enhance the protestations of loyalty. The opening chapters of Pliny's *Panegyric* are a brilliant illustration. Trajan has forbidden flattering addresses in the senate, and only permits the consular *gratiarum actio* because it is enjoined by a *senatusconsultum* (4, 1-2); the orator must struggle not to offend the emperor's ears by excessive praise (3, 2). The reason is that such praise is counterproductive: it appears to be expressed out of fear (2, 2), and insincere talk of virtue only rubs in consciousness of vice (3, 4). In fact, Trajan's suppression of *adulatio* resulted in the greater credibility of the 'spontaneous' *acclamations* (3, 1) and of the formal panegyrics which were exceptionally permitted. As Tacitus knew, a display of *libertas* could serve as a weapon of inverted sycophancy. A certain level of verbal opposition was indeed tolerated in some reigns: but the level of opposition reported by the sources dwindles from fairly sharp criticisms by senators of Augustus and Tiberius to the jibes of court jesters under the Antonines.<sup>51</sup>

### *Privatus*

The emperor's power placed him above the law: who would dare accuse him, or indeed a member of his family? To abuse this position was tyranny: but it could be ritualized if the emperor pretended to act 'ad privati hominis modum'.<sup>52</sup>

Trajan made a ceremony of swearing the consular oath to obey the laws (he was not of course the first). His panegyrist brought out the implications: he has often heard the claim made 'princeps super leges' (*Pan.* 65). What a paradoxical inversion! How gracious of Trajan to submit himself to the status of an ordinary citizen! Thus a few ritual words (naturally no *actions* were involved) gave the audience opportunity to rejoice in the emperor's uncontrollability.

The Pisistratids and certain other Greek tyrants are said to have submitted to appearance in court. As Plato points out, to admit someone your judge is to admit him your superior. Even to appear as witness might be a potent gesture by an autocrat. Augustus went to court to beg the life of Castricius, who saved him from a conspiracy. Tiberius set out for the forum to stand bail for Urganilla: the gesture cowed her accusers into withdrawing the case. Later emperors do not seem to have used this technique. But at least they did not allow their jurisdiction wholly to eclipse the public courts. That fiscal cases were heard by a public tribunal increased the emperor's *gloria*: Principate and Liberty used the same forum.<sup>53</sup>

For lack of better opportunities, dress might be used to symbolize 'private' status. Augustus wore (on occasion) homespun togas; for him it was a voluntary act, for others it was compulsory, since his issue of an edict. The obsession of late imperial biographies with the private dress of the Antonines may owe something to reaction against Diocletian and his ceremonial finery. Nevertheless their practice of dressing as private citizens is evidently authentic, since there was a division of the imperial wardrobe called *privata vestis*.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The ambivalence of imperial attitudes is neatly summed up in Tacitus' epigram, 'libertatem metuebat, adulationem oderat', *Ann.* 2, 87. He is well aware that the exercise of *libertas* could function as refined *adulatio*, e.g. *Ann.* 3, 70. For examples of imperial 'patience' of free speech Suet., *Jul.* 75, 5; *Aug.* 51, 2-3 and 56; *Tib.* 28; *Vesp.* 13. Seen in action in Marcus' *Meditations*, P. A. Brunt, *JRS* 64 (1974), 13 f. For jesters, SHA *Pius* 11, 8; *Marcus* 8, 1.

<sup>52</sup> See Béranger, 'L'accession d'Auguste et l'idéologie du "privatus"', *Principatus* (1975), 243 ff. with *Recherches*, 150. For the use of *privatus*, e.g. Suet., *Tib.* 26, 1: 'paulo minus quam privatum'; SHA *Hadr.* 9, 8; *Pius* 7, 6; 11, 1 ff.; *Marcus* 5,

7-8; *Sev. Alex.* 4, 1. Similarly the use of *idiotes*, e.g. Dio LVII, 11, 7 (Tiberius); LX, 6, 1-2 (Claudius); LXV, 7, 1 (Vitellius); LXXI, 35, 4 (Marcus); Herodian II, 4, 9 (Pertinax).

<sup>53</sup> Pisistratids: Aristotle, *Politics* 1315 b 21 ff. and *Ath. Pol.* 16. Augustus: Suet., *Aug.* 56. Tiberius: Tac., *Ann.* 2, 34. Pliny on Trajan's fiscal cases, *Pan.* 36.

<sup>54</sup> Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 127 f. on the *privata vestis*. Augustus and togas, Suet., *Aug.* 73 and 40, 5. For doubts about the SHA, Alföldi, 128 n. 5. But Marcus is clear enough: *Med.* I, 16, 8; VI, 30, 2, cf. Brunt, *PBSR* 1975, 24.



*Officia amicorum*

Social relations found concrete expression at Rome in the exchange of *officia*, the etiquette of 'services' of a purely ceremonial nature paid by inferior to superior (*cliens* to *patronus*, *amicus* to *amicus*) in exchange for more material benefits.<sup>55</sup> The emperor was the greatest patron of all, and owed nothing to any citizen. There were numerous occasions, from the *salutatio* of the morning levee onwards, when his *amici* were allowed to pay their respects (a privilege). But this was unremarkable. More dramatic evidence of his superiority was the care he might take to be seen to pay respects to his social inferiors.

Numerous emperors are credited with accepting the hospitality of their friends, attending their celebrations and festivals, and visiting them when sick.<sup>56</sup> So Augustus at the bedside of a senator he hardly knew dissuaded him from suicide by starvation. It was a mark of honour to be invited to ride in the imperial carriage; though when the honour was extended from senators to Claudius' freedman Narcissus, something had gone very wrong.<sup>57</sup> *Amicus principis* is treated by historians as a semi-technical title, rightly. But Trajan, says Pliny, restored to it the reality of friendship by condescending 'in omnia familiaritatis officia'. He escorted a retiring prefect to the shore, and bade him farewell with a kiss (*Pan.* 85).

Another sign of condescension was to modify the *officia* his subjects owed to the princes. Tiberius made the levee less time-consuming by letting his friends off greeting and kissing him individually: he welcomed them *en masse*.<sup>58</sup> Claudius and others relieved the public of the duty to celebrate their family's birthdays.<sup>59</sup> Trajan excused his friends from writing notes of apology for missing the levee. Marcus recommends Pius for his public-spirit: 'his friends were under no obligation to join him at his table or to attend his progresses and when they were detained by other engagements, it made no difference to him'.<sup>60</sup>

Entrances and exits to and from Rome were always special occasions, and a patron hoped for a formidable escort of friends. Augustus by slipping in and out of the city after nightfall saved his friends considerable inconvenience. He also thereby ensured that the imperial *adventus* or *profectio*, when it occurred, was a gala occasion.<sup>61</sup> Tiberius was irritated to find that the return from an outing to the suburbs was elevated into a triumphal entry: he never could face the *adventus* which would have marked his return from his last long holiday. The *adventus* itself offered opportunities for condescension. Trajan made his first entry to Rome remarkable by coming in on foot, and by kissing his friends—just as if he were an 'ordinary' person, the mere patrician consular who left, not the autocrat who returned.<sup>62</sup>

This summary of some of the salient features of imperial social conduct does not, of course, represent the pattern of what all emperors did all the time. Every autocrat needs constant reassurance of his power. Not every emperor was strong and confident enough of his subjects' submissiveness to rely exclusively on the ritual of condescension. Even the most 'civil' emperors also made occasional use of Alföldi's 'hellenistic' or 'oriental' despotic techniques: Augustus himself wore raised heels. It was a matter of steering a middle course. 'Reverentiam ille terrore, alius amorem humilitate captavit': Pliny claims

<sup>55</sup> W. Kroll, *Die Kultur der ciceronischen Zeit* (1933), II, 65 ff. for the republic; Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte* I, 90 ff. on the empire. Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 40 ff. for the ceremonial of the *salutatio*.

<sup>56</sup> Augustus, Suet., *Aug.* 53, 3; Dio LVI, 26, 2; Tiberius, Suet., *Tib.* 31, 2; Dio LVII, 11, 7; Claudius, Dio LX, 12, 1, cf. Suet., *Claud.* 35, 1; Vitellius, Dio LXV, 7, 1; Vespasian, LXVI, 10, 6; Trajan, LXVIII, 7, 3 and Eutropius VIII, 4; Hadrian, Dio LXIX, 7, 3-4; SHA *Hadr.* 9, 7; Pius, SHA *Pius* 11, 1-7; Pertinax, Dio LXXIV, 3, 4; Severus Alexander, SHA *Sev. Alex.* 4, 3.

<sup>57</sup> See Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 110. Add for Trajan, Eutropius VIII, 4, Dio LXVIII, 7, 3; Hadrian, Dio LXIX, 7, 3. Narcissus joins Claudius in the Messalina crisis: Tac., *Ann.* 11, 33.

<sup>58</sup> On kissing at the levee, Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 40-2; Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte* I, 95.

<sup>59</sup> On discouragement of birthday celebrations, Suet., *Tib.* 26, 1; Dio LX, 5, 6-7 (Claudius); SHA *Hadr.* 8, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Notes of apology: Plin., *Pan.* 48, 2; Marcus *Med.* 1, 16, 2. Yet see Fronto, *ad Verum* 1, 3, p. 112 van den Hout, *ad Pium* 5, p. 159 for such notes.

<sup>61</sup> Millar, *Emperor*, 31 on the ritual. For Augustus, Suet., *Aug.* 53, 2; Dio LIV, 25, 4. For the later development of *adventus* ceremonials, S. McCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (1981), 17 ff.

<sup>62</sup> Tiberius, Tac., *Ann.* 3, 47; Trajan, Plin., *Pan.* 22-4, imitated by Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 47, 3 on Theodosius.

Trajan is the first emperor to avoid both failings.<sup>65</sup> All that is argued here is that refusal and condescension is the historically distinctive element in Roman monarchic style; and that we hear so much about it not simply because of the myopic and unrealistic expectations of the senatorial class, but because it was put into practice and to good effect.

## III

One of the signs that the ritual of deference represented the Roman monarchic style *par excellence* is that it is difficult adequately to express any other conduct in Latin except in the language of disapproval. *Modestia, moderatio, comitas, civilitas* describe imperial condescension with approbation: the opposite is vicious, *superbia, arrogantia*. As has been observed, there is no real equivalent to Greek talk of *semmotēs*. No Latin author is to be found justifying the behaviour of a Caligula or a Domitian in terms of *gravitas* or *dignitas* or *maiestas*. Of course, *civilitas* had its opponents. Certain emperors who adopted this style are said to have met resistance from the officials of their court. But there is nothing to justify the assumption that emperors and their retainers spoke in terms of one set of ideals, and the senators of another. The *Meditations* of Marcus confirm how deeply imbued with the 'senatorial' ideals an emperor might be, even in his unguarded moments.<sup>64</sup>

It is worth, then, looking at the language of the ideals associated with this pattern of imperial behaviour a little more closely. What emerges is the distinctiveness of the imperial ideal, corresponding to the distinctiveness of the pattern of behaviour. There are, to be sure, links with both republican and Greek thought, but these should not be allowed to obscure what is new and different about imperial thought. Two strands in particular lead from pre-imperial thought to combine in a new single ideal.

*Moderatio* is the quality which Pliny most insistently attributes to Trajan: 'how much I have already said about moderation', the panegyrist exclaims, 'and how much more still remains to be said'.<sup>65</sup> It was also a virtue which Tiberius took care to advertise.<sup>66</sup> Here on the face of it is an idea deriving from Greek kingship thought. *Metriotēs* was regarded by both Plato and Aristotle as a quality vital for the preservation of monarchic power. In illustration, Aristotle offered an anecdote about the Spartan king Theopompus: reproached by his family for introducing the ephorate and so weakening his royal power, he reassures them that he has thereby made it more long-lasting.<sup>67</sup> *Moderatio* was also regarded as a traditional quality of Roman republican magistrates, a view reflected in Valerius Maximus' collection of *exempla* of the quality.<sup>68</sup>

Doubtless the younger Pliny would have reckoned the *moderatio* of Trajan as linked to the restraint recommended in Greek philosophy and republican tradition. But there is a difference. It is caught most strikingly in the opposites to the respective ideals. The antithesis of *metriotēs* is simply tyranny, with all the violence and contempt for law and convention that involves. The opposite of imperial moderation is more precise and more restricted: it is *arrogantia* or *superbia*, a pride that manifests itself in social relations. In suggesting the restraint of power, *moderatio* overvalues imperial condescension. The moderation of Theopompus, or of the republican examples Valerius cites, involved real restrictions in the powers held.<sup>69</sup> For an emperor that was hardly possible. The actualities

<sup>65</sup> Plin., *Pan.* 4, 5. For the idea of a middle course see Ammianus xxv, 4, 7 on Julian, 'civilitati admodum studens, tantum sibi adrogans quantum a contemptu et insolentia distare existimabat'.

<sup>64</sup> Court pressure against *civilitas* is alleged at SHA *Hadr.* 20, 1; *Pius* 6, 4; *Sev. Alex.* 20, 3; it may of course reflect fourth-century tensions. On the importance of the evidence of Marcus, see P. A. Brunt, *JRS* 64 (1974), 10 ff., and *PBSR* 1975, 24 f.

<sup>65</sup> *Pan.* 56, 3. On the theme see F. Trisoglio, *La Personalità di Plinio il Giovane . . .* (*Mem. Acc. Sc. Torino, Cl. Sc. Mor.* ser. 4, 25 (1972)), 85 ff. and the introduction to M. Durry's commentary (Coll. Budé, 1932).

<sup>66</sup> For contemporary assertions of Tiberius' *moderatio*, see Velleius II, 122 and the coin series, *BMCRE* 1, 132; cf. B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (1976), 87 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Plato, *Laws* III, 691C ff. on *metriotēs* as a key factor in the Spartan monarchy. Theopompus: Aristotle, *Politics* 1313 a 26 ff.; repeated by Plut., *Lyc.* 7, 2; *ad princ. inerud.* 779e.

<sup>68</sup> Cicero and Livy claim it as a traditional republican quality: see J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le Vocabulaire Latin des Relations et des Partis Politiques sous la République* (1963), 263. A whole chapter is devoted to *moderatio* by Val. Max. IV, 1.

<sup>69</sup> The majority of Valerius' republican *exempla* reflect the importance of the Roman tradition of the limitation of magisterial powers. Note that his *moderatio* also overlaps with the idea of *clementia*, e.g. IV, 1, 15 (Bibulus). The ideas are similarly linked at Suet., *Jul.*, 75, 1 and Sen., *de clem.* I, 11, 1.

of power did not derive from the sort of formal titles refused (or from the body which offered them), and refusal thus had the effect of increasing the gap between realities and appearances. Tacitus, who cared little for pretences, understood. He sees the moderation of Tiberius as a cold, calculated fraud: so by a speciously moderate speech of refusal he reinforced imperial power, *vim imperii tenuit* (*Ann.* 2, 36). The arrogance of Roman emperors is something seen not in tyrannical actions but in their expression and comportment, like the stiff neck and convoluted speech of Tiberius.<sup>70</sup> Trajan shows his *moderatio* in the modesty of his bearing as he approaches his palace for the first time, in his refusal to allow powers, real or titular, to change his conduct towards others. In the *Panegyric* the idea of *modestia* is almost synonymous; closely allied are qualities like *humanitas*, *reverentia* and *verecundia*, manifested when an emperor shakes hands with his subjects. That monster of pride, Domitian, initially misled people into taking him for the right sort of ruler: it was by his maidenly blush.<sup>71</sup> Imperial *moderatio* centres on gestures, not on actions.

As a second strand we may distinguish the idea of the 'common touch' represented by *comitas* and its associates. The aristocratic tradition of the republic expected a magistrate to treat his inferiors austere: *gravitas* and *severitas* are his characteristic qualities.<sup>72</sup> Only in certain circumstances could a more relaxed attitude be approved. The candidate for office above all did well to show *comitas* to his potential supporters.<sup>73</sup> In the exercise of power, it was provincial government that especially called on qualities like *comitas*, *facilitas* and *humanitas*.<sup>74</sup> Cicero's recommendations in this field manifest their debt to the Greek tradition on the approachability of kings: the models he points to are Philip the father of Alexander and Xenophon's Cyrus.<sup>75</sup> Emperors too, like republican governors, played the role of kings in the Greek East, and were duly praised for *facilitas* in admissions and *comitas* to petitioners, though, as has been seen, this topic is less prominent in Latin sources than Greek.<sup>76</sup>

What is more remarkable is that 'senatorial' sources praise emperors for their *comitas* towards the city plebs, particularly in 'joining in the pleasures of the crowd' at games, and in allowing mass audiences to watch them sing or even bathe.<sup>77</sup> Such blatant courting of *popularitas* could hardly be expected to meet with upper-class approval did it not fit into the ritually required pattern of condescension. The aristocratic tradition found it hard to countenance any infringement of *dignitas*; the pursuit of popularity was an unworthy act of *levitas*.<sup>78</sup> But an emperor's *dignitas* was unassailable, and ideal demanded that he stoop: thus even stooping to the masses now can meet approval.

Two conceptual strands, then, which have their background in hellenistic and republican thought, come together under the empire to form something new. *Moderatio*, the restraint of power, and *comitas*, the friendly treatment of inferiors, meet at the point where each is reduced to the social etiquette of imperial condescension. But the ideology behind the etiquette is best revealed by a term that is, appropriately, a new one. *Civilitas*<sup>79</sup> aptly evokes the behaviour of a ruler who is still a citizen in a society of citizens, where the freedom and standing of the individual citizen is protected by the law, not the whim of an autocrat. The emperor, like Tiberius, is seen to act as an *aequalis civis* not an *eminens princeps*.<sup>80</sup> Of course, it is only by an act of voluntary sacrifice that the autocrat chooses to

<sup>70</sup> Tac., *Ann.* 1, 33 on Germanicus: 'iuveni civile ingenium, mira comitas et diversa ab Tiberii sermone vultu, adrogantibus et obscuris'.

<sup>71</sup> Plin., *Pan.* 23, 6 approach to palace; 24, 2 shaking hands. Domitian's blush: Tac., *Hist.* 4, 40; Suet., *Dom.* 18, 2; bitterly attacked at Tac., *Agr.* 45; Plin., *Pan.* 48, 4.

<sup>72</sup> See Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire*, 279-90.

<sup>73</sup> A useful collection of evidence in K. H. Heuer, *Comitas-facilitas-liberalitas: Studien zur gesellschaftlichen Kultur der ciceronischen Zeit* (Diss. Münster, 1941). Also Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire*, 211-15. See esp. Cic., *Comm. Pet.* 16, 49-50.

<sup>74</sup> Discussed by R. Combès, *Imperator*, 350-2.

<sup>75</sup> Cic., *off.* 11, 48 (hellenistic kings); 1, 90 (Philip); *ad Q.f.* 1, 1, 23 (Cyrus).

<sup>76</sup> Plin., *Pan.* 47-8 is more concerned with the

*salutatio* as a social than as a business occasion: Trajan admits men of learning.

<sup>77</sup> *Comitas* at games, Tac., *Ann.* 1, 76; Suet., *Tit.* 8, 2; recitation, Suet., *Ner.* 10, 2, cf. 1; bath, Suet., *Tit.* 8, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Z. Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (1969), 52, 98 on attitudes of disapproval. For republican criticism of *levitas popularis*, see also Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire*, 518.

<sup>79</sup> For the early development of this word see I. Lana, 'Civilis, civiliter, civilitas in Tacito e Svetonio', *Atti Ac. Sc. Torino*, 106 (1972), 465 ff.; also N. Scivoletto, 'La civilitas del IV secolo e il significato del Breviarium di Eutropio', *Giorn. It. Fil.* 22, n.s. 1 (1970), 14 ff. The lexical material is collected in the *TLL* s.vv. Note also the material s.vv. *incivilis*, *incivilitas*, *inciviliter*.

<sup>80</sup> So Velleius 11, 124, 2 on Tiberius.

play the *civis*. The term is analogous to the *humanitas* attributed to emperors, the willingness to act as if a fellow-mortal, rather than as the god to whose status the emperor approximates. As Pliny puts it, 'Trajan's superiority is the greater because he thinks of himself as one of us [by us he means citizens, even if senators are citizens *par excellence*], and bears in mind that he is a mortal just as much as a ruler over mortals'.<sup>81</sup>

It is significant that this usage of *civilis* only emerges with the collapse of the republic.<sup>82</sup> Cicero may speak of the *societas civilis*, the citizen-state, held together by the bond of law, existing for the mutual benefit of its members, and incompatible with the injustice and pride of tyranny.<sup>83</sup> But his use of *civilis* is still purely descriptive; it never suggests how someone ought to behave.<sup>84</sup> Only after the fabric of the *societas civilis* had been destroyed by the triumphs of dynasts could *civilis* begin to refer to an ideal. The earliest attestations are in Sallust: Marius contrasts his *civile imperium* with the arrogant treatment of the troops by his aristocratic colleagues.<sup>85</sup> The concept becomes common in Livy. It is an ideal broken by the wealthy and overpowerful ruling aristocracy of Carthage, who show no respect for law and convention.<sup>86</sup> In Rome the ideal is infringed by the use of violence by an aristocrat against a tribune; and above all by the uninterrupted tenure of *imperium*.<sup>87</sup> Scipio Africanus emerges as an antecedent of civil emperors by refusing a series of honours—the details are of course fictitious.<sup>88</sup> It is quite clear that it was the behaviour of the civil Augustus that provided the impulse for the development of the ideal. Already in 26 B.C. Messala Corvinus is said to have resigned the novel and powerful post of the city prefecture describing it as an 'incivilis potestas'; and it is the Augustan declaimer Porcius Latro who formulates the epigram 'nothing is so civil or useful as to make a great power a brief one'.<sup>89</sup>

Though Livy invokes the idea with reference to the Republic and even to non-Romans, it is emperors to whom from then on the concept is overwhelmingly applied. A further development should also be observed. Initially the conduct of emperors is described, adjectively or adverbially, as 'civil'. But it is not until the second century A.D. that an abstract noun is formed: the ideal can be described as *civilitas*. Correspondingly *civilis* emerges as an ethical term, applied to the personality of the ideal ruler, not merely to the nature of his conduct.<sup>90</sup> This development represents not so much a change in meaning or attitudes as the final stage of crystallisation. It is precipitated by the unusual method of Suetonius' imperial biographies. Because the author abandons narrative and seeks instead to categorize imperial behaviour under its separate aspects, we find for the first time an attempt to describe the pattern of behaviour of each Caesar in this area. *Civilitas* describes the pattern of a good emperor, *superbia* that of a bad one.<sup>91</sup> Henceforth in imperial biographies and histories an emperor can be described as *civilis* or *incivilis* as a sort of shorthand, indicating that he did or did not live up to a known standard of behaviour.<sup>92</sup> The novelty

<sup>81</sup> *Pan.* 2, 4. 'Unum e nobis,' must refer to *cives*, since the expression comes in a string of first person plurals following 'omnibus civibus entendum' at 2, 1. Doubtless he is thinking primarily of senators, as at *Pan.* 63, 2.

<sup>82</sup> The point is made by Lana (n. 79), 467 f.

<sup>83</sup> On *societas civilis*, see esp. *rep.* I, 49 and *leg.* I, 62; also *de or.* II, 68; *fin.* III, 66; *ND* II, 78.

<sup>84</sup> *TLL* III, 1213 ff. for the distinction 'quid ad *cives* pertinet' and 'quid bonum *civem* decet'. Neither Cic., *fin.* v, 66, nor *leg.* III, 42, classed by *TLL* under the latter, really anticipate the imperial sense, being translations of *politikos*.

<sup>85</sup> Sallust, *BJ* 85, 35. Note also the Sallustian *Letter to Caesar* I, 3, 1 where Caesar is urged to use his victory *civiliter*.

<sup>86</sup> Livy xxxiii, 46, 3; cf. xlv, 32, 5 of the Macedonian court: 'nulli *civilis* animus, neque legum neque libertatis aequae patiens'.

<sup>87</sup> Of violence against tribunes, VII, 5, 2; xxxviii, 56, 9. On unbroken *imperium*, esp. xxvii, 6, 4, 'neque magistratum continuari satis civile'; cf. vi, 40, 7-15.

<sup>88</sup> xxxviii, 56, 12 f. The similarity of Scipio's refused honours to those of Caesar and the presumption of fabrication are discussed by S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 36 f.

<sup>89</sup> For contemporary celebration of Augustus' civility, Ovid, *Trist.* III, 8, 41; IV, 4, 13; cf. Sen., *Contr.* IV, *praef.* 5. Messala's words are reported by Jerome, *Chron.* ann. 728/9 from Suetonius (*Reliquiae*, ed. C. Roth (1858), 290). Latro is quoted by Sen., *Contr.* VII, 8, 7.

<sup>90</sup> *Civilitas* first at Suet., *Aug.* 51, anticipated only by Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* II, 15, 25) translating *politikē* in a different sense. The parallel development of *civilis* is observed by *TLL* III, 1217, 79 ff. Of earlier passages cited, Plin., *NH* xviii, 320 is wrongly construed; and Ovid, *Trist.* IV, 4, 13 is dubious (the form 'quid est *civilis* illo' avoids direct application of the adjective to a person—*what* is more civil, not *who* is more civil). The earliest attestation is thus Plin., *Pan.* 83, 7 'quam *civilis* incesso' of Plotina; followed by Suet., *Tib.* 26 etc.

<sup>91</sup> The relevant sections of the *Lives* are: *Jul.* 75, 5-79; *Aug.* 52-6; *Tib.* 26-32; *Cal.* 22 and 26; *Claud.* 12, cf. 35, 1; *Ner.* 10, 2 (*comitas*); *Vesp.* 12; *Dom.* 12, 3-13. Lana (n. 79), 476 ff., in citing only passages where *civilis* and its associates occur, conceals the extent of documentation of both civil and incivil behaviour in Suetonius.

<sup>92</sup> For the numerous occurrences of the idea in the SHA, Eutropius and elsewhere, see Scivoletto (n. 79).

then is that the pattern of behaviour itself is known and fixed. The first century A.D. represents a period of experiment and fluctuation. By the age of the Antonines the etiquette had become *de rigueur*.<sup>93</sup>

We may ask too how Greek sources handle this subject. Cassius Dio is the most important witness, steeped in the senatorial tradition. In his sketches of the character and style of individual emperors the familiar pattern of behaviour recurs: refusal of honours and flattery, respect to the senate, accessibility and affability, the exchange of courtesies with the aristocracy, the good-natured handling of the plebs in the theatre and at the games, and so on.<sup>94</sup> His Greek background perhaps shows in his tendency to separate off the *topos* of refusal from that of accessibility and sociable behaviour;<sup>95</sup> but the pattern described is authentically Roman. Like Latin sources, he employs a wide range of vocabulary in these contexts, most of it familiar to the hellenistic tradition. But to render the characteristic term *civilis*, he uses a word which may at first sight seem surprising, *dēmōtikos*.<sup>96</sup>

The obvious calque on *civilis* would have been *politikos*. But this word had its own history, which made it inappropriate.<sup>97</sup> *Dēmōtikos* normally conveyed 'democratic', 'popular' or even 'plebeian'. What made it appropriate for Dio was that it suggested behaviour 'as if under a republic', *hōs en dēmokratia*.<sup>98</sup> In this sense it is met on rare occasions in earlier Greek writers. Three cases are particularly interesting, for they show kings playing the democrat in traditionally democratic societies. Pisistratus is praised by Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 16) for *to dēmōtikon* in his disposition: he wins this title by subjecting himself to the laws of Solon. Philip V is depicted by Polybius (x, 26) as courting support in democratic Argos by removing his diadem and purple and posing as the equal of the many and a *dēmōtikos*: in his case the pose is shown up as fraudulent by his monarchic use of real power. Thirdly (and closest of all to the circumstances of 27 B.C.), there is Diodorus' picture of the Syracusan coup of Agathocles.<sup>99</sup> Having won power by use of the army and populace against the upper classes, Agathocles declares before the people that he is restoring autonomy and returning to the status of a private citizen, the equal of all. He changes from military uniform into civilian clothes, like one of the many. But this pose as *dēmōtikos* is a carefully calculated piece of play-acting, designed to secure absolute control. Henceforth he rules supreme; though it is notable that in contrast to contemporary dynasts he never assumed the diadem, and made no practice of unapproachability (xix, 9).

On the basis of such passages Dio and other imperial authors were able to use *dēmōtikos* as a term of recommendation.<sup>100</sup> But the Greek parallels also may serve to throw into relief the uniqueness of Roman 'civility'. Greek monarchs use the pose 'as a democrat' as a tactic; there is no sense that to be 'demotic' is a virtue in a king, and there is no sign of it as such in the kingship literature. But for the Romans imperial play-acting is not a pose but a virtue: Augustus acts *hōs dēmōtikos tis*, but not 'quasi civilis'. It is the acting itself that proves him the model of civility.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>93</sup> The suggestion that the abstract noun only emerges after practice has become settled fits in with the pattern proposed by Quentin Skinner in a discussion of the emergence of 'keywords', *Essays in Criticism* 29 (1979), 205-24.

<sup>94</sup> Tiberius, LVII, 8-9 and 11; Claudius, LX, 5, 3-6, 2 and 12; Vespasian, LXVI, 10, 4-11, 3; Trajan, LXVIII, 6-7; Hadrian, LXIX, 6-7; Marcus, LXXI, 35, 3-5; Pertinax, LXXIV, 3, 4. On these sketches see C. Questa, 'Tecnica biografica e tecnica annalistica nei libri liii-lxiii di Cassio Dione', *Studi Urbinate* 31 (1957), 37 ff.

<sup>95</sup> As at LVII, 8-9 (Tiberius' moderation in honours) and 11 (accessibility); split by talk of his liberality.

<sup>96</sup> *Dēmōtikos* = *civilis* at LVII, 8, 3; 9, 1; LXVI, 11, 1; LXXIV, 3, 4; 5, 1. cf. P. Sattler, *Augustus und der Senat* (1960), 38. Other terms employed include *metrios*, *epieikēs*, *euprosodos*, *euprosēgoros*, *koinos*, *isos*.

<sup>97</sup> See F. Schotten, *Zur Bedeutungsentwicklung des Adjektivs politikos* (Diss. Köln, 1966), esp. ch. 5.

<sup>98</sup> So LVII, 11, 3. For Dio's views on 'democracy' see F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (1964), 74-6.

<sup>99</sup> Diod. xix, 1-9; cf. the version of Polyæn. v, 3, 7. The parallel between Agathocles and Augustus was drawn by Ed. Meyer, *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 1888, 858 f. Diodorus is normally assumed to have been writing before 27 B.C. For such *recusationes*, see H.-W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft* (1965), index s.v.

<sup>100</sup> e.g. Appian, *Mithr.* 566 (Pompey); Arrian, *Anab.* vii, 4, 7 (Alexander); Aelian, *VH* II, 20 (Antigonos); Josephus, *AJ* III, 212 (Moses); viii, 215 (Reheboam). For Plutarch's fondness for the term, see A. Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* (1974), 68 and B. Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität in den Biographien Plutarchs* (1972), 16.

<sup>101</sup> So Dio LIII, 12, 1 (27 B.C.). *Civilis* is never qualified by *quasi* or the like (at Cic., *fn.* v, 66 it excuses a translation).

## IV

One possible response to the actual behaviour that constituted *civilitas* is to regard it as more or less of a sham. Here is part of the legacy of Augustus' republican façade, part of a screen put up to disguise, all too thinly, the fundamental fact of autocracy. The Tacitean historian, impatient with appearances, and intent on realities, may well question both the importance of this ideal to the Romans, and its value in illuminating the Roman Empire for us.

But if, as was suggested above, civility is analysed as an aspect of imperial ceremonial, it becomes possible to view it in a different light. Every autocrat relies to some extent on sham and ceremonial to remedy the deficiencies in his image. The precise form of this ceremonial may be illuminating, for it symbolizes the priorities and deficiencies in the relationship between ruler and ruled. The most familiar form, resulting in such paradoxical doctrines as that of the King's Two Bodies, seeks to represent the ruler as more than mortal, a being set apart from his fellows. There are elements of this in Roman ceremonial, as Alföldi and students of the 'Imperial Cult' have shown. But the strong opposite current of civility is historically no less remarkable, and has its own symbolic value.

How then are we to interpret it? There are various different levels at which *civilitas* may be analysed. Three separate approaches will be here attempted: these should be seen as overlapping and supplementing each other, not as mutually exclusive.

The first factor to be invoked is that of traditionalist sentiment. The precise historical sequence of events played an essential part in moulding the Principate: Pharsalus, the suicide of Cato, the murder of Caesar, Philippi and the competitive offers to restore the republic by the triumvirs are all vital background to the settlement of 27 B.C. A large part of Octavian's success lay in exploiting, not overriding, Roman traditionalist sentiment. The 'restoration of the republic' and the style of autocracy that flowed from it may be seen as a 'sham' or 'charade' if we look at the realities of power. Nevertheless, the Romans with their deeply embedded reverence for *mos maiorum* clearly found it profoundly reassuring that the new leader was a champion of the traditional:

cum patribus populoque penatibus et magnis dis,

restoring forgotten cults, reviving neglected traditions, and showing exaggerated respect for the traditional political institutions.<sup>102</sup> Over the next few centuries, however much the personnel changed, this sentiment remained a characteristic part of Roman culture.

But traditionalism cannot survive on thin air. Moreover, respect for the past is necessarily selective: it involves endorsing certain aspects of what is supposed to be past custom and rejecting others. Why should certain modes of behaviour, notably respect for the senate, continue to be regarded as the true tradition, if there were not further factors that made it convenient to do so?<sup>103</sup>

There is surely a political dimension to be taken into account here. Military dynasts, owing their power to army and city mob, emperors nevertheless also depended on the support of the upper classes. Octavian won Actium, so he boasted, with the backing of over 700 senators (*RG* 25). His successors too depended for their survival on the loyalty of the high command. They continued, at least until the beginning of the third century, to draw on the senatorial order for the majority of the top military commands: it remained therefore prudent to conciliate the senatorial order.

Undoubtedly it is the senate that lies at the heart of the ceremonial of *civilitas*. The 'good' emperor may be synonymous with the 'pro-senatorial' one.<sup>104</sup> Is it not the consul Pliny, praising Trajan before a senatorial audience, who is the most articulate champion of

<sup>102</sup> cf. Syme, *Roman Revolution*, 315 f.; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (1979), 55 ff.

<sup>103</sup> Note the salutary warning of Syme, *Roman Revolution*, 323: 'it would be an elementary error to fancy that the ceremony of January 13th was merely a grim comedy'. He stresses the political

realities (322): Augustus needed 'the support of men of property and the active cooperation of the governing class'.

<sup>104</sup> So Alföldi, *Repräsentation*, 25 f.; Sattler, *Augustus und der Senat*, 38; cf. Veyne, *Le Pain*, 715 f.

this style? 'What is so civil or so senatorial as the name of Optimus we have awarded you?' (*Pan.* 2, 7). 'Quid tam *civile* tam *senatorium*'—the two terms appear almost synonymous. In the majority of anecdotes it is senators who benefit from imperial condescension. Conversely, it is the senate that suffers most under 'arrogant' emperors. We think of Gaius' ominous words on return to Rome: 'he was returning, but only to those who wanted him, the equestrian order and the people; to the senate he would be neither citizen nor princeps any more'.<sup>105</sup> Or we think of Commodus shaking the severed head of an ostrich towards the senatorial stalls in the amphitheatre (Dio LXXIII, 21).

It would be a mistake, however, to distinguish too sharply the senate from the upper equestrian order. There is no sign of an ideological gulf, in this area at least, between the two upper orders. Trajan kissed equites as well as senators on his return to Rome; and it was a praetorian prefect he escorted to the seashore. Pliny's *Panegyric* was not only heard in the senate. The private recitation, surely attended by non-senators as well, was a resounding success. And what are we to make of the keen interest in *civilitas* shown by the equestrian *ab epistulis* Suetonius? It is he who reports, with horror, Gaius' anti-senatorial remarks. He is no less shocked by Nero's alleged plan to eject senators from the high command and replace them by equestrians and freedmen.<sup>106</sup>

At least in the early second century, Pliny's letters indicate that senatorial and equestrian orders were closely united by ties of patronage, social intercourse and cultural interests. It makes the emphasis placed on *civilitas* more comprehensible if we suppose that it reflected the dependence of emperors on the upper orders as a whole. It was, perhaps, only after mounting military exigencies forced emperors from Marcus onwards to promote low-born men from the ranks that the need for *civilitas* began to fade.

A political interpretation along such lines is surely indispensable. Nevertheless it is not, so it seems to me, sufficient to stand alone. It fails to account for the precise way in which the ideal is formulated, notably its emphasis on the citizen body as a whole. *Civilitas* stresses the emperor's legal status as a *civis*, not just as a senator. He was expected to show his respect not only for the senate as a body, but for the whole *populus Romanus*. Hence the praise for endurance of the *longum carmen* of the elections, and hence the ability to categorize the emperor's popularizing conduct at the games in the same bracket as his courtesies to the upper classes.

A third level of interpretation, then, will be to relate *civilitas* to the social organization of the empire. In terms of social structure the change from republic to empire did not prove revolutionary. Far from overturning the traditional hierarchical structure, it reinforced it.<sup>107</sup> The ceremonial ritual that cast the emperor as a citizen reflected that fact. The emperor's subjects were organized according to a strict social hierarchy based on law. The state was constituted of citizens, legally distinct from both slaves and peregrines. Citizenship was a legal privilege constantly sought after, not only by individuals, but by communities. The status of *colonia* that gave all its members the citizenship was valued even excessively; this and the lesser statuses of *ius Latinum* and *Latium maius*, that gave citizenship to the magistrates or the curial order respectively, were extended far beyond their republican origins. Within the citizenship prestige was marked by the republican grades of honour: equestrian status, senatorial status, and within that the ascending ranks of the magistracies. When Claudius wished to give his freedman Narcissus prestige, the form he used was the vote by the senate of the honorary insignia of a quaestor; when Pallas' superiority to Narcissus was later marked, it was by the insignia of a praetor.

This was not, of course, the only conceivable form of social organization. Under autocracy it is possible for the degrees of prestige to derive from the degrees of proximity to the monarch. This was the tendency of the bureaucratic and palace-centred society produced by the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine.<sup>108</sup> A tension between the two possibilities can be felt from the start: the status of the praetorian prefect being notably

<sup>105</sup> Suet., *Cal.* 49, 1, 'se neque civem neque principem senatui amplius fore'.

<sup>106</sup> cf. *Ner.* 37, 3. The thesis of F. della Corte, *Svetonio, eques Romanus*<sup>2</sup> (1967), that Suetonius manifests an equestrian ideology hostile to that of the senate is demolished by J. Gasco, 'Suétone et

l'ordre équestre', *REL* 54 (1976), 257 ff.

<sup>107</sup> So P. A. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* (1971), 154 f.

<sup>108</sup> See the account of A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (1964), 525 ff.

ambiguous, simultaneously the emperor's most powerful officer and yet junior in rank to the most junior senator. But in legal theory it was the republican statuses that mattered, and in practice the most prudent emperors displayed their own civility and respect for the ranking system.

It was very much to their advantage. An emperor whom ritual and ceremonial raised above the level of human society, whose power was represented symbolically as deriving from 'outside', from the gods, owed nothing to the internal structure of the society he ruled. To act, by contrast, as a member of that society, as the peer of its most elevated members, was (symbolically) to associate autocratic power with the social structure. Civility both reinforced the social hierarchy by demonstrating imperial respect for it, and strengthened the autocracy by linking it with the social structure. The moderation of the emperor placed his own dignity on the same scale of values as that of his subjects. To be honoured as a god like Caligula with exotic sacrifices of flamingos created an unbridgeable gap between sovereign and subject. But if to be thrice consul was considered an honour even by an emperor, it was an honour worthy for his subjects to aspire to. To be honoured in the same coin as his subjects ensured that the currency retained its value.<sup>109</sup>

There was therefore a real and practical value to the emperor in keeping up the appearance of a citizen-society, one grasped from the start by Augustus. There was no need for an autocrat to cast doubt on the value of the *respublica*, as Caesar was alleged to have done.<sup>110</sup> If the emperor himself controlled access to the various grades of the republican hierarchy, he had a ready-made honours system for promoting his supporters and generating a sense of indebtedness. Whether by the *lex Saenia*, which already in 29 B.C. empowered Octavian to create patricians, or by temporary grants of censorial powers, or by the ill-defined and to us still obscure powers that made senatorial rank (*latus clavus*), some of the magistracies, and certainly the consulship, a matter of imperial grant, not to speak of the gift of further plums like priesthoods and military decorations, emperors were the prime operators of the honours system.<sup>111</sup> Millar's emperor is like a hellenistic king to the extent that he is constantly bombarded by petitioners, but he differs from hellenistic kings in that a prime method of benefaction is the distribution of social and legal privileges of republican origin. So when Pliny tells Trajan he can only increase his stature by stooping, this is more than epigram. By projecting himself as no more than a rather special senator, he restores credibility to the hierarchy itself, and so raises the value of the benefactions he can grant. It is not easy to explain in any other terms what was so objectionable about Domitian's seventeen consulships. Thanks to generosity with suffectures, his tenure hardly blocked the way for others.<sup>112</sup> But if the subject honoured with the consulship had only achieved a seventeenth fraction of his sovereign's dignity, it might be doubted whether the 'supreme' magistracy had much significance at all.

It would be interesting to attempt to correlate the civility of individual emperors with their appreciation of the value of the honours system. Clearly it would be wrong to look at the sheer degree of generosity in distributing republican honours. Claudius' indiscriminate awards of citizenship were felt to devalue it; perhaps significantly the sources discredit his civility, 'iactator civilitatis' (Suet., *Claud.* 35, 1). Caracalla gets no credit for extending citizenship to the whole empire. But there is a correlation between those emperors to whom the sources ascribe respect for the social order itself, and those to whom they ascribe civility. For Suetonius, Augustus and Vespasian are the two great models of imperial behaviour; they also emerge as the Caesars above all responsible for restoring the social hierarchy after the chaos of civil war.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>109</sup> The point explicitly at Plin., *Pan.* 60, 2-4: Trajan's consulship restores glamour to the office, 'receptum enim tertium consulatum ut daret'. The reward of merit is an important theme here, esp. 44-5. Conversely *malignitas*, unwillingness to reward merit, goes with imperial *superbia*: so Suet., *Cal.* 34-5; Tac., *Agr.* 41, 4 (Domitian and Agricola).

<sup>110</sup> Suet., *Jul.* 77, 'nihil esse rem publicam, appellationem modo sine corpore ac specie'. Contrast Seneca's criticism of Gaius in allowing an aged senator to kiss his foot: 'non hoc est rem publicam calcare?' (*de ben.* 11, 12).

<sup>111</sup> So Millar, *Emperor*, 275 ff. See now R. P.

Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (1982), 41 ff., very much to the point.

<sup>112</sup> The prosopographical investigations of W. Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (1970), 55 ff. and B. W. Jones, *Domitian and the Senatorial Order* (*Mem. Am. Phil. Soc.* vol. 132, 1979), by demonstrating that Domitian was by no means sparing in his awards of magistracies, have only intensified the problem of explaining the attitude of the sources.

<sup>113</sup> The contributions of these emperors to social order are documented with emphasis at *Aug.* 35-40 and *Vesp.* 8-9.



It is also tempting to correlate the rise and fall of the citizen-emperor ideal in the longer term with developments in the social structure of the empire. One of the familiar themes of Roman history is the process whereby a city-state spread its membership and institutions over an ever-widening geographical circle, admitting the people of the provinces to its citizenship and their local aristocracies to its ruling orders until it was transformed into a 'world'-state. Emperors play a central role in this process. Despite Augustus' firm lead, the first century A.D. still shows signs of hesitancy and fluctuation; by the second century the process is in full swing, with the 'flood-tide' under the Antonines. The Severans both take the process to its logical conclusion and thereby terminate it.<sup>114</sup> In very broad terms this pattern seems to run parallel to our evidence for civility. One has the impression of having turned a corner with the death of Marcus. Under the Severans Dio still sets much store by the ideal; yet Severus Alexander is the last emperor credited with realizing it for over a century, and even this is in a quaint and semi-fictional biography. In the second part of the fourth century there is a marked revival of interest in the ideal, evidently associated with the figure of Julian. To explain this is beyond the scope of this paper, though one might guess that it is partly to do with Julian's attempts to recapture the pagan Roman past, partly with his running down of the central imperial machine and his efforts to restore vitality to the life of the cities of the Empire.<sup>115</sup>

To sum up. While it is true that under the Principate some emperors used ceremonial to set a gulf between themselves and their subjects, it is more striking that others used a ritual of condescension to represent themselves as simple citizens. It is hasty to dismiss such a ritual as a sham or charade. It was enacted in all seriousness, because it served to articulate certain deeper truths that, for a period, mattered to the society over which these emperors ruled: the continuity with the republican past; the dependence of the emperor on the consent of the upper orders; but above all the use of the social structure of a city-state to organize and unify the disparate peoples of the empire.

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<sup>114</sup> This outline follows the classic account of A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*<sup>2</sup> (1973), 221 ff.

<sup>115</sup> The evidence for the Julianic revival is set out by Scivoletto (n. 79). Julian's civility is linked with his regeneration of the *polis* by P. Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism* (1981), 112 f.