

## CAESAR'S REPUBLICAN RHETORIC AND THE VEILS OF AUTOCRACY

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The relationship of Caesar's intentions and self-knowledge to the events that he set in motion underlies the concerns of this conference. This is, of course, obvious in the label "visionary", which ascribes both self-awareness with regard to Caesar's moment in history and a political-historical imagination which has been confirmed by the backward gaze of our position in history. That is to say, if he was a visionary, not only did he have a plan but it was a plan that conformed to or created what we today see as the trajectory of history. On the other hand, the term "precursor" is more problematic. It seems to set Caesar in the midst of history's independent but necessary course, as much pushed forward or summoned by the forces around him as choosing among them.

Any approach to these alternatives raises a host of further questions. Assuming that Caesar at some point realized that the republic was nothing, a name without body or form (Suet. *Div. Iul.* 77), when did he decide that his own quest to be *primus, optimus, maximus, summus*<sup>1</sup> meant not only the utter defeat of Pompey, but such an overwhelming victory that he would become equated with the state? Was it in 69 when he spoke in favor of the *lex Gabinia*, did he already then have his eye on the kind of extraordinary command that would be necessary for his kind of victory? Or was it in 59, when according to Plutarch Cato already saw the future tyrant (*Cato Min.* 33)? Or was it in the first week of January 49 when Cato blocked a compromise brokered by Cicero<sup>2</sup> or after the failed embassy of Lucius Caesar sometime around Jan. 17, 49? When did he begin to associate his *res privata* with the *res publica* and when did he decide to restructure the Roman constitution in

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<sup>1</sup> WISEMAN 1985b.

<sup>2</sup> Vell. Pat. 2,49,3; cf. Suet. *Div. Iul.* 30,1. RAAFLAUB 1977, 46-48; 2003, 45.

ways that would ultimately make the Republic a thing of the past?

On the other hand, we might focus on the relations between Pompey and Caesar. Was their friendship and the period of the “first triumvirate” the beginning of the dissolution of the state?<sup>3</sup> And, when did the civil war between Pompey and Caesar become inevitable, when did they finally become intractable enemies? Was it already before Luca or only in the weeks preceding Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon? Were they still friends when Caesar gathered three veteran legions and two new legions south of the Alps late in 50<sup>4</sup> or were they enemies before Caesar spoke of Pompey’s *virtus* in his account of the year 52 in the *Bellum Gallicum*? I will make no effort to answer these questions. In the first place, they depend in a circular way on assumptions about when the republic was destroyed, collapsed, came unglued or was transformed. Itself a topic on which there is little consensus: a recent study claims, “in an objective sense the Republic *never* actually ‘fell’ – an overworked metaphor that anyway prejudices the issue in various ways: by prompting us to look for a single, catastrophic event; by insidiously suggesting that one side in the conflicts ... represented the Republic, overcome by others seeking to destroy the Republic, or alternatively, that it ‘collapsed’ of its own long-incubating illnesses”<sup>5</sup>. Secondly, the answer to these questions will always lie outside the evidence to the extent that they require access to Caesar’s desires, intentions and self-knowledge. In fact, they assume a coherence in both human psychology and human relations that I find belied by the pressures of desire and ignorance in everyday experience.

This paper will attempt another tack. Assuming that history, like psychology, is caught up in chaos, ignorance and *Verneinung*, that we do not know what we are doing, except in the stories we make up afterwards about what happened, instead of looking to some self-conscious intention, some overarching and self-aware plan, we may look to the discourses that shape our desires and denials, to the metaphors we live by and the narratives we deploy in self-understanding and self-justification. These stories and discourses not only shape the desires that inform action, but they give that action meaning in relationship to other desires and other stories. By turning to the discours-

<sup>3</sup> So Asinius Pollio (Hor. *Carm.* 2,1); see also Florus 2,13,10-11; Vell. Pat. 2,445,1; Lucan 1,84-86. See the counter arguments of GRUEN 2009, 34.

<sup>4</sup> See STANTON 2003, 82-83 referring to OTTMER 1979, 28 (which was not available to me).

<sup>5</sup> MORSTEIN-MARX - ROSENSTEIN 2006b, 625; see also 626: “On this view, personal domination, if transitory, was not in fact inconsistent with the survival of the old Republic; and permanence is something that by its very nature is proven only to posterity. Before Tiberius assumed his predecessor’s position in AD 14 it would have been possible even for a hypothetical contemporary Tacitus to see the entire “reign” of Augustus as an interruption, rather than the termination, of the deeply embedded Republican tradition”.

es within which Caesar lived, discourses that defined Republican virtues and values, it is possible I believe to see something other than the individual directing or being directed by events. In the case of Caesar, I will attempt to explore some of the ways in which the republican rhetoric of self, the ideology of aristocratic competition, and the language of Caesarian promotion and self-promotion are all part of what we might consider both precursor and visionary of what was to come. The competition between Caesar and Pompey that resulted in the civil war was a natural outcome of aristocratic competition. It was encouraged and waged in the terms of the republic and republican virtues, and it was this republican discourse that was the veil of autocracy. In other words, it was not civil war that created autocracy, but the republic itself.

But first a brief word about the relationship between this kind of study and two standard and challenging approaches to the late Republic. Due to the important work of Gruen and Meier, it is not uncommon today to view the “end of the Republic” as part of a continuum of Republican practices. For Meier, the traditional system was failing; but the players within it could not find an alternative because they did not see the system as the problem. Consequently, their very efforts to save the Republic, to shore up that part of the system that served their own needs and interests, created both an accommodation and a “crisis without alternative”<sup>6</sup>. Splintering interests and expanded opportunities for command and power overturned the safeguards of the old system and eventually brought about the failure of the Republic. Gruen concurs with Meier’s view that no faction or revolutionary was plotting the end of the Republic. He sees the state functioning as it always did, in some ways even more vigorously after Sulla, right up to the end when “a series of miscalculations in the last months before the opening of hostilities” led to the outbreak of war. In his well-known formulation, “Civil war caused the fall of the Republic – not vice versa”<sup>7</sup>, “[P]olitics operated very much as usual down to the eve of civil war”<sup>8</sup>. Both positions see continuity, and both are ultimately interested in institutions and actions: for instance, the nature of *imperium extra ordinem*, the power of the *equites*, the action of the tribunes.

In what follows, I am not so much interested in events and institutions as I am in the way in which these events and institutions were conceived, in particular in the way in which the rhetoric of competition defined, fueled and foresaw the competition that ended in civil war. Gruen summarizes:

<sup>6</sup> MEIER 1980.

<sup>7</sup> GRUEN 1974, 504

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 500.

“Politics, and nothing more, lit the fuse for this explosion”<sup>9</sup>. By this he means that Caesar did not have in mind a revolutionary political agenda. This does not, however, mean that the explosion was ultimately avoidable, or that “miscalculations” really summarizes the complex calculations that did explode. Politics may mean the petty self-serving daily decisions made by men and the sides taken in those decisions, or it may refer to something larger: the trajectory of ideological ambitions that is daily enacted and practiced by the words of men, the implicit goal of the metaphors and rhetoric we live by.

The fact that “Caesar had not intended to push matters to the brink of war”<sup>10</sup> is, in a sense, irrelevant: there were symbolic forces at work within which something was shaped that was neither intended nor chosen, something rather like “identity”, something outside of which self-recognition becomes impossible<sup>11</sup>. Thus, when Gruen says, “motives for the civil war are nowhere to be found”<sup>12</sup>, I find myself in partial agreement: nowhere to be found, if we are looking for the event or goal that singles out Caesar for his role in history – he was doing what many had done, what the republic had survived before, what had made the republic great and safe, what he was supposed to do. And the resistance of others does not contradict this claim; ideology, especially an ideology of competitive self-assertion within a republican institution, harbors contradictions.

But, on the other hand, “motives” are everywhere to be found if we look at the rhetorical context in which men acted and saw their actions recognized and evaluated. Men were not, then, “overcome by the iron grip of events”<sup>13</sup>. It was, rather, the iron grip of words, of the symbolic structure of their world. And this was something they could not escape<sup>14</sup>. It is also this aspect of events that appears in contemporary writings: *fatalis quaedam calamitas incidisse videtur ... ut nemo mirari debeat humana consilia divina necessitate esse superata (pro Lig. 17)*<sup>15</sup>. But it is also this aspect of events that makes it hard for us, coming after, with other institutions, other

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 487.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> The view of ideology taken here derives from the seminal work of ALTHUSSER 1970.

<sup>12</sup> GRUEN 1974, 495.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 496.

<sup>14</sup> This is not what Meier has in mind when he sees a system that worked well enough for the parties who struggled within it and that partial success prevented them from seeing, diagnosing and repairing the systemic failure. Both Meier’s Romans and Gruen’s Romans are much more self-aware within modern assumptions than my Romans.

<sup>15</sup> Cited by GRUEN 1974, 496 n. 166 to illustrate the “iron grip of events”. It is worth noting how Cicero’s language attempts to frame a very different experience of the world and what happens in it. Cp. Sallust’s plague and Livy’s disease.

metaphors to live by, to think back into the world of contradictions and desires in which Cicero, Cato, Caesar and Pompey lived<sup>16</sup>. A gap appears between action and the understanding of action: *sed tamen ille optimo animo utens et summa fide nocet interdum rei publicae* (Cic. *Att.* 2,1,8 on Cato, June 60). Caesar sets aristocratic competition itself above everything else: the struggle to be *primus* is itself *primum*: *sibi semper primam fuisse dignitatem vitaeque potioem* (Caes. *BC* 1,9,2); but this makes him a madman in Cicero's eyes, who fusses about the meaning of *dignitas*: *o hominem amentem et miserum, qui ne umbram quidem umquam τοῦ καλοῦ viderit! atque haec ait omnia facere se dignitatis causa. ubi est autem dignitas nisi ubi honestas?* (Cic. *Att.* 7,11,1), only to see Caesar's point of view after the fact: *principum dignitas erat paene par, non par fortasse eorum qui sequebantur; causa tum dubia, quod erat aliquid in utraque parte quod probari posset; nunc melior ea iudicanda est quam etiam di adiuverunt* (*pro Lig.* 19)<sup>17</sup>, just as he had seen it before the fact<sup>18</sup>. One might say that the problem is that *dignitas* (or any other goal of aristocratic competition)<sup>19</sup> is both something a man accomplishes and something granted by others; it belongs both to himself and to others. What happens when Cato takes away what belongs to Caesar? or when Caesar demands what it is the right of the Senate to grant? and when both prizes go by the name of *dignitas*? and when Caesar can protect that *dignitas* in the same way he earned it?

Gruen distinguishes Cicero's complaints that the republic is being destroyed from his confidence at other times when he is personally secure (503). He then uses this contrast to disregard the complaints. My procedure has been rather the opposite. I have assumed that the complaints, whether accurate reflections of a crisis or not, are reflections of how a dynamic in republican thought and action was perceived and felt. When adapting the proverb "Enough of acorns!" Cicero imagines Atticus saying "Enough of *dignitas*; time to think of your safety!" (*Att.* 2,19,1), he reflects the same sense that let Caesar to cross the Rubicon: whatever else *dignitas* is or should be, it must be supported by self-interested action, or it is merely acorns. Of course, Scipio would agree, as would Sulla and Catiline. And

<sup>16</sup> Valuable studies of Roman emotions and their relationship to the external world can now be found in BARTON 2001; KASTER 2005.

<sup>17</sup> See especially the tortured logic of *pro Lig. 19*: *mibi vero, Caesar, tua in me maxima merita tanta certe non viderentur, si me ut sceleratum a te conservatum putarem. Quo modo autem tu de re publica bene meritus esses, cum tot sceleratos incolumi dignitate esse voluisses?*

<sup>18</sup> See below on Caesar's *dignitas* in the *prov. cons.*

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, the tortured political dance of desire and indifference required for the triumph described by BEARD 2007, 214-218 and the politics of performance described by PITTINGER 2008.

therein lies the problem and the precedent: one of the goals and values of aristocratic competition, *dignitas*, provoked the very confrontations that required its violent self-defense. And so, when Cicero ends his letter of confusion and complaint saying: *certi sumus perisse omnia* (*Att.* 2,19,5), we should not measure his rhetoric by some putatively real standard of the “health of the republic,” as in the dismissive directive: “Ciceronian hyperbole must be recognized for what it is”<sup>20</sup>. Rather we should see in Cicero’s anguish another reflection of what the failure of the normative exchanges meant or could mean, if only from one side: it meant the loss of everything<sup>21</sup>. Similarly, when Cicero, resisting those who would take Caesar’s command away from him, says *vehementius arbitror pertimescendum* (*prov. cons.* 16,39) and *praestare hoc senator debeo, quantum possum, ne quis vir clarus aut potens huic ordini iure irasci posse videatur. Atque haec, si inimicissimus essem C. Caesari, sentirem tamen rei publicae causa* (*ibid.* 16,39-40), we can hear an extraordinary, if failed, effort to reassert the alignment of power, safety, politics and the republic.

While the focus of this discussion is different from Gruen’s, conceptually it belongs somewhere between Gruen’s claim that “Politics, and nothing more, lit the fuse for this explosion” (487) and the claim that “politics operated very much as usual down to the eve of civil war” (500). If both claims are true, then the fuse of civil war’s explosion was a fuse that was usually and typically lit throughout and in Republican politics.

### *Privato consilio, publica auctoritas*

Like many ideological claims about self and identity, the aristocratic competition to be *primus, optimus, maximus, summus*<sup>22</sup> harbors self-contradiction and civil war. It benefits both self and community or can benefit either self or community. Its Jovian and regal ambitions are nowhere more spectacular than in the triumphal procession<sup>23</sup> and its larger cultural dynamic is “already” diagnosed by Livy’s Cincinnatus, as he justifies the murder of Sp. Maelius: *Claudios, Cassios consulatibus, decemviratibus, suis maiorumque*

<sup>20</sup> GRUEN 1974, 503.

<sup>21</sup> Caesar uses the same language to complain of wrongs done to him: *omnia permiscere* (*BC* 1,32,5; cp. 1,6,8).

<sup>22</sup> WISEMAN 1985b, 3-6.

<sup>23</sup> See BEARD 2007, 226-228. The “true origins” of the costume are not as important to the rhetoric of success as the way in which it was seen by general and audience, on which see Livy 10,7,10, also 38,56,13. See also Sulla’s vision of the goddess who stood by his side and put a thunderbolt in his hand, Plut. *Sulla* 9,4.

*honoribus, splendore familiarum sustulisse animos quo nefas fuerit* (Livy 4,15,5). As Rome expanded, these ambitions could not be held in check by the expanding opportunities for military and civil *imperium*<sup>24</sup>. Extraordinary commands were not extraordinary enough and the logic of exemplarity entailed both innovation and revolution: *in ipso Cn. Pompeio in quo novi constitui nihil vult Q. Catulus quam multa sint nova summa Q. Catuli voluntate constituta recordamini* (*de imp. Pomp.* 60,12). The *gloria*, *auctoritas*, and *dignitas* granted in Rome by one's peers was never univocal – as Scipio at Liternum could attest. What one won at the risk of one's life could be taken away – at the risk of life.

By the first century, an army could reconfigure the Senate, and did. Before the end of that century, private ambitions threatened and defined the *res publica*<sup>25</sup>. By AD 14 Augustus had begun his account of his achievements: *annos undeviginti natus exercitum privato consilio et privata impensa comparavi, per quem rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi*. His language pointedly joins *res privata* and *res publica* as it recalls what Pompey did at Auximum<sup>26</sup> and what Julius Caesar said at Corfinium: *ut se et populum Romanum factione paucorum oppressum in libertatem vindicaret*<sup>27</sup>. This identification of self and state, of *res privata* and *res publica*, is precisely what Romans from Brutus to Brutus did. When the government could not or would not do the right thing: *privato consilio*, counter-measures were taken and wars were undertaken. So Cicero speaks of the support of the people upon the failure of Gabinius: *privato consilio, quoniam publicis ducibus res publica careret* (*Sest.* 26,4), and again of his own actions during the Catilinarian conspiracy: *meaque privata consilia publici quoque casus comprobaverunt* (*Planc.* 66,17). And Sallust agrees: *ancipiti malo permotus, quod neque urbem ab insidiis privato consilio longius tueri poterat...* (*C.* 29,1). And so Cicero speaks of D. Brutus: *quodque ille bellum privato consilio susceperat, id vos auctoritate publica comprobastis* (*Phil.* 5,28).

And it was a long standing republican tradition. According to Cicero, writing in 51, Brutus freed the state as a *privatus* (*qui cum privatus esset, totam rem publicam sustinuit*) and this established a rule that others have also demonstrated: *primusque in hac civitate docuit in conservanda civium libertate esse privatum neminem* (*Rep.* 2,46). Brutus was *primus* and he showed that,

<sup>24</sup> See MEIER's chapter *Die Übermässig Extensivierung der Res Publica*" (1980, 64-161).

<sup>25</sup> GRUEN 2009 points to the difficulty of drawing a clear line between private ambition and the commonwealth when he writes of Caesar's first consulate: "None of this activity, however, involved breaking the codes of conventional political behavior" (28); see in general 23-28 on Caesar's conventional career. "The advancement of the triumvirs personal aims did not entail revolutionary change" (34).

<sup>26</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 6,3.

<sup>27</sup> BC 1,22,5.

when it comes to preserving the freedom of citizens, no one is a *privatus*. Among those who illustrate the principle one finds P. Scipio: *vir amplissimus, P. Scipio, pontifex maximus, Ti. Gracchum mediocriter labefactantem statum rei publicae privatus interfecit* (*Cat.* 1,3; cp. *Brut.* 212). According to Livy, in 479 the entire Fabian *gens* volunteered to be a standing army against the Veientes: *auctores sumus tutam ibi maiestatem Romani nominis fore. Nostrum id nobis velut familiare bellum privato sumptu gerere in animo est* (Livy 2,48,8-9). The Senate was thankful: *manat tota urbe rumor; Fabios ad caelum laudibus ferunt: familiam unam subisse civitatis onus; Veiens bellum in privatam curam, in privata arma uersum* (2,49,1). Again, in 390, when Camillus was in exile, languishing at Ardea, with divine inspiration (*divino spiritu tactus*, 5,43,1) he musters an army (*res et periculum commune cogit*, 5,43,1) which follows him into the field where they attack a camp of Gauls (*capite arma frequentesque me sequimini ad caedem, non ad pugnam*, 5,44,7). He is later made dictator, and, when he succeeds against the Gauls, *Romulus ac parens patriae conditorque alter urbis haud vanis laudibus appellabatur*, 5,49,7).

The equation of personal glory and the glory of Rome meant that private resources and private considerations had always been used for the glory and safety of Rome, for the glory, power and safety of individuals<sup>28</sup>. In 54 Cicero proudly joins “my glory”, “private counsels”, “public events”, and “managing the state”<sup>29</sup>. In 45 we find Cicero defending Scipio Nasica’s action against Ti. Gracchus as representing a Stoic ideal: *mibi ne Scipio quidem ille pontifex maximus, qui hoc Stoicorum verum esse declaravit, numquam privatum esse sapientem, iratus videtur fuisse Ti. Graccho tum, cum consulem languentem reliquit atque ipse privatus, ut si consul esset, qui rem publicam salvam esse vellet, se sequi iussit* (*T.D.* 4,51). He was a Stoic and a *sapiens*; he was and was not a *privatus*; and he was not even angry! In 44, after D. Brutus *privato consilio* prevented M. Antony from entering Gaul, Cicero asks the Senate to give *public auctoritas* to his *privato consilio* (*Phil.* 3,12)<sup>30</sup>. Of course *privata consilia* were a danger: Lepidus gathered an army *privato consilio*. But that was what Philipus said; Lepidus himself claimed to put *libertas* above *privatas opes*<sup>31</sup>. Cicero and Sallust demonstrate that the boundary between public and pri-

<sup>28</sup> In fact, action by a *privatus* seems often to characterize the actions of Senators against the plebs in the early republic: e.g., Livy 3,11,13; 3,38.

<sup>29</sup> *Itaque si quam habeo laudem, quae quanta sit nescio, parta Romae est, quaesita in foro; meaque privata consilia publici quoque casus comprobaverunt, ut etiam summa res publica mihi domi fuerit gerenda et urbs in urbe servanda* (*Planc.* 66).

<sup>30</sup> *Faciendum est igitur nobis, patres conscripti, ut D. Bruti privatum consilium auctoritate publica comprobemus*.

<sup>31</sup> Philipus says, *quoniam <M.> Lepidus exercitum privato consilio paratum cum pessumis et hostibus rei publicae contra huius ordinis auctoritatem ad urbem ducit* (*H.* 1,76,22). Lepidus himself, however, contrasts his interest in *libertas* with *privatas opes* (*H.* 1,55,16-17).



vate was permeable<sup>32</sup>, and, of course, it was the winner who got to speak of *publica auctoritas*<sup>33</sup>. In fact, if the older tradition said that Maelius was killed by a *privatus*, the tough guy Ahala, the tradition itself can be altered: Cincinnatus was made dictator and Ahala his *magister equitum*<sup>34</sup>.

And how did private interests take over public policy? Sallust diagnosed the problem. But it is a complex and tortured diagnosis that Sallust offers, not always understood by modern readers. Something went wrong, but its origin keeps slipping beyond the grasp. Ambition is like a virtue but is actually a vice: *quod tamen vitium propius virtutem erat* (C. 11,1). It compels men to lie (C. 10,5). It earns all the rewards of virtue: *omnia virtutis praemia ambitio possidet* (C. 52,23). It corrupts like a contagion. It invades and attacks. It compels. It is important to listen to Sallust: he is saying that the ambition itself is not innocent, and yet it runs the engine of aristocratic competition seeking glory, honor, *imperium* (C. 11,2). If we put aside the label “(hypocritical) moralist”, we may hear Sallust saying that the very thing Romans were supposed to do (compete for honor) was itself hard (impossible?) to distinguish from a vice<sup>35</sup>.

Furthermore, writing within aristocratic ideology<sup>36</sup> he saw no way out and generalized the problem his world faced to the entire world. Conflicts, *dissensiones, certamina, dominatio* were the result of a fault of human nature: *vitio humani ingenii evenere, quod iniquis atque indomitum semper inter certamina libertatis aut gloriae aut dominationis agit* (H. 1,7). The same flaw that proved to men that intelligence was better than brawn: *postea vero quam in Asia Cyrus, in Graecia Lacedaemonii et Athenienses coepere urbis atque nationes subigere, lubidinem dominandi causam belli habere, maxumam gloriam in maxumo imperio putare, tum demum periculo atque negotiis conpertum est in bello plurimum ingenium posse* (C. 2,2). The same vice that produces history and gives kings and states names<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> See also Cotta in Sallust, *H.* 2,47,17 and Pompey at *H.* 2,98,35.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, the Sulla's self-representation as *parens et servator*, SANTANGELO 2007, 214-216. See also the analogy between Sulla and Romulus, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2,7-29; Sallust, *H.* 1,55,5.

<sup>34</sup> See LINTOTT 1968, 55-58: “The implication of these traditions is somewhat paradoxical. Their moral was that anyone who acquired so much support among the *plebs* that he was suspected of tyrannical tendencies should be killed by a patriotic citizen, whether he was a magistrate or not”. Or, put differently, a *privatus* could kill whoever could be branded a tyrant.

<sup>35</sup> Thus, the moralistic analysis is itself a symptom of systemic failure: what was going wrong was not to be repaired by laws or institutions.

<sup>36</sup> I do not mean by “ideology” some false belief about the world that aristocrats adopted or chose, but rather the symbolic relationship a person or group has to their world. It is both an imaginary relationship to the real, and a relationship that creates many real features of the world we live in. In this sense, there is no outside ideology. See ALTHUSSER 1970.

<sup>37</sup> See BATSTONE 1990.

In the Republic the *certamina libertatis aut gloriae aut dominationis* were generally carried out with and for proconsular *imperium*. And it was here especially that the equation of the individual and the state was forged. As Eckstein<sup>38</sup> has shown, even in the third century the general in the field did not consult with the Senate nor did the Senate exercise tight control over his decisions, especially as his command moved farther from Rome. Individual commanders dominate the foreign policy of Rome in Sicily, Spain, Africa and Greece. In the field he was Rome. And here, the aristocrat, trained to command since birth, pursued what was, or what he could claim was, the *mos maiorum*, the consensus of how things were to be done, while pursuing glory and wealth for himself.

### *Pompey's Experience and civile bellum*

With these perspectives in mind, we can turn to the competition between Pompey and Caesar, not under the rubric of Civil War, but under the rubric of *res publica*. Pompey's success in being *primus optimus maximus* is and was obvious: his cognomen, his triumphs, his extraordinary commands. In 66 BC, Cicero reviewed his achievements in the *pro lege Manilia*, a speech that some have seen as setting the standard to which Caesar's self-presentation in the *Bellum Gallicum* was the answer<sup>39</sup>. The speech outlines Pompey's qualifications and excellences, and does so in the context of aristocratic competition; in fact, it enacts its own competition: Cicero speaks of Sulla and Murena, *duo fortissimi viri et summi imperatores* (8,4), of Lucullus, *summus vir* (10,4). But this is all foil for the brighter star of Pompey: *Cn. Pompei divino consilio ac singulari virtute* (10,3), *unum virum esse in quo summa sint omnia* (13); the man the provinces want. The war concerns the Roman people, their glory and honor; it should excite and inflame our spirits; it carries with it the traditions of our ancestors: *in quo agitur populi Romani gloria quae vobis a maioribus cum magna in omnibus rebus tum summa in re militari tradita est; agitur salus sociorum atque amicorum pro qua multa maiores vestri magna et gravia bella gesserunt; aguntur certissima populi Romani vectigalia et maxima quibus amissis et pacis ornamenta et subsidia belli requiretis; aguntur bona multorum civium quibus est a vobis et ipsorum causa et rei publicae consulendum* (6,6).

Cicero's list of Pompey's singular qualifications is extensive. They include

<sup>38</sup> ECKSTEIN 1987.

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., WELCH 1998, 85-86. One should not, however, forget that Pompey's *res gestae* were in preparation by Theophanes of Mytilene in 62; for references, see HALL 1998, 40 n. 180.

*virtus* (26 times), *auctoritas* (26 times), *celeritas* (7 times), *consilium* (13 times) and self-restraint (*temperantia* 5 times and *se continere* 5 times). These qualities make him *summus ac perfectus imperator* and *severus iudex*. In self-restraint he excels all others<sup>40</sup> – like our ancestors (*nunc denique incipiunt credere fuisse homines Romanos hac quondam continentia*, 41,3) – that neat contradiction or danger of exemplarity: one becomes the model of what others should do by doing what no one has done before<sup>41</sup>. He represents an originary Romanness. To the provinces he seemed, not an emissary *ex hac urbe missum*, but *de caelo delapsum* (41)<sup>42</sup>, a witness for the past and a promise for the future. He is the reason that the splendor of the Roman empire gleams, that Roman subjects prefer to be ruled by Rome over ruling others (*servire populo Romano quam imperare aliis maluisse*, 41). Born to bring all wars to an end, *divino quodam consilio* (42), nothing stands between the *gloria imperi* (12,2), *gloria nominis vestri* (19,4) and Pompey's *gloria*<sup>43</sup>. One must speak of the singular and extraordinary virtue of Pompey: *dicendum est enim de Cn. Pompei singulari eximiaque virtute; huius autem orationis difficilius est exitum quam principium invenire. Ita mihi non tam copia quam modus in dicendo quaerendus est* (3). And the beginning of the speech is the dignity and glory of the Roman people: *de vestri imperi dignitate atque gloria, quoniam is est exorsus orationis meae* (11). He overcomes not only the glory of men who now live, but even the memory of the past (27). May the gods continue to favor him *cum communis salutis atque imperium ipsius hominis causa* (48). How does one compete with this eminence?

Caesar did. Already in 69, he contested the rhetorical center of these virtues in his speech on the death of his aunt Julia. His family is descended from kings and from gods, he says: *est ergo in genere et sanctitas regum, qui plurimum inter homines pollent, et caerimonia deorum, quorum ipsi in potestate sunt reges* (Suet. *Div. Iul.* 6,29). This is not just greatness, but greatness with power and divine approval, greatness that excels all others, greatness that defines Roman strength, virtue, safety, peace<sup>44</sup>. The gods are, of course,

<sup>40</sup> *Hic miramur hunc hominem tantum excellere ceteris (pro lege Man. 39).*

<sup>41</sup> For the pressure toward excess built into exemplarity, see Cornelia's remark: I was the daughter of the Scipios; when will I become the mother of the Gracchi? (Plutarch, *Tiberius* 8,5).

<sup>42</sup> Compare *Phil.* 11,34 (Brutus, who is to be preserved like that statue that fell from heaven, and is cared for by the Vestal Virgins: *quo salvo salvi sumus futuri*). In Livy the phrase belongs to Romulus who appears to Proculus Iulius to prophesy Rome's greatness, 1,16,6; in Vergil, to Anchises (5,722) and Juno (7,620).

<sup>43</sup> This equation of personal and public goes back to the *deditio* formula found in Livy 1,38 and parodied in Plautus, *Amph.* 258-259. Not surprisingly, its origin with Tarquin places the victor in the position of *rex*.

<sup>44</sup> This is, of course, not new. On the use of divine ancestors, see ZANKER 1988, chapter 1 (esp.

the source of Sulla's *Felicitas* and Pompey's *divino quodam consilio*. But this is also the competitive rhetoric of the republic: one thinks of the young Scipio who, Livy tells us, went to the Capital every morning where he sat alone in seclusion: *seu consulto seu temere volgatae opinioni fidem apud quosdam fecit stirpis eum divinae virum esse* (Livy 26,19,6), or of Pompey's associations with Venus and of Sulla Ἐποφρόδιτος. In Caesar's case the outcome will be the opposition of another Cato, a crown offered at the Lupercalia and Caesar's eventual deification.

In this larger context we can return to Pompey's credentials. At section 28 of the speech, Cicero briefly summarizes Pompey's resume according to "types of warfare": *Civile, Africanum, Transalpinum, Hispaniense mixtum ex civibus atque ex bellicosissimis nationibus, servile, navale bellum, varia et diversa genera et bellorum et hostium*. *Civile*, at the head of the list, demands some explanation. Cicero is speaking to the people, and "the class of 81"<sup>45</sup> had not always been kind to the people's concerns. Pompey had followed in his father's footsteps and raised at least one legion to support Sulla upon his return from Asia. Sulla's victory had been brutal and his peace even worse. It is the common opinion today that throughout this period Sulla "remains, with great consistency, an object of popular revulsion and hatred ... Sulla is nothing less than that enslaver of the Roman People"<sup>46</sup>. But, this picture actually comes from Sallust's *Histories*, written in the thirties. Here, in 66, Pompey is cited for his expertise in *bellum civile*. Later, in the same speech, Cicero will cast Pompey as the liberator of Italy according to Sulla: *testis est Italia quam ille ipse victor L. Sulla huius virtute et subsidio confessus est liberatam* (30).

What explains this? Is it that civil war is not, either not yet or no longer, what it was to become? It is not likely that the people had forgotten. Three years later Cicero will say of the Sullan victory, *ne dici quidem opus est quanta deminutione civium et quanta calamitate rei publicae* (*Cat.* 3,24; cp. 2,20). But even this is excused, or perhaps one should say that it is excusable, within the contrast Cicero wants to draw with Catiline: *non illi nullam esse rem publicam sed in ea quae esset se esse principes, neque hanc urbem conflagrare ... voluerunt* (3,25). Even in 63 the Sullan civil war could be cast as part of aristocratic competition, extreme perhaps and regrettable, but tradi-

pp. 11-14). The so called Ahenobarbus Base (late second century BC) juxtaposes the self portrait of a censor with the wedding procession of Poseidon and Amphitrite. Zanker also cites a denarius of C.M. Limetanus of 82: he traces his ancestry back to Hermes (obverse) via Odysseus (reverse). I thank Mark Wright for calling this to my attention.

<sup>45</sup> See PATERSON 1985.

<sup>46</sup> MORSTEIN-MARX 2004, 111.

tional. Or, perhaps it is just a matter of geography: *civile* means “in Italy”, but not the Social War or the war against Spartacus. Not likely. But, no matter how one takes it, the ease with which Civil War becomes part of Pompey's resume, like the ease with which it becomes foil for Catiline, says something about the ease with which Civil War has entered Roman history: before it was the ancestral curse of Horace's epode, it was a term in the rhetoric of praise and blame.

Before moving on, it is important at this point to make clear that I am not making any claims about Cicero or what he believed. Nor am I interested in what might be called the facts that Cicero refers to. The fact that concerns me is a textual fact: that the calamity to the republic and the slaughter of citizens that Sulla was responsible for has been absorbed into the rhetoric of aristocratic competition: it is an experience that qualifies Pompey for the extraordinary command that will mark his victory in that same competition; it was a competition in which *se in hac urbe florere voluerunt* (*Cat.* 3,25; cp. *Phil.* 8,7,3). It is at once ironic and completely of a piece with this rhetoric of *virtus* that in 49, as Caesar is “liberating” Italy, and Cicero shrinks in horror from a *genus belli crudelissimi et maximi, quod nondum vident homines quale futurum sit* (*Att.* 9,10,2), Pompey will threaten the towns (the ones he had liberated according to Sulla) and the citizens of Rome saying *Sulla potuit, ego non potero?* (*ibid.*). This linkage of liberty and slaughter, personal power and public authority<sup>47</sup>, *dignitas* and Sulla was part of the script for competition – even while its consequences were seen as disastrous: *at Sulla, at Marius, at Cinna recte. Immo iure fortasse; sed quid eorum victoria crudelius, quid funestius?* (*Cic. Att.* 9,10,3)<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Cp. Scipio's response to Q. Fulvius when asked if he would obey the Senate's decree regarding provinces: *cum Scipio respondisset se quod e re publica esset facturum, tum Fulvius: non ego ignarus quid responsurus facturusve esses quaesivi, quippe cum prae te feras temptare te magis quam consulere senatum...* (*Livy* 28,45,3-4). The point is not about procedure but about Scipio's standard, which seeks public authority for his personal ambitions and stands above procedure. He made the same gesture when he refused to respond in court.

<sup>48</sup> Twenty three years after *civile bellum* heads the list of “military experience” on Pompey's resume, the valence of the term has changed substantially: *nam nec privatos focos nec publicas leges videtur nec libertatis iura cara habere quem discordiae, quem caedes civium, quem bellum civile delectat, eumque ex numero hominum eiciendum, ex finibus humanae naturae exterminandum puto. Itaque sive Sulla sive Marius sive uterque sive Octavius sive Cinna sive iterum Sulla sive alter Marius et Carbo sive qui alius civile bellum optavit, eum detestabilem civem rei publicae natum iudico* (*Phil.* 13,1). And, yet, as *Phil.* 8,7,3 shows, the linkage with republican values and the republic itself cannot be broken: *ceteris enim bellis maximeque civilibus contentionem rei publicae causa faciebat.*

### *Caesar and the demands of dignitas*

In 56 Cicero had occasion to turn to Caesar and the extension of his command. Again his rhetoric, the values and forces that his rhetoric depends upon and helps constitute, give us a taste of what is to come. Pompey is still preeminent (39,1), but now Caesar's services to the state make him a friend to Cicero (24), now Caesar has received honors unlike any before him (25,5), now *ratio belli* and *utilitas rei publicae* require Caesar (30) and Caesar knows every kind of war and is so successful that "there is no race that is not so razed that it scarcely exists or so dominated that it grows quiet or so pacified that it rejoices in our victory and power"<sup>49</sup>. Caesar's *fides*, *virtus*, and *felicitas* is what governs and cares for Gaul; he brings laws, rights and peace. This accrues to the glory of Rome, the extension and safety of her empire, and fires Cicero with a great love for his country (22). Caesar's personal glory and Rome's safety, Cicero's patriotic passions and the extension of empire are all inextricably linked.

But throughout the speech we hear of Caesar's *dignitas*. Cicero's speech on the Manilian Law is longer by half than his speech on the consular provinces. And in the speech on the consular provinces, he spends half of his time attacking those monsters, Piso and Gabinius. In less than half the space he refers to Caesar's *dignitas* twice as many times (6)<sup>50</sup> as he referred to Pompey's *dignitas* (3 times)<sup>51</sup>. And the references are more pointed. Pompey's *dignitas* did not make him a snob (41); men's confidence in him was the fruit of his valor and *dignitas* (*virtutis fructum ac dignitatis*, 59); the Senate should not contradict the judgment of most distinguished men about Pompey's *dignitas* (63). There is nothing particularly remarkable about Pompey's *dignitas* unless it is the fact that it is combined with *facilitas* and *temperantia*. But when he comes to Caesar, the unprecedented fifteen day *supplicatio* pertained more to Caesar's *dignitas* than to the needs of the Republic (*magis ad hominis dignitatem quam ad rei publicae necessitatem*, 26) or what was sufficient for the gods (26); the additional days were attributed to Caesar's *dignitas* (26); the *dignitas* of the words were for his glory and praise (27); the measure regarding soldiers' pay was good for the republic

<sup>49</sup> *Nulla gens est quae non aut ita sublata sit ut vix exstet, aut ita domita ut quiescat, aut ita pacata ut victoria nostra imperioque laetetur* (31).

<sup>50</sup> Cicero refers to *dignitas* thirteen times: the senatorial order (10; 38) and the *dignitas* it offers (38); the empire (18); of Servilius and Lucullus (22), of the *maiorum* (36), of Cicero (42), and of Caesar (26; 26; 28; 47); of Cicero's words on behalf of Caesar (27); Caesar's future position in the state (35).

<sup>51</sup> Cicero refers to the *dignitas* twelve times: the *dignitas* of empire and Rome (11; 14,5; 14,13; 54; 57; 64; 71); of senators (63), and of a certain *dignitas imperatoria* in speaking (42); Pompey's *dignitas* appears at 41, 59, and 63.

but Cicero supported it more generously because of Caesar's *dignitas* (28). Cicero looks at the future: Caesar's return will mean glory, triumph, praise, honor from the senate, thanks from the Equites, the love of the people. Cicero's *concordia omnium*!<sup>52</sup> He would return "to his country, to his household gods, to that *dignitas* which he sees in store for him ..., to be borne in triumph as a conqueror to the Capitol..." (35)<sup>53</sup>. Caesar's *dignitas* requires, if not demands, what exceeds the honors given to Marius and Pompey, it exceeds the needs of the state, it receives more than what the gods expect. Then Cicero warns the Senate: since Caesar postpones the fruits of his labors while undertaking service to the state, they ought not to impede an *imperator* who is passionate about governing the republic. *Vehementius arbitrator pertimescendum si hominum clarissimorum ac potentissimorum aut honorem minuero aut studium erga hunc ordinem repudiaro* (39): "I think it is to be dreadfully feared, if I diminish the honor of very famous and powerful men or repudiate their zeal for this Senatorial order".

Long before civil war seemed to be inevitable, the rhetoric of aristocratic competition is already being articulated in ways that make civil war as much an origin as a conclusion. Pompey's many excellences begin in civil war. Caesar's unique accomplishments entail reasonable expectations: triumph, love of the people, a zeal to govern the republic; and the failure of those expectations are wrong (*non debemus*) and frightening (*vehementius pertimescendum*). Cicero knew the potential because he knew how the game was played. And he knew the *dignitas Caesaris*<sup>54</sup>. It is important that these elements of the discourse of aristocratic competition appear in the easy rhetoric of Cicero, the uncertain politician who did not want to believe that war was necessary until it was too late, the man who nearly brokered a peace agreement in first week of January 49<sup>55</sup>. Looking backward at the speeches of 66 and 56, the seeds of civil war are already planted in the fertile soil of aristocratic competition, and, without knowing what it would eventually mean, Cicero already knew what it would mean to deprive Caesar and his *dignitas* of command, of the consulship, and of the honors (he believed) he had deserved.

<sup>52</sup> See GRUEN 2009.

<sup>53</sup> *Nec imperatorem incensum ad rem publicam bene gerendam revocare nec totam Gallici belli rationem prope iam explicatam perturbare atque impedire debemus* (35).

<sup>54</sup> He also seems to have an ear for Caesar's diction: *noster imperator nosterque exercitus et populi Romani arma peragrarunt* (32).

<sup>55</sup> Vell. Pat. 2,49,3. On Cicero's peace efforts, see RAAFLAUB 1977, 64-68; on Caesar's efforts, see *ibid.* 262-290.

## *Caesar and Roman imperium*

I come now to Caesar's self-presentation. It is easy to show that he displays most, if not all, of Pompey's virtues, and that these virtues represent Romanness, the way of the ancestors. To a large extent this is the purpose of the *Gallic War*. At the beginning, he abandons annalistic structure in two ways: first, he gives his audience an overview of Gaul and its political background; second, the narrative itself begins in March which allows Caesar to appear simultaneously in Gaul and in the *Bellum Gallicum* as Rome's response to a problem in "our province". Like Cicero's Pompey, he carries with him Rome and her history. When the Helvetii ask for passage, Caesar recalls the death of the consul Lucius Cassius, and refuses (1,7,3). Cassius had been killed more than 50 years earlier; before Caesar was born. The skeptic may believe that Caesar was forcing a fight, but the rhetoric claims that he is caring for Rome and her history. When the Aedui appeal to Caesar, he protects the fortunes of the allies. When Caesar attacks the Helvetii, it turns out that these are Tigurini, the very men who had killed Lucius Cassius: "whether by chance or by the plan of the gods," he says. Thus, Caesar becomes the avenger of wrongs, the protector of history, the agent of the gods. And he adds that the Tigurini had also killed Lucius Piso, a legate, the grandfather of Caesar's father-in-law. Familial piety is added to the list of Caesarian virtues and roles that Caesar carries and displays. This is the quintessential Roman, Aeneas *avant la lettre*<sup>56</sup>.

When in response to the pleas of Divitiacus he forgives his brother, Dumnorix, he overlooks both the injuries of the republic and his own sense of indignation<sup>57</sup>. What is important here is not what he overlooks or the fact that he responds to a form of *pietas*<sup>58</sup>, but, first, that he represents himself as being in the position to overlook injuries to the republic, and, second, that those injuries and the personal investments of his *dolor* are conjoined. And Caesar's actions, which are of course good for Rome, are good for Gaul: he punished the Helvetii "for the old wrong done by them to the Roman people, yet that ... [was] no less to the benefit of Gaul ..., because the Helvetii

<sup>56</sup> See HALL 1998, 28: "For Caesar this (importation of Greek culture) was not enough, and the *Bellum Gallicum* will represent the authentic voice of Rome, her mission and destiny: imposing linguistic order on the world against the intrusion of barbarisms, and imposing political order on it against rebarbative tribesman, are two sides of the same intellectual and ideological coin (cf. Caesar ap. Pliny, *NH* 7,117)". See also BATSTONE - DAMON 2006, 34-37.

<sup>57</sup> *Uti et rei publicae iniuriam et suum dolorem eius voluntati ac precibus condonet* (1,20,5).

<sup>58</sup> One might compare Scipio at New Carthage returning a beautiful captive to her fiancé, Livy 26,50.



... had quitted their country with the design of making war upon the whole of Gaul, and seizing the government, and selecting the most convenient and most productive spot for a home and holding the rest of the states as tributaries" (1,30). The agent of history acting on behalf of the Roman people repairs injustices in the world.

Ariovistus is another example: proud and cruel; he would wreak on the Haedui every kind of cruelty, if everything was not done at his nod or pleasure; he was savage, passionate, and reckless (*barbarum, iracundum, temerarium*); his commands could no longer be borne, unless there was some aid in Caesar and the Roman people. The point is not that this is true or untrue or even unusual. The point is that Caesar speaks and acts for Rome: "either by his own influence and by that of his army, or by his late victory, or by name of the Roman people" (1,31). And this was also how Cicero saw the war in 56: a war that would end with established law, sure justice, eternal peace<sup>59</sup>. *Ego vero sic intellego, patres conscripti, nos hoc tempore in provinciis decernendis perpetuae pacis habere oportere rationem* (*prov. cons.* 30).

In the Gallic War, enemies are defeated both by the Roman army and their own failures in *fides, virtus*, and self-restraint, in *celeritas, consilium*, and *virtus*. Recent studies have shown that the good Gauls are noble; the enemies of Rome are demagogues. Caesar and his victories represent a polity that is essentially aristocratic<sup>60</sup>. When violence harms the workings of clientship among the Haedui and Sequani, Caesar sets their state in order. The story is worth repeating:

When Caesar arrived in Gaul, the Haedui were the leaders of one faction, the Sequani of the other. The Haedui had *auctoritas* from long ago and many clients; by themselves the Sequani did not have much power, so they joined up with the Germans and Ariovistus, whom they seduced with big expenses and big promises. They won many battles, killed all the Haeduan aristocracy, and became so pre-eminent in power that they brought over to their side a large number of the Haeduan clients, they took the sons of their leaders as hostages, they forced them to swear an oath not to do anything to hurt the Sequani, they violently took possession of a great part the neighboring territory, and seized the leadership of all Gaul. This was the necessity that forced Divitiacus to go to the Senate at Rome to seek aid. He returned empty-handed. Caesar's arrival brought about a change in the situation. Hostages were returned to the Haedui, former clients restored, new ones were gained through Caesar, because they saw that those who had joined in friendship with the

<sup>59</sup> *Domitae sunt a Caesare maximae nationes, sed nondum legibus, nondum iure certo, nondum satis firma pace devinctae. Bellum adfectum videmus et, vere ut dicam, paene confectum, sed ita ut, si idem extrema persequitur qui inchoavit, iam omnia perfecta videamus* (*prov. cons.* 19).

<sup>60</sup> See BARLOW 1998.

Haedui enjoyed better conditions and fairer control, and in other affairs their influence and dignity was increased; they dismissed the Sequani's leadership. The Remi take over the place of the Sequani because they had equal favor with Caesar<sup>61</sup>.

There are two simple points to make: First, Caesar fixes the social and political system, which is to say he makes it better fit the ideals of Roman clientship<sup>62</sup> and the needs of Gaul; second, he does this because the Senate fails to act. Caesar represents Rome even when Rome fails herself. Another more complex point to make is that the political solution to such factional abuses requires someone who stands outside and above the dispute, someone who can decide between the Haedui and Sequani and whose favor will also aid the Remi. If there is an allegory here<sup>63</sup>, it aligns Caesar's response to factionalism in Gaul with his response to the Senate's refusal to act: acting when the Senate will not, Caesar still represents Roman and aristocratic values; acting outside the petty disputes of the politicians, Caesar's magisterial actions repair the community: *hortatur ac postulat, ut rem publicam suscipiant atque una secum administrarent. Sin timore defugiant, illis se oneri non futurum et per se rem publicam administraturum* (BC 1,32,7).

There are two arguments that concern this paper in the Caesar's *Gallic War*: First, Caesar represents the coming of Rome, her history, her laws, her social structure, her virtues. He Romanizes, which is to say civilizes, the world: this is both the glory and the safety of the Republic, this is the conjunction of Caesar's glory and Rome's safety: *tamen praeferendum existimavit, quas in provinciis regionesque venisset, eas ita relinquere constitutas ut domesticis dissensionibus liberarentur, iura legesque acciperent, externorum hostium metum deponerent* (Bell. Alex. 65,1). Second, the Gauls, despite

<sup>61</sup> *Cum Caesar in Galliam venit, alterius factionis principes erant Haedui, alterius Sequani. Hi cum per se minus valerent, quod summa auctoritas antiquitus erat in Haeduis magna eorum erant clientelae, Germanos atque Ariovistum sibi adiunxerant eosque ad se magnis iacturis pollicitationibusque perduxerant. Proeliis vero compluribus factis secundis atque omni nobilitate Haeduorum interfecta tantum potentia antecesserant, ut magnam partem clientium ab Haeduis ad se traducerent obsidesque ab iis principum filios acciperent et publice iurare cogerent nihil se contra Sequanos consilii inturos, et partem finitimi agri per vim occupatam possiderent Galliaeque totius principatum obtinerent. Qua necessitate adductus Diviciacus auxilii petendi causa Romam ad senatum profectus infecta re redierat. Adventu Caesaris facta commutatione rerum, obsidibus Haeduis redditis, veteribus clientelis restitutis, novis per Caesarem comparatis, quod ii qui se ad eorum amicitiam adgregarant, meliore condicione atque aequiore imperio se uti videbant, reliquis rebus eorum gratia dignitateque amplificata Sequani principatum dimiserant. In eorum locum Remi successerant; quos quod adaequare apud Caesarem gratia intellegebatur...* (BG 6,12,1-7).

<sup>62</sup> Mark Wright points out to me that the description in BG 6,11 is already redolent of Roman institutions: *civitates, factiones, principes, auctoritas, arbitrium, iudicium*, and *plebs*. This is, of course, a feature of imperialism: the natives are imperfect, not as natives, but as Romans.

<sup>63</sup> And, of course, there is no reason to tell the story except for its implications ... about Caesar, Rome, Gaul, and so on.

their quasi-Roman *virtus*, are essentially failed Romans. Their inability to fully understand and accept the principles that guide both the military and civil systems of the Romans justifies domination and empire. In fact, recent studies<sup>64</sup> have shown that the Gauls seem to learn more quickly how to besiege a fortified position than how to create community out of diversity. This both defeats them and justifies their defeat.

### *The Civil War: Bringing it all back Home*

Caesar's *Civil War* is of a piece with both this rhetoric of Roman *imperium* and Cicero's rhetoric of *virtus* and *gloria*. In the *Civil War*, however, Pompey and his followers display the weaknesses of Caesar's opponents in Gaul: like the Gauls in general (*BG* 4,5) they are quick to believe rumors that turn out to be untrue (*BC* 1,53,1). Like Ariovistus (*BG* 1,36), Pompey misjudges his strength, both at the beginning (*BC* 1,6,1-2) and at the end (*BC* 3,86,1). Caesar mentions Gallic cruelty 4 times in the *Gallic War*: it characterizes Ariovistus, Litaviccus, Critognatus<sup>65</sup>. In the *Bellum Civile* cruelty is associated only with the Pompeians<sup>66</sup>: at the beginning, Pompey praises those who spoke most fiercely and cruelly (1,2,8). As he fled Brundisium, Pompey dug trenches across the streets, fixing sharpened stakes and posts; the townspeople warned Caesar because they resented the damages and insults of Pompey's army. In Asia Scipio gave men military power over cities: "Of them, whoever acted most fiercely and cruelly, he was considered a man and an excellent citizen" (3,38). They confuse cruelty with Roman citizenship, which is, within the rhetoric of Republican *virtus*, an essential misunderstanding of what it means, and has long meant, to be a Roman<sup>67</sup>. Both Pompey and Scipio give the lie to the self-restraint that Cicero described. In fact, the towns that welcomed Caesar in early 49 are the *Civil War*'s answer to Cicero's claims. Caesar turns away from the treasury in Rome: lest he seem more restrained in regard to human life than in regard to money (1,23,4). The Gauls are irrational, petty, abusive, devious. The Pompeians are irrational, petty, abusive, devious. Caesar's continuator in the *Spanish War* seems to make the

<sup>64</sup> RIGGSBY 2006, 103-104.

<sup>65</sup> RIGGSBY 2006, 103 concludes: "over the course of the work, although the Gauls become more like the Romans in skill, they become less like them in humanity", referring mainly to Critognatus at 7,77,3; see also Ariovistus (1,31-32), Litaviccus (7,38). *Crudeliter* and *crudelitas* occur only here in the *BG*.

<sup>66</sup> In addition to the two cited above, 1,32,6; 1,76,5; 1,85,4; 3,28.

<sup>67</sup> See the picture of Scipio in Livy and of Pompey in *de imp. Pomp.* (above).

point for me: describing a particularly *nefandum crudelissimumque facinus* by Pompey's men, he says *sicut apud barbaros* (*Sp.* 15).

I want to focus on two arguments. The first aligns the Pompeians with the barbarians, which justifies their defeat and domination in terms of Roman *imperium*; the second, not only aligns Caesar with Roman values as the true and exemplary Roman, but in so doing makes him the *imperator* who represents Rome. This claim is partly carried out through representations of how Pompeians have destroyed *res publica*. Like the Sequani they seduce with big expenses and big promises; like the Germans, they force Romans to swear an oath and use violence for personal profit. The *Civil War* opens with a scene in the Senate, the refusal to discuss Caesar's letter, threats and abuse. Throughout the work Pompeians abuse freedom of speech – that which was for Cicero essential to *libertas* and a republic. They either make threats or private agreements. Senators are treated as *evocati* (1,3); provinces go to *privati*, while Caesar's friends Philippus and Cotta are passed over by private agreement (1,6,5). *Privati* are attended by lictors (1,6,7). Caesar is making the claim that Pompey's *privatum consilium* has no *publica auctoritas*. In contrast, Caesar asks for free elections and that “all the republic” be returned to the people. Pompeians destroy good government. They replaced *res publica* with *res privata*. In his speech to the senate, Caesar speaks of Pompeian *iniuria, acerbitas inimicorum, crudelitas et insolentia*; he asks the senate *ut rem publicam suscipiant atque una secum administrent* (1,32,7). Fear of Pompey prevents even this.

Now it is Caesar's speed and Caesar's *consilium*. The very virtues that singled Pompey out in Cicero's speech turn against him. Caesarian speed becomes the essence of speed<sup>68</sup> as Caesar travels south in 49; at Ilerda the whole contest depended on speed (1,70,1). Caesar's *consilium* preempts Pompey's miscalculations. His refusal to yield to his soldiers' desire to fight as his army shadows Petreius and Afranius is a *consilium* that does not please all (1,72). But it shows self-restraint and *miseriordia civium*. And finally it is *consilium* that fails Pompey in his final scene. He tries to keep hidden as long as possible his *fugae consilium* (3,102,3); he abandons his *adeundae Syriae consilio* (3,103,1); and finally succumbs to a secret plot: *clam consilio inito* (3,104,2). In the next sentence, Pompey is killed.

<sup>68</sup> Cicero elaborates Pompey's *celeritas* (7 times in the *de imp. Pomp.*): *o celeritatem incredibilem!* (*Att.* 7,22,1; see also 8,9a,2). The word became associated with Caesar to such an extent that Antony in 44 was said *Caesariana uti celeritate* (*Att.* 16,10,1). And, of course, this *celeritas* is all over the *BG* as well – beginning at *BG* 1,13: “The Helvetii, confused by his sudden arrival, when they found that he had effected in one day, what they, themselves had with the utmost difficulty accomplished in twenty”; and was deadly for Pompey in the *BC*: *bis de causis uterque eorum celeritati studebat et suis ut esset auxilio et ad opprimendos adversarios ne occasione temporis deesset* (*BC* 3,78).

In the end, Caesar's republican virtues, patience, strategy, compassion, defeat the barbarian and re-establish Roman values. The final scene of book 1 after the battle at Ilerda confirms this. As I have argued elsewhere<sup>69</sup>, it reverses all the dangers and damages of the opening scene. Private meetings are made public; Petreius is protected from insults; disputes are settled; losses are made good from Caesar's own pocket; armies are dismissed. Here, as he acts out again his role as restorer of order, bringer of Roman values, agent of Roman history and the gods, civilizer in a world gone mad, he foreshadows the Augustan principate. Like the Caesar of the *Bellum Gallicum*, here at Ilerda Caesar takes a position outside and apart from the conflict, but this time it is something he can do only through the magnanimity and imperiousness of his victory. But, then, the republican rhetoric of competition had always aimed at exactly that: the divine and singular virtue of Pompey, such *humanitas* that he was like a god, and the demands of *dignitas*, *gloria* and *potentia*. How does one compete with divine and singular virtue? How does one compete with the descendant of a king and a god? The equation of individual glory with the glory of Rome may fuel civic ambition<sup>70</sup>, but it also aims at dominance. Where does one stop in the effort to establish a world "with laws, with a fixed system of rights, with a peace that can be counted on" (*prov. cons.* 19)? Certainly not at the Rubicon any more than at Nola. The rhetoric of "Caesar and the Roman people" depends upon an equivalence that already hides autocratic ambitions. Behind the veil of virtue were contests for glory, freedom, domination. It was always a deadly business: in the end deadly to Pompey, to Caesar and to the Republic.

### Conclusion

In drawing a line from Pompey's supremacy in speed, *humanitas* and *consilium* and his qualifying experience in civil war to *Caesariana celeritas*, Pompeian *crudelitas*, his failed *consilium*, his destruction of Roman values and his defeat in civil war, or in noting how Cicero already saw that the demands of *gloria* and *dignitas* could or even should exceed the needs of the Republic and the desires of the gods, I am not trying to give up on personal responsibility or genius in the name of Postmodernism and the textuality of action. There were choices. Perhaps Caesar did not need to adopt a totalizing rhetoric. But Cicero already had. Or take an absolute moral high-

<sup>69</sup> BATSTONE - DAMON 2006, 75-88.

<sup>70</sup> Cicero exploits the same equation when he notes that Clodius' attack upon and destruction of his house was by senatorial decree considered an act *contra rem publicam*: *Har. Resp.* 15; cp. the destruction of Maelius' house, Livy 4,16.

ground. But Pompey was already like a god: *tanta temperantia, tanta mansuetudine, tanta humanitate ut ei beatissimi esse videantur apud quos ille diutissime commoretur* (*de imp. Pomp.* 13,10). And, besides, by 49 Caesar had already taken that step in actions that fired Cicero's heart with love for his country – like Pompey's war, it will be remembered. And there was always the matter of obedience, of *disciplina* and *studium*. Cicero tried to construct a *studium erga hunc ordinem* at the same time that he warned the Senate not to diminish the honor of powerful men. And lest we become too doctrinaire and one-sided about aristocratic values and aristocratic competition, here is Cicero speaking to the Senate and describing his change of heart with regard to Caesar: *vos sequor, patres conscripti, vobis obtempero, vobis adsentior* (*prov. cons.* 25,11).

There are always alternatives within ideologies. But it may be a mistake to think that the "choices" for Sulla or Caesar were the same as we can imagine them being. If the choice is between injury, indignity, failure, and rejection on the one hand (i.e., *omnia perisse, omnia permiscere*) and *dignitas* on the other, is there really a choice?<sup>71</sup> Our understanding of the choices facing Caesar or Sulla or Pompey and others should, I think, be informed by the rhetoric, not just of competition, but of identity that told the actors who they were and what they were to do in the world. This rhetoric not only constitutes a personal identity (or manliness and excellence), but it also establishes a common world. It is within this world that Caesar's decisions in late 50 and early 49 were not radical breaks with the past, but rather continuations of the competition that in Rome may have always aimed at *regnum* or at least appeared to do so<sup>72</sup>. It begins, after all, with Brutus' sons<sup>73</sup>, and includes Sp. Cassius and Sp. Maelius<sup>74</sup>, Scipio Africanus and Tiberius Gracchus. It was, after all, a term of praise and empowerment for childhood games (*rex pueritiae*, Hor. C. 1,36,8) and for feasting and parasites (e.g. Plaut. *Capt.* 825; *rex mensae*,

<sup>71</sup> "The truth is that Sulla had little choice but to act as he did" (KEAVENEY 2005, 50).

<sup>72</sup> Fear of *regnum* would then be a kind of *Verneinung*. In any event, it appears as a term of political invective as early as Livy 6,41,3 of C. Licinius Stolo and Lucius Sextius in the 380s and 9,34,16 of Appius Claudius in 310. And, of course, T. Gracchus, Saturninus, Cinna, Sulla, Pompey, and even Cicero were saddled with the term *regnum* or *rex*. See WIRSZUBSKI 1968, 62-63. "Personal domination, if transitory, was not in fact inconsistent with the survival of the old Republic" (MORSTEIN-MARX - ROSENSTEIN 2006, 626): but, as Caesar noted, transitory domination was not the goal.

<sup>73</sup> The example that Cincinnatus uses when justifying the slaughter of Sp. Maelius, Livy 4,15,3.

<sup>74</sup> The connection between his *popularis* actions, his use of *privata pecunia*, and the charges of *regnum* points to a key negotiation of the ideological stew: *privata impensa* and *publica auctoritas* (i.e., the Senate) meant *libertas*, while *privata pecunia* and *lex agraria* meant *regnum*; see Livy 4,13-14. It is interesting to note that in the earlier version of Maelius recorded by Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 12,4,2-5 Ahala killed him "on the Senate's advice but without being invested with any magistracy. He was chosen for the job simply because he was a tough" (LINTOTT 1968, 56).

Macr. 2,1) and for wealth in general (see Plaut. *Rud.*; Hor. *C.* 2,14,11; 2,18,34; *E.* 1,7,37). And then there is that marked ambivalence Romans show toward their own kings?<sup>75</sup> On the darker side, Sallust thought that struggles for domination were a restless and indomitable vice of human nature. And Cicero said of Pompey and Caesar, *uterque regnare vult* (*Att.* 8,11,2). “If Caesar and Pompey had thought like Cato”, Montesquieu said, “others would have thought like Caesar and Pompey”<sup>76</sup>. And, of course, it is not clear that Cato aspired only to an equality among other aristocrats.

As Caesar (from his perspective) fixes *clientela* among the Haedui, avenges wrongs to Rome and his family, brings Roman values to a barbarian world, opposes Pompeian cruelty and irrationality, defends his *dignitas* and establishes justice and joy among the citizen-soldiers at Ilerda, he is living out the consequences of republican ambitions that always joined personal and public glory. It was a competition that justified egregious power by identifying victory with the state, one that sought *publica auctoritas* for *privato consilio*, one that fought for and protected *res publica*, and in so doing brought the republic to an end. *Exercitum ... privato consilio ac privata impensa comparavi, per quem rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi* (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 1,1).

Augustus' words could be taken as clever intertextual propaganda, the great man manipulating the words of a world he has changed. But, without contradiction, it could also be taken as an example of rhetoric manipulating Octavian, of ideology doing its work. After all, at eighteen when he took over his adoptive father's legions, he was doing what other men had done, what Pompey himself had done. And he too was on his mother's side descended from kings, and on his fathers from the gods who hold even kings in their power. But the choice between subject-to-ideology and subject-of-ideology is a false choice. It amounts to the distinction between “they know not what they do, but they do it anyway” and “they know exactly what they do, and they do it anyway”<sup>77</sup>. It is the choice between the clever slave of Plautus and the *miles gloriosus*<sup>78</sup>, or between the statue of Augustus in full military dress in the center of the forum and the emperor's last words: ἐπεὶ

<sup>75</sup> See ERSKINE 1991. Erskine's view that invective grew out of the Roman experience with Hellenistic monarchies may be only part of the truth; the other part might be found in the Roman imitation of Hellenistic monarchies, e.g., *Magnus ipse*.

<sup>76</sup> *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*, ch. 11, cited in MORSTEIN-MARX - ROSENSTEIN 2006, 629; 636 n. 8.

<sup>77</sup> Žižek introduced this reversal of the Marxian formula in ŽIŽEK 1989, 28-33.

<sup>78</sup> For the importance of the figure of the Plautine slave in Roman identity, see BATSTONE 2006, 548-550; BATSTONE 2009, 212-227.

δὲ πάνυ καλῶς πέπαισται, δότε κρότον (“a round of applause, since I played my part well!”).

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