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Title

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Journal

Berkeley Undergraduate Journal of Classics, 3(2)

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Publication Date

2015

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Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

Augustus and Auctoritas

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Abstract: This paper addresses the Republican precedent for Augustan auctoritas, with a particular focus on its role in legitimizing near-absolute rule in a State which continued to refer to itself as a *res publica*, and to its leader as an exceptionally authoritative princeps.

If Augustan rule cannot reasonably be described as Republican in nature, much of the terminology used in the *Res Gestae*—be it in reference to the State (the *res publica*), to personal *auctoritas*, or to the role of a *princeps*—is strikingly Republican in origin. Although Augustus himself is careful not to use phrases such as *res publica restituta* or *res publica reddita*,¹ the settlement of 13 January 27 B.C. was meant to convey a restoration of the *res publica*. Augustus’s intention to maintain at least an illusion of compliance with Republican principles² starkly contrasts the lack of concern which Julius Caesar had shown as dictator for keeping up a pro-Republican profile. Instead, Augustus treads a careful line between expressing Republican sentiment and allowing such a political implication to be drawn from his actions.

Even if one understands *res publica* as “the State,” “the Commonwealth” or, most literally, “the public thing,” the inevitable association of the term with a long tradition of Republican politics should not be downplayed. It was in looking to the past—to the *mos maiorum* (“*nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi*”)³—that Augustus claimed to have rebuilt a functional state, rooted out corruption, and put a definitive end to the chaos brought about by approximately 150 years of civil war. Time and again, Augustus refers to the fact that he acted not unilaterally, but *ex auctoritate senatus*⁴—i.e. by senatorial decree. In section 34, however, Augustus proclaims that after putting an end to the war, he excelled all men in influence (*auctoritas*), though he possessed no more official power (*potestas*) than his colleagues in the different magistracies: “*Post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihilo amplius habui quam ceteri qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt.*”⁵

Hence the paradox: on the one hand, Augustus used the concept of senatorial *auctoritas*, of which he was an integral part as *princeps senatus*,⁶ to legitimize his pre-eminent political status; while on the other hand, the outstanding nature of his personal *auctoritas*, or influence, elevated him above all other men, including the senators. As we shall see, such conflicting conceptions of *auctoritas*—the one associated with traditional senatorial authority, the other denoting the unique qualities of a single distinguished leader—was already developed extensively in Cicero’s political writings, albeit inconclusively.

¹ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 65.

² Cf. André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 43: “Mais, alors que César ne tint pas sa promesse, formulée dans ses premières propositions de paix, Octave alla jusqu’au bout de la fiction, lorsqu’il procéda à la restauration théâtrale du 13 janvier 27.”

³ *RG.* 6. 5

⁴ Brunt & Moore’s edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) has reconstructed the Latin in section 12, as starting with the words “*ex senatus auctoritate*”; whereas Wallace (2007) proposes the term “*senatus consulto*”. Both editions, however, present the phrase “*ex auctoritate senatus*” in section 20.

⁵ *RG.* 34. 10-12

⁶ *RG.* 7. 2

Indeed, Cicero's attempt to reconcile the role of an influential *princeps* with the Senate's supreme authority (*summa auctoritas*)⁷ poses several problems. Augustus, for his part, did not see the two as mutually exclusive, as the official reference to *senatus consulta* as *S.-C. ex auctoritate Augusti*⁸ boldly suggests. The appellation is arguably redundant, if not problematic, if one understands *senatus consulto* as being equivalent to *ex senatus auctoritate*; the result would be *ex senatus auctoritate ex auctoritate Augusti*.

One fruitful way of elucidating the complexities of Augustan *auctoritas* might be found in applying Max Weber's famous theory of "the three pure types of legitimate authority"⁹—legal, traditional and charismatic—to the Principate. Augustus sought to use tradition¹⁰ to legitimize his rule, thereby fulfilling Weber's definition of traditional authority as one "resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority to issue commands."¹¹ Augustus also assumed a different type of individual authority—a kind which Weber would later term "[c]harismatic ... resting on a devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him."¹² As Weber notes, very few examples in history present a singularly pure form of authority as the basis for legitimizing rule;¹³ Augustan Rome was no exception.

It seems clear that an element of "charismatic authority," identified by Weber as "a specifically revolutionary force,"¹⁴ did surface in the age of Augustus, despite an apparent allegiance to the traditional model. Using *auctoritas* as a basis for legitimizing power was not *per se* a revolutionary concept, or indeed anti-Republican; on the contrary, the genius of the *Res Gestae* lies in the fact that both its terminology and its value system appear remarkably conservative. The *Res Gestae* relies on the programmatic notion of *auctoritas* to inscribe itself in the history of Roman political thought, from the mythical foundation of the *Urbs* by Romulus to the Late Republic of Cicero. That unifying, intrinsically Roman principle was vital to the transition to imperial rule signified by Augustus's ascent to power.

At the heart of this discussion lies the problem of accounting for the central role played by tradition in building this new order, which has come to be known as the "Principate"¹⁵—a term coined relatively recently by Theodor Mommsen.¹⁶ As we shall see, Augustus's appropriation of *auctoritas* as both a personal and political trait, exceeding that of all other men,¹⁷ was motivated not only by a need to avert accusations of monarchical rule associated with a monopoly of power,¹⁸ but also by a conscious intention to maintain a semblance of adherence to Republican values. While few would dispute the fact that the

⁷ Cf. *Cic. rep.* 2. 61. 1

⁸ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 61.

⁹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 324.

¹⁰ i.e. Republican values relating to senatorial authority, as well as associated customs and precedents.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 328

¹² *Ibid.* 328

¹³ *Ibid.* 382: Legal authority and traditional authority are indeed closely linked, as attested by the fact that, both in Cicero's time and during the Principate, senatorial authority was perceived as legitimate based on precedent rather than clear-cut legal provisions: "The belief in legality comes to be established and habitual, and this means it is partly traditional."

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 362

¹⁵ Walter Eder, "Augustus and the Power of Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16.

¹⁶ Incidentally, Max Weber attended Theodor Mommsen's lectures. See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Introduction," in *Max Weber and his Contemporaries*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Routledge, 2006), 10.

¹⁷ *RG.* 34. 10

¹⁸ Cf. *RG.* 34.10-12

Roman Republic did come to an end in the first century B.C., and perhaps most decisively in the wake of Caesar's rise from consul to dictator for life¹⁹ between 48 and 44 B.C., the question of what replaced the old order cannot be settled simply by reference to the concept of dictatorship.

Equally, the idea of a State run by a *princeps*—an eminent citizen—cannot, in and of itself, account for the radical changes which took place in the Roman political arena after the Battle of Actium. The term *princeps*, in fact, was far from alien to the Republican tradition. What was a *princeps*, if not a distinguished citizen whose authority stemmed from his achievements (his *res gestae*) and the associated official honours and prestige he enjoyed both at home and abroad? Cicero himself saw such a man in Pompey,²⁰ a Republican general *par excellence*. As his *De oratore* reveals, he identified the Republic's *principes* (or *oratores*) not with magistrates but rather with generals who had distinguished themselves in battle; Scipio Africanus and Laelius are two notable examples.²¹ In other instances, especially when Cicero refers to one *princeps civitatis* or *princeps rei publicae* in particular,²² the emphasis tends to be on the outstanding quality of the individual in terms of influence (*auctoritas*) or oratory (*eloquentia*) rather than proven military prowess, such as in the case of Pericles²³ and Demaratus of Corinth.²⁴

That Octavian should become known as *princeps* following his victory at the Battle of Actium thus appears consistent with Republican precedents. Indeed, Cicero had envisaged the importance of a *princeps*—a charismatic leader acting as *rector* or “head of state”²⁵ on the one hand, and liberator²⁶ or guarantor (*auctor*) of the Republican constitution²⁷ on the other—in salvaging the Republican state. Hence the fact that Augustus chose to emphasize his role as leader and liberator of the *res publica* (“*rem publicam a dominatio factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi*”)²⁸ is actually in line with some of the most fundamental Republican ideals presented by Cicero, however problematic they may have seemed. Weber's more sceptical reflection, that “[f]or republics ... striking victories may be dangerous in that they put the victorious general in a favourable position for making charismatic claims,”²⁹ is especially relevant here.

Such claims to personal *auctoritas*—which may be understood as “influence” or “charisma”—were not only associated with eminent generals, but also with certain extraordinarily respectable men of the State.³⁰ As Cicero reports in his speech against Piso, the magistrate Quintus Metellus could act beyond the limits of his legal *potestas*—*de iure*

¹⁹ Klaus Bringmann, *A History of the Roman Republic*, trans. W. J. Smyth (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 262: “By adopting the insignia of the Etruscan/ancient Roman monarchy as dictator for life and presenting himself publicly in this way, he [Caesar] was demonstratively putting on show that he wanted to have his position seen as that of a king in the tradition of the city's ancient monarchical origins.”

²⁰ *Cic. Leg. Man.* 43: “Et quoniam auctoritas quoque in bellis administrandis multum atque in imperio militari valet, certe nemini dubium est quin ea re idem ille imperator plurimum possit.... Quod igitur nomen umquam in orbe terrarum clarius fuit? cuius res gestae pares? de quo homine vos, id quod maxime facit auctoritatem, tanta et tam praeclara iudicia fecistis?”

²¹ *Cic. de Orat.* 1. 255; Laelius, moreover, was particularly admired by Cicero for his eloquence.

²² Ferrary 1995: 52

²³ Cf. *Cic. rep.* 1. 25, 1: “Pericles ille et auctoritate et eloquentia et consilio princeps civitatis suae”.

²⁴ Cf. *Cic. rep.* 2. 34, 3: “fuisse enim quondam ferunt Demaratum Corinthium, et honore et auctoritate et fortunis facile civitatis suae principem”.

²⁵ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 8: “Dans le *de Republica*, Cicéron décrit le princeps comme un chef d'Etat.”

²⁶ *Cic. Phil.* 4, 1: “princeps ... libertatis defendae”

²⁷ *Cic. Phil.* 2, 26: “auctores ad liberandam patriam”

²⁸ *RG.* 1. 2-3

²⁹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 382.

³⁰ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), ix.

power—by exercising an extra-constitutional, *de facto* kind of power: namely, *auctoritas*, “*id quod nondum potestate poterat, obtinuit auctoritate.*”³¹ Although *auctoritas* was traditionally associated with the collective influence of the Senate,³² as opposed to the power of a sole monarch,³³ it could thus also refer to the political leverage enjoyed by individual senators and magistrates. On this account, Augustus’s use of the term *auctoritas* to define his own power as an eminent leader is far from ground-breaking, and deliberately so. The same connection existed between the (informal) Republican title of *princeps*—attributed to outstanding generals and statesmen such as Pompey and Pericles—and the concept of personal *auctoritas*.³⁴ As Karl Galinsky notes, “the link between *auctoritas* and the *principes viri*, the eminent citizens of the state, is attested frequently and was easily transferable to the *princeps* Augustus.”³⁵

It is undeniable that Augustus attempted to justify his unusual place in Roman politics based on the notion of *auctoritas*. As he himself argues, his eminent role relied solely on personal *auctoritas*—that is, informal, extra-constitutional power.³⁶ He was *de facto* ruler by virtue of *de facto* power.³⁷ As Erich S. Gruen boldly states, “Augustus was *princeps*. But he did not hold a *principatus*.”³⁸ Whereas the word *princeps* was scarcely used in official language, the term *auctoritas* was allowed to figure in official documents of the highest importance,³⁹ including senatorial decrees, which, as we have seen, were henceforth referred to as *S.-C. ex auctoritate Augusti*.⁴⁰ The advantage of using *auctoritas* as a basis for power lies in the fact that it is a deliberately flexible term,⁴¹ associated at the same time with custom and senatorial power as well as with personal prestige or *dignitas*.⁴²

It is worth exploring the obvious etymological connection between the notion of *auctoritas* and the term *auctor*, the latter denoting an individual whose inherent influence and aptitude for moral leadership enables him to act as a guardian or guarantor of the Republic.⁴³ As we have seen, in some instances Cicero uses the words *princeps* and *auctor*

³¹ *Cic. Pis.* 8

³² Cf. *Cic. rep.* 2. 56, where Cicero argues that the aristocratic stage of the constitution meant that most things were done “*senatus auctoritate et instituto ac more*” – i.e., by authority of the senate, custom and precedent.

³³ Cf. *Cic. rep.* 2. 14: Although Cicero’s history of Rome should not be taken at face value, the fact that Romulus himself is said to have relied on the authority of the “*patres*” (“*tamen eo interfecto [Tito Tatius] multo etiam magis Romulus patrum auctoritate consilioque regnavit*”) informs the Republican belief that senatorial authority had been a major unifying factor in Roman constitutional history.

³⁴ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 2: “Il existe une étroite corrélation, qui n’a pas toujours été aperçue, entre le titre de *princeps* et la notion d’*auctoritas* qui lui sert de fondement.”

³⁵ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 16.

³⁶ *RG.* 34

³⁷ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 2.

³⁸ Erich S. Gruen, “Augustus and the Making of the Principate,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 35.

³⁹ Cf. Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 12: Terms such as *princeps*, *pater patriae* and *auctoritas* are good examples of para-constitutional language.

⁴⁰ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 61.

⁴¹ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 12: “It is precise without being limiting and it is elastic without being vague.”

⁴² The fact that Augustus skillfully blurred the limits between *dignitas* and *auctoritas* is clearly illustrated in the fact that, in the Greek version of the *Res Gestae*, the translation of the Latin word *auctoritas* is ἀξιομα (cf. Malcolm Schofield, “Liberty, Equality, and Authority: A Political Discourse in the Later Roman Republic,” in *A Companion to Greek Democracy and the Roman Republic*, ed. Dean Hammer (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 124-5) – a term rather far removed from the concept of authority, and indeed roughly equivalent to the Latin *dignitas* (“dignity”, “rank”, “importance”).

⁴³ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 12.

interchangeably, suggesting a moral and political responsibility for safeguarding the Republican State, no matter how unconstitutional the measures required may be. In addition to expressing itself at an extra-constitutional level through *privatum consilium* (“princeps ... libertatis defendae”),⁴⁴ *auctoritas* may be linked to constitutional power, to the extent that it also manifests itself through *publicum consilium*—embodied by the Senate or Cicero’s ideal *rector*. This raises the issue of reconciling two diametrically opposed types of juridical right: that of the head of state, backed by constitutional, quasi-legal power, versus that of the revolutionary leader, whose legitimacy as a ruler relies solely on natural right.

A paradox is craftily eluded by Augustus’s cognomen, acquired in 27 B.C. The etymological connection between the adjective *augustus* and the verb *augere* suggests that *auctoritas*, as a form of power, does not remain static;⁴⁵ rather, it evolves through continual activity on the part of the agent or *auctor* (a noun which may also be linked to the fourth principal part of the verb *augere*). We have also seen that the title *auctor* is closely related to the idea of a *princeps*—a leading man by virtue of exceptional *auctoritas*. Augustus, then, is both the embodiment of *auctoritas* in a political sense (*auctor* may be understood not just as “founder,” but also as “guarantor”) and its moral champion (suggested, moreover, by the religious undertones of the epithet *augustus* and the associated noun *augur*). All this is consistent with Augustus’s use of the term in the *Res Gestae*: “By emphasizing *auctoritas* as his governing concept Augustus makes it clear that he does not want to be just a functionary or magistrate but that he aims to provide a higher kind of moral leadership.”⁴⁶

Augustus’s superior status as *princeps*, expressed both in terms of his presiding role in senatorial procedures (“princeps senatus”)⁴⁷ and in his exemplary value,⁴⁸ is therefore consistent with Cicero’s definition of a Republican *princeps*. Yet the fact that Augustus never claimed to have a monopoly on *potestas*—a power traditionally associated with the magistracies—was crucial to keeping up an appearance of allegiance to the Republican cause. In his *Pro Sestio*, Cicero does not use the word *dux*, *auctor* or *princeps* to qualify the role of distinguished magistrates in relation to the senate. Their individual *auctoritas* was in principle very limited, and depended upon the greater authority and collective prestige of the Senate. Rather tellingly, they are referred to as mere *ministri*, subservient to the collective will of the *patres*; in no way can a single magistrate excel the Senate, as the latter is the *constitutional* guardian, custodian, and champion of the *res publica*: “senatum rei publicae custodem, praesidem, huius ordinis auctoritate uti magistratus et quasi ministros gravissimi consili esse voluerunt.”⁴⁹ In his capacity as *princeps senatus*, as opposed to a magistrate with limited *potestas*, Augustus could claim his own share of *de facto* power in the name of *auctoritas*.

The distinction between the Republican *princeps* and the imperial ruler lies less in the para-constitutional nature of *auctoritas* than in the separation of powers (or lack thereof) postulated in the Republican mixed constitution. Indeed, Augustus admits to having held *tribunicia potestas* for life,⁵⁰ despite being a patrician⁵¹ and holding the consulship thirteen

⁴⁴ *Cic. Phil.* 4. 1

⁴⁵ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an interpretive introduction*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 12

⁴⁷ *RG.* 7. 2

⁴⁸ *RG.* 8. 13-15: “Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi.”

⁴⁹ *Cic. Sest.* 137. 4

⁵⁰ *RG.* 10. 3

⁵¹ Cf. Erich S. Gruen, “Augustus and the Making of the Principate,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 36: According to Gruen,

times.⁵² Far from constitutional was his permanent *tribunicia potestas* as well as intermittent consular *imperium*, while he continued to claim outstanding *auctoritas* in the Senate. As Cicero makes very clear in his *De re publica*, a State in which a single man is endowed with permanent power (*perpetua potestate*), even if there is also a Senate, can only be called a monarchy: “nam in qua re publica est unus aliquis perpetua potestate, praesertim regia, quamvis in ea sit et senatus ... illud excellit regium nomen, neque potest eius modi res publica non regnum et esse et vocari.”⁵³

The fact that Augustus seriously considered taking on the name of Romulus is well documented,⁵⁴ though he ultimately abandoned the idea for fear of arousing suspicions that he hoped to reinstate kingship.⁵⁵ If Suetonius’s account of Augustus’s edict relating to the restoration of the Republic is accurate,⁵⁶ Augustus did not in any way wish to be associated with monarchical rule,⁵⁷ tyranny, or dictatorship, which is by no means inconsistent with the *princeps*’s own account of his deeds: “Dictaturam et apsentis et praesentis mihi delatam et a populo et a senatu M. Marcello et L. Arruntio consulibus non recepi.”⁵⁸ In both Suetonius’s account and in the *Res Gestae*, Augustus is shown to have officially relinquished absolute powers. As Suetonius reports, Augustus also assumed the title of “auctor optimi status,”⁵⁹ the Republican resonance of which cannot be disregarded. One need only look so far as Cicero’s *De re publica* to grasp the significance of this claim, the *optimus status* being a conspicuous reference to the Republican constitution.⁶⁰

Augustus is presented as the agent behind the restoration of the Republican State, a notion which relies on the Republican precedent for a citizen’s ability to intervene in state affairs in the name of liberty and justice, merely in his capacity as a *privatus*.⁶¹ The opening lines of the *Res Gestae* are telling in this regard: “exercitum privato consilio et privata impensa comparavi, per quem rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi.”⁶² In this instance, Augustus claims his natural right to intervene in state affairs in the name of liberty and political stability, thereby justifying his role as *princeps*, or head of State. While there is no evidence that Augustus was directly inspired by Cicero’s political writings, his *Res Gestae* do reflect a political mission surprisingly analogous to that of Cicero’s model *princeps*, which seems to allude to a political ideal rather than a historical reality: “There are remarkable revolutions and almost cycles of changes and alterations in commonwealths; to recognize them is the part of a wise man, and to anticipate them when

Augustus tried to solve this constitutional problem by holding “the equivalent of a tribune’s authority” as opposed to actual *tribunicia potestas*.

⁵² *RG*. 35. 1

⁵³ *Cic. Rep.* 2. 43. 1

⁵⁴ See e.g. *Dio*. 53. 16: “βουληθέντων γάρ σφωv ιδίως πως αὐτὸν προσεῖπεῖν, καὶ τῶν μὲν τὸ τῶν δὲ τὸ καὶ ἐσηγουμένων καὶ αἰρουμένων, ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐπεθύμει μὲν ἰσχυρῶς Ῥωμύλος ὀνομασθῆναι”.

⁵⁵ *Dio*. 53. 16

⁵⁶ *Suet. Aug.* 28. 3

⁵⁷ Erich S. Gruen, “Augustus and the Making of the Principate,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 39: “Augustus had resolutely resisted any implication that he occupied a throne that could be passed on to an heir.”

⁵⁸ *RG*. 5. 1-2

⁵⁹ *Suet. Aug.* 28. 3

⁶⁰ André Magdelain, *Auctoritas Principis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1947), 57; See *Cic. rep.* 1. 33. 3: “Scipionem rogemus ut explicet quem existimet esse optimum statum civitatis.”

⁶¹ Cf. *Cic. rep.* 1. 46: The exemplary value of Lucius Brutus, a virtuous man who freed his fellow-citizens from the tyranny of Tarquinius Superbus, is emphasised by Cicero as a model for legitimate intervention on the part of a private citizen.

⁶² *RG*. 1. 1-3

they are about to occur, holding a course and keeping it under his control while governing, is the part of a truly great citizen and nearly divine man.”⁶³

Ironically, it was Cicero who first made a compelling case for the role of a charismatic leader⁶⁴ in salvaging the Republican State. While it is unlikely that he would have approved of Augustus’ Principate, which in reality was an autocracy in all but name, Cicero’s musings on what Scipio might have achieved had he not died in 129 B.C. suggest a political ideology akin to that of the Principate: “the senate, all upstanding citizens, the allies, and the Latins will look to you; you will be the one person on whom the safety of the state rests. To be brief, you will have to restore the commonwealth as dictator.”⁶⁵ The idea that a single leader might be the solution to the problem of decline was thus not as far from Cicero’s thoughts as one might have expected from such a conservative thinker. In this respect, it seems Cicero would have agreed with Machiavelli’s statement that “a prudent orderer of a republic, who has the intent to wish to help not himself but the common good, not for his own succession but for the common fatherland, should contrive to have authority [*autorità*] alone.”⁶⁶ Augustus may not have been the Republican that Machiavelli or Cicero were in their own times. In cunningly cultivating appearances, however, as the sole authoritative *princeps* dedicated to tradition and to the *mos maiorum*—to the restoration of the *res publica* and to its stability—while laying the foundation for imperial rule, Augustus could not have been more Machiavellian.

⁶³ *Cic. rep.* 1. 45. 1-2: “mirique sunt orbis et quasi circuitus in rebus publicis commutationum et vicissitudinum. Quos cum cognosse sapientis est, tum vero prospicere impendentes, in gubernanda re publica moderantem cursum atque in sua potesta retinentem, magni cuiusdam civis et divini paene est viri.”

⁶⁴ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 358: See Weber’s definition of charisma, which echoes Cicero’s characterization of an ideal leader: “The term ‘charisma’ will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”

⁶⁵ *Cic. rep.* 6. 12. 3-4: “te senatus, te omnes boni, te socii, te Latini intuebuntur; tu eris unus in quo nitatur civitatis salus. ac ne multa: dictator rem publicam constituas oportet”.

⁶⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, “Come egli è necessario essere solo, a volere ordinare una repubblica di nuovo, o al tutto fuor degli antichi suoi ordini riformarla,” *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio*, Book 1 (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1984), 86: “Però uno prudente ordinatore d’una repubblica, e che abbia questo animo, di volere giovare non a sé ma al bene comune, non alla sua propria successione ma alla comune patria, debbe ingegnarsi di avere l’autorità solo.”

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