Living in an Age of Gold:
Being a Subject of the Roman Emperor

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Τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς μου γονεῦσι

Abstract

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Panayiotis Christoforou, Brasenose College, DPhil in Ancient History, Trinity Term 2016

This thesis explores the perception of the emperor in the *mentalités* of his subjects, exploring the different ways he was understood. Drawing upon written material from Augustus to Alexander Severus, this thesis explores the roles he was cast in, alluding to a discourse concerning who the emperor was and what he should be, exploring similarities across the period. It is argued the participants in this conversation are not restricted to an elite, but also involved scrutiny from a wider population. Accordingly, this thesis is an alternative history about how the Emperor *seemed*.

It is split into three parts according to episodes of an emperor's life: Part 1 and Chapter 1 explore the nature of the succession, including a discussion of the scholarship concerning the nature of the emperor's power and its transmission. It explores the nature of the succession, the imperial family, and perception of this issue from the perspective of his subjects.

Part 2 explores the discourse about the emperor's conduct during his reign. Chapter 2 discusses the issues with the evidence, and how to glean a wider perspective. Chapter 3 is a thematic treatment of the 'topics of conversation' within the discourse, and each help to describe the 'thought-world' concerning the emperor, involving the fears and expectations of his roles in government, culture, and society; from the banal to the fantastic.

Part 3 and Chapter 4 concern the emperor's legacy. It discusses the impression of the emperor's timelessness, and the comparability of the emperorship. This is reflected in the afterlife of an emperor, showing the relevancy of dead emperors to subsequent generations, and is manifested in diverse ways, from historical discourse to the appearance of false emperors. Finally, comparability is stressed, opening possibilities for further study on the nature of the emperorship as an example of autocracy.

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors follow the conventions in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[3]. For the journal abbreviations, I have followed *L'Année Philologique*. All papyri are cited according to the latest version of the Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets, published online: (http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist.html).

Acta = Musurillo, H. (1961) *Acta Alexandrinorum* (Leipzig).

AE = *Année Epigraphique*.

ANRW = Temporini, H., W. Haase (edd.) (1972) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* (Berlin and New York).

APM = Musurillo, H. (1954) *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* (Oxford).

CAH[2] = *The Cambridge Ancient History*[2], 14 vols. (Cambridge).

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin).

Corinth 8.2 = West, A. B. (1931) *Corinth, VIII.2, Latin Inscriptions* (Cambridge, Mass.).

EJ = Ehrehberg, V. And A.H.M. Jones (edd.) (1976) *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford: 2nd ed. reprint).

DE = de Ruggiero, E. (ed.) (1886-1997) *Dizionario Epigrafico di Antichità Romane* (Rome).

DPR = Mommsen, T. (1889-1896) *Le Droit Public Romain,* 7 vols. tr. P. F. Girard (Paris).

I.Assos = Merkelbach, R. (ed.) (1976) *Die Inschriften von Assos* (IGSK Band 4; Bonn).

I.Sardis = Buckler, W. H. and D. M. Robinson (edd.) (1932) *Sardis, VII. Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (Leiden).

ILAfr = Cagnat, R. L. Chatelain and A. Merlin (1923) *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc)* (Paris).

IG = *Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin).

IGR = R.Cagnat (ed.) (1901-1927) *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes* (Paris).

ILLPRON = Hainzmann, M. And P. Schubert (1986-) *Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices (*Berlin).

ILS = Dessau, H. (1892-1916) *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae,* 3 vols. (Berlin).

Inscr. Ital. 13.2 = Degrassi, A. (ed.) (1963) *Inscriptiones Italiae Academiae Italicae Consociatae ediderunt. Volumen XIII, Fasciculus II, Fasti anni Numani et Iuliani* (Rome).

OCD[3] = Hornblower, S., and A. Spawforth (2003) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford; 3rd ed.).

Orac. Sib. = *Oracula Sibyllina* (cited from Gauger, J-D. (ed.) (1998) *Sibyllinische Weissagungen* (Düsseldorf).

PIR[2] = Groag, E., A. Stein, et al. (edd.) (1930-) *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I. II. III.* (Leipzig, 2nd ed.).

SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (*Leiden).

Smallwood, *Gaius* = Smallwood, E. M. (1967) *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge).

StR = Mommsen, T. (1887/8) *Römisches Straatsrecht,* 3 vols. (Leipzig; 3rd ed.).

Sherk, *RDGE* = Sherk, R. K. (1969) *Roman Documents from the Greek East:* Senatus Consulta *and* Epistulae *to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore).

SVF = Arnim, H. F. A. v. And M. Adler (edd.) *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta,* 4 vols. (Leipzig)

Syll.[3]= *Dittenberger, W.* (1915-1924) *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (Leipzig, 3rd ed.).

Roman Statutes = Crawford, M. H. (ed.) (1996) *Roman Statutes (BICS Suppl. 64)* (London).

Dig. = Mommsen, T. P. Krueger and A. Watson (edd.) (1985) *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia).

Introduction: An Imagined Emperor

> Aurea secura cum pace renascitur aetas
> et redit ad terras tandem squalore situque
> alma Themis posito iuvenemque beata sequuntur
> saecula, maternis causam qui vicit Iulis.
> dum populos deus ipse reget…[1]
>
> … sed legibus omne reductis
> ius aderit, moremque fori vultumque priorem
> reddet et afflictum melior deus auferet aevum.[2]

The above quotations are from Calpurnius Siculus' first *eclogue*, here recounting the prophecy of Faunus inscribed on a beech tree. It is found by Corydon and Oryntus in an effort to escape the sun in late summer.[3] The inscription describes the coming of a new Golden Age, precipitated by a young emperor who will restore peace and order to the joy of the people.[4] In many ways, it captures the essence of several themes that will be explored in this thesis, which is a study of the perception and reception of the Roman emperor from the perspective of his subjects. These are timelessness, comparability, and liminality, which can be explained as follows. The temporal dimension involves the continual existence of the emperorship, in that the idea of an emperor existing permanently, giving him a timeless quality.[5] This brings us to comparability, which invites judgement and scrutiny of different emperors from the perspective of his subjects within the rubric of what it means to be an emperor; a conversation that is continually being augmented with the advent of new emperors and the reinterpretation of previous ones.[6] Finally, his liminality is due to the emperor being caught between several different roles and worlds that are inherent to the nature of the position. Depending on context, the emperor can be perceived to be *basileus,* responding to petitions from his subjects, and

[1] Calp. *Ecl*. 1.42-46.
[2] Calp. *Ecl*. 1.71-73.
[3] cf. Wiseman (1982) 57.
[4] For more on these themes, see Chapter 3.6.
[5] See Chapter 4.1. cf. Chapter. 1.1.
[6] See Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

also the first amongst equals at Rome.[7] He could be a paragon of moral rectitude, distant from the vicissitudes of luxury, but also seen in the company of freaks, engaging in depravity.[8] He could also be godly, standing between humanity and the divine; a bringer of peace and plenty to the world, a harbinger of a new Golden Age, but also a *Saturnalicius Princeps*, a figure that brings about ruin and chaos.[9]

As a precursor, all these themes are present in Calpurnius Siculus. The lack of specificity of the allusions to any singular emperor point to the malleability of the themes and images with which he is elaborating.[10] Indeed, the strength of the argument that the *iuvenis* described throughout as clearly being a reference to Nero was challenged by Champlin a few decades ago, who argued for a third century date, and the young man actually being Alexander Severus.[11] This precipitated a scholarly firestorm involving several classicists, commenced by a strong rejection of Champlin in order to bolster the Neronian date.[12] However, the terms of these debates concerning the historical and literary references apparent in Calpurnius Siculus, alongside analyses of his metre, syntax, and prosody fall out of the scope here. Perhaps the key point to argue takes its cue from Horsfall's agnosticism on the dating of the poems, namely concerning the timelessness of its themes.[13] In other words, the references above could refer to a specific emperor, yet it is framed in such a way that it can be disputed. With this in mind, there is a temporal wavering at play here, brought into relief by the mythological references, that

[7] Millar (1992) 3, 11.
[8] Dench (2005) 279-292.
[9] Dench (2005) 280; Dickison (1977) 634-647; Trentin (2011); Braund and James (1998) 285-288; esp. Versnel (1993a) 43ff. For more on the Golden Age, see below, Chapter 3.6
[10] cf. Horsfall (1997) 166.
[11] Champlin (1978) 95-110, esp. 98-100.
[12] For a comprehensive account of this debate, see Martin (1996) 34-35, n. 4. For the first reactions, see Townend (1980) 166-174, Mayer (1980) 175-176 and Wiseman (1982) 57-67. For Champlin's response, see Champlin (1986) 104-112, alongside aid from Armstrong (1986) 113-136, for a more literary and metrical analysis of the poet's work that preferred a later date. For a sceptical appraisal of the earlier date, see Baldwin (1995a) 157-167 and Horsfall (1997) 166-195.
[13] Horsfall (1997) 192-195. cf. Potter (1994) 141 for a similar argument with respect to the emperors in the Sibylline Oracles.

places the discourse of what it means to be an emperor outside of time. As this thesis will show, this developing conversation scrutinised the idea of emperor throughout the period in question, namely the first two and a half centuries of our era, allowing for comparison to occur between different emperors and different contexts.

Indeed, this is also observable in the quotation above, which involves a judgement on the suitability of different emperors in their ability to ensure the peace and prosperity of the empire. Not only does the new emperor bring a return of a Golden Age, but does so at the expense of the previous emperor and his age of oppression. Accordingly, there is an inherent comparability between different emperors. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of the emperor within the conceptual framework of how the world works; it is the emperor who is responsible and culpable for the good and the bad. It was the hope for a *melior deus* who would ensure the peace and prosperity in the world, which is met by the fear that he would fall short of the mark. Moreover, the idea that there would be a 'better god' highlights the extraordinary scrutiny placed on the position and conduct of the Roman emperor, and indeed the different roles he had to fulfil.

This theme of liminality of the emperor is one that runs throughout this thesis, and often involves the expectation or understanding of the emperor as a preternatural person who occupies a space between the real and the imaginary; seemingly contradictory and inexplicable. Such was the impression of the Roman emperor on the *imaginaire*. The contradictory roles of the emperor can be argued to be extremes, part in parcel of the spectrum of opinions concerning what made them 'good' or 'bad', which seem separable and distinct. However, when the lens becomes less focused to encompass the position of the emperor as a whole, these roles become less easily delineated. Hence the liminality: all these roles contribute to how he was perceived by his subjects in the Roman empire, and therefore it permeates the discourse concerning the emperor. This means that we often

get a contradictory view of the emperor; one that cannot be easily defined or explained. A goal of this thesis is to appreciate the cracks and fissures that populate the thought-world of the Roman emperor, in order to appreciate the different roles the emperor had to fulfil, and also to see the differing perspectives of these roles, particularly from a wider, inclusive perspective.

There are several avenues which a project such as this could follow. More on what couldn't be done with respect to the restrictive medium of a doctorate will be elaborated below, but the conscious concentration was to explore the various written representations of the emperor and his interactions with his subjects in order to construct a history of how he was perceived.[14] Several interesting points were revealed, which aggregated to provide an alternative perspective of the Roman emperor in his world. It is alternative in the sense that it attempts to flip the picture and observe the idea of the emperorship from the perspective of his subjects, rather than attempting to assess outward representations of the position.[15] It is this choice of lens and focus that reveals different impressions of the emperor.

Indeed, these impressions seem to confirm the subjectivity and volatility of the position. It is subjective in that it seemed ideologically incumbent to the success of an emperor to be challengeable.[16] In other words, the idea that the emperor was dependent on the consent of his subjects in order to rule. This involves the corollary that he could lose his power. This evokes Weber's schema of charismatic authority, which brings us to volatility. It is volatile in both the vastly different and contradictory imaginations of the emperor, encompassing both what was hoped and feared in his conduct, and the instability of the system that resisted a smooth succession of one emperor to the next. In terms of

[14] cf. de Jong (2014) 244-245 for a similar argument.
[15] cf. further discussion below in Chapter 3.1.
[16] cf. Chapter 1 on the succession and the idea of acceptance.

the historical impact, it means that the system had a failsafe: if an emperor proved to be unsuitable for the position, he could be removed, but not to the destruction of the system itself. This meant that what people thought about him *mattered*, thus meaning that what people thought and talked about the emperor was important to the political, social, religious, and cultural life of the Empire.

This *mentalité* concerning the emperor was a moving target, constantly evolving through time and space. In other words, the expectations and fears about the Roman emperor were added to by both real and imagined perceptions of him and his actions, made more and more complex by new examples being set, alongside reassessment of the old. All this has essential implications to the sort of emperor that was imagined, giving a different perspective than a more legal or administrative delineation of the office and his duties. It importantly suggests an emperor with a larger-than-life role, which transcended time and space, hinted at in the passages of Calpurnius Siculus above. To reiterate, this means that the emperor had more liminal and celestial aspects than previously acknowledged. His position made it necessary for him to be seen as a mediator between worlds, taking on different guises in different contexts, which meant that he had to be perceived to solve a wide variety of problems, from the banal to the fantastical.

The thesis as a whole is split thematically, and the different parts correspond to different episodes in the life of an emperor. Greater detail is provided in the introductions for each chapter, but the contents are as follows: The first chapter serves as an introduction to the relevant themes concerning the power of the Roman emperor, and also as a discussion on the perception of the succession. It will be argued that if acceptance was a deciding factor in the legitimisation of an emperor's rule, then exploring what his subjects thought about him was essential. In particular, it explores the debate about bloodline and adoption, their importance to the succession, and perception of this issue

from the perspective of the emperor's subjects. The second chapter provides a necessary excursus on the problems and issues of the evidence, and how to extrapolate wider perspectives of the emperor. The third and largest chapter is a thematic treatment of the different 'topics of conversation' within the discourse concerning the emperor, each of which describes aspects of a thought-world about him. The fourth chapter concerns the legacy and afterlife of the emperor, including the impression of timelessness, which saw the continued relevancy of dead emperors to the future of the Principate.

As with all exercises of this type, there is a necessary place for *res non gestae*, allowing for new avenues to be explored in the future. At certain points, depth was sacrificed for breadth, and vice versa. Certain topics, such as the provincial and civic organisation of the imperial cult, were avoided, due to ample scholarly treatment and the potential that the thesis could quadruple in size. Still, there are several topics of different sizes that could have been treated in this thesis that are worth mentioning. Of particular note is the question of visual imagery and art historical evidence. It is unfortunate that these could not be incorporated into the thesis, since from its inception research focused on text rather than image, for fear of an ever growing corpus of evidence, as well as a lack of expertise dealing with such material. Still, future iterations of this work will endeavour to include visual material, particularly concerning representations of the emperor at a provincial and local level in different media, such as portraiture and coinage.[17] Furthermore, also in consequence of space, more specific encounters with the emperor and certain groups around the empire were avoided, with the view to try to stress commonalities as well as differences between subjects in their views of the emperor. This does not mean that certain groups, such as the military, or Jewish communities, do not

[17] For inspiration on this line of analysis, and where to find such material, see Clarke (2003). For inspiriation on the type of work done in provincial coinage, see Howgego et al. (2005). For more specific relevancy to a topic dealt with in this thesis, the collections of *mirabilia* at Rome (Chapter 3.4), see Rutledge (2012) for his discussion of the material, as well as textual, evidence.

appear in this thesis, but rather that differentiation and stratification in society is more loosely dealt with in an effort to focus on the differing perspectives concerning the emperor. A much larger work would take this issue into consideration, and in particular, argue for a *schema* hinted at throughout this thesis; that proximity to an emperor and his power seemed to matter on how one viewed the position, giving an alternative impression of Roman imperial society. With this in mind, such work would include encounters with the emperor, the relationship with the army, exploring specific provincial attitudes, such as Jewish or Christian perspectives, naming the emperor as beneficiary in *testamenta*, and the devotional contexts of the *Lares Augusti*, amongst others.

Nonetheless, it is hoped that the breadth of topics and evidence discussed will provide a thought-provoking tapestry on the different perceptions of the Roman emperor. Accordingly, this thesis opens up the emperor to understandings of continuity and comparison. Not in the sense of fixity or an unchanging impression, but rather how different emperors from different contexts could be conceptually compared and contrasted to each other. It also creates a study concerning how an autocratic ruler was understood and perceived by his subjects, both revealing the weight of expectation and the difficulty of being an emperor, and also highlighting the resonance of the emperor as an idea for comparison with different periods of human history.[18]

[18] For more on comparability, see Chapter 4.2 and the Conclusion.

Part 1: Before Being Emperor

Chapter 1: Imagining the Succession: The Imperial Succession from a Wider Perspective

1.1: Introduction

As discussed above, the emperor's liminality is temporal. From the inception of the Principate, the role of emperor, and its perception, was in constant dialogue with the past, present, and future. This can be observed in calendars.[1] They attest to a form of dividing and understanding time, which could vary across region and era.[2] As Feeney asserts, the advent of dates on the calendar that concerned the emperor and his family should not be underestimated:

> every few days, another imperial anniversary, another commemoration of the *princeps* and his family, a positive invasion, a planned and systematic act of intrusion which has the cumulative effect of recasting what it means to be Roman.[3]

In the Italian *fasti*, each year, birthdays of the imperial family,[4] temple dedications,[5] title conferrals,[6] and even the assumption of the *toga virilis* of an imperial family member, are commemorated.[7] Such pervasiveness is also reflected in the provinces. At the suggestion of the proconsul Paulus Fabius Maximus, the *koinon* of Asia approved that the calendar of the province be reformed to make Augustus' birthday, the September 23, the new year:[8]

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[1] Feeney (2007) 184-189.

[2] Morgan (2007) 244: the dating systems could include *AUC (ab urbe condita*) from the foundation of Rome, Olympiads, magisterial, regnal and consular years, and also comitial days to festival days; *EJ* 45ff has an edition of compiled calendars. For the compilation, see *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2. cf. Salzman (1991) 5-6; cf. Feeney (2007) *passim*, for the nuances and differences of how the Romans imposed order and structure on their perceptions of time. cf. Potter (1984) 137.

[3] Feeney (1992) 5; Feeney (2007) 185, where he cites Horace on how the Senate and the People will remember Augustus: '*tuas, Auguste, virtues in aevum per titulos memoresque fastus aeternet…*' (*Carm*. 4.14.3-5).

[4] *EJ* p. 51 = *CIL* 1, p. 246 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.29, for the *Fasti Pighiani*: '*nat(alis) Germanic(i)*.' cf. SHA, *Hadr*., 8.2 and SHA. *Pert*. 15.5 on birthday celebrations.

[5] *EJ* p. 45 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.17: '*Concordiae Au[gustae aedis dedicat]a est P(ublio) Dolabella C(aio) Silano co(n)[s(ulibus)]*.'cf. *EJ* p. 45 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.22, for the *Fasti Verulanli*: '*fer(iae) [e]x s(enatus) c(onsulto) quod eo die aedis* | *C[o]ncordiae in foro dedic(ata) est*'.

[6] For example, the title *pater patriae: EJ* p. 47 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.17: '*feriae ex s(enatus) c(onsulto)* | *quod eo die Imperator Caesar Augustus pontifex* | *maximus trib(unicia) potest(ate) XXI co(n)s(ul) XIII* | *a senatu populoque Romano pater patriae* | *appellatus*'.

[7] *EJ* p. 48 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.17: '*Ti(berius) Caesar togam virilem sumpsit Imp(eratore) Caesare VII M(arco) Agrippa* | *III co(n)s(ulibus)*.' cf. Rüpke (2011) 134.

[8] For Paulus Fabius Maximus' letter: *EJ* 98a, ll.20-23 = Sherk, *RDGE* 65A.

> διὸ τύχῃ ἀγαθῇ καὶ ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ δεδόˡχθαι τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἕλλησι, ἄρχειν τὴν νέαν νουμηνίαν πάσα[ις] ˡ ταῖς πόλεσιν τῇ πρὸ ἐννέα καλανδῶν Ὀκτωβρίων, ἥτις ἐστὶν γενέˡθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ. ὅπως δὲ ἀεὶ ἡ {τε} ἡμέρα στοιχῇ καθ' ἑκάστˡην πόλιν, συνχρηματίζειν τῇ Ῥωμαϊκῇ καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἡμέραν. ˡ ἄγεσθαι δὲ τὸν πρῶτον μῆνα Καίσαρα, καθὰ καὶ προεψήφισται, ἀρχόμεˡνον ἀπὸ πρὸ ἐννέα μὲν καλανδῶν Ὀκτωβρίων, γενεθλίου δὲ ἡμέρας Καίσαρος…[9]

A rupture is created in the reckoning of time for the province of Asia: a new year starts with a new month, called *Kaisar*, to be placed within the framework of the Asian calendar, which is enumerated at the end of the inscription (ll. 68-76). Furthermore, in a more mundane context, regnal years are utilised in documentary papyri for dating purposes. This can include receipts, contracts, census declarations, letters, and birth certificates.[10] Knowledge of regnal years was important in order to date documents: an innocuous, but far-reaching impact of the coming and going of imperial lives. More directly, it hints at the pervasiveness of the Roman emperor in the minds and lives of his subjects. In general, there are several aspects of life in which the emperor is found present as an influential factor; from the expectations of justice being upheld from the part of the emperor to the curious cases of monsters being kept as part of the imperial retinue.[11]

The imperial life punctuates and informs how time is constructed and experienced in a community. This is an inspiration for the organisation of this thesis: the ebb and flow of time is experienced by observing the beginnings and endings of an emperorship. It can reflect understandings of how time progresses, and how things can seemingly change and remain similar in comparison to different points in the history of the principate.[12] This

[9] For the decree of the Koinon: *EJ* 98b. ll. 50-56 = Sherk, *RDGE* 65D.
[10] Examples follow the above list: *BGU*.1.31; *BGU*.1.50; *BGU* 1.53; *BGU*.1.45; *BGU* 1.110. I am currently working through the mentions of emperors in papyri for a future project. Other than the *Acta*-related literature, the largest percentage of papyri fall under 'dating' related documents. On the importance of the Roman power and the emperor manifesting themselves on papyri in Egypt, including analysis of the poll tax, and imperial titulature, see de Jong (2014) 243-261.
[11] This is tackled with greater detail in Part 2 below, particularly Chapter 3.
[12] Morgan (2007) 244 argues that the lack of more concrete understandings of time such as the calendars and water clocks in ethical material is an indication of how they did not make an impact on more popular understandings of how time worked. However, feasts and festival days can be an indication of an impact of important dates in the calendar (*IG* VII 2712 for an inscription in Acraephia, Boiotia, for a description

understanding of time allows for the comparison in history between similar episodes of different emperors. This does not mean to disregard the differences between emperors and the progression of the office of emperor, but it allows for a wider understanding of how the emperor was perceived. It also attests to an (a)temporality of the emperor and his family: the perception of them is in constant dialogue with different aspects of time: the precedents of the past, the appearance of the present, and the projections for the future.[13]

This chapter deals with the imperial succession, which can be seen as a beginning in the life of an emperor, even if a concrete understanding of exactly *when* someone became an emperor can be elusive.[14] However, it seems that attempting to find a concrete staring point of an emperor's reign may be a distraction from the events and experiences that marked the road to becoming an emperor,[15] all of which could be essential to how the emperor was understood from a wider perspective. Therefore, a *mélange* of the variant possibilities should be constructed, appreciating the mosaic of opinion concerning which factors were important to understanding the Roman emperor. In other words, this chapter will attempt to explore perceptions of the circumstances leading up to the succession, and the events surrounding the accession itself.

This chapter will be split up as follows: First, there will be an exposition of the historical and scholarly issues that have formed the debate concerning the succession, which will provide important background concerning the office of emperor.[16] Second, a

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of their festival of *Ptoion* and *Kaisareon*). Still, a looser understanding of time is a correct assertion, with seasons and natural phenomena being important markers. For more, see Chapter 4.1-2.

[13] See Tac. *Ann*. 2.41.3, where Tacitus plays with the temporality of Germanicus by comparing him to the past of his family, the joyous nature of his present situation in the triumphal procession, and the hope/fear of the future embodied by him and his children. For more analysis on this passage, see Chapter 1.3.2 and Chapter 4.3. cf. O'Gorman (2000) 55.

[14] Béranger (1953) 7: '*Ces événements projettent une lumière crue sur l'accession impériale. Le Sénat ratifie, à plus ou moins longue échéance, une situation dont il n'est point le maître. Ce jour-là peut s'appeler* dies imperii *et marquer conventionnellement le début d'une ère de légalité, ce n'est que l'anneau d'une chaîne: nous n'en tenons pas le bout*.' cf. Ibid., 9-10, for differing lengths of reigns in different sources. cf. Hurlet (1997) 3.

[15] cf. Duff (1999) 19-20 for an ancient biographical debate on when should one commence an imperial life.

[16] Chapter 1.2 below.

historical analysis of the role of perception in the 'road to becoming emperor', which will involve the interactions between the members of the imperial family and the general population, and its importance to the succession and the stability of the regime. It serves as a precursor to the rest of the thesis, for it shows how the contours and conversations over the acceptance of an emperor started before their accession to the principate, suggesting that the criteria of ruling and the topics of conversation that criticised the emperor's duties and suitability was not hermetically sealed and begun *after* he started his emperorship, but rather was a discourse that began early.

It will be argued that the wider population in the empire had an understanding of the power of the emperor and his family, and were engaged in the conversation of acceptance that helped bolster the regime.[17] The ambiguous nature of the emperor's power meant that there was no uniformity in the potential perceptions of the emperor, allowing for differing interactions between the emperor and divergent sections of society, suggesting that he could fulfil different, seemingly contradictory, roles in Roman political and social life.[18] For the succession, the world of observers contributed to their image of the emperor and his family, creating divergent opinions and images, which had a complicating effect on the politics of the succession: differing popular perceptions of the members of the imperial family, and of the relationships within the *aula Caesaris*,[19] give the impression of varying preferences for certain members in comparison to others. This suggests that the perceptions of the *Domus Augusta* and its members fluctuated in the eyes of different constituencies across the empire.

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[17] cf. Charlesworth (1937) 5. A wider perspective has been largely neglected for various reasons, which could be due to lack of evidence, or perhaps the belief that certain sections of society either did not matter or did not have any political say. See Veyne (1976) 544-545; Veyne (1990) 292-296; De Ste. Croix (1981) 370-372; cf. Syme (1939) 313ff.; cf. Finley (1983) 96; cf. Wiseman (2009) 235-236; See also below Chapter 2.2.

[18] Purcell (1999) 187; Flaig (2011) 77.

[19] On the *aula*, see Winterling (2009) 79-102, Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 283-308, Wallace-Hadrill (2011) 91-102, and Bang (2011) 103-128.

1.2: The Question of the Succession: Issues of Interpretation and the Scholarly Debate

The purpose of this section is to briefly outline the debate concerning the office of emperor, which will provide the necessary precursor to the issues of the succession, and wider perceptions of the phenomenon. In other words, it will describe the debate on the nature of imperial power, and the nature of the succession, before exploring the role of a wider population in the discourse. This section does not pretend to provide a new interpretation on the constitutionality of the *princeps*, or to reveal a different reading of the emperor's judicial powers, which would fall outside the scope of this thesis. Instead, what follows is short discussion of pertinent sources and scholarly opinions concerning two important issues: the debated source of the emperor's power and his accountability, and the problem of the legitimacy of the succession. These selected topics do not form an exhaustive list on the subject of monarchical power, from which historiographical and philosophical studies could be made, concentrating on the Roman emperor alone. Studying the different influences on the Roman emperorship, steeped in precedents derived from governmental practice, Roman mythological history, and Greek theories of kingship, alongside the reception of these influences thereafter in modern historiography, is a worthwhile task, but would require a much larger exposition than the one provided here. Instead, what is discussed will provide precursory information for the main purpose of this chapter, concerning perceptions of the emperor and the succession, particularly concerning interactions between him and a wider population across the empire. Attention to this viewpoint is crucial when choosing the relative relevance of different topics concerning the ideology of the emperor. For instance, whereas knowledge of the ancient political philosophy *peri basileias* is essential, it is also important to acknowledge that many of the emperor's subjects were not necessarily versed in the viewpoints of Plato or

Aristotle.[1] This does not make it irrelevant, but it means that a wider focus is taken, which stresses aspects of the emperor and his office that lent itself to a wider understanding of his acceptance.

The designation of a successor to the office of emperor was a difficult task. Mason Hammond's metaphor 'transmission of powers' is perhaps just a descriptive phrase utilised to get around a concept that is slippery at best, and perhaps purposefully so.[2] The phrase suggests a process: the movement of powers from one *princeps* to the next; by the voting of requisite powers at the new *princeps'* accession, and/or the inheritance of power at the death of the old emperor. However, there are problems with this manner of understanding the issue of succession. The first problem lies in how readily monarchic, or regal, the description of the principate becomes. Explanations of the phenomenon involving words such as 'king', 'prince', 'throne' etc., presupposes an equality between the principate and other kingdoms in history without the necessary scrutiny.[3] Usage of such terms becomes more of a hindrance than a help, confining the principate to models of monarchy that seem more familiar, meaning that supposed deviations from the model(s) of monarchic government become seen as such, even if in reality this was not the case.[4] This is problematic as it influences our understanding of Roman government at

[1] cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32-36 on his attempt to create connections between Greek antiquity and the Principate, assessing the peculiarities of the Roman system.
[2] Hammond (1956) 64ff; Hammond (1959) 1-6. cf. Veyne (2002) 5.
[3] See for example Lott (2012) 1: When describing the senatorial guidelines for the commemoration of Gaius and Lucius, he uses the word 'princes' to describe them, and proceeds to include the caveat 'an anachronistic but useful word'. Unfortunately, Lott does not explain the usefulness of the word to the understanding of Gaius and Lucius' position in relation to Augustus, their family, the Senate, and other relevant constituencies across the Empire to justify its use. As such, these terms can often be distracting. However, this is not the same as discounting comparative frameworks of analysis, such as the similarities and differences between different autocracies across time and space. For an excellent recent exposé on this method and its utility in the medieval and early modern world, see Duindam (2016) 1-13. cf. Veyne (2002) 7-8 for a short assessment on the differences between the principate and the *Ancien Régime* of France.
[4] cf. Rowe (2002) 2 for the use of 'princes' to denote the young men in the imperial family. The strength of this criticism should not be overestimated as it must be said that words such as 'prince' are used for want of better words. See, however, Fears (1977) for the careful use of language, particularly with much comparative material coming from other forms of ancient monarchy.

its highest level, obscuring the nuances of the position of *princeps* within its ancient context.

The second problem involves simplicity. Again, Hammond's phrase makes the phenomenon seem seamless, as if the 'transmission of powers' was a smooth conferral of powers from one emperor directly to the next. However, it was necessarily not straightforward.[5] The syntax of the previous sentence was arranged purposefully to point to the inherent ambiguity of the office of emperor, and the strains that the question of the succession put on the role. This ambiguity will be discussed further below, but it is important to state here that the ambiguous nature of the power of the emperor was in fact its essence. The imperial powers that derived from sources both informal, such as that of an emperor's own *auctoritas*,[6] and formal, that voted to him on his accession, existed in a perpetual tension that shifted between the two. Both sides were important to the principate, for it is the combination of these sides of power that made the role of emperor essential to the system.[7]

[5] Gibson (2012) 1. cf. Hekster (2002) 17 and esp. Hekster (2015) 2-12 for a careful and nuanced explanation of the issue.
[6] cf. Rowe (2013) 1-15 on the term, and below for a discussion on his argument.
[7] See below, 29-30.

1.2.1: Ambiguity in the Office of Emperor

The ambiguity of the office of emperor has been a matter of debate for centuries, troubling scholars in the sense that the role of emperor was seemingly contradictory. This prompted interpretations that wished to stress one aspect over the other, such as the constitutional aspects of the emperorship above the more symbolic sources of his power. Enigmatically, the principate was an autocratic form of government that placed unmatched power in the hands of an individual, yet it retained aspects of republican terminology and nomenclature.[8] It was theoretically constrained by the law, yet it retained the authority that went beyond the law and other offices of the Roman state.[9] This wavering of the emperor's powers supports the view of the emperor as a liminal figure: the ambiguous nature of his power meant that he could simultaneously fulfil the role of autocrat, whilst also claiming to be first among equals.[10]

In the *Römisches Staatsrecht,* Mommsen discusses the constitutionality of the emperor. In his understanding the principate was founded on the sovereignty of the people,[11] which meant that the *princeps* was no different than a magistrate, chosen to the supreme office, with constitutional restrictions on his power:

> Alle Gewalten im Staate üben nicht eigenes Recht aus, sondern stellvertretend dasjenige des Volkes, und der Princeps ist nichts als ein Beamter mehr, und zwar ein Beamter nicht mit einer Machtfülle, die ihn über die Verfassung stellte, sondern mit

[8] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32. cf. Syme (1939) 2 for his cynicism on the 'Restoration of the Republic.' cf. Winterling (2009) 123-140.
[9] *Dig*. 1.3.31 = Ulp. *ad l. iul. et pap*. 13; Aug. *RG*. 34. cf. Purcell (1999) 187.
[10] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32ff; cf. Freudenberg (2014) 4.
[11] *StR* II 749-750 = *DPR* V, 6-7. The reference here is to the *populus Romanus*. see Ando (1999) 14: 'According to Cicero, "the *res publica* is the *res populi*, but a *populus* is not every crowd of men, gathered for any reason, but a crowd bound by consensual commitment to a particular normative order and by common interest." The *populus Romanus* was thus notionally permeable, open to those Romans willing to participate in this consensus, and yet that consensus constructed the Roman people, in its corporate identity, as a singular and homogeneous collective.' cf. Cic. *Rep*. 1.39; cf. Gaius, 1.3. What constituted the *populus Romanus*, and the difference with the *plebs Romana*, and indeed other collectives across the Empire, will be discussed below in Chapter 2.2.

> einer in die verfassungsmässigen Ordnungen eingefügten und fest umschriebenen Competenz.[12]

According to Mommsen, the principate was different from what can be understood as an absolute monarchy; it was by the consent of constituents of the Roman empire that the emperor owed his position.[13] This idea, the *consensus universorum*, is an important ideological aspect of the Roman principate, and is reflected in numerous sources.[14] To give but one example, in the *Res Gestae*, Augustus states '*per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium*'.[15] His power, therefore, was claimed to be sanctioned by universal consent. This is further reflected in the legal tradition. Ulpian wrote that

> quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem: utpote cum lege regia, quae de imperio eius lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat.[16]

Therefore, the emperor's powers were given to him by the people.[17] The primacy of the people, and its relationship to its supreme representative, is an ideologically significant point.[18]

This can be observed in the *Res Gestae*. For example, Augustus' actions overseas are done on behalf of the Roman people: '*Aegyptum imperio populi Romani adieci*;'[19] '*Parthos trium exercituum Romanorum spolia et signa reddere mihi supplicesque amicitiam populi Romani petere coegi*;'[20] '*imperio populi Romani subieci protulique fines Illyrici ad ripam fluminis Danui*.'[21] This can similarly be observed in the following

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[12] *StR* II 749-750 = *DPR* V. 6-7.
[13] *StR* II 844 = *DPR* V 116. cf. Veyne (2002) 6. cf. *StR* II 1132-1133 = *DPR* V. 445-446. The *consensus universorum* is a wider body of support that the *populus Romanus*, which would stretch Mommsen's model. See below, Chapter 2.2, 74-77; cf. Flaig (2011) 77.
[14] See below, 33-37 on the idea of 'acceptance'; cf. Hammond (1959) 10, 24, n. 44-48. cf. Plin. *Pan*. 10.1; cf. Val. Max. 1. *pr*.
[15] Aug. *RG*. 34. cf. *StR* II 844 = *DPR* V 116.
[16] *Dig*. 1.4.1.pr. = Ulp. *Inst*. 1.
[17] cf. Brunt (1977) 107-8: It has been argued that by the time Ulpian wrote this, such constitutional formalities had become fossilised in text, and did not occur in practice. Nevertheless, Ulpian's comment suggests that it was still an ideologically important aspect of the imperial regime.
[18] Millar (1988) 12-13. cf. Griffin (1991) 46.
[19] Aug. *RG* 27.1
[20] Ibid., 29.2-3.
[21] Ibid., 30.

inscription, set up on an Egyptian obelisk serving as a *gnomon* in the Campus Martius: '[*imp. Caesar divi f.*] | [*Augustus*] | [*pontifex maximus*] | [*imp. XII, cos.* | *XI, trib. pot. XIV*] | *Aegupto*(!) *in potestat*[*em*] | *populi Romani redac*[*ta*] | *Soli donum dedit.*'[22] Therefore, both legally and ideologically, Augustus portrayed himself as accountable to the people and the laws of the state,[23] to which he was the supreme magistrate and representative.

Paradoxically, the emperor was simultaneously above the laws.[24] The above quotation from Ulpian, which starts with the clause *quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem*, is a quite open ended statement that suggests that the emperor, as the principal law giver, was above it, because his opinion meant law.[25] This is corroborated by Ulpian himself with the dictum:

> quodcumque igitur imperator per epistulam et subscriptionem statuit vel cognoscens decrevit vel de plano interlocutus est vel edicto praecepit, legem esse constat.[26]

Therefore, the law could be made through any medium that the emperor chose, including even outside the setting of a tribunal (*de plano*).[27] Still, this status did not necessarily equate to being above the law. However, it was the case, as stated by Ulpian in his commentary on the Julian and Papian laws, that *princeps legibus solutus est*.[28] Now, this

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[22] *ILS* 91 = *CIL* 6.702. cf. Plin. *NH*. 36.71.
[23] Millar (1988) 15; Brunt (1977) 109. cf. Plin. *Pan*. 65. 1
[24] See below 20-21, for the issue of dating when the emperor was above the law. cf. Wirszubski (1950) 130-136.
[25] cf. Brunt (1977) 108, 110:
[26] *Dig*. 1.4.1.1. = Ulp. *Inst*. 1; cf. *Dig*. 1.2.12 = Pompom. *Encheiridion* 1: '*aut est principalis constitutio, id est, ut quod ipse princeps constituit pro lege servetur*.' cf. Gaius. 1. 5: '*Constitutio principis est, quod imperator decreto vel edicto vel epistula constituit*.'
[27] However, Ulpian argues that this had to be within the bounds of utility: *Dig* 1.4.2. = Ulp. *De Fidecommissis* 4: '*In rebus novis constituendis evidens esse utilitas debet, ut recedatur ab eo iure, quod diu aequum visum est*.' See, however, *Dig*. 48.18.18.10 = Paulus, *Sent*. 5: '*Custodiae non solum pro tribunali, sed et de plano audiri possunt atque damnari*.' This indicates a legal distinction between *planum* and *tribunal*, which needed clarification despite the ability to try and convict prisoners in either setting. Literally, a *tribunal* was a raised platform from which a magistrate could pronounce official judicial decisions, and *planum* was the opposite, 'at ground level.' That the emperor's power would extend to both should indicate his wide-ranging judicial powers, which included 'official' and 'unofficial' contexts, enhancing the ambivalence of the imperial position and also extending it different, extra-judiciary settings. There is thus a ubiquitous quality to the emperor's powers. See Braund (2009) 224-225 for this point.
[28] *Dig* 1.3.31. = Ulp. 13 *ad l. Iul. et Pap*.

could be a specific statement, meant to restrict the emperor's exemption to the marriage laws, and not necessarily anywhere else.[29] That being said, there is other evidence that refers to this special dispensation for the emperor. In his explanation of the office of emperor and its powers, Dio states the following:

> Λέλυνται γὰρ δὴ τῶν νόμων, ὡς αὐτὰ τὰ Λατίνα ῥήματα λέγει· τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ἐλεύθεροι ἀπὸ πάσης ἀναγκαίας νομίσεώς εἰσι καὶ οὐδενὶ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐνέχονται.[30]

This is reiterated again later on in the same book:

> πάσης αὐτὸν τῆς τῶν νόμων ἀνάγκης ἀπήλλαξαν, ἵν᾽, ὥσπερ εἴρηταί μοι, καὶ αὐτοτελὴς ὄντως καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν νόμων πάντα τε ὅσα βούλοιτο ποιοίη καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὅσα ἀβουλοίη μὴ πράττῃ.'[31]

Dio's *interpretatio Graeca* of the emperor's powers was an attempt to explain to his audience an aspect of the imperial regime and the emperor that he perceived had been present from the time of Augustus; namely that the emperor was above the law so that he might do what he wished, and refrain from doing that which he did not wish.[32] The optative mood is key in this sense, and it remained so for emperors thereafter, for such actions *could* happen, rather than *did* happen willy-nilly. Furthermore, the phrase has precedent in Greek philosophical thought. In the fragmentary treatise *On Laws*, Chrysippus discusses the Stoic theory on the pre-eminence of natural law over all:

> ὁ νόμος πάντων ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων· δεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν προστάτην τε εἶναι τῶν καλῶν καὶ τῶν αἰσχρῶν καὶ ἄρχοντα καὶ ἡγεμόνα, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο κανόνα τε εἶναι δικαίων καὶ ἀδίκων καὶ τῶν φύσει

[29] Brunt (1977) 108. cf. *StR* II 751 = *DPR* V 8-9. cf. Murray (1971) 276-277, who argued that the relationship between a monarch and the laws was a problematic one that had been only half-heartedly treated in Classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman thought until Justinian cut the 'Gordian Knot' with his claim for legalistic absolutism. This may be the case, but this doesn't solve the discourse that had existed from the beginning of the principate.

[30] Dio. 53.18.1. Λατίνα ῥήματα merits note as it suggests Dio had first-hand knowledge of the Latin text or phrase. There seem to be close similarities between what Dio states and what the jurists say (cf. *Inst. Iust.* 2.17.8; *Cod. Iust.* 6.23.3. See below, 26-27). However, it would be hard to state definitively that Dio's source would directly be the contemporary legal texts. What can be said is that the passage is Dio's interpretation of the Latin phrase as he had understood it, whatever that source may have been. cf. Ibid., 53.19.6 for his claim of wide knowledge, and the different sources for his evidence. cf. Millar (1964a) 34-38.

[31] Dio 53.28.2

[32] Compare this discretion to the anecdote of Vedius Pollio, his man-eating *muraenae,* and Augustus' reaction in Sen. *De Ira*, 3.40.2., discussed in Chapter 3.4 below, 186-187.

πολιτικῶν ζῴων προστατικὸν μὲν ὠν ποιητέον, ἀπαγορευτικὸν δὲ ὠν οὐ ποιητέον.[33]

The antithesis at the end of the sentence, with the law allowing them to do what they should, and also prohibiting them from doing what they should not, is quite similar to Dio's *sententia* above. However, there are important distinctions. In Chrysippus, the implication is that the natural law remains above all, which would imply that the monarch would be subordinate to it.[34] In contrast, Dio's emperor is absolved from law. This can be solved by suggesting that the *nomos* that Dio is discussing here is human law, or the laws of the state, meaning that the emperor's use of discretion corresponds to right reason and the natural law itself that allows him to decide what to do and not do, which is compatible with Stoic thought.[35] Moreover, the specific 'καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὅσα ἀβουλοίη μὴ πράττῃ' also seems to refer to ἀνυπεύθυνος ἀρχή, the idea that monarchy was unchecked rule, meaning that the monarch could refuse to be accountable.[36] This suggests that emperor's powers were limitless. Needless to say, the reality of the situation was more complicated, as were the philosophical debates, and these will be discussed further below.[37] To return to Dio's interpretation, the desired historiographic effect was one of comparison and similarity across the history of the Roman principate, what Pelling described as 'generalizability': 'This taste for generalizabilty is a feature of Dio the historian… the man who is interested in the way imperial history as a whole ticks.'[38]

However, Brunt argued that Dio was incorrect in pushing this absolution too far back to 24 BC, and that it was rather a reflection of the reality that the emperor was *legibus*

[33] *Dig*. 1.3.2 = *SVF* III. F. 314 = Marcinanus *Inst*. 1; Murray (1971) 220.
[34] Murray (1971) 221.
[35] Ibid., 221.
[36] Ibid., 216-217 on the idea of ἀνυπεύθυνος ἀρχή in Greek philosophy. cf. Dio Chrys. *Or*. 3.43: 'λέγεται γὰρ ἡ μὲν ἀρχὴ νόμιμος ἀνθρώπων διοίκησις καὶ πρόνοια ἀνθρώπων κατὰ νόμον, βασιλεία δὲ ἀνυπεύθυνος ἀρχή, ὁ δὲ νόμος βασιλέως δόγμα.' The reference can also be to the *recusatio*, the emperor's refusual of honours. see below: 27-28
[37] Murray (1971) 276-278. See below 24-30, esp. 26, n. 75.
[38] Pelling (1997) 143. cf. Pelling (1983) 223. For more on this idea of comparison over different periods of history, see below Chapter 4.1-2.

solutus in the Severan period, with the implication that Augustus had no such dispensation that Dio had stated.[39] This still does not entirely explain away the issue of the emperor's supreme power, which had manifestly existed quite early on, as hinted by Ovid (*res est publica Caesar*),[40] and Seneca (*Caesari… omnia licent)*.[41] The issue for Brunt was to find the source of the emperor's immunity from the laws, and whether an origin date can be deduced. Brunt suggests that the origin of the opinion of the jurists such as Ulpian was in what he calls 'clause VI' of the *lex de imperio Vespasiani*:

> utique quaecunque ex usu rei publicae maiestateque divinarum | humanarum publicarum privatarumque rerum esse | censebit, ei agere facere ius potestasque sit, ita uti divo Aug(usto), Tiberioque Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), | Tiberioque Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico fuit.[42]

This clause gave Vespasian the right to act in a manner in which he saw fit for the matters of the state, which extended to its dignity in human, divine, public and private affairs; an unlimited scope that was based on the emperor's discretion. Further, this right allegedly went back to Augustus himself. However, Brunt was reluctant to date it back to Augustus and Tiberius, due to their scrupulous attention to Republican sensitivities,[43] and prefers the date AD 37, when Gaius became *princeps*.[44] The problem with the attempt to carefully date the collection of powers into the emperorship is that it entails a restrictive view of what those powers were. This is not to say that such exercises are futile. Far from it; these powers all contributed to what the office of emperor was from a legal perspective.[45]

Thus far, the discussion has concentrated on the emperor's ambiguous power, both in definition and source, with a particular look at the more constitutional understanding of the position. However, this only represents one part of the explanation,

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[39] Brunt (1977) 109. cf. *StR* II 752 = *DPR* V 10. cf. Millar (1964a) 96.
[40] Ov. *Tr*. 4.4.15.
[41] Sen. *ad Polyb*. 7.2.
[42] *CIL* 6.930 = *ILS* 244; Brunt. (1977) 103. cf. Flaig (1992) 559.
[43] cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32-48.
[44] Brunt (1977) 114-115.
[45] cf. Dio. 53. 17-18; Millar (1964a) 96.

which can be described as the 'formal' aspect, described by magisterial titles and powers, as discussed by Brunt.[46] The other, more 'informal' aspect evades datable acts and measures. For example, the use of the word *censebit*, i.e 'the *discretion* to do what *he* thinks best,'[47] suggests a much more open-ended reading of imperial powers inherent in the position of emperor. Therefore, Augustus' wide range of powers involved that which was defined by law, and that which was not. Therefore, the nature of imperial power and its ambiguity, exemplified by the fact that the emperor is both absolved from the law and lived according to it, requires supplementary explanation.[48]

The answer can be twofold, and in concepts more abstract than can be ultimately described by legislation. First, the concept of *auctoritas*.[49] An excellent introductory discussion to the topic comes in the form of a history on authority from the sociologist Frank Furedi. He expertly captures the problems and nuances in this notoriously difficult term:

> The Romans themselves used the term in an expansive sense in order to make sense of a variety of different relationships and experiences. This was a politically contested and protean term that could be harnessed to assist a variety of projects. However, despite its multiple usages, *auctoritas* represented a claim to influence, respect, and esteem.[50]

Influence, respect, and esteem. Accordingly, *auctoritas* is a distinct concept to the holding of military or political office, and the power that comes with it, which in Latin is described by the word *potestas*. To have *auctoritas* encompassed ideas of having the necessary clout to initiate and inspire. It had the aspect of more personal qualities that involved high moral character, in a figure whose words and deeds carried more weight. Therefore, it was

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[46] See above, 20-21.
[47] Brunt (1977) 114. cf. n. 27 above on the discretionary power of the *princeps*.
[48] Brunt (1977) 108.
[49] Wirszubski (1950) 116-117.
[50] Furedi (2013) 60-62. Furedi quotes Dio to bolster his point about *auctoritas*, within Dio's discussion of the Senate's *auctoritas*: Dio 55.3.5: 'ἀλλὰ αὐκτώριτας ἐγίγνετο, ὅπως φανερὸν τὸ βούλημα αὐτῶν ᾖ. τοιοῦτον γάρ τι ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου δηλοῖ· ἑλληνίσαι γὰρ αὐτὸ καθάπαξ ἀδύνατόν ἐστι.'

essentially difficult to define and elusive, seemingly giving its holder unparalleled abilities to influence. As argued by Wirszubski in his work on this subject:

> The practical implications of supremacy by virtue of *auctoritas* are far-reaching. Unlike *potestas*, *auctoritas* is not defined, and therefore whereas *potestas* is confined within certain limits, there is, in theory at least, no limit to the scope of *auctoritas*: it can be brought to bear on any matter.[51]

This is the general understanding of the term *auctoritas*, and the enormous remit it encompasses. However, in a recent article, Gregory Rowe has challenged the orthodoxy of the term as the catch-all way to understand the emperor's power and authority.[52] The strength in his argument lies in his discussion of the *Res Gestae* 34.3, where the stress of the clause is on *potestas* being equal to others rather than having surpassed all in *auctoritas*.[53] As Rowe points out, this is an ideologically important phrase, for 'it is an affirmation that he conformed to collegiality'.[54] This has similarities to Wallace-Hadrill's ideas concerning *civilitas*.[55] With that being the case, one would not expect to see *auctoritas* paraded as one of the 'virtues of an Emperor', despite what Rowe argues,[56] for it would be remarkably different from the others, which point to restraint.[57] Therefore, its absence from ideological self-promotion is not enough to discount its importance. The discussion on the various uses of the word *auctoritas* still suggests that it was a malleable term that was associated with informal, discretionary power, which could be used to compel and coerce:[58] indeed, the unsavoury idea of proscription comes to mind here, with a particular case being Varro Murena, who was implicated in a conspiracy after the problematic trial of M. Primus. To enumerate the issues would fall outside the scope here,

[51] Wirzsubski (1950) 116.
[52] Rowe (2013) 1-15. cf. Galinsky (2015) 244-249 for a rebuttal of Rowe's arguments.
[53] Rowe (2013) 9.
[54] Ibid., 15
[55] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32-48.
[56] Rowe (2013) 3-4.
[57] Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 316-318; See below 28-29.
[58] Rowe (2013) 6-9.

but suffice it to say that Augustus' actions were justified by his assertion that it was in 'the interest of the state', which was safeguarded by his *auctoritas*.[59] It helps explain the extra-constitutional aspects of Augustus' power. Both the symbolic and constitutional aspects of the emperor's power were ideologically important to the position.[60] If anything, Rowe's challenging paper serves to rein in over-zealousness and remind us of the formal powers of the emperor.

To return to the problems of the Latin terms that describe power and authority, the powers of an emperor collected from his various republican magisterial titles, *potestas*, is distinct from his *auctoritas*, which encompasses a more abstract power or 'clout' that was inherent in the role of princeps.[61] This formula can be observed in Augustus' own words in the *Res Gestae*:

> In consulatu sexto et septimo, postquam bella civilia exstinxeram, per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium, rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populique Romani arbitrium transtuli. Quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est et clupeus aureus in curia Iulia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis caussa testatum est per eius clupei inscriptionem. Post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihilo amplius habui quam ceteri qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt.[62]

The distinction between magisterial *potestas*, and Augustus' own *auctoritas*, is made in this chapter. First, Augustus states that he had complete power by universal consensus, and then transferred the *res publica* back to the control of the Senate and Roman People. Thereafter, he was honoured by the Senate and the People of Rome and given the name Augustus, an honour that was given *pro merito meo*.[63] The key lies in the last line, which

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[59] Dio 54.3.3: 'τοῦ τε συναγορεύοντος τῷ Πρίμῳ Λικινίου Μουρήνου ἄλλα τε ἐς αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐπιτήδεια ἀπορρίψαντος, καὶ πυθομένου "τί δὴ ἐνταῦθα ποιεῖς, καὶ τίς σε ἐκάλεσεν;" τοσοῦτον μόνον ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι τὸ δημόσιον.' On Primus and Varro, Levick (1975) 156-163, esp. 161 on this issue.
[60] See below 29-30.
[61] Magdelain (1947) 49, 111-112. Wirszubski (1950) 109-123.
[62] Aug. *RG* 34.
[63] cf. Charlesworth (1943) 10. On the issue of 'merit' and its subjectivity, see Chapter 3 in general, and in particular 3.1, on the reception of an emperor's virtues and vices.

can be paraphrased as follows: his *auctoritas* made him pre-eminent, but his *potestas* as a magistrate was no more than that of another in that office. The implication is that part of his supreme powers rested in his *auctoritas*, which lay outside of what could be transferred to him by legislation.[64] This situation meant that the primacy and direction of the Roman state were placed in the hands of Augustus alone, also meaning that the power of the emperor had this informal, extra-legal aspect that could not be delineated or regulated by law.[65] Magdelain, in his book *Auctoritas Principis*, where he carefully analyses the republican precedents of *auctoritas* and compares it to that of Augustus in the principate,[66] summarises the effect of *auctoritas principis* on the office of emperor:

> Mais, pour cela, il fallait admettre que, de Cicéron à Justinien, l'*auctoritas principis*, malgré de très sensibles variations, avait représenté la même autorité prédestinée à assumer le gouvernement de l'État. Autorité personnelle ou autorité légale, selon la forme de la constitution, mais, dans tous les cas, autorité dont la mission était, par le jeu d'une sagesse providentielle, d'assurer le bien commun.[67]

Magdelain's solution to the problem of understanding imperial power was to concentrate on the result of having said power instead of where it came from, for therein lay the purpose of the emperor–to have the requisite authority, aided by *providentia*, to ensure the common good.[68] This is significant, as it highlights the tension inherent in the office of emperor that reconciled the preeminent authority of the *princeps* with the notion that this authority was predicated on the maintenance of peace and prosperity in the Roman empire.[69] This tension is encapsulated well by the nebulous meanings of the term *auctoritas*, as it encompasses the necessary clout and authority to enact and compel, but also involves the notion of accountability, in the sense that it was a subjective quality that

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[64] Magdelain (1947) 48-49. cf. Syme (1939) 322-3. cf. Rowe (2013) 9-10 for a different interpretation.
[65] See above, 18-21; cf. Brunt (1977) 116.
[66] Magdelain (1947) 35-6, 39.
[67] Ibid., 111-112.
[68] Wirszubski (1950) 116-117; cf. Nutton (1979) 209-221. cf. Béranger (1953) 210-217 and Noreña (2001) 159 on *providentia*.
[69] cf. *StR* II 844 = *DPR* V 116. cf. Flaig (2010); Veyne (2002) 6: This again pointed to how consensus was important for the imperial regime, with the corollary if it as lost by a 'bad' emperor, he could be removed.

had to be cultivated. This placed enormous weight on how the emperor *seemed* with respect to the success and stability of the regime.[70]

This leads on to the second aspect, which involves the ideological importance of the perceived accountability of the emperor.[71] To return to the legal realm, despite the apparent separation of the power of emperor from accountability to the law, the statement that the opposite was true was an important facet of the imperial regime. This can be observed in legal literature. For example, Justinian quotes Severus and Caracalla concerning inheritance of defective wills:

> secundum haec divi quoque Severus et Antoninus saepissime rescripserunt: 'licet enim,' inquiunt, 'legibus soluti sumus, attamen legibus vivimus.[72]

A similar opinion was expressed by Alexander Severus:

> Ex imperfecto testamento nec imperatorem hereditatem vindicare saepe constitutum est. Licet enim lex imperii sollemnibus iuris imperatorem solverit, nihil tamen tam proprium imperii est, ut legibus vivere.[73]

Of note here is the juxtaposition between what was allowed, and what was proper for an emperor. On one side, the emperor was perfectly capable of exploiting his personal exemptions from the law,[74] as cited by each Severan emperor. On the other, the repetition of *legibus vivere*, 'to live according to the laws', is an interesting phrase to use to describe the relationship between the emperor and the law.[75] Despite the exemption, the emperors

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[70] For more on this subjectivity, see the discussion below 33-37 on Flaig's acceptance thesis, and its connection to Weber's 'charismatic authority'. cf. Weber (1978) 1114-1115.
[71] cf. above on *consensus universorum,* 17.
[72] *Inst. Iust.* 2.17.8.
[73] *Cod. Iust.* 6.23.3. cf. Dio. 53.18.1.
[74] cf. *StR* II 750-752 = *DPR* V 7-9.
[75] This seemingly innocuous term *legibus vivere* has largely escaped scrutiny in the legal commentaries. However, it does not take long to find parallels, particularly in philosophy. Similar phraseology appears in Cic. *Leg.* 1.56., where the thoughts on how to live from the Academic/Peripatetic and Stoic schools are contrasted, with the latter resembling the sentiment we have in the legal texts: '*aut naturam sequi et eius quasi lege vivere, id est nihil (quantum in ipso sit) praetermittere quominus ea quae natura postulet consequatur, quod item hoc valet, virtute tamquam lege vivere.*' Moreover, it points to parallels in Greek thought, with an example being the following from Plato (Pl. *Leg.* 874e): 'προρρητέον δή τι περὶ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων τοιόνδε, ὡς ἄρα νόμους ἀνθρώποις ἀναγκαῖον τίθεσθαι καὶ ζῆν κατὰ νόμους ἢ μηδὲν διαφέρειν τῶν πάντῃ ἀγριωτάτων θηρίων.'

As Murray has shown throughout his thesis Περὶ Βασιλείας, the debate on the relationship between the king and the law, which he called 'central problems, which were only desultorily discussed in

here are shown not to have exploited advantages in private law, but live by the laws, and live by the example of what should be the proper conduct of the imperial office.[76] This also can be observed in a statement made by Pliny, '*quod ego nunc primum audio, nunc primum disco, non est "princeps super leges', sed 'leges super principem*'.[77] All of this evidence suggest both a choice and an obligation. The reality was that the emperor was above the law through his pre-eminence. However, it was also essential for emperors to exhibit restraint and choose to subject themselves to it.[78]

Therefore, an emperor's appearance and conduct mattered.[79] In a compelling recent article on the power of the *recusatio imperii*, the emperor's action of disavowing autocratic aims and to stress consensus, and how it relates to contemporary poetic *recusationes*, Freudenberg discusses the idea of *res non gestae*: what Augustus had reverentially refused to do to safeguard 'traditions of the Roman republic, and therefore worthy of being revered.'[80] However, the wish to uphold the *mos maiorum* allowed for him to demand powers in order to maintain it, which seems counter-intuitive, as he gained

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Hellenistic and Roman thought'. In general, Murray argued that Hellenistic writers agreed that the king should obey the laws, even though practically they rarely did. (Murray (1971) 276-277). However, of interest here is the relationship between the emperor and the natural law, as opposed to the law of the state. It could be this distinction that the Severan emperors are referring to; in other words, that even though they are not bound by the laws of the state, they are still charged to live according to the (natural) law, with deferment to reason. (See above 18-20; Murray (1971) 220-221).

Also of interest is the idea of the Hellenistic ruler as the embodiment of law. cf. Béranger (1953) 154; Xen. *Mem*. 4. 6. 12, on the difference between good kingship and tyranny being the monarch's ability to rule according to the laws: 'τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἑκόντων τε τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ κατὰ νόμους τῶν πόλεων ἀρχὴν βασιλείαν ἡγεῖτο, τὴν δὲ ἀκόντων τε καὶ μὴ κατὰ νόμους, ἀλλ' ὅπως ὁ ἄρχων βούλοιτο, τυραννίδα.' see Wirszubski (1950) 133-134; Millar (1992) 3-4; see Braund (2009) 24-27 for a short discussion of kingship in Greek literature; cf. Ibid., 40-42.

[76] Ideologically, that the emperor and his family lived by example is important. One is brought to think of Julia's misbehaviour under Augustus, and the reported consternation it brought. Suet. *Aug*. 65.

[77] Plin. *Pan*. 65.1. cf Sen. *ad Polyb*. 7.2. cf. Dio 69.20.4, where Hadrian states that Antoninus Pius had been reared 'κατὰ τοὺς νόμους'.

[78] cf. Brunt (1977) 109: Pliny was comparing the conduct of Trajan and Domitian, with the latter being the one who placed himself *super leges*, which meant Domitian had failed to heed to this etiquette.

[79] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 40. cf. Charlesworth (1939) 1-10 for the refusal of honours; *StR* II 750 = *DPR* V. 7: 'Also liegt es im Wesen des Principates, dass der Princeps als der erste der Bürger durch die Gesetze des Staates ebenso gebunden ist wie jeder andere auch.' *CIL* 6.930 = *ILS* 244, l. 22; cf. Brunt (1977) 103, 109; Plin. *Pan*. 65. 1.

[80] Freudenerg (2014) 3. cf. Béranger (1953) 218.

'the very powers he so persistently sought to eschew'.[81] Thus, the *recusatio* serves as a method of reaffirming his power whilst seemingly being reverential.[82] This allows for Freudenberg to coin a new term 'Augustanate', 'which is to say that the Roman republic autocratically stabilised, adhered to, and guaranteed.'[83] Even though he seems to base this assertion on Augustus' *auctoritas*, his suggestion is that the republic was remade, with a monarchic failsafe to prevent it descending into chaos. This brings up an important point about the Principate: to call it a monarchy dressed up in a Republican façade does not express its construction properly, for it suggests that all the republican niceties could fall away, leaving a stable monarchic core. Instead, the ambiguity *was* the point, as both his pre-eminent authority and accountability allowed for the state to function, with both affirming his power.[84] In reality, the emperor required aid and acceptance from different constituencies around the empire to maintain his principate, which meant for the *ordo senatorius* a reaffirmation of their status as the ruling class of the empire.[85]

Continuing with conduct, Wallace-Hadrill argues that a new ideological concept was created and developed through the imperial period called *civilitas*, which

> aptly evokes the behaviour of a ruler who is still a citizen in a society of citizens, where the freedom and standing of the individual citizen is protected by the law, not the whim of an autocrat.[86]

[81] Freudenberg (2014) 7
[82] Béranger (1953) 149-150.
[83] Freudenberg (2014) 4.
[84] Indeed, this is reflected in the discourses about his power and role in the world, as argued in Chapter 3, particularly 3.2 on justice.
[85] cf. Flaig (2011) 75: in his estimation the ruling aristocracy is maintained, but is accepted by a wider population 'only if mediated by a monarchic person'. This idea of the emperor as a mediator will be discussed further in Chapter 3, with reference to both more concrete legal cases (3.2) and the more fantastic (3.4).
[86] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a), 42. On the *civilitas*' development from adjective/adverb to abstract noun, Ibid., 43. cf. Griffin (1984) 62.

The evidence above fits nicely into this concept of *civilitas*,[87] and a matter articulated well by Pliny:

> non enim de tyranno sed de cive, non de domino sed de parente loquimur. Unum ille se ex nobis–et hoc magis excellit atque eminet, quod unum ex nobis putat, nec minus hominem se quam hominibus praesse meminit.[88]

Accordingly, *civilitas* was a virtue and method used by the emperors to cultivate favour and ingratiate themselves with Roman society; an important factor in the political functioning of the state.[89] Wallace-Hadrill's thesis was to argue that *civilitas* had a wider applicability; namely that its casting of the emperor as a fellow citizen was important not only for the Senate, but the *populus Romanus* as whole. Moreover, this stress on the citizen meant that it reinforced the traditional social hierarchy. However, this can be criticised. First, even if we include all the citizens in the Roman Empire, it was still a restrictive category of people; so how do we understand the role of the emperor in relation to other sections of the social matrix? Second, the emperor had an autocratic image, which also placed him outside the social structure, particularly separate from the upper orders.[90] Therefore, the emperor took on different guises depending on the situation at hand.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Veyne in his illuminating essay *Qu'était-ce qu'un Empereur Romain*.[91] He discusses the paradoxical nature of the office of emperor, and stresses that the political system worked because of a mutually beneficial compromise:

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[87] See above, 16-27; cf. Vell. 2.124.2: '*pugnantis cum Caesare senatus populique Romani, ut stationi paternae succederet, illius, ut potius aequalem civem quam eminentem liceret agere principem*.'; cf. Ov. *Tr*. 4.4.13: '*ipse pater patriae–quid enim est civilius illo*?'.

[88] Plin. *Pan*. 2.3-4; cf. Ibid., 24. It is significant that Pliny uses *homines,* which points to a wider constituency than citizens that the emperor condescended to. In contrast, see the reported conduct of Domitian in Suet. *Dom*. 13.2: '*cum procuratorum suorum nomine formalem dictaret epistulam, sic coepit*: "*Dominus et deus noster hoc fieri iubet*."'

[89] Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 45-48.

[90] Ibid., 47: I agree that *civilitas* was important, but it was only the 'tip of the iceberg' (Purcell (1999) 187). These ideas will be developed further below in both the wider applicability of the expectation directed towards an emperor, and the guises he took in Chapter 2 and 3 below.

[91] Veyne (2002) 3-25, in particular 8-9.

> Le régime impérial ne maintenait pas sa façade républicaine par une fiction, mais aux termes d'un compromis; le prince ne pouvait ni ne voulait abolir la République, car il avait besoin d'elle: sans l'ordre sénatorial, sans les consuls, sans tous les magistrats, l'Empire, dépouillé de sa colonne vertébrale, se serait effondré. De son côté, pour la majorité des nobles, le régime impérial était préférable: il imposait une règle du jeu dans le match de leurs ambitions de carrière, alors que la République avait fini en une lutte anarchique entre quelques rares magnats pour la tyrannie. Bref, le système impérial (au prix d'une distinction que nous dirons) reposait sur la noblesse sénatoriale, au moins jusqu'au troisième siècle.[92]

Such a 'compromise' was expedient in order to ensure the stability of the regime. Veyne's 'compromise' rests on the senatorial order, which concentrates on the running of the Roman state and relations within the upper classes. However, the stance can be widened. The *consensus universorum* involved a wider constituency than the Senate alone, meaning that other constituencies contributed to the acceptance of the system and the emperor.[93] What seemed to be constitutionally contradictory *prima facie*, was in essence the role of the Roman emperor: he had to exhibit the requisite flexibility in his interactions with different sections of Roman society, opening up the idea that the Roman emperor meant different things to different people.[94]

To continue with Veyne, he states that one of the duties of an emperor was to secure a peaceful succession. Even though Veyne observed a pattern of the son, whether adopted or biological, succeeding his father to the principate, it was unlike the hereditary monarchies '*comme au moyen âge et sous l'Ancien Régime, d'institution dynastique qui faisait du trône la propriété d'une famille déterminée*.'[95] The nature of Veyne's Roman state, based on consensus and compromise,[96] further complicated the understaning of the principate and its succession.

[92] Veyne (2002) 8; see also Ibid., 11. cf. Dio. 53.12.1
[93] cf. Flaig (2011) 77. See below, 33-34.
[94] See Chapter 1.3.
[95] Veyne (2002) 5.
[96] Ibid., 10-11.

1.2.2: The Transfer of Power: Legitimacy, 'Acceptance' and the Dynastic Question

As tricky as it is to define the nature and power of the position of emperor, so too it is to describe how the office was passed on from one emperor to the next.[97] Constitutionally, it follows that the emperor received his powers from the people,[98] which was confirmed by the Senate and popular *comitia*, meaning that the Senate and People of Rome gave power to a new *princeps*.[99] Therefore, it can follow, in an extreme interpretation, that there was no succession in the monarchical sense, but rather that the principate died alongside the death of an emperor, and was re-instituted once a new *princeps* was confirmed by the political organs of the Roman state.[100] Indeed, this was the argument put forward by Mommsen in the *Staatsrecht* in an attempt to understand the transferral of power in the Roman Empire. In his discussion on the legitimacy of Augustus' principate, he stated:

> Es hat wohl nie ein Regiment gegeben, dem der Begriff der Legitimität so völlig abhanden gekommen wäre wie dem augustischen Principat; rechtmässiger Princeps ist der, den der Senat und Soldaten anerkennen und er bleibt es, so lange sie ihn anerkennen.[101]

Accordingly, the ideological self-image of the office of emperor was predicated on this idea of recognition, which also included the threat of the violent removal of the *princeps*, making recognition essential to its stability.[102] As discussed above,[103] a concentration on the powers given to a new *princeps* at his accession only illuminates one side of the coin;

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[97] Mastrocinque (2011a) 1-3, on the literature that stresses the non-hereditary aspect of power.
[98] See above, 16-18; Gaius. 1.5: '*Nec umquam dubitatum est, quin id legis vicem optineat, cum ipse imperator per legem imperium accipiat*.'
[99] Hammond (1959) 6-8; Veyne (2002) 3.
[100] *StR* II 844 = *DPR* V 116; Flaig (2010) 277. For the issues of collegiality, see *StR* II 1145-1146 = *DPR* V 459-461.
[101] *StR* II 844 = *DPR* V 116. cf. Flaig (2010) 276-277; cf. Weber (1978) 1114-1115, 1125.
[102] See above, 17-18; cf. Veyne (2002) 3; cf. Béranger (1953) 72; cf. Gruen (2005) 38. cf. Flaig (2010) 277; cf. Flaig (2011) 77; Flaig (1992) 11ff: As Egon Flaig argued, the threat of violent removal, which came to fruition under *Usurpationen*, highlighted the importance of this recognition, which he called *Akzeptanz*: a complicated system of acceptance that involved different sections of Roman society. This is discussed further below, 33-37.
[103] See above 21-26.

for the law cannot bestow *auctoritas*.[104] This could potentially be misleading, as the nature of the succession was more complicated than that.

To begin, there is the question of type of succession. Mason Hammond split it up into two rough categories: the changeover occurred either under peaceful or violent conditions. The 'peaceful succession' was by the designation of an heir, through filial line, adoption, or the institution of an heir in testament,[105] which occurred at the death of the previous ruler. The violent succession was either the assassination of a sitting emperor, or a successful revolt and deposition of one.[106] In the peaceful succession, an important aspect of securing the following reign and the dynastic line was to prepare the heir to political and social life as a presumptive successor to the emperorship.[107] Alternatively, as outlined by Frédéric Hurlet in *Les Collègues du Prince sous Auguste et Tibère,* there were varying degrees of collegiality, which ranged from being designated as an heir, gaining powers, plus magisterial and military posts, to actually becoming a full colleague as an *Augustus*.[108] Indeed, collegiate association at the apex of the Roman Empire seemed to be an important aspect of the succession. In *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum*, Kornemann compiled statistics on the number of years imperial powers were shared in the time between the start of the principate and the institution of the tetrarchy of Diocletian. His research showed that out of the 311 years of

[104] For example, see Suet. *Vesp*. 7.2: '*Auctoritas et quasi maiestas quaedam ut scilicet inopinato et adhuc novo principi deerat; haec quoque accesit*.'
[105] Hammond (1959) 1-6: Hammond's summary is useful, even with the tendency to interpret the succession as a hereditary monarchy; cf. Hammond (1956) 63-66. cf. Syme (1939) 341. For the various methods of instituting successors, see Corbier (1991) 63ff. and Champlin (1989) 154-165.
[106] Hammond (1959) 5-6.
[107] This will be discussed further below, Chapter 1.3.
[108] Hurlet (1997) 541; cf. Hammond (1959) 2-3, 11; The differences between what can be termed 'exposure', which involved the public exposition of the male members of the imperial family across the Empire, and 'collegiality', which was the grant of magisterial powers to other family members, will be discussed in Chapter 1.3.2.

the Roman Empire up to that point, 125 years were shared at the apex of power.[109] Therefore, it seems that this method of collegiality was used to ensure dynastic longevity.[110]

This brings us to the issue of legitimacy. As seen above, Mommsen argued that legitimism did not exist in the principate, but was rather predicated on the active *recognition* of a new emperor by important political actors, such as the senate and military.[111] This sentiment has been echoed in historiography since then in similar forms. For example, Rostovtzeff argued that the reality of Augustan power was based upon military loyalty.[112] Therefore, he rejected the idea of a hereditary monarchy for the principate, as it could not confer legitimacy to a successor. Rather, it was the 'good-will of the army' that maintained the emperor, suggesting that 'every member of the senatorial class had theoretically the same right to the office of supreme magistrate of the Empire.'[113] What Mommsen argued thus follows: that the right for an emperor to rule was predicated on his acceptance by relevant sectors of the political order.

Moreover, Egon Flaig argued more recently that the word legitimacy itself was inappropriate in describing how the emperor maintained his reign, since it inherently suggested an irrevocable right to rule uncontested.[114] Instead, he moves the question of legitimacy from the person of the emperor to the monarchy itself, for it was the latter that was legitimate and inviolable. As for the emperor, he was devoid of legitimacy by the

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[109] Kornemann (1930) 179-184, esp. 184. In the 262 years between Augustus and Alexander Severus, 106 years were shared. This equates to 40.45% of the time, showing little statistical difference with the third century, which if included drops to 40.19% of the time. cf. Hurlet (1997) 3.

[110] Hurlet (1997) 541: '*L'exercice d'une "co-régence" était loin de se limiter à la volonté du régime de donner au concept de succession dynastique un fondement légal; il visait aussi - et surtout - à conférer au collègue une légitimité que personne ne serait en mesure de lui contester et qui lui permettrait le cas échéant de garantir, avec les meilleurs chances de réussite, la continuité du pouvoir impérial a sein de la* Domus Augusta.' cf. Rowe (2002) 2.

[111] See above 18.

[112] Rostovtzeff (1957) 77.

[113] Ibid., 77. cf. Syme (1955) 22; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.13.2.

[114] Flaig (2010) 276.

simple fact that he could lose his right to rule, and therefore his life.[115] Flaig chose the word *Akzeptanz* to describe the process by which an emperor secured his reign. He defines it as follows: '"acceptance" is to be defined as the fact that relevant sectors of a political community support the rule of a specific person by their explicit or implicit consent.'[116] The key phrase is 'relevant sectors', for Flaig argues that in the hierarchy of Roman society, not all sections had political impact on the maintenance of imperial 'acceptance'. For him, these were the Senators, the *plebs urbana* at Rome, and the citizen soldiers in the military. Accordingly, it was the beneficial and proper cultivation of relationship between the emperor and these sectors that ensured that he could maintain 'acceptance' throughout his reign.

Flaig also rejects the idea of hereditary succession being important to the acceptance of an emperor,[117] making his paradigm antagonistic to a competing conception of the succession that stresses the dynastic perspective. As seen above, peaceful succession could be conducted by giving powers to an heir, who was either related through blood or adoption.[118] The question then becomes more specific. To what extent did the legitimacy or 'acceptance' of an emperor derive from his familial connections to the imperial dynasty? In that sense, the dynastic element might become very important. As argued by Hammond and Hurlet, the legitimacy of a successor was bolstered by the cultivation of heirs within the system.[119] However, this was not necessarily always the case.[120] In Brunt's astute formulation:

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[115] Flaig (2010) 278-279.
[116] Ibid., 278.
[117] Ibid., 279.
[118] See above, 32; Hammond (1959) 1ff. On adoption and the dynastic principle, see Hekster (2001) 35-49; Hekster (2002) 15-30 and Hekster (2015) 2-12.
[119] cf. Hurlet (1997); Hammond (1956); Hammond (1959); Hammond (1968); cf. Gray (1970) 233-234; cf. Zanker (1988) 215; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 3.56; cf. Ibid., 4.8.4-5, and a discussion of this passage below in Chapter 1.3.1.
[120] Griffin (1984) 190.

> On accession Gaius, Claudius and Nero each possessed only that prestige which accrued to them as members of the imperial dynasty; none had any personal achievements to show, and their capacity to rule could be doubted.[121]

Nevertheless, each became emperor by virtue of their membership of the *Domus Augusta*, a matter which Dio argues for on the accession day of Claudius:

> ἔπειτα δὲ γνωρίσαντες αὐτοκράτορά τε προσηγόρευσαν καὶ ἐς τὸ στρατόπεδον αὐτὸν ἤγαγον, κἀκ τούτου μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων, οἷα τοῦ τε βασιλικοῦ γένους ὄντι καὶ ἐπιεικεῖ νομιζομένῳ, πᾶν τὸ κράτος αὐτῷ ἔδωκαν.[122]

Two reasons are mentioned for the choice of the soldiers: one being Claudius' connections to the imperial family, and also because he was thought suitable. The suitability of Claudius is left unelaborated here by Dio, but his political career thus far had been underdeveloped. Claudius' political exposure was confined to a single consulship in his 50 years of life up until that fateful day,[123] meaning his being a legitimate candidate for the emperorship derived from his familial connections.[124]

The juxtaposition between Flaig's acceptance hypothesis, and the 'dynastic principle', may seem irreconcilable on the face of it, but this is not the case.[125] Flaig's argument is based on crisis situations during the history of the Roman principate. His interest lies in usurpation, for he believes that the true character of the regime can be understood in those high stress situations.[126] Therefore, his paradigm does not necessarily

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[121] Brunt (1977) 115.

[122] Dio 60.1.3. The word ἐπιεικεῖ is of interest. It has been translated as 'agreeable' or 'suitable', but its status as the word used to translate *clementia* means that it cannot have been chosen lightly. cf. Barden-Dowling (2006) 5; Braund (2009) 33-40. *Clementia* involves similar issues of ambiguity, such as the paradoxical relationship between the emperor and the law, for it involves just and right actions of the emperor, and shows him exhibiting self-control and leniency when it comes to punishment. Such sensibility involves hierarchy, as Braund argues (Ibid., 32): 'Only some in a position of superiority can grant *clementia*; the corollary is that he also had the power to act severely and punitively.'; cf. Sen. *De Clem*. 2.3.1.

[123] Dio 60.2.1. cf. Levick (1990) 31-33.

[124] This will be discussed in further detail below: Chapter 1.3. cf. Wiseman (2004) 252-253. cf. Levick (1978) 96 and Levick (1990) 16, 21.

[125] Hekster (2001) 35-49; Hekster (2015) 11 for his arguments against Flaig's insistence that the dynastic principle did not exist in the Roman context.

[126] Flaig (1992) 11: '*Doch kein Phänomen taugt so sehr dazu die Struktur der Akzeptanz, der Loyalität, die Bedingungen des Funktionierens der römischen Monarchie zu erhellen wie diese extremen Fälle politischer Krisen*.' cf. Shaw (1984) 34, on the power dynamics of civil war and usurpation: 'During any period of upheaval such as civil war the whole process whereby legitimacy flowed downwards through the political

reflect how the succession was secured in peaceful situations; his concern is to see how 'acceptance' was lost, rather than how it was gained.[127] Acceptance could be won and lost, despite familial connection, but being a member of the imperial family was a key factor in being included in the conversation.[128] Moreover, having usurpations in monarchic systems of government against the ruling dynasty is not impossible; just because there are challenges does not mean that a dynastic principle did not exist.[129] Despite these objections, Flaig's acceptance hypothesis is essential as it takes into account the impact of the opinions of different constituencies across the empire. An alteration proposed here is to reintroduce a certain degree of importance in dynastic issues, as it helped inform the opinions expressed within the dialogue of 'acceptance'.

In the end, the discussion on the derivation of the emperor's power and authority, and the evident problems and tensions they entailed, reveals an aspect of the emperorship that is observable in his relationship to the law, the formation of his *auctoritas*, and indeed Flaig's contention that the legitimacy or 'acceptance' of an emperor was not inviolable, and that it could be challenged. All of these point to the importance of perception; namely how the emperor seemed to his subjects. A form of connective tissue can be observed in the similarities between the subjectivity in *auctoritas* and Flaig's acceptance thesis with the Weberian ideal type concerning 'charismatic authority'. As Weber said, a leader with charisma meant that he possessed

> a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.[130]

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system by a process of state definition, finally to be invested in the hands of the individual soldier, could be reversed.'

[127] Flaig (2010) 275-288.

[128] This will be elaborated on below in Chapter 1.3, particularly in the interaction between the young men of the imperial family and the people. It seems as if the people understood this dynastic principle, and expressed opinions on the matter.

[129] Hekster (2001) 36.

[130] Weber (1978) 241.

Furthermore, Weber's thoughts on charismatic authority's inherent instability provide interesting parallels:

> Charismatic authority is naturally unstable. The holder may lose his charisma, he may feel "forsaken by his God", as Jesus did on the cross; it may appear to his followers that "his powers have left him." Then his mission comes to an end, and hope expects and searches for a new bearer; his followers abandon him, for pure charisma does not recognise any legitimacy other than one which flows from personal strength proven time and again. The charismatic hero derives his authority not from an established order and enactments, as if it were an official competence, and not from custom or feudal fealty, as under patrimonialism. He gains and retains it solely by proving his powers in practice.[131]

Indeed, the Roman emperor can be understood in this framework. The tension between the enormous powers invested in an individual and its instability, i.e constantly having to prove and secure one's preeminence, is something that can be observable in this context. Not only is this reflected in the conversation of acceptance concerning an emperor with respect to his succession, but also throughout his reign, and indeed after it. However, one caveat: this does not necessarily have to be manifested in finding evidence for the real impact of a wider population in the deposition of an emperor; this would stretch the concept and this thesis too far. Instead, what is argued is that the 'acceptance' of an emperor was continually challenged and reshaped, suggesting that he was constantly being criticised and scrutinised for his conduct. In the end, it is an indication of an evolving thought-world concerning the Roman emperor and his place in the world, showing the power of the emperor on the Roman *imaginaire*.[132]

More specifically, this chapter explores how a more general population received and understood the succession in the imperial regime, and how they interacted with the dynastic question and the conversation of acceptance. Concerning the succession, it seems that a wider population perceived the emperor and his family, or the *Domus*

[131] Ibid., 1114.

[132] Indeed, this conversation continued before, during, and after an emperor's term, which is a recurrent theme throughout the remainder of this thesis. See in particular Chapters 3 and 4 for this varied and fascinating phenomenon.

Augusta, as a separate aristocratic entity that derived its legitimacy from its primacy in the Roman world.[133] From their perspective, they understood that the legitimacy of a Roman emperor could be defined by his familial ties to the ruling dynasty, and interacted with a potential *princeps* on these terms.[134]

[133] For a similar, recent argument, see Hekster (2015) 177.
[134] cf. Rowe (2002) 174; Hekster (2001).

1.3: The Road to Becoming Emperor: Wider Interactions with the Potential *principes* of the Imperial Regime

1.3.1: Family Matters: The *Domus Augusta* and the 'Legitimacy' of Potential *principes*

In a remarkable portion of the *Annals*, Tacitus provides the reader with a moment of clarity in the character of Tiberius, who kept true sentiment hidden beneath the surface.[1] It was an exposition of *status quo* behind the façade of a *Res Publica Restituta*;[2] namely that the survival of the state rested upon the scions of the house of Augustus:

> Augusti pronepotes, clarissimis maioribus genitos, suscipite regite, vestram meamque vicem explete. hi vobis, Nero et Druse, parentum loco. ita nati estis, ut bona malaque vestra ad rem publicam pertineant.[3]

The speech starts with Tiberius addressing the Senate directly, mentioning the excellent stock of the young men, beseeching the conscript fathers to recognise, direct, and finishing raising them, a duty (*vicis*) which both belongs to them and to Tiberius himself. The parental images are striking, and it suggests a great importance was placed on their education.[4] To elaborate slightly, the duties of the surrogate parents would involve their proper education, which not only meant their teaching in rhetoric and letters, but also in political, governmental and military training.[5] A detailed analysis concerning the history of their training falls out of the scope of this chapter. The point to stress is their exposure to educative experiences early in their lives and their careers, and that these were received

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[1] Tac. *Ann*. 1.4.3-4: '*Tiberium Neronem maturum annis, spectatum bello, sed vetere atque insita Claudiae familiae superbia, multaque indicia saevitiae, quamquam premantur, erumpere. hunc et prima ab infantia eductum in domo regnatrice; congestos iuveni consulatus, triumphos; ne iis quidem annis, quibus Rhodi specie secessus exul egerit, aliud quam iram et simulationem et secretas libidines meditatum*.' Ibid., 1.6.3, 2.36, 4.9.1; cf. Suet. *Tib*. 24, 57. The tradition of Tiberius' character is ambiguous and often contradictory: cf. Champlin (2008), 408-425 and Chapter 3.4-5 for a further discussion of this phenomenon.

[2] *StR* II 746; = *DPR* V. 2; Syme (1939) 323-4; cf. Velleius. 2. 89. 4: '*prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata*'; cf. Suet. *Aug*. 28. 1; cf. Aug. *RG*. 34. cf. above Chapter 1.2

[3] Tac. *Ann*. 4.8.4-5.

[4] Parker (1946) 29-50; cf. Bloomer (2011), 53-54, 84-85; This idea of education, and the proper bringing up the young men of the *domus Augusta* will be discussed generally below, esp 56-57.

[5] Parker (1946) 29-50; Bonner (1977) 11-12. See Dio 45. 2. 7-8, for the training of the young Octavius: 'ἐξ οὖν τούτων ὁ Καῖσαρ μεγάλα ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἐπελπίσας ἔς τε τοὺς εὐπατρίδας αὐτὸν ἐσήγαγε καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἤσκει, καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὅσα προσήκει τῷ μέλλοντι καλῶς καὶ κατ᾽ ἀξίαν τηλικοῦτο κράτος διοικήσειν ὑπάρχειν ἀκριβῶς ἐξεπαίδευσε· λόγοις τε γὰρ ῥητορικοῖς, οὐχ ὅτι τῇ τῶν Λατίνων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇδε τῇ γλώσσῃ, ἠσκεῖτο, καὶ ἐν ταῖς στρατείαις ἐρρωμένως ἐξεπονεῖτο, τά τε πολιτικὰ καὶ τὰ ἀρχικὰ ἰσχυρῶς ἐδιδάσκετο.' cf. Suet. *Aug*. 64.1 for Augustus' conduct with his grandsons.

and commemorated publicly.[6] Therefore, alongside the general ethos that their well-being was important to the state are the more specific events in their lives, such as their assumption of the *toga virilis*.[7] The direction of the speech then shifts suddenly to address the young men, Nero and Drusus, who are shown their new surrogate parents.[8] It ends with the reiteration of their place in society by their birth, for which their fortune (both good and bad) will have an effect on the state. This phrase rounds off an important theme that runs through the speech: the importance of time in the lives of these young men. They are simultaneously being affected by their past (being *Augusti pronepotes, clarissimis maioribus genitos*), their present (their location in front of the Senate, and their status as a 'duty' for proper upbringing) and their future (being potential *principes*).[9] This temporal flux elucidates the nature of the road to becoming an emperor, with a constant negotiation between the past, present, and future.[10] The following section concerns this period, how a wider populace understood it, and what they expected from the *Domus Augusta*.

As argued by Hurlet, one of the secrets of the regime was to place a male member of the imperial family in a prominent position so as to avoid any question of a vacuum at the death of the sitting emperor.[11] Theoretically, this subordinate role could have been for anyone who was *capax imperii*.[12] However, the issue then becomes who would be considered for the emperorship. It seemed to be that the principate was handed down

[6] For a detailed look at the formative years of the young men of the *Domus Augusta* under the early Julio-Claudians, see Hurlet (1997) *passim*.
[7] Ibid., 117. *AE* (1915) 1 = *IGR* 4.1756 = *EJ* 99. l. 10: 'τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐκ παιδὸς ἄνδρα τελεηοῦσαν αὐτὸν', referring to Gaius'. cf. the *Feriale Cumanum* (*CIL* 10.3682 = *CIL* 10.8375 = *CIL* 1, p. 229 = *Inscr. Ital*. 13.2.44 = *ILS* 108, where Augustus' is commemorated; See above, 9-10.
[8] See Bonner (1977) 11-12, on the Roman ideal of the father being the instructor of his child. cf. Pliny. *Ep*. 8.14.4-6, esp. 6: '*Suus cuique parens pro magistro, aut cui parens non erat maximus quisque et vetustissimus pro parente*.'
[9] cf. O'Gorman (2000) 55. cf. Chapter 4.3 on similar themes of fear and fortune.
[10] For further on this negotiation of time, see Chapter 4.2-3.
[11] Hurlet (1997) 539. cf. Hammond (1956) 67.
[12] Rostovtzeff (1957) 77-8. cf. Syme (1955) 22; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.13.2-3; cf. Ibid., 1.28.4

hereditarily from father to son, either by adoption or by blood,[13] but the reality was wider than that.[14]

As shown in the previous section, the nature of the office of emperor and the nature of the 'succession' were ambiguous.[15] The end of one emperorship and the start of a new one is difficult to describe; using the model of hereditary monarchy based solely upon the dynastic principle, and using terms such as 'prince', 'throne', and 'coronation' are all misleading insofar as they suggest a clear-cut method and mode of succession that had been pre-ordained.[16] However, there were different criteria that contributed to the 'acceptance' of an emperor, and being a blood relation with the emperor did not necessarily guarantee accession to the emperorship, meaning that blood or familial connection was not an inviolable legitimator in becoming emperor.[17] To reiterate what was argued above, this is does not mean that the dynastic question did *not* matter; contrarily, it was an important criterion of 'acceptance'.[18] Moreover, the framework with which we view the dynastic issue is extremely important to our understanding of the succession. As Corbier argues, the Romans had a complex family structure that allowed for the reordering of relationships:

> ils ne sont pas limités… à la ordre des générations institué par la nature ni aux liens réels fondés sur la consanguinité (au sens actuel du term) et sur l'affinité.[19]

Therefore, a wider focus than the father-son relationship is required; the process by which the young men of the imperial family were placed to succeed was more complex.[20] This

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[13] This is the basic argument made by Hekster in Hekster (2001) 35-39, in answer to Flaig's idea of *Akzeptanz*. *cf*. Hammond (1959) 1. Corbier (1995) 182-192; cf. Corbier (1991) 63-74. See Chapter 1.2.2.
[14] cf. Flaig (2010) 279.
[15] See Chapter 1.2
[16] Osgood (2012) 24-25; cf. Gruen (2005) 38.
[17] cf. Flaig (2010) 278-279. See above, Chapter 1.2. It should be reiterated here that Flaig's 'acceptance' thesis is not incompatible with the dynastic principle: it will be argued that familial connections were an important criterion in the conversation of 'acceptance'. cf. Corbier (1994b) 246.
[18] See above Chapter 1.2.2
[19] Corbier (1994b) 246. This 'complex family structure' and how it contributed to the idea of the *Domus Augusta* will be discussed below.
[20] Ibid., 243-290.

wider approach appreciates other male members within the family who could be seen as potential *principes* given their closeness to the imperial family, and also the role of women in the power politics.[21] It is the complex nature of the *Domus Augusta*, their interactions with, and the popular perceptions of them across the empire, that is the focus of this section.

The following sections will be organised as follows: First, there will be a preliminary discussion of Roman familial concepts and groupings, such as *gens, familia,* and *domus*. Second, a discussion of the evidence of interaction between the male members of the imperial family and a wider population within the context of their introduction into political life. This is followed by a discussion about the perception of new emperors who had not been thus introduced.[22] Third, the idea of competition within the imperial family, with a particular look at the perceptions and reactions of the wider population to the relationships between different family members of the *Domus Augusta.*

The first discussion will be split roughly along the lines of terms of familial groups, including *gens*, *familia*, and *domus*. To start with the idea of *gens*, Mommsen begins his discussion of the term with the following statement: '*Die Gesammtheit der zu einem Geschlecht vereinigten Personen, der Männer wie der Weiber, heisst den Römern* gens'.[23] This is quite a loose definition, as it seems to encompass quite a wide range of people.[24] This requires further delineation. Christopher Smith elaborates:

> The *nomen* was inherited through the male line, and so the *gens* can be seen as a group comprising all agnates, and so, potentially at any rate, a collection of families. Agnates are defined as legitimate descendants of a common male ancestor, through the male line only, but for some purposes at least this stopped at what was known as the sixth grade (i.e. second cousin); there was no such limit on the gens. In the gens of the *Fabii*

[21] cf. Rogers (1955) 190-212. Corbier (1994b) 243-290.
[22] cf. Lott (2012) 15: See below, 65-69; cf. Corbier (1994a) 69 and Corbier (1995) 184-185.
[23] *StR* III 9 = *DPR* VI 8-9; For whole discussion on the *gens* in Mommsen, see *StR* III 9-19 = *DPR* VI 8-20.
[24] cf. Smith (2006) 13-15: the idea of *gens* being a group with a common ancestor, that becomes more nebulous as it encompasses more people, to the 'wider sense of a nation or people.'

then, every free member born into the group took the *nomen* Fabius and was a *gentilis*.[25]

Accordingly, the *gens* is a family group that consisted of all relations along the male line of descent, who would share the same *nomen*.[26] Therefore, despite the potential size of such a group, it is nonetheless restrictive in the sense that the *gens* does not pass through the female line.[27]

Something similar can be seen with relation to the *familia*. It is worth looking at the definitions provided by Ulpian:

> Familiae appellatio refertur et ad corporis cuiusdam significationem, quod aut iure proprio ipsorum aut communi universae cognationis continetur. iure proprio familiam dicimus plures personas, quae sunt sub unius potestate aut natura aut iure subiectae, ut puta patrem familias, matrem familias, filium familias, filiam familias quique deinceps vicem eorum sequuntur, ut puta nepotes et neptes et deinceps. pater autem familias appellatur, qui in domo dominium habet, recteque hoc nomine appellatur, quamvis filium non habeat: non enim solam personam eius, sed et ius demonstramus: denique et pupillum patrem familias appellamus. et cum pater familias moritur, quotquot capita ei subiecta fuerint, singulas familias incipiunt habere: singuli enim patrum familiarum nomen subeunt. idemque eveniet et in eo qui emancipatus est: nam et hic sui iuris effectus propriam familiam habet. communi iure familiam dicimus omnium adgnatorum: nam etsi patre familias mortuo singuli singulas familias habent, tamen omnes, qui sub unius potestate fuerunt, recte eiusdem familiae appellabuntur, qui ex eadem domo et gente proditi sunt… Item appellatur familia plurium personarum, quae ab eiusdem ultimi genitoris sanguine proficiscuntur (sicuti dicimus familiam iuliam), quasi a fonte quodam memoriae.[28]

According to Ulpian, *familia* is a group of people that are placed under a single authority, that of the *paterfamilias*, even if he does not have a son. He also elaborates on the title's

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[25] Smith (2006) 15-32 - based on Cic. *Top*. 29: '*itemque [ut illud]: Gentiles sunt inter se qui eodem nomine sunt. Non est satis. Qui ab ingenuis oriundi sunt. Ne id quidem satis est. Quorum maiorum nemo servitutem servivit. Abest etiam nunc. Qui capite non sunt diminuti. hoc fortasse satis est…*' On the term *gentilis*, see *StR* III 10 = *DPR* VI 9.

[26] Smith (2006) 18-20 for a discussion on the *nomen* and a history of the *tria nomina*. cf. *StR* III 16-17 = *DPR* VI 17. There are, of course, other issues to do with the *gens*, such as its interpretation throughout historiography, and how it informs mythological identity, but that would fall out of the scope of this section. On these topics, see Smith (2006) *passim*, esp. 32-44. cf. Saller (1984) 336-355.

[27] cf. Smith (2006) 25-6, where he discusses the issues of property succession. In the case where if there is no proper heir, then the estate would pass to the agnates (Gaius. *Inst*. 3. 9: '*Si nullus sit suorum heredum, tunc hereditas pertinet ex eadem lege XII tabularum ad adgnatos*.' cf. Smith (2006) 23 for a transcription of the fifth table, from *Roman Statutes* 2.40, pp. 580-581; Ibid., 641-642 for commentary). This is elaborated further by the fact that in terms of agnatic line (Smith (2006) 25): 'sons of a sister are not encompassed, nor are any relations whatsoever on the wife's side.' cf. Gaius. *Inst*. 3. 14 for more on the complications of inheritance with respect to women.

[28] *Dig*. 50.16.195.2, 4 = Ulp. *ad. ed*. 46. Saller (1984) 337-338.

transmission: once the *paterfamilias* passes away (or a son is emancipated), then those who were under his authority become independent with their own *familiae*.[29] However, despite this separation, Ulpian states that they still constitute a *familia*, since they came from the same house and race. This points to the idea that *gens* and *familia* were similar terms, and had some overlapping meanings, even if not totally synonymous,[30] as indicated by the distinction Festus provides about how several families make up a *gens*.[31]

One point of similarity between *gens* and *familia*, also referred to by Ulpian, is the importance of the agnatic relationship.[32] This meant that, despite the fact that *familia* could be used to denote a larger group of people,[33] it was restrictive in the sense that it was only passed through the male line.[34] This can be observed with the status of the wife. Depending on the nature of the marriage, the wife may or may not enter into the *potestas* of her husband.[35] The result that it was ambiguous whether or not the term *familia* encompassed the wife, and indeed, by our period, she often was not.[36] A famous example would be Livia, Augustus' wife, who would not have entered into the *gens Iulia* when she married Octavian, but rather when she was adopted after his death.[37] This meant that she would not have been part of the *familia* (or *gens*) *Iulia* prior to the adoption.

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[29] cf. Saller (1984) 338-339. cf. Weaver (1972) 299.
[30] Saller (1984) 341. Note in *Dig* 50.16.195.4, Ulpian comments on the idea that a *familia* is also one that has an 'ultimate ancestor', which is similar to the idea of the *gens*. Indeed, that the terms were conflated by Ulpian is shown by his citation of the *familia Iulia* as an example.
[31] Paul. Fest. 94 = Festus, *Gloss. Lat. p.* 214: '*Gens Ae<mi>lia quae ex multis familis conficitur*,' quoted in Saller (1984) 341. cf. Corbier (1994a) 67, who stated that *familia* '*désigne normalement un rameau de la* gens.'
[32] Corbier (1991) 53; Corbier (1994a) 69: '*La famille impériale comprend les personnes du sexe masculin et du sexe féminin qui descendent en ligne agnatique, c'est-à-dire en ligne masculine, du fondateur de la dynastie et les épouses de lui et de ses descendants agnatiques… Il est vraisemblable qu'on est parti même là du principe fondamental qui domine tout le droit de famille romain, du principe de la descendance agnatique*.'
[33] See n. 30 above.
[34] *Dig*. 50.16.195.5 = Ulp. *ad ed*. 46: *mulier autem familiae suae et caput et finis est*. cf. Smith (2006) 27 on the restrictions on women.
[35] Corbier (1994a) 70; Saller (1984) 338-339. The distinction is between marriages *cum manu*, where the wife enters into her husband's family, and *sine manu*, where she does not.
[36] Saller (1984) 338-339 for the legal/non-legal uses of *familia.*
[37] Saller (1984) 339; Tac. *Ann*. 6.51.1, which concerns both Livia and Tiberius: '*Pater ei Nero et utrimque origo gentis Claudiae, quamquam mater in Liviam et mox Iuliam familiam adoptionibus transierit*.'

This brings us to term *domus*, and the appropriate Latin term for a kinship group that cuts across the restrictions of *gens* and *familia* to include both agnate and cognate relations.[38] Saller provides the following possible definitions for the word:

> *Domus* was used with regard to household and kinship to mean the physical house, the household including family and slaves, the broad kinship group including agnates and cognates, ancestors and descendants, and the patrimony.[39]

The third definition, concerning who is included in the group, is where *domus* differs to *familia* and *gens*. Corbier summarises the difference as follows:

> Le concept de *domus*, nous explique Saller, inclut un groupe plus large que la famille agnatique à laquelle sont réservés les termes de *gens* et de *familia*: font partie notamment de la *domus* (ou peuvent en faire partie) l'épouse (qui, lorsqu'elle n'a pas été épousée *cum manu*, n'est pas membre de la *familia*), les parents par les femmes – petits-fils utérins, collatéraux, ancêtres maternels –, ainsi que des parents par alliance, tels que le gendre ou le beau-frère. L'absence de toute définition juridique fait de la *domus* un espace familial aux frontières assez floues qui peut se limiter à la "maisonnée" ou englober un cercle de parenté plus étendu, mais qui, à la différence de la *gens* et de la *familia*, inclut les cognats et les affins.[40]

The effect is that *domus* is a more malleable term, which lends itself to a wider interpretation of who was included within the kinship group. This has important implications for the *Domus Augusta*, as it allowed for a wider understanding of the membership of the imperial family.[41]

Continuing with the theme of the Roman family is the issue of heirship. As outlined by Corbier, divorce, remarriage and adoption were all strategies used by the Roman aristocracy to shape political alliances.[42] To start with succession and inheritance,

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[38] Corbier (1994a) 70; Saller (1984) 342, 344-346, for examples of the differences between *familia* and *domus* in literature, and how it is used to include cognate relations.
[39] Saller (1984) 342.
[40] Corbier (1994a) 70; cf. Saller (1984) 344: '*Domus* could refer variously to a man's circle of living kin or to his descent group including ancestors and descendants. The extent of the kin encompassed by the *domus*, as by the *familia*, could be more or less great, from the whole *gens* to a much narrower circle of relatives. In these respects, *domus* is very much like *familia*, but there is one notable difference: *domus* is an appropriate term for cognate, as well as agnate, kin.'
[41] Not all the members of the *Domus Augusta* were members of the same *familia* or *gens*. See Corbier (1994a) 66-69, on the contours of convergence between the *gens Iulia* and the *Domus Augusta*. Sometimes they overlapped, but they were not synonymous; cf. Fishwick (1991) vol. 2.1, 423; cf. below, 51-52.
[42] Corbier (1991) 63.

Roman society was patrilineal, where the father passed down property, status and name to his children.[43] Children inherited through this relationship, and it is how families were maintained across generations. However, having your own children was not the only method of succession: adoption provided a man with progeny, so as to transmit 'name, wealth and rites'.[44] There were different types of adoption in legal terms: *adoptio* was the movement of someone under the power of one father to the power of another; *adrogatio* was when 'a person *sui iuris* placed himself under the *potestas* of another of his own accord'.[45] Added to this is the idea of 'testamentary adoption', which is technically not adoption, but the institution of an heir in a will.[46] Therefore, there were different ways under different legal terms to designate an heir and successor. This is the context in which the *Domus Augusta* and the succession can be understood: for despite the multivalent nature of the succession throughout the imperial period, the existing methods of heirship (in its different forms) were utilised by the Roman emperors.[47] It was possible to employ these familial strategies to place the male members of the imperial family in the position to be able to take the reins of empire.

This brings us to the term *Domus Augusta*.[48] In his book, *Death and Dynasty in Early Imperial Rome*, Lott places great importance on the ability of the regime to pass down its power to the new generation.[49] Accordingly, the family was the essential vehicle with which this could be done:

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[43] *Dig* 50.16.195.2 = Ulp. *ad. ed.* 46, quoted above, 43; cf. Corbier (1991) 53.
[44] Ibid., 63: Corbier quotes Cic. *Dom.* 35 (*hereditas nominis pecuniae sacrorum*) in the context of Cicero questioning the validity of P. Clodius' adoption. cf. Corbier (1994b) 246: '*L'adoption leur permet de se donner des enfants placés dans le même rapport d'*agnatio *que les enfants par la naissance*.'
[45] Corbier (1991) 63-64: Gell. *NA*. 5. 19; Gaius. 1. 99, 134.
[46] Corbier (1991) 76; Champlin (1989) 154-165.
[47] cf. Corbier (1991) 66-67; cf. Hekster (2002) 19-20; cf. Mastrocinque (2011a) 4-5; cf. Tac. *Hist*. 1.16. on Galba's solution to the issue of succession.
[48] For a recent overview and analysis of the implementation of the the *domus augusta* and its iterations from Augustus onwards in its projection through inscription, coinage, and portraiture, see Hekster (2015) 162-202, esp. 177: 'The continuous central formulations of imperial descent created a new social structure, in which the elevated position of the imperial household became obvious to all'.
[49] Lott (2012) 5.

> The language of fatherhood was a staple metaphor for Roman political and divine leadership… but when the whole state publicly offered the role of *pater* to Augustus, it suggested that the whole state was now part of the household (*familia*) of Augustus, subject to his paternal as well as political authority. Gaius and Lucius could inherit this relationship: an heir normally took control of his father's property and household. Importantly the senate took this moment to redefine the important relationship between the prosperity of the state and the stewardship of the saviour Augustus. Now eternal prosperity depended on the continued good fortune of Augustus and his *domus*. This was a clear dynastic statement: the *domus* of Augustus would inherit his special responsibility for the prosperity of the state, which could thus continue forever.[50]

In this argument, the fate of the state hinged upon the successful maintenance of the imperial *domus*, and familial terminology was used to describe positions of power and authority. Moreover, the analogy of the emperor and the position of *pater* suggested the implied relationship between the emperor and the people: one of paternal authority, and filial piety.[51] Dio describes it as follows:

> καὶ ἥ γε τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπωνυμία τάχα μὲν καὶ ἐξουσίαν τινὰ αὐτοῖς, ἥν ποτε οἱ πατέρες ἐπὶ τοὺς παῖδας ἔσχον, κατὰ πάντων ἡμῶν δίδωσιν, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀρχὴν ἐγένετο ἀλλ' ἔς τε τιμὴν καὶ ἐς παραίνεσιν, ἵν' αὐτοί τε τοὺς ἀρχομένους ὡς καὶ παῖδας ἀγαπῷεν καὶ ἐκεῖνοί σφας ὡς καὶ πατέρας αἰδῶνται.[52]

In Lott's estimation, it was Augustus' intention that the success of the regime was directly proportionate to the continuation of his family; the *Domus Augusta*.[53] The term itself is a 'new collective concept', which describes the familial connections and strategies used by the emperor to set the future succession, rather than Augustus' actual family:

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[50] Lott (2012) 9.

[51] Weinstock (1971) 200-201, esp. 204: 'Caesar was the first for whom the title meant more than glory. It became part of his nomenclature and was a reinterpretation of his unlimited political power: it was not tyranny but *patria potestas*… The consequences were far-reaching. His relation to his fellow citizens was completely changed. They all were now bound to him. Like the son to his father, by *pietas*, began to pray for his welfare and to swear by it, to worship his Genius as if it were their own. And conversely those who had broken this bond and were excluded from the community, the exiles, were not allowed to show themselves in his presence, just as a banished son was not allowed to return to the house of his father.'

[52] Dio 53.18.3. It is important to note Dio's temporal sensitivity here. He argues that the appellation of *pater* had been one of honour, whereas it developed into giving the emperor *patria potestas* over all. Saller (1994) 102-132, on *potestas* and *pietas*.

[53] Lott (2012) 5; cf. Hekster (2015) 58-109 for the continuation of this theme through the early principate towards the Severans.

> *Domus* could refer either to a physical house or to its inhabitants. It had become a preferred term in the late republic because it was less restrictive than *familia*. It was first used to describe the imperial family already in 2 BC when Augustus was offered the title *pater patriae*. Now it reappeared to denote the structuring of the artificial dynasty as opposed to the natural family of Augustus. The *domus Augusta* represented Augustus' plans for the future political leadership of the empire (including women), not his natural family.[54]

The problem with this understanding of the *Domus Augusta* is that it presupposes a policy or strategy of succession, with little voice afforded to the various constituencies across the empire.[55] However, the nature of the succession and the 'legitimacy' of the *Domus Augusta* was wider and more fluid. In terms of 'acceptance', it seems that it also covered Augustus' *domus*. Suetonius records the following when Augustus was acclaimed as 'Father of the Country' in 2 BC:

> Is mandantibus cunctis: "Quod bonum," inquit, "faustumque sit tibi domuique tuae, Caesar Auguste! Sic enim nos perpetuam felicitatem rei p. et laeta huic precari existimamus: senatus te consentiens cum populo R. consalutat patriae patrem."[56]

Therefore, the acceptance of Augustus as *pater patriae* came with honours given to his house as well, which suggests that 'acceptance' could also be accorded to his family and heirs.[57]

The issue now becomes *which* parts of the family this acceptance was accorded. The reception of the *Domus Augusta* was ambiguous and uncertain. As described by Millar in his discussion of Ovid and contemporary literature, there was

> a systematic uncertainty as to what, or who, the proper focus of loyalty should be. That object was in any case a moving target, repeatedly transformed by death, and by reversals among the members of the *domus Augusta*.[58]

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[54] Lott (2012) 15. See also, Corbier (1995) 178: 'the House of the Caesars was an original and intentional construction', that allowed for the legitimacy to rule to be transmitted within the family. cf. Corbier (1994b) 246.
[55] cf. Gruen (2005) 38-39; cf. Osgood (2012) 24-25.
[56] Suet. *Aug*. 58.2; cf. Millar (1993) 7; *RG* 35; cf. Ov. *Fast*. 2. 127-8: '*Sancte pater patriae, tibi plebs, tibi curia nomen hoc dedit, dedimus nos tibi nomen, eques*.'
[57] cf. Weber (1978) 246-248 on the idea of 'hereditary charisma'; cf. Béranger (1953) 143; cf. Mastrocinque (2011a) 3-5.
[58] Millar (1993) 8; cf. Lott (2012) 15. See above, 45-47.

This was no doubt confounded by the fact it was by definition a more flexible term. Therefore, despite the historical analysis of familial and succession strategies,[59] it did not mean that these complexities were fully understood by the wider population.[60] The willingness of different constituencies across the empire to accept and continue to support members of the imperial family, even those who were seemingly out of favour,[61] suggested that the whole household could be subject to adulation, and that acceptance ebbed and flowed according to the varied fortunes of members of the *Domus Augusta.*

This is observed by the ambiguity of Ovid's use of the name *Caesar*, which Hardie argues gave the impression that even though separate individuals were implied, differences were elided to the extent that an 'unbroken succession' within the family was maintained. This is seen in *Tristia* 2.230: '*bellaque pro magno Caesare Caesar obit*.'[62] Another example appears in the context of Tiberius' triumph on October 23, AD 12 (*Pont*. 2.2.67-74):

> tempus adest aptum precibus. valet ille videtque
> quas fecit vires, Roma, valere tuas.
> incolumis coniunx sua pulvinaria servat,
> promovet Ausonium filius imperium.
> praeterit ipse suos animo Germanicus annos
> nec vigor est Drusi nobilitate minor.
> adde nurum neptemque pias natosque nepotum
> ceteraque Augustae membra valere domus.

The family is presented as a collective, alongside the mention of successive generations, with the wish for good health for the whole *Domus Augusta.* Moreover, Ovid's

[59] Lott (2012); Corbier (1995) 178-193.
[60] Corbier (1994a) 67-68, on the evidence from Carthage and Corinth that talks of a *gens Augusta*, which seems to be a conflation of terms that Corbier calls non-sensical. Carthage: *ILAfr*. 353; Corinth: *Corinth,* 8.2.17. See discussion below, 51-52.
[61] Suet. *Aug*. 65, esp. 3 for the calls for the Elder Julia's return: '*Nam ut omnino revocaret, exorari nullo modo potuit, deprecanti saepe p. R. et pertinacius instanti tales filias talesque coniuges pro contione inprecatus*.'
[62] Hardie (2002) 254-255:' The ambiguity is a hazard of the imperial fiction that 'Caesar = Caesar', power maintained in an unbroken succession through individuals with the same name, and in a sense the same person. In exile poetry Ovid uses repetitions of Caesar to blur the difference between biologically separate individuals of the imperial family, Augustus and Tiberius'; cf. *Pont*. 2.8.1, 37-8.

descriptions of the imperial family, even if laudatory, are nevertheless vague and transferable; few members get named explicitly, allowing for Ovid to be supple and alter the subject matter as the fortunes of the *Domus Augusta* unfolded. Compare the above excerpt, written in AD 12,[63] where Germanicus and Drusus are the only named members of the family, with familial nouns used instead, such as *coniunx* and *nepos*, with Ov. *Pont*. 4.13.25-33, written in the aftermath of Augustus' death in AD 14:

> nam patris Augusti docui mortale fuisse
> corpus, in aetherias numen abisse domos:
> esse parem virtute patri, qui frena rogatus
> saepe recusati ceperit imperii:
> esse pudicarum te Vestam, Livia, matrum,
> ambiguum nato dignior anne viro:
> esse duos iuvenes, firma adiumenta parentis,
> qui dederint animi pignora certa sui.

Similarly, save for Livia and Augustus, the members of the *domus* are not mentioned by name, allowing Ovid to be vague, and stress the family.[64] However, this was one possible reaction to the *Domus*. Wrinkles in allegiances existed across the empire, with support for different members of the imperial family (not constricted by gender) contributing to the mosaic of opinion that informed the wider population's view of the emperor, his household, and the question of succession.

Epigraphical evidence points to this. The complicated nature of familial ordering in the imperial family would potentially serve to confuse people across the empire, leading to different responses, that would involve inclusions and exclusions in the conception of the *domus*, as well as issues of proper naming. One example comes from a dossier of documents from Sardis, that date from 5 to 2 B.C.[65] They honour Menogenes, a Sardian aristocrat that went on embassies to Augustus. In the first document (l. 7), he is called 'ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ παίδων', the *eldest* of the children of

[63] cf. *Inscr. It*. 13.2.17: *Ti. Caesar. triumphavit* | *ex Illurico*.
[64] See Millar's analysis in Millar (1993) 12-13, 15-16.
[65] *EJ* 99 = *IGR* 4.1756 = *I. Sardis* 7.1.8. For a further discussion on this inscription, see below, 57-58.

Augustus. The second document (l. 26), which is Augustus' epistolary response to the Asians and Sardians, corrects this slightly with 'τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου μου τῶν παίδων', the *elder* son of two.[66] Furthermore, to compliment this more restrictive picture, is a more inclusive statement (ll. 26-27):

> ἐπαινῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς φιλοτειμουμένους ἀνθ' ὧν εὐεργε|τῆσθε ὑπ' ἐμοῦ εὐχαρίστους ἀτοὺς εἴς τε ἐμὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς πάντας ἐνδείκνυσθαι·

Thus, Augustus includes his whole family into the equation. Nonetheless, the Sardians seem to respond to the latter of Augustus' statements in the third document, and duly includes expressions of joy and goodwill that concern his *domus* (ll. 33-34):

> καὶ συντυχὼν τῶι Σεβαστῶι ἐδήλωσεν τὴν τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τῶι Γαΐωι χαρὰν καὶ | περὶ ὅλον τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ εὔνοιαν.

However, they maintain the *eldest* appellation for Gaius (ll. 30-31: 'πρὸς Γάϊον Καίσαρα | τόν πρεσβύτατον τῶν παίδων', suggesting that their reception of Augustus' *domus*, and perhaps the nature of the succession, was different to the emperor's.[67]

There is an inscription from Carthage where there is a conflation of Latin terms, using the more restrictive *gens* with *Augusta*: '*Genti Augustae* | *P(ublius) Perelius Hedulus sac(erdos) perp(etuus)* | *templum solo privato* | *primus pecunia sua fecit*.'[68] This is mirrored in another inscription from Corinth: col. I: '*Tiberio* | *Caesari*; col. II: *Ant(oniae)* | *Augu(stae)* | *Genti Augustae*.'[69] Corbier identifies those commemorated as Tiberius Gemellus and Antonia, '*nièce d'Auguste, mère de Germanicus et grand-mère de Caligula*', who is not part of the *gens Iulia,* if that indeed is what the inscription was meant to allude to.[70] Perhaps this can be explained as a confusion about the appropriate term for the imperial family, and indeed, there is evidence from Corinth under Nero for the use of

[66] I owe this point entirely to Rowe (2002) 146, who argues that this means Agrippa Postumus is excluded from the equation, meaning to include Gaius and Lucius.
[67] Ibid., 145-147.
[68] *ILAfr* 353; Corbier (1994a) 68.
[69] *Corinth* 8.2.17.
[70] Corbier (1994a) 68.

domus Augusta,[71] but it shows the scope of confusions as to how and who to commemorate.

In conjunction, the oath of allegiance at Paphos on Cyprus takes an interesting view of the *domus* of Tiberius:

> Τιβέριον Καίσαρα Σεβαστοῦ ὑὸν Σεβασ | τὸν σὺν τῶι ἅπαντι αὐτοῦ οἴκωι καὶ | τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκείνοις φίλον τε καὶ ἐχθρὸν | ἔξειν μετά τε τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν μόνοις | Ῥώμῃ καὶ Τιβερίωι Καίσαρι ν Σεβαστοῦ υἱῶι | Σεβαστῶι ὑοῖς τε τοῦ | αἵματος αὐτοῦ ν καὶ οὐδενί ἄλλῳ | τῶν πάντων εἰσηγήσεσθαι ψηφίσ[α]σ[θαι].[72]

This suggests that their allegiance was restricted toward blood relations of the imperial family, and perhaps even Tiberius' branch alone, meaning that the more fluid notion of the *domus Augusta* was not necessarily understood.[73]

Staying on Cyprus, there is a commemorative inscription of a gynamsiarch who was also high priest of the imperial cult at Salamis.[74] What is interesting is that it was emended. The first edition was dedicated to Augustus and mentions that the gymnasiarch was a priest for Gaius and Lucius as well. The second edition inscribed on top removed the names of the twins and placed the names of Tiberius' grandchildren, Tiberius Gemellus and Germanicus, instead. This indicates a Salaminian sensitivity to the changing make up of the imperial family, for they changed the names of those who would be the future of the empire once new scions of the *domus* appeared.[75]

Perhaps a more direct attestation of popular opinion can come from the graffiti on the walls of Pompeii. For instance, in the *vestibulum* of the house of Q. Poppaeus Sabinus

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[71] Corbier (1994a) 68; *Corinth*, 8.2.68: '*C(aio) Iulio Laconis f(ilio)* | *Euryclis n(epoti)… archieri* <u>*domus Aug(ustae)*</u> | *[in] perpetuum primo Achaeon(!)* | *ob v[i]rtutem eius et animosam* | *f[usi]ss[im]amque erga domum divinam et erga coloniam nostr(am)* | *munificientiam tribules* | *tribu[s] Calpurnia[e]* | *[pa]trono*.' cf. *IG*. 3.805 for the title of his priesthood in Greek: 'Γά · Ἰούλιον Σπαρτια|τικὸν ἀρχιερέα θει[ῶν] Σεβαστῶν κ[αὶ] | [γέ]νους Σε[β]αστῶν.'
[72] Mitford (1960) 75-79; SEG 18. 578.
[73] Lott (2012) 15.
[74] Mitford (1947) 222-223; *IGR* 3.997.
[75] cf. Tac. *Ann*. 2.84. cf. Scott (1930a); Scott (1930b).

(Casa del Menandro),[76] where there was a *Lararium* called the *Lares Augustosi*,[77] the outside wall has the following graffito on Octavia: '*Octavia Augusti [vale h]abias [pr]opit[—] sa(lutem)*.'[78] This should be read in the context of other graffiti in the area, namely those that favourably mention her erstwhile husband and his new wife, the Pompeian Poppaea: '*iudiciis Augusti Augustae felicit(er). Vobis salvis felices sumus p[e]rpetuo*.'[79] Thus, the existence of this evidence suggests a mosaic of opinion concerning the *domus Augusta*, where well-wishes for different, competing members of the imperial family could appear simultaneously.

[76] Franklin (2001) 109ff.
[77] *CIL* 4.8282. cf. Franklin (2001) 112; cf. Hopkins (1978a) 211-212 on the *Lares*.
[78] *CIL* 4.8277; Franklin (2001) 112. I wonder if there is a sense of irony with this graffito, a facetious allusion to her demise.
[79] *CIL* 4.1074; See in particular Franklin (2001) 121-122, where there are numerous graffiti concerning Nero and his wife.

1.3.2: The Generosity of Potential *principes* with a Wider Population

Part of the public presentation of a young male member of the imperial family was the interaction with the people.[80] This involved meeting the people in public spaces, engaging with them by means of gesture or speech, distributing largesses, and giving and attending public shows, such as circuses, theatre or gladiatorial combats. These public meetings were a place where the people could communicate sentiment and opinion toward the emperor and the men of the imperial family.[81] Therefore, it was a method by which the people could join into the conversation of acceptance, which started early in the life of a potential emperor.

The evidence for this is as follows. Augustus alludes to this in the 22nd chapter of the *Res Gestae*, where he lists the times he gave a spectacle. Interestingly, Augustus also lists the spectacles that were held not only under his name, but also under the names of his sons and his grandsons:

> Ter munus gladiatorium dedi meo nomine et quinquiens filiorum meorum aut nepotum nomine, quibus muneribus depugnaverunt hominum circiter decem millia. Bis athletarum undique accitorum spectaculum populo praebui meo nomine et tertium nepotis mei nomine… Venationes bestiarum Africanarum meo nomine aut filiorum meorum et nepotum in circo aut in foro aut in amphitheatris populo dedi sexiens et viciens, quibus confecta sunt bestiarum circiter tria millia et quingentae.[82]

His descendants, alongside Augustus himself, gave gladiatorial shows under their name, athletic contests and *venationes* in different locations at Rome to the people. The nature of this phrase in Latin (*meo nomine aut filorum meorum et nepotum*) is important. It is a singular name shared by all of them, meaning that these games were under the name of

[80] For examples of work along these lines see Hurlet (1997), Rowe (2002), Hekster (2002) 30-39, and Bowersock (1984) 169-188. However, it is important to note the difference between what is outlined here, and the advancement of the political careers of the young men, as senators and as potential partners in power. This is the difference between their appearances with the people, and the magistracies they fill. Both have political implications (see Hurlet (1997) 233; Yavetz (1969a) 9-37), yet are different in purpose.
[81] cf. Millar (1992) 369-375, where he lists the evidence for the interactions between the *princeps* and the people at Rome in public spaces throughout the history of the principate.
[82] Aug. *RG*. 22.

Caesar (perhaps also under the *gens Iulia*). As seen above the word *nomen* was important in denoting a family group, suggesting that its use here denotes the imperial collectivity. Thus, Augustus and his sons are portrayed corporately in front of the *populus Romanus*. This placed Gaius and Lucius in the role of benefactor in direct communication with the people,[83] in a medium where popular expression could reach them directly.[84]

This is corroborated by other evidence: Augustus is shown with his grandsons at the theatre;[85] he also exhibited Germanicus with his children at a public show.[86] The crowds at the theatre reacted to Gaius and Lucius with cheers and applause.[87] Also, in the reign of Augustus, Tiberius is seen to have given a banquet and largesses to the people: '*Prandium dehinc populo mille mensis et congiarium trecenos nummos viritim dedit*.'[88]

Drusus (Germanicus and Claudius' father) is eulogised by Augustus in front of the people:[89]

> cum Augustus tanto opere et vivum dilexerit, ut coheredem semper filiis instituerit, sicut quondam in senatu professus est, et defunctum ita pro contione laudaverit, ut deos precatus sit, similes ei Caesares suos facerent sibique tam honestum quandoque exitum darent quam illi dedissent.[90]

Drusus is an interesting case, for even though Drusus did not have a direct filial connection with Augustus, he was nevertheless, according to Suetonius, a co-heir (*coheres*).[91] This suggests that Drusus could be interpreted as a potential emperor.

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[83] Veyne (1990) 347.
[84] Millar (1992) 369-370.
[85] Suet. *Aug*. 43.5. cf. Dio. 54.27.1; Ibid., 55.9.1-2.
[86] Suet. *Aug*., 34.2: '*Sic quoque abolitionem eius publico spectaculo pertinaciter postulante equite, accitos Germanici liberos receptosque partim ad se partim in patris gremium ostentavit*.'
[87] Ibid., 56.2: '*Numquam filios suos populo commendavit ut non adiceret: "Si merebuntur." Eisdem praetextatis adhuc assurrectum ab universis in theatro et a stantibus plausum gravissime questus est*.'; Dio. 54.27.1; Dio. 55.9.2. cf. Osgood (2012) 24-25. These passages highlight an interesting debate on the issue of how to deal with popularity, namely the vacillating spectrum of *levitas* and *gravitas*. This issue has been discussed in Yavetz (1965) 99-110 and Yavetz (1969a) 97-102.
[88] Suet. *Tib*. 20.1.
[89] Suet. *Claud*. 1.5.
[90] It is interesting to note Augustus' prayer that he would get as honourable a death. See Chapter 4, for the interest in imperial legacies.
[91] Corbier (1991) 74.

Germanicus' popularity reportedly preceded him to the extent that his life was put in danger when he made public appearances:

> sic vulgo favorabilis, ut plurimi tradant, quotiens aliquo adveniret vel sicunde discederet, prae turba occurrentium prosequentiumve nonnumquam eum discrimen vitae adisse.[92]

Fortunately, there is papyrological evidence that can shed light on Germanicus' interaction with a large crowd in public. In *P.Oxy* 2435,[93] there is a scene in Alexandria where Germanicus' speech is interjected repeatedly with laudatory acclamations from the Alexandrians to the effect of wishing luck, life and health on him,[94] to the extent that Germanicus had to implore that they refrain from showing approval until he had finished.[95] The vociferous public adulation of Germanicus that has been recorded suggests that a wider population expected that Germanicus was to become emperor in the future, and they were using public occasion to express their acceptance of this possibility.

Tiberius gave largesses to the people on the occasions that his grandsons, via his son Germanicus, came of age:

> Cum ex Germanico tres nepotes, Neronem et Drusum et Gaium, ex Druso unum Tiberium haberet, destitutus morte liberorum maximos natu de Germanici filiis, Neronem et Drusum, patribus conscriptis commendavit diemque utriusque tirocinii congiario plebei dato celebravit.[96]

In conjuction, Nero (the son of Germanicus) is shown at his first entry to the forum to be giving largesses to the *plebs*.[97] The references to the *dies tirocinii* and the first entry to the forum are of interest, and they refer to the start of the educative experience in military and political life for young men.[98] As pointed out by Bonner, this *tirocinium*, either *fori*

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[92] Suet. *Cal*. 4.1. cf. *P.Oxy* 2435; *EJ* 375.
[93] *P.Oxy*. 2435 recto = *EJ* 379.
[94] Ibid., ll.4-5, 17;
[95] Ibid., ll.5-9. cf. *EJ* 320, ll. 41-45 = *Sel. Pap*. II, 211, where Germanicus reproaches the Alexandrian crowd for addressing him with 'ἰσοθέους ἐκφωνήσεις' (l.36). For more on more divine guises of the emperor, see Chapter 4.3.
[96] Suet. *Tib*. 54.1.
[97] Tac. *Ann*. 3.29.1-3.
[98] cf. above, 39-40.

or *militiae*, can be translated as 'recruitment to the forum' or 'recruitment to military life', respectively.[99] This was a year that commenced when the young man assumed his *toga virilis*. As stated by Quintilian, the timing of the *tirocinium* was essential, as if done too early, they would be ill-equipped, and if done too late, then the fear of public speaking would increase.[100] The key was to experience first hand the skills of public life, by doing and by observation.[101]

Moreover, this perhaps has parallels in the title *princeps iuventutis*, a title given to Gaius and Lucius by the *equites*,[102] the point being that this was the beginning of their road to being the leaders of the next generation.[103] It is also a title that is not restricted to the Julio-Claudian period, as there are many attestations on inscriptions from different eras of the principate, such as Domitian under Titus' reign,[104] Commodus, under his father Marcus Aurelius,[105] Lucius Helvius, Pertinax's son,[106] and Geta, Septimius Severus' son.[107] The passage from childhood to manhood is also commemorated in the Menogenes

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[99] Bonner (1977) 84-85.

[100] Quint. *Inst*. 12.6.2-3 (3 is quoted): *'nec rursus differendum est tirocinium in senectutem: nam cotidie metus crescit maiusque fit semper quod ausuri sumus, et dum deliberamus quando incipiendum sit incipere iam serum est*.'

[101] Bonner (1977) 85; Quint. *Inst*. 10.5.19; Tac. *Dial*. 34.

[102] Lott (2012) 7; *RG* 14. See Vassileiou (1984) 829.

[103] Lott (2012) 8; Ov. *Ars. Am*. 1.194: '*nunc iuvenum princeps, deinde future senum'*; cf. Millar (1988) 18; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 12.41.1. for Nero's advancement, including the title *princeps iuventutis*; cf. Suet. Ner. 7.2: '*deductus in Forum tiro populo congiarium*'.

[104] *CIL* 3.12218, from Apa in Galatia: '*[Imp(erator)] T(itus) Caesar di|vi Vespasiani f(ilius) Aug(ustus)* | *pont(ifex) max(imus) trib(unicia) potest(ate) X* | *imp(erator) XVII p(ater) p(atriae) co(n)s(ul) VIII desig(natus)* | *VIIII censor et* | *[Domitia]nus [Cae]sar divi* | *[Vespas]iani f(ilius) co(n)s(ul) VII desig(natus) VIII* | *sacerdos omnium collegilorum* ***princeps iuventutis*** | *per A(ulum) Caesennium Gallum* | *co(n)s(ulem) XVvir(um) s(acris) f(aciundis) leg(atum) Aug(usti) pro pr(aetore)* | *straverunt.'* cf. Hammond (1956) 83.

[105] SHA. *Comm*. 2.1-2; cf. *CIL* 8.11928: '*[Pro salute Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L(uci) Aureli Commodi Germ]anici Sarmatici* <u>*principis iu[ventutis*</u> *co(n)s(ulis) des(ignati*)…'; cf. Dio 72(71).22(2).1: 'ὡς καὶ ἐς ἐφήβους ἤδη τελεῖν δυνάμενον…' For evidence of Marcus Aurelius' time as *princeps iuventutis*: Dio 72(71).35.5.

[106] *AE* (1904) 65, from Bostra, Arabia (Southern modern Syria): *'Imp(erator) Caes(ar)* | *P(ublius) Helvius Pertinax Augus/tus princeps senatus con|sul iterum pontifex maxim[u]|s tribuniciae potestas(!) pat[er]* | *patriae et Caesar L(ucius) Helvius* | *filius* <u>*princeps iu(v)entutis p[er]*</u> | *Severianum Maximum p|ro praetorem(!)* |*Frontonem leg(atum) Aug(usti)* | *pro pr(aetore)* | *XXVI.'*

[107] *CIL* 8.17727, from Aquae Flavianae in Numidia: '*Imp(erator) Caes(ar) L(ucius) Septimi[us Severus]* | *Pius Pertinax Aug(ustus) Arab(icus) Adiab(enicus) P[art(hicus) max(imus) imp(erator) XII]* | *trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVI co(n)s(ul) III p(ater) [p(atriae) proco(n)s(ul) et]* | *Imp(erator) Caes(ar) M(arcus) Aurelius Antoninus Au[g(ustus) imp(erator) II trib(unicia) pot(estate) XI co(n)s(ul) III et]* | *[[P(ublius) Septimius Geta nob(ilissimus) Caes(ar)* <u>*princ(eps) iu[ventutis*</u> *Aug(ustus) co(n)s(ul) II]]]* | *Aquas Flavianas vetustate conla[psas per vexilla]|tionem militum suor(um) restitue[runt].'* It should be noted here that this is a

dossier at Sardis.[108] The first document reports the sending of an embassy from the Asian league and Sardis on the occasion of Gaius' assumption of the *toga virilis*:

> Ἐπεὶ Γάϊος Ἰούλιος Καῖσαρ ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ παίδων τὴν εὐκταιοτάτην | ἐκ περιπορφύρου λαμπρὰν τῷ παντὶ κό<σ>μῳ ἀνείληφε τήβεννον, ἥδονταί τε πάντες | ἄνθρωποι συνδιεγειρομένας ὁρῶντες τῷ Σεβαστῷ τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων εὐχάς, ἥ τε ἡ|μετέρα πόλις ἐπὶ τῇ τοσαύτῃ εὐτυχίᾳ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐκ παιδὸς ἄνδρα τελοῦσα[ν] | αὐτὸν ἱερὰν ἔκρινεν εἶναι…[109]

Thus, the city would commemorate this day, on which wreathes would be worn, sacrifices made, and wishes of welfare for Gaius professed,[110] which would be replicated on the day that they received the news.[111] Further, Gaius' image would be set up in Augustus' temple.[112] Here is evidence of the temporal interest in the lives of the young men of the *domus Augusta*: not only is the felicitous present being commemorated civilly, but the hope of the future.[113]

Claudius is seen to exhibit his son Britannicus in front of the soldiers and the people:

> Britannicum vicesimo imperii die inque secundo consulatu, natum sibi parvulum etiam tum, et militi pro contione manibus suis gestans et plebi per spectacula gremio aut ante se retinens assidue commendabat faustisque ominibus cum adclamantium turba prosequebatur.[114]

This is also reflected in the Trojan games, where Claudius showcased both Britannicus and Nero:

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reconstruction of the text, as Geta's name was chiseled out. However, the line is still legible, with PRINC. IV. at the end of the fifth line. This is compared with another of Septimius at Lauriacum in Noricum (*AE* (1912) 293 = *AE* (1909) 248 = *AE* (2006) 1001 = *ILLPRON* 961), which has the same title restored, but less concretely.

[108] Mentioned above, 50-51. For more on Menogenes, and the growth of self-promotion and city euergetism in this period, see Rowe (2002) 145-147.

[109] *EJ* 99 = *IGR* 4.1756 = *I. Sardis* 7.1.8, ll. 7-11.

[110] Ibid., ll. 11-13

[111] Ibid., 14-15.

[112] Ibid., ll. 13-14.

[113] For more on this narrative of hope for the future, see Chapter 4.3.

[114] Suet. *Claud*. 27.2. cf. Ibid., 43.1, on wanting to give Britannicus the *toga virilis*: '*Cumque impubi teneroque adhuc, quando statura permitteret, togam dare destinasset, adiecit: "Ut tandem populus Romanus verum Caesarem habeat*."'

> sedente Claudio circensibus ludis, cum pueri noblies equis ludicrum Troiae inirent interque eos Britannicus imperatore genitus et L. Domitius adoptione mox in imperium et cognomentum Neronis adscitus.[115]

In a similar situation, Nero and Britannicus appear together at circus entertainments: *'et ludicro circensium, quod adquirendis vulgi studiis edebatur, Britannicus in praetexta, Nero triumphali veste travecti sunt*.'[116] Nero is also shown to have given largesses to the people on his coming of age.[117]

Progenies Caesarum in Nerone defecit. As Suetonius so pithily stated, the death of Nero spelt the end of the race of the Caesars.[118] This opened up the pool from which an emperor could be made.[119] However, the system of presenting an heir to the soldiers and the people remained a factor past the Julio-Claudians, through the second century to the Severan age. For instance, according to the *Historia Augusta*, L. Ceionius Commodus was adopted by Hadrian in A.D. 136, was thus named L. Aelius Caesar, which was thereafter followed by circus games and a donative to the troops and people: '*ob cuius adoptationem ludos circenses dedit et donativum populo ac militibus expendit*.'[120] Similar evidence can be seen for Antoninus Pius in the context of his adoption by Hadrian: '*congiarium populo de proprio dedit et ea quae pater promiserat'*.[121] Under Marcus Aurelius, Commodus is seen to be giving largess as part of his move towards adolescence: *'cooptatus est inter trossulos principes iuventutis, cum togam sumpsit. adhuc in praetexta*

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[115] Tac. *Ann*. 11.11.2; cf. Suet. *Ner*. 7.1.
[116] Tac. *Ann*. 12.41.2.
[117] Suet. *Ner*. 7.2; Tac. *Ann*. 12.41.1: '*additum nomine eius donativum militi, congiarium plebei*.'
[118] Suet. *Gal*. 1.1.
[119] Plin. *Pan*. 7. 6: '*Imperaturus omnibus eligi debet ex omnibus*'; Syme (1958) 234. cf. Tac. *Hist*. 1.16. The nature of choosing an emperor, which can be seen in the argument of blood vs. adoption, typified by the aforementioned Tacitus passage, has been an issue in the history and historiography of the principate (See above, 1.2.2). However, the debate is a manifestation of the conversation of acceptance, from which familial ties formed a part of a phenomenon which seemed quite complex. This will be discussed further below in Chapter 1.3.3.
[120] SHA, *Hadr*. 23.12. cf. SHA, *Ael*. 1.2: '*quorum praecipue de Helio Vero dicendum est, qui primus tantum Caesaris nomen accepit, adoptione Hadriani familiae principum adscitus*.' For the issues concerning the succession of Hadrian, see Barnes (1967) 74-79, Champlin (1976) 79-89. On L. Ceionius Commodus, *PIR*^{2} C 605.
[121] SHA, *Ant*. 4.9. cf. Dio 69.20.2-5.

puerili congiarium dedi atque ipse in basilica Traiani praesedit.'[122] Septimius Severus bestowed names and titles on his sons Caracalla and Geta,[123] and gives the troops a donative within the context of Severus' Parthian campaign: '*harum appellationum causa donativum militibus largissimum dedit*.'[124]

All the above passages point to a direct interaction between the male members of the imperial family and a wider population. A familial aspect was accentuated by these meetings, and allowed an emperor and potential heirs to cultivate their relationship with the wider population (including the military) in order to bolster the acceptance of their position in the world, and to ensure that the succession was tied to the imperial family.[125] These interactions of generosity were an important topic in the understanding of the Roman emperor's role in the world that not only started early before the assumption of his principate, but continued thereafter.[126] However, the nature of the succession was more complicated than the assertions that membership of the imperial family and/or being presented to the people or the troops would mean a successful reign. This does not mean to discount the evidence of this interaction, but rather that this was one part of a long conversation of acceptance that took place between the emperor and different constituencies throughout his reign. Case studies of different accessions point to the array of criteria that could be called upon when discussing an emperor's acceptance in that role, which follows in the next section.

[122] SHA, *Comm*. 2.1. cf. above, 56-58, for the discussion on the *toga virilis* and *princeps iuventutis*.
[123] On the nature of Severan succession and the issues therein see Mastrocinque (2011b) 71-83, Hammond (1956) 114-115; cf. SHA. *Sev*. 10. 3-6.
[124] SHA, *Sev*. 16.5.
[125] cf. Osgood (2012) 34; cf. Rowe (2002) 87-88.
[126] See further below, Chapter 3.3.

1.3.3: Modes of Acceptance

The ambiguity of the imperial position and its definition, the ambiguity of how powers were transferred from one emperor to the next, and the difficulty of negotiating the ideological tight-rope between republican sensibilities and the prospect of hereditary monarchy were all important facets of the imperial regime.[127] The previous sections have shown both this difficulty in interpretation, and the idea that, despite variances, the Roman principate was described with familial concepts, which included the nature of the succession. However, the succession is not as easily explained by describing it simply as passing from father to son, or through familial connection, for it reduces a quite complex process to a dynastic certainty. One recourse could be to cite the sixth clause of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*,[128] where the emperor had the discretion to do what he thought best.[129] It follows that under this wide remit of imperial power came the choice of a successor, eliminating any succession crisis or lack of leadership. Easily stated in theory, less so in practice: the history of the early principate has furnished numerous examples of accessions that problematise the historical understanding of the principate. In essence, the manifestations of different accessions, which could for instance involve the passage of the principate from father to son, or the choice of a candidate by the military, all propelled the prospective emperor into a conversation of acceptance that would not necessarily lead to the eventual goal of becoming an emperor.[130]

When the line of Caesars had been spent,[131] the connection of blood to Augustus could no longer be a factor in the choice of an emperor: a fact that a pithy Tacitean remark on the ancestry of L. Silanus perhaps best elucidates: '*nobilem et, quod tunc spectaretur*,

[127] see above Chapter 1.2.
[128] *CIL* 6.930 = *ILS* 244; Brunt. (1977) 103, cited above, 21.
[129] Brunt (1977) 114. See above, Chapter 1.2.1-2 for a further discussion on the emperor's powers.
[130] cf. Flaig (1992); Flaig (2009) 177.
[131] Suet. *Galb*. 1.1; Tac. *Hist*. 1.16.

e Caesarum posteris'.[132] This seemingly innocuous line shows that the conversation had shifted slightly: the succession of the principate was still discussed using familial terms, yet it showed that the criteria for the succession would include other factors. These criteria, which can involve the merits or vicissitudes of an emperor, plus characteristics of an emperor that seemed to appeal to a wider population, will be discussed further below in Part 2. Here, it is important to discuss an ancient manifestation of this debate of acceptability, which comes in the form of the virtues of blood versus adoption.[133]

In a famous passage in the first book of Tacitus' *Histories*, the emperor Galba extolls the virtues of being able to choose a suitable heir by adoption, comparing his solution to the precedents of the Julio-Claudians:

> nunc me deorum hominumque consensu ad imperium vocatum praeclara indoles tua et amor patriae impulit, ut principatum, de quo maiores nostri armis certabant, bello adeptus quiescenti offeram, exemplo divi Augusti qui sororis filium Marcellum, dein generum Agrippam, mox nepotes suos, postremo Tiberium Neronem privignum in proximo sibi fastigio collocavit. sed Augustus in domo successorem quaesivit, ego in re publica… sub Tiberio et Gaio et Claudio unius familiae quasi hereditas fuimus: loco libertatis erit quod eligi coepimus; et finita Iuliorum Claudiorumque domo optimum quemque adoptio inveniet. nam generari et nasci a principibus fortuitum, nec ultra aestimatur: adoptandi iudicium integrum et, si velis eligere, consensu monstratur.[134]

However, it is impossible to interpret this passage as unproblematically supporting the merits of adoption.[135] The principle of choosing the best by adoption rather than from a bloodline is presented here as an ideal, and one that becomes less stable as more information is supplied. First, the last statement above, which can be translated 'if one wishes to make a choice, it is demonstrated by common consensus', points to the

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[132] Tac. *Ann*. 13.1.1

[133] cf. SHA *Severus*, 20-21., where the *scriptor* of the Life produces a rhetorical piece using historical precedent to argue that natural sons succeeding their fathers in authority led to disastrous results, placed here to show the failure of Septimius Severus' legacy in his children, as opposed to Antoninus Pius' success at leaving his two adopted sons, Verus and Marcus Aurelius. This passage adds to the debate, but it also deals with issues of legacy, and the appropriation of the Antonine line by the Severans. cf. Marastoni (2011). For more on the formation of legacy and its fluctuations, see Chapter 4.

[134] Tac. *Hist*. 1.15-16; Syme (1958) 151-152 for an eloquent paraphrasing of the passage.

[135] Syme (1958) 207-208.

subjectivity of the choice made that depends on the approval of others, thus taking the situation out of the hands of the *princeps*. In other words, the choice of the 'best' could prove to be futile if that opinion is not reciprocated. In the continuation of the speech, Galba discusses the insecurity of the world that is challenging his principate, highlighting the uncertainty of his rule, which he is to bequeath to Piso. Their fate is portrayed to be in the mercy of their reception:

> nos bello et ab aestimantibus adsciti cum invidia quamvis egregii erimus. ne tamen territus fueris si duae legiones in hoc concussi orbis motu nondum quiescunt: ne ipse quidem ad securas res accessi, et audita adoptione desinam videri senex, quod nunc mihi unum obicitur. Nero a pessimo quoque semper desiderabitur: mihi ac tibi providendum est, ne etiam a bonis desideretur. monere diutius neque temporis huius, et impletum est omne consilium, si te bene elegi. utilissimus idem ac brevissimus bonarum malarumque rerum dilectus est cogitare quid aut nolueris sub alio principe aut volueris; neque enim hic, ut gentibus quae regnantur, certa dominorum domus et ceteri servi, sed imperaturus es hominibus, qui nec totam servitutem pati possunt nec totam libertatem.[136]

The passage is full of future tense and conditional clauses, all pointing to the bleak future of Galba and Piso, which it indeed proves to be as Tacitus' narrative unfolds in the *Histories*, culminating in their gruesome death in 1.40-49, and the elevation of Otho to the principate.[137] Galba did not have *deorum hominumque consensus* as he claimed at the beginning of the speech. Thus Tacitus, bringing out further his theme of utter chaos and lawlessness that ruled this year,[138] juxtaposes a political doctrine that meant to elevate the best and provide stability to the principate, but in fact exposed the importance of the acceptance of the emperor and heir to the success of the regime.

A similar picture is portrayed in Plutarch's account of the situation, where Galba's adoption of Piso appears in the context of the unravelling of his principate, at the mercy

[136] Tac. *Hist* 1.16.3-4.
[137] Morgan (1994) 236-244.
[138] Ash (1999) 23-72 on the characterisation of the armies in Tacitus; Ash (2009), 90-95, on the moral depravity of the troops, and the portrayal of the state as an uncontrollable beast.

of the irrational collective forces of the military.[139] In the narrative, the portrayal of Galba's character, age,[140] parsimony,[141] and indecisiveness,[142] is accentuated by the brewing discontent of Plutarch's collective forces, meaning that his intentions go unheeded.[143] More concretely than Tacitus, but in a similar vein, Plutarch states the following: 'ὁ δὲ Γάλβας ἀεὶ μὲν ἦν δῆλος πρὸ τοῦ ἰδίου τὸ κοινὸν τιθέμενος, καὶ ζητῶν οὐχ αὑτῷ θέσθαι τὸν ἥδιστον, ἀλλὰ Ῥωμαίοις τὸν ὠφελιμώτατον.'[144] Same intentions, but also to no avail: the following narrative shows Otho and Vitellius' usurpations,[145] the unpropitious context of Piso's adoption,[146] and Galba's gruesome death.[147]

Perhaps this evidence can be dismissed as specialised, applicable only to the context of A.D. 69. However, as Flaig argues: 'Political systems are best understood by considering their deepest crises. In the Roman monarchy, these were the violent changes of emperors.'[148] This need not be overstated as an orthodoxy, but it is important in the sense that general conclusions can be taken from what may seem to be quite specific contexts and circumstances. Indeed, it points to the wider conversation on acceptance that was not restricted to the beginning of an emperor's reign, but continued throughout, and that dynastic or familial claims were still subject to scrutiny.

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[139] Plut. *Galb*. 1; Ash (1997) 192: cf. Ash (1997) 192: 'Plutarch's interest is in neither Galba nor Otho as individuals, but in the similar forces to which they both fell prey, even though they were very different men.'; cf. Pelling (2002) 261; cf. Ibid., 318. This context will be discussed further with excerpts of the Tacitus' and Plutarch's texts in Chapter 2.3.
[140] Plut. *Galb*. 17.1: 'Ὁ δὲ πρεσβύτης ἠδικεῖτο τὰ μὲν πρῶτα τοῦ Οὐινίου κακῶς διοικοῦντος, ἃ δὲ αὐτὸς ὀρθῶς προηρεῖτο διαβάλλοντος ἢ κωλύοντος·' Ibid., 3.5.
[141] Ibid., 3.4: 'τὸ δὲ εὔκολον αὐτοῦ τῆς διαίτης καὶ φειδωλὸν ἐν δαπάναις καὶ ἀπέριττον αἰτίαν ἔσχεν αὐτοκράτορος γενομένου μικρολογίας, ἣν ἕωλόν τινα δόξαν εὐταξίας ἔφερε καὶ σωφροσύνης'; cf. Ibid., 16.
[142] Ibid., 22.1: 'Καταλαμβάνει δ' αὐτὸν ἔτι μέλλοντα καὶ βουλευόμενον ἐκραγέντα τὰ Γερμανικά.'
[143] cf. Ibid., 18.
[144] Ibid., 21.2.
[145] Vitellius: Ibid., 22-23; Otho: Ibid., 23-24.
[146] Ibid., 23.3: as seen with the tempestuous weather on the day of Piso's unveiling at the Praetorian camp. cf. Tac. *Hist*. 1.18.1
[147] Plut. *Galb*. 27.
[148] Flaig (2010) 275.

Nevertheless, it was still a criterion that was taken into account.[149] Even though it seemed from the evidence that emperors took care to introduce their heirs to the wider population, this would not necessarily dictate what was taken into account once the time came for them to accede to the emperorship. The attempt to find the 'best' candidate through adoption could fail, so also it could be that one who was part of the family, yet relegated to the background, could be propelled to the forefront. Such is the complex nature of the succession, and the process of acceptance.

A good example of this is Claudius. According to Suetonius, in a letter to Livia, Augustus had concerns over Claudius' physical ailments and their potential effect on public perceptions of the family and of Claudius himself, particularly when the public was accustomed to deride such things.[150] Therefore, Augustus' suggestion was to keep Claudius away from the limelight by not allowing him at the imperial seat at the circus: '*spectare eum circenses ex pulvinari non placet nobis; expositus enim in fronte prima spectaculorum conspicietur.*'[151] Therefore, unlike his other male relatives, such as his brother Germanicus, Claudius was placed in the background.[152] Despite these problems, there is evidence for opinion concerning Claudius prior to him becoming emperor.[153] In particular, during Gaius' principate, Claudius was hailed at spectacles when he presided: '*praeseditque nonnumquam spectaculis in Gai vicem, adclamante populo:* "*Feliciter*" *partim* "*patruo imperatoris*" *partim* "*Germanici fratri!*"'[154] These acclamations are interesting, for they concentrated on his familial connections. He is acclaimed because he

[149] cf. Brunt (1977) 115.
[150] Suet. *Claud.* 4.2; cf. Ibid., 2.1. For the quotation and analysis of this passage within the context of wonder and monstrosity and their connection to the Roman emperor, see Chapter 3.4, 176.
[151] Suet. *Claud.*, 4.3.
[152] cf. Ibid., 5-7, on Claudius' political life
[153] Ibid., 5: '*cum interim, quanquam hoc modo agenti, numquam aut officium hominum aut reverentia publice defuit.*'
[154] Ibid., 7.

is a member of the family, and because he is the 'uncle of the emperor' and the 'brother of Germanicus'.

This can also be observed in the accounts of his accession. The demise of Gaius was met by deliberation of the Senate on what government should be created, whilst the military seized Claudius and hailed him as emperor, because of his projected clemency and membership of the *basilikou genous*.[155] Accordingly, different sections of Roman society and state were expressing their opinions on the future of the Roman government. An important player in the discussion of the acceptance of a new ruler was the military. In Josephus' account of the events, the soldiers' deliberation on the matter is interesting:

> πολὺ πλείων ἡ ἐπιφοίτησις ἦν τῶν στρατιωτῶν χαρᾷ τὴν ὄψιν δεχομένοις τοῦ Κλαυδίου, περὶ πλείστου τε ἦν αὐτοῖς αὐτοκράτορα στήσασθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον εὐνοίᾳ τε τῇ Γερμανικοῦ. ἀδελφὸς δὲ ἦν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ μέγα πᾶσιν τοῖς ὠμιληκόσιν καταλελοιπὼς κλέος τὸ αὐτοῦ.[156]

The importance of Claudius' relations is reiterated: the soldiery were willing to accept Claudius on the basis of his brother's fame. However, an interesting wrinkle is included. The soldiers feared that if a candidate *not* chosen or supported by them had become emperor, it would be problematic:

> πρὸς δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀμήχανον τοῦ πράγματος κατενόουν, καὶ πάλιν εἰς ἑνὸς ἀρχὴν μεθισταμένων τῶν ὅλων κινδύνους αὐτοῖς φέρειν δι᾽ ἑνὸς κτησαμένου τὴν ἀρχὴν μεθισταμένων τῶν ὅλων παρ᾽ ὃν ἐπιχωρήσει καὶ εὐνοίᾳ τῇ αὐτῶν λαβόντα Κλαύδιον μνημονεύσεις τε χάριτος αὐτοῖς ἀποδιδόντα τιμήν, ἢ ἐπὶ τοιούτοις γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ἀρκοῦσα.[157]

Here we see the tensions apparent within the succession. It could be interpreted as the soldiers wishing to be compensated for their support, perhaps monetarily. However, this reveals the dependence of an imperial candidate on the acceptance of their rule from different constituencies, and that there could be a difference in opinion on who that candidate should be. They call upon Claudius' familial connections to justify their choice,

[155] Cited above in Chapter 1.2.2, 35; Dio. 60.1.1-3. cf. Suet. *Claud*. 10.1-3.
[156] Jos. *AJ*. 19.223
[157] Ibid., 19.225.

which reveals that it was an important criterion for acceptance, but it is the *acceptance* itself that places him in the position to become emperor, meaning that it was a complicated process to which many factors contributed, including Claudius' ancestry.

The people at Rome expressed similar sentiments on the issue. In the deliberation, the crowd expressed their wishes and opinion:

> verum postero die et senatu segniore in exsequendis conatibus per taedium ac dissensionem diversa censentium et multitudine, quae circumstabat, unum rectorem iam et nominatim exposcente.[158]

So, whereas the Senate is presented as divided,[159] the crowd is unanimous in wanting one ruler; specifically naming Claudius, a member of the imperial family. This juxtapostion between the Senate and the people is also a theme in Josephus:

> διειστήκεσαν δὲ αἱ γνῶμαι τοῦ δήμου καὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς βουλῆς· οἱ μὲν ἀξιώματός τε τοῦ πρότερον ὀρεγόμενοι καὶ δουλείαν ἔπακτον αὐτοῖς ὕβρει τῶν τυράννων γενομένην φιλοτιμούμενοι διαδιδράσκειν χρόνῳ παρασχόν, ὁ δὲ δῆμος φθόνῳ τε πρὸς ἐκείνην καθιστάμενος καὶ τῶν πλεονεξιῶν αὐτῆς ἐπιστόμισμα τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας εἰδὼς καὶ αὐτοῦ καταφυγὴν ἔχαιρεν Κλαυδίου τῇ ἁρπαγῇ στάσιν τε ἔμφυλον, ὁποία καὶ ἐπὶ Πομπηίου γένοιτο, ἀπαλλάξειν αὐτῶν ὑπελάμβανον τοῦτον αὐτοκράτορα καθιστάμενον.[160]

The reasoning that Josephus provides us as to why the people (ὁ δῆμος) were opposed to the restoration of senatorial primacy suggests the following: there was a fear of a return to the civil strife of the previous century. In other words, the emperor ensured the peace. Also, they preferred the new power structure that was created by having an emperor, for it kept the senate in check, and provided the people with a refuge. The use of the words τῶν πλεονεξιῶν… ἐπιστόμισμα, 'a curb of greediness' gives the passage a strong antagonistic tone: the emperor is portrayed as a foil to the excesses of the Senate in the mind of the people.[161] There are a number of interesting aspects to the phrase. If we follow

[158] Suet. *Claud*. 10.4.
[159] cf. Ibid., 10.3:
[160] Jos. *AJ*. 19.227-228.
[161] cf. Ibid.,19.224 for a similar sentiment expressed amongst the soldiery.

Wiseman's commentary,[162] there are differences and inconsistencies in the text that suggest Josephus used different sources for the construction of this narrative. If the source was Latin, the word would have been *frenum*, which translates as a horse's bit, but was often used in political contexts to mean the control of power, and the restraint of ambition.[163] If this is the case, then the source would emphasise the shortcomings of the Senate, and contrast it to the wish for protection from the people.[164] This perhaps betrays a Roman *popularis* perspective, typified by a strong antagonism towards the patricians, steeped in republican precedent. The possibility is striking,[165] and perhaps points to an understanding that placed relations between the Senate, People and Emperor within that older framework. Whether this can be extrapolated to include the perspective of the lower classes at Rome in general is not clear, but it does reveal tensions of interpretation between the upper and lower sections of Roman society.

This brings us to the interpretation of how a wider population perceived the political and social structure of the Roman world. Using this passage of Josephus, Veyne argued that the general population of the Roman empire was 'monarchic by a sort of anti-parliamentarianism', because the existence of a monarch created a patriarchal system that prevented senatorial rivalry and fighting.[166] This is an interesting proposition. The emperor is cast in the role of overseer and mediator between groups in society; a figure that can safeguard peace and prosperity in the empire. The emperor and his family created a new set of dynamics in Roman politics and society, re-configuring the power structure to the extent that the emperor and his family became a new 'social structure' that was

[162] Wiseman (2013) 70, 88.
[163] *TLL* 6.1.1294.19ff. e.g. Ov. *Fast*. 1.532: '*hanc fas imperii frena tenere domum*.' cf. a discussion of similar Platonic imagery of the bestial being restrained as a metaphor for government in Chapter 2.3.
[164] This was to be achieved, according to popularis ratio, by the tribunician power: Tac. *Ann*. 1.2.1: '*et ad tuendam plebem tribunicio iure contentum*…' Griffin (1991) 27: 'the tribunate is there to diminish and control the *consulare imperium* and the *potentia senatus*.
[165] Griffin (1991) 32.
[166] Veyne (2002) 19, quotation is my translation. cf. Hekster (2002) 21.

separated from the senatorial one.[167] This added a new layer onto the multivalent society across the empire that cut through older boundaries, creating new dominant-subordinate power relationships in its wake.[168] Moreover, the emperor's subjects had to navigate through these new currents. As shown in this chapter, they grappled with these slippery concepts that formed the thought-world of the Roman emperor, which began early in an imperial 'life'. The discourse discussed and scrutinised the expectations directed towards the emperor on his conduct and actions, and it continued throughout his reign and thereafter into discussions of his legacy. The themes of acceptance, discursive conversations about the suitability of an emperor, and perceptions of the unusual place the Roman emperor held in the world that have been introduced in this chapter will be developed further in the subsequent parts of this thesis. What follows next is a discussion of the problems and pitfalls of placing our literary evidence under this sort of scrutiny, with explorations of different solutions that could help excavate the perceptions of the Roman emperor from the perspective of his subjects.

[167] Hekster (2015) 177, see 37-38 above; cf. Lott (2012) 15.
[168] For more on this, see Chapter 2.2.

Part 2: The Life of An Emperor

Chapter 2: Discourses of the Emperor and his Subjects

2.1: Introduction: Talking about the Emperor, and Finding the 'Popular' Voice in the Conversation

> But no power, no empire, can hope to exist for long unless it wins the assent and trust of the majority of its subjects, and the question that this lecture aims at answering is, 'What did the common people under the Empire expect of their rulers, and how were they satisfied?' It is no good simply referring the inquirer to such treatises as Seneca *On Clemency*, Dio Chysostom *On Kingship*, or the younger Pliny's Panegyric on Trajan. Instructive these treatises are, and useful… but they have one common fault: with their elegance and sophistication, their almost painfully literary quality, they can have reached and influenced only a small circle, whereas we are concerned with the ordinary people, 'What did the farmer in Gaul, the corn-shipper in Africa, the shopkeeper in Syria, expect?[1]

At the Raleigh Lecture on History in 1937, M. P. Charlesworth showed his interest in the attitudes of subjects towards the empire, and asked the question of what they expected from the emperor, and what they thought about him. An interesting question, which is fraught with difficulties and pitfalls. For one thing, Charlesworth's solution to his enquiry was to explore the 'propagandic' output of the centre, including observing imperial coinage, arguing for both the purposeful propagation of an imperial idea or image, and its unproblematic reception by a wider population.[2] In other words, Charlesworth's method was to extrapolate popular opinion on the emperor from evidence of his actions and images, including media which could be interpreted as having been disseminated by the government.[3] This 'top-down' approach to the understanding of ideology and image dissemination in the empire has had a large impact in the historiography of the Roman

[1] Charlesworth (1937) 5.
[2] Charlesworth (1937) 12-13: 'In addition coins could act as a sort of newspaper or official gazette to the provinces, and those handling them would be continually reminded of the benefactions, the good deeds, or the glorious exploits of their emperor… 'The use of these legends assumes a large number of people able to read them, and to be affected by them.'
[3] Noreña (2001) 147: 'each coin minted at Rome was an official document and as such represented an official expression of the emperor and his regime' cf. Noreña (2011), who has a similar approach to Charlesworth, but his interest is in understanding imperial ideals from the side of its production and dissemination, rather than its reception in the wider world.

empire.[4] However, the approach is different here, exploring the topics of conversation about the emperor that discuss the roles and expectations placed on his position.

Before commencing with the difficulties of this subject, which is the major component in this chapter in particular, it is important to outline the underlying premise of Part 2. As highlighted by Charlesworth in the quotation above, the idea that the imperial regime and its power was derived from the consensus of different constituencies has been important to the understanding of the Roman government in the early principate.[5] The previous chapter discussed the nature of this 'acceptance' and its importance to the ideology and legitimacy of the imperial regime. The corollary of this premise is that the dialogue that existed between emperor and subject was important to this idea of consensus, and that the thoughts and opinions of people on the emperor *mattered*. The distinction that needs to be drawn here concerns how they mattered. Looking for the political impact of opinions on the actions and history of the regime would be a chimera, as such an interpretation would presume a large degree of political agency resting with the silent masses of the Roman empire, suggesting that this was the sort of discourse that could make or break an emperor. This would go too far. Nonetheless, the evidence for the expression of these opinions points to the interest in understanding the emperor from a wider angle, with the lens of lower class individuals or groups revealing variegated perspectives about the ruler of the Roman world. Put differently, the goal is summarised

[4] Ando (2000), esp. 19-48; Flaig (1992); Syme (1939) 448-475; Noreña (2001) 146-168; Noreña (2011), esp. 1-26; Nutton (1978) 209-220; Rogers (1991); Veyne (2002) 3-25; Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 298-323; Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32-48; Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 19-36; Winterling (2009) 9-33; Zanker (1988), esp. 3; See Chapter 1.2 for a short discussion on the understanding of the Roman emperor, and Chapter 3.1 for a discussion of the alternative thematic method used in this thesis.

[5] Discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.2.1; *StR* II 749-750 = *DPR* V 6-7; Hopkins (1978a) 198; Veyne (2002) 3; Flaig (1992) 11; Rowe (2002), esp. 1-2; Noreña (2011) 7: 'With these influential collectivities the emperor was in constant dialogue, both real and symbolic, interacting with each in a highly prescribed manner calculated to elicit the public displays of consensus, or 'acceptance', upon which imperial legitimacy ultimately rested.' cf. Weber (1978) 1114-1115 on charismatic authority, whence the kernel of these ideas is derived.

in an alteration of Millar's famous dictum: whilst it is true that 'the emperor was what the emperor did'[6], it is also apparent that 'the emperor was what the emperor *seemed*'.[7]

The purpose of this chapter is to outline, problematise, and discuss the various analytical issues that arise from attempting to observe and record what people thought about the emperor. It commences with the problems of interpretation, and the attempt to read the opinions of a wider population in the evidence. Next, the issues of time and space, contrasting the contextual specificity and wider universality of stories about emperors and their interactions with people. This seeming paradox reveals the tension between the constructed world in which the discourse of interaction between people and *princeps* operates, and the world that it alludes to.[8] Such is the difficulty of finding that line between the reality and a mirage. Depending on the cynicism of the author, the ability to read the 'real' situation behind the vignette can be variable, and problematic. However, the substance of talk and discourse about the emperor in the contexts described, for instance at the imperial court or the circus, are in themselves abstract phenomena that *represent* opinion, rather than giving a real break down of what people thought about the emperor.[9] That is lost to history. Nonetheless, the recording of such material suggests the modes in which the emperor was discussed and understood, which could open a window into the discourse about the emperor, which is useful even in falsehood.[10] This interpretation takes a literary perspective quite seriously, whilst also attempting to appreciate the historical context in which this evidence was written, and in which it describes.

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[6] Millar (1992) 6.
[7] cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 183: 'Millar has taught us that the emperor was what the emperor did; this paper explores the proposition that the emperor was also what the emperor *said*.' See below, Chapter 3.5, and Potter (1984) 99 for variations on this theme.
[8] For example, see Beard (2014) 140, on the tension between the literary representation and the 'social reality' of laughter between emperor and subject.
[9] I owe this point to my discussion with Professor A. Wallace-Hadrill.
[10] This point is argued throughout this Part, particularly in Chapter 2.2 and 3.4.

2.2: Problems of Interpretation

How do we access the opinions and thoughts of a wider population in the empire about the emperor?[1] Unpacking the question, and also the problem of sources, poses more questions than at first meet the eye. what is meant by a 'wider population? Is 'public opinion', or even the opinions of that wider population in the empire, accessible? How do we approach the evidence of potentially 'popular' opinion in our 'elite' sources? Can such a binary opposition of 'elite' and 'non-elite' perspectives be easily delineated? Are some sources of evidence better than others? This section can serve as a beginning to tackling these difficult issues and to find new perspectives.

First, the issue of a wider population. This thesis seeks to provide an inclusive history of the perceptions of the Roman emperor from the perspective of his subjects. The argument for these shared perspectives that could cross social, political, cultural and economic lines will be discussed further below,[2] but there are certain problems that require further thought, particularly concerning terms such as *populus* and *plebs*, the meanings and prejudices they evoke, and ultimately who is meant by a 'wider population.'

To start with the people at Rome itself, the emperor constitutionally derived his powers from the *populus Romanus* in the form of a *lex*, which was officially confirmed in comitial procedure.[3] However, this duty has been interpreted as perfunctory: 'the *comitia*, which had long since ceased to represent the whole citizen body had no effective role at all: its votes could hardly be said to convey the endorsement of public opinion.'[4] This is echoed by Millar: 'Though… the electoral assemblies took place at least until the

[1] cf. Beard (2014) 4, on this problem with accessing how Romans laughed.
[2] See below, 80-84, and Chapter 3.5.
[3] See above Chapter 1.2.1. cf. Brunt (1977) 95-96. *Dig*. 1.4.1.pr. = Ulp. *Inst*. 1; cf. Brunt (1966) 5-7.
[4] Brunt (1977) 95. cf. Yavetz (1969a) 3-5.

early third century, from AD 14 onwards their business was purely formal'.[5] Accordingly, the role of people in the act of the conferral of powers on to a new *princeps* was a ceremonial and ideological one at most.[6]

It has been argued that without this political function, the Roman people were reduced to murmurs and shouts at the street corner, theatre and circus.[7] This is indeed the impression that comes from ancient literature. For example, Juvenal famously versed: '*nam qui dabat olim imperium fasces legiones omnia, nunc se continet atque duas tantum res anxius optat, panem et circenses*.'[8] A similar picture is given by Tacitus: '*plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta*'.[9] This is significant. The reduction of people's political force, and their portrayal as being taken by bread and shows, has had an impact on the historiographical perception of the people at Rome in Roman history. For example, Hammond argues that 'the people had had no share in the grants of powers to subordinates. Thus the sovereignty of the Roman people passed in fact to the senate and the expression of the will of the *populus*, or of the *plebs*, in the formal votes of the various *comitia* disintegrated into the shouts of the rabble.'[10] Hammond's description conforms to and derives from the image received from Juvenal and Tacitus. Although not as extreme, this cynicism on the role of the people at Rome can be found elsewhere. Moses Finley in *Politics in the Ancient World* argued that the *populus Romanus* did not in reality have governmental or voting power, but rather exercised influence 'by taking to the streets, by agitation, demonstrations and riots, and this long before the days of gangs and

[5] Millar (1992) 368; cf. Ibid., 301-302; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.15; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 16.2; For the third century, Dio. 58.20.4: 'καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἔς τε τὸν δῆμον καὶ ἐς τὸ πλῆθος οἱ προσήκοντες ἑκατέρῳ, τῆς ἀρχαίας ὁσίας ἕνεκα, καθάπερ καὶ νῦν, ὥστε ἐν εἰκόνι δοκεῖν γίγνεσθαι, ἐσιόντες ἀπεδείκνυντο.'
[6] Griffin (1991) 39, 45.
[7] Ibid., 40-1; Hammond (1959) 8;
[8] Juv. 10.78-81. cf. Wiseman (2009) 236.
[9] Tac. *Hist*. 1.4.3
[10] Hammond (1959) 8; cf. Hammond (1968) 146 in particular for a lengthy derogatory description of the Roman people. cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.15. cf. Millar (1988) 12.

private armies of the civil-war century.'[11] De Ste Croix argued that people's role in conferring powers to an emperor was a façade, and that it 'was virtually a fiction from the first' because of the fact that their political and law-making powers had been taken away from them in the principate.[12] Griffin gives quite a bleak appraisal on the importance of the *plebs* in the political processes at Rome, coldly observing that they did not have any political force in practice:

> Lampoons and grumbling at street corners, or rather in the large and convenient gathering places in which the poorer inhabitants of a Mediterranean city spend most of their time, were hardly a serious threat.[13]

Griffin could only take the people of Rome seriously if they had any feasible impact on the political direction of the state. If this could not be shown, then by logical consequence their *inanis rumor*[14] was just that; inane, inconsequential rumour. Such is the prejudicial impression of the people at Rome.

This entire framework is rather restrictive. In terms of political activity, the shouts and acclamations of the people in the street, theatre and circus directed toward an emperor can be seen as a vehicle of public opinion,[15] and the perception and understanding of the Roman emperor is not restricted to constitutional or political themes. Moreover, the above scholarly prejudice is directed toward a narrow group of people. The terms *populus* and *plebs,* in the sense in which they were used in constitutional contexts, both were quite restrictive collective nouns. Cicero defines *populus* as follows:

> Est igitur… res publica res populi, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus.[16]

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[11] Finley (1983) 91.
[12] De Ste Croix (1981) 384-386.
[13] Griffin (1991) 40-41.
[14] Tac. *Ann*. 1.15.
[15] On public opinion, see discussion below, 77-80. Zanker (1988) 147. Aldrete (1999) xviii; Millar (1992) 369-375.
[16] Cic. *Rep*. 1.39.1. Ando (1999) 14.

Accordingly, Cicero's *populus* is defined by a collective consensus of interest and justice, and is not *any* congregated mass of people. The jurist Gaius gives us a political understanding of the word *populus*, and how this can be distinguished from the idea of the *plebs*:

> plebs autem a populo eo distat, quod populi appellatione universi cives significantur, connumeratis et patriciis; plebis autem appellatione sine patriciis ceteri cives significantur.[17]

The *populus* signifies the whole of the citizen body. The *plebs*, on the other hand, includes only the citizens outside the patrician class. Both can be interpreted as restricted groups of people.

Thus, instead of over-stretching these terms either by using them to denote the 'lower class' at Rome and to attribute the term to other groups, or in a more restrictive sense of attempting to recover the opinion of the *plebs* at Rome specifically, the rubric suggested here is to talk about an inclusive discourse that had the emperor as its subject, and was being contributed to by different people in different times and contexts.[18] This part of the thesis in particular pursues this wider world of observers, expressing divergent and disparate views on the emperor.

Second, the issue of public opinion. As Habermas shows, in the eighteenth century, public opinion came to mean the rational and enlightened 'outcome of common and public reflection on the foundations of the social order.'[19] Therefore, in the modern age public opinion has been important in understanding democratic societies, with a particular interest in gauging the position or stand of individuals and groups in society on topics pertaining to government and their actions.[20] This understanding is seemingly

[17] Gaius, 1.3.
[18] This will be elaborated further below, particularly concerning the problems of the binary division between 'elite' and 'non-elite'.
[19] Habermas (1989) 89ff., 96 for quotation, who also discusses the etymology of opinion. cf. Kuhn (2012b) 13-14 on Habermas' contextually specific thoughts on *öffentlich meinung*.
[20] Benson (1967) 523-524, cf. Kuhn (2012b) 11-13.

wedded to its modern context: a scientific study of the break down of voting or poll data on relevant issues.[21] An essential question is whether we can retroject this concept to pre-modern societies, where such data is lacking.[22] As Christina Kuhn has argued on the issue of 'public opinion' in classical studies, a problem lies in whether scholars agree public opinion exists or not.[23] Paul Veyne argued in his seminal *Bread and Circuses* that the idea of finding public opinion on the emperor was problematic:

> The Emperor's name was spoken with respect, but people did not have political opinions and political discussion was unknown.... The thousands of graffiti and painted inscriptions to be read on the walls of Pompeii surprise us, for there is not a single one that we should call political – only repetitions of 'Long Live the Emepror' (*Augusto Feliciter*). The Emperor is not politics...[24]

In Veyne's estimation, even in the medium that had access to 'thoughts on the street', graffiti in Pompeii, were markedly apolitical when it came to the question of the emperor, a manifestation of a 'political discussion'.[25] This would be a narrow view of what could constitute 'public opinion', which for Veyne does not include the expressions of 'submission' and loyalty toward the emperor, but rather the opinions of senators, 'the narrow ruling class who had knowledge of public business and public events, represented a sort of public opinion.'[26] As Kuhn rightly points out, such a view of public opinion is indebted to Enlightenment conceptions of rational thoughts and criticism on politics, as described by Habermas.[27] This is a restrictive framework in both its purview of what was

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[21] Back (1988) 279. This paper argues for the manifestation of 'public opinion' in literature as an actor that forces the attention of rulers, esp. 283-284.
[22] Kuhn (2012b) 13, 15; cf. Benson (1967) 563.
[23] Kuhn (2012b) 15: '*Sie ist geprägt von einer Kontroverse, in der sich die inhaltliche Diskussion auf die Grundsatzfrage von Existenz oder Nicht-Existenz öffentlicher Meinung in der antiken Welt zugespitzt hat*.'
[24] Veyne (1990) 296.
[25] cf. Franklin (2001) 108, which records *CIL* 4.8075 = *AE* (1962) 133, given there as '*Cucuta ab ra[t]ioni[b]us | Neronis Augusti*. This would seemingly be innocuous if it recorded a name, but if a pun is intended, then the reference to hemlock, or poison, may be a jab at the emperor for his methods of improving his accounts. Would such a comment count in Veyne's thought of 'political discussion'? Perhaps not, but it is a revealing anecdote about potential opinions on an emperor's actions. Beard (2008) 50-51; cf. Purcell (1999) 183; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 29.2: '*decimo quoque die numerum puniendorum ex custodia subscribens rationem se purgare dicebat*.'
[26] Veyne (1990) 295.
[27] Kuhn (2012b) 14-15; Habermas (1989) 89ff.

involved in the political arena, and also in that it curtails its participants to subjectively rational people. Accordingly, it disregards the more bizarre and unusual interpretations of the Roman emperor, which were a part of the discourse about who the emperor was and how he seemed to be.[28]

Diversity is key when discussing 'public opinion' and the Roman emperor. As Hopkins has argued, such a narrow conception obscures the nature of the situation:

> There was a wide spectrum of values, beliefs and attitudes. At a rational level, several of them were probably incompatible, yet in fact held by the same people simultaneously. Indeed, people often pick values, beliefs and attitudes from a common social stock and give them different emphasis and expression according to the demands of social circumstances. For example, different values and beliefs are expressed at cocktail parties or stag parties and in church, in public and in private, at the emperor's court, in the royal presence, and in a philosophical discussion. It is both impracticable and undesirable to compress this huge variety into a single historical account, whether our subject is beliefs in contemporary England, America or in ancient Rome.[29]

The variety that Hopkins describes is daunting, yet it reveals the hazards of eliding differences and conceiving of public opinion in programmatic statements. This brings us to nuance in the evidence, which can include opinion that varies in geographical, temporal, spatial, and social contexts. How do we differentiate between opinions of those between social boundaries, geographical or cultural variances, or different time periods?

The question of evidence is one that troubles the study of the majority of people in the ancient world. How do we get to the opinion of those who are rendered silent by time and history? The statement that our sources come from an urban male elite perspective is a truism, and is rarely challenged: it is cited often with chagrin that we have a tiny percentage of the total literary output of antiquity, and that it comes 'entirely (from) the work of an elite of birth, wealth, and education'.[30] Nonetheless, the 'elusive quarry'

[28] For instance, see Chapter 3.4 in particular on the more bizarre and wondrous associations.
[29] Hopkins (1978a) 216.
[30] Beard (2014) 4.

has been searched for exploitation by numerous scholars.[31] Before engaging with the methods utilised by these scholars, there is a distinction that needs to be made here. The studies that have explored these methods of analysis have had the expressed wish to ascertain and determine popular, as opposed to elite, *culture*, with the attempt to regain information about a large proportion of people whose story has been lost to history, or at best badly (mis)represented in the evidence.[32] This part of the thesis attempts to focus on the discourse surrounding the figure of the Roman emperor; a figure of prominence in the literature of the Roman empire, which had an interest in recording and discussing what people said and thought about him.[33] Thus, a popular culture is not necessarily being resurrected here, but rather the substance of discourse that was shared by a wider population that would include voices across socio-economic boundaries.

How does one go about finding the opinions of the emperor's subjects from literature which cannot be argued to be representative of a majority of people in antiquity? One method is to study the discrepancies in power relationships between the dominant and subordinate in society, in order to appreciate the nature of the discourse in public in the face of power, and the corresponding discourse in clandestine confines.[34] This methodology takes its cue from James C. Scott on discrepant power relations in Southeast Asia, and his understanding of social interaction between these groups. He creates a model of three modes of speech that describe the interaction between the subordinate and the dominant:[35] First, is the *public transcript*, which is a façade put in place by the

[31] Horsfall (2003) 20-23; Morgan (2007) 3-4; Toner (2009) 5-7; Kurke (2011) 3; Forsdyke (2012) 16-18; Beard (2014) 4. cf. Burke (1978).
[32] For instance, see discussion on *plebs* above (74-77), and Plutarch's discussion on collective forces in Chapter 2.3 below; cf. Horsfall (2003) 26; Purcell (1994) 644.
[33] cf. Purcell (1999) 183.
[34] Forsdyke (2012) 6-18. cf. Ahl (1984) 174-208, on the intricate 'art of safe criticism'.
[35] cf. Burke (1978) 23-24: This model of different transcripts has its parallels in Peter Burke's utilisation of the social anthropologist Robert Redfield's model of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition, where the former is the closed, elite discourse, and the latter is popular. The similarity lies in the existence of different vernaculars that had varying degrees of overlap, meaning that seemingly distinct social groups nevertheless shared culture.

subordinate classes that mirrors the ideology and concerns of the dominant class, thus maintaining and affirming the social order: 'That the poor should dissemble in the face of power is hardly an occasion for surprise. Dissimulation is the characteristic and necessary pose of subordinate classes everywhere most of the time–a fact that makes those rare and threatening moments when the pose is abandoned all the more remarkable. No close account of the life of subordinate classes can fail to distinguish between what is said "backstage" and what may be safely declared openly'.[36] Second, and in opposition, is the *hidden transcript*, which basically is what the lower classes say about the higher classes behind closed doors:

> Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of both hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understanding resistance to domination.[37]

Third is a mix between the two, a *transcript* that is purposefully ambiguous and misleading in order to confuse and hide their true opinions; a transcript that could include 'rumor, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theater of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, they insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity or behind innocuous understandings of their conduct.'[38]

A key point of Scott's paradigm is how discrepant power relations affect the nature and content of the discourse between the subordinate and the dominant. In different contexts, different opinions on the emperor could be expressed, and some which may seem contradictory to each other, and may hide an alternative meaning to what is being

[36] Scott (1985) 284; cf. Scott (1990) 4, n.7.
[37] Scott (1990) xii.
[38] Ibid., xiii; cf. Ibid., 19 and Forsdyke (2012) 40-41 for a discussion on this idea; cf. Scott (1990) 4: 'the dialectic of disguise and surveillance that pervades relations between the weak and the strong will help us, I think, to understand the cultural patterns of domination and subordination.'

openly said. However, this should not be taken too far, for the paradigm can be problematised as follows. One issue is the identification of 'subordinate' and 'dominant.' It would perhaps be easy to use this opposition in correspondence with the seemingly straightforward dichotomy of 'elite' and 'non-elite'.[39] However, the negotiation of power relations in the Roman world was much more complex, and complicated further by the existence of the emperor in the social framework.[40] This can be observed in an illuminating passage of Epictetus' *Peri Eleutherias*:

> ταῦτα ἄν τις ἀκούσῃ δισύπατος, ἂν μὲν προσθῇς ὅτι 'ἀλλὰ σύ γε σοφὸς εἶ, οὐδὲν πρὸς σὲ ταῦτα,' συγγνώσεταί σοι. ἂν δ᾽ αὐτῷ τὰς ἀληθείας εἴπῃς ὅτι "τῶν τρὶς πεπραμένων οὐδὲν διαφέρεις πρὸς τὸ μὴ καὶ αὐτὸς δοῦλος εἶναι,' τί ἄλλο ἢ πληγάς σε δεῖ προσδοκᾶν; 'πῶς γάρ,' φησίν, 'ἐγὼ δοῦλός εἰμι; ὁ πατὴρ ἐλεύθερος, ἡ μήτηρ ἐλευθέρα, οὗ ὠνὴν οὐδεὶς ἔχει: ἀλλὰ καὶ συγκλητικός εἰμι καὶ Καίσαρος φίλος καὶ ὑπάτευκα καὶ δούλους πολλοὺς ἔχω.' πρῶτον μέν, ὦ βέλτιστε συγκλητικέ, τάχα σου καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τὴν αὐτὴν δουλείαν δοῦλος ἦν καὶ ἡ μήτηρ καὶ ὁ πάππος καὶ ἐφεξῆς πάντες οἱ πρόγονοι. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα ἦσαν ἐλεύθεροι, τί τοῦτο πρὸς σέ; τί γάρ, εἰ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γενναῖοι ἦσαν, σὺ δ᾽ ἀγεννής; ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἄφοβοι, σὺ δὲ δειλός; ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἐγκρατεῖς, σὺ δ᾽ ἀκόλαστος; καὶ τί, φησί, τοῦτο πρὸς τὸ δοῦλον εἶναι; — οὐδέν σοι φαίνεται εἶναι τὸ ἄκοντά τι ποιεῖν, τὸ ἀναγκαζόμενον, τὸ στένοντα πρὸς τὸ δοῦλον εἶναι; — τοῦτο μὲν ἔστω, φησίν. ἀλλὰ τίς με δύναται ἀναγκάσαι, εἰ μὴ ὁ πάντων κύριος Καῖσαρ; — οὐκοῦν ἕνα μὲν δεσπότην σαυτοῦ καὶ σὺ αὐτὸς ὡμολόγησας. ὅτι δὲ πάντων, ὡς λέγεις, κοινός ἐστιν, μηδέν σε τοῦτο παραμυθείσθω, ἀλλὰ γίγνωσκε, ὅτι ἐκ μεγάλης οἰκίας δοῦλος εἶ.[41]

It is a dialogue between a senator and Epictetus, an ex-slave, who challenges the statement that he is no different than a thrice-sold slave by arguing for his status and his freeborn status.[42] The quoted section ends with the acknowledgement that only one can compel him, the emperor:

> But who is able to compel me, if not Caesar, the lord of all?—There, you yourself admitted that you have one master. But that he is the common master of all, as you say, let it not at all reassure you, but realise that you are a slave from a great house.[43]

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[39] cf. Toner (2009) 5-6.

[40] Shaw (1982) 30-33, 36-37, esp. Fig. 2, for Shaw's interesting schema on social relations in the Roman empire; Winterling (2009) 12-28; Alföldy (1985).

[41] Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 4.1.6-13. cf. Philo, *Leg.* 119, who creates a similar comparison between slavery and being subject to a despotic emperor in particular: 'Τί γὰρ ἄν εἴη δούλῳ βαρύτερον κακὸν ἢ δεσπότης ἐχθρός; δοῦλοι δὲ αὐτοκράτορος οἱ ὑπήκοοι…'

[42] Millar (1965) 144; cf. Starr (1949) 25-26. cf. Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 4.1.45-48

[43] Translation is my own adapted from the Loeb.

It is a startling passage, which fits into others from Epictetus on the position of the emperor relative to society, often citing the dangers of being close to the *princeps*.[44] The stark power of the emperor in comparison to others is outlined in the passage, which in essence indicates the nature of power relations in the Roman empire: the position of the emperor above all redefined power relationships across the empire, which created uncertainties and discrepancies between social groups.[45] This puts Scott's paradigm into perspective: discrepant power relationships could be felt by those considered to be 'elite' actors in the Roman empire, suggesting that they could fulfil the 'subordinate' group in Scott's model, which further suggests that they themselves could engage in a 'hidden transcript'. Put differently, given the higher powerful position of the Roman emperor with respect to (for instance) the senatorial class, the discourse they engaged in could be argued to have had 'hidden' components: criticisms and true sentiment concealed with various techniques.[46] Thus, it becomes problematic to delineate where an 'elite' transcript ends and where a 'non-elite' one begins, since it is a shared phenomenon. However, this is only an issue if one insists on a stark polarity between elite/non-elite, since the reality is more complex. What will be argued is that experiences of the emperor, and the conversations about him, were experienced by different people and groups up and down the social scale, all of which contributes to the image of the emperor that has been handed down.[47] In other words, lines between groups are blurred in the experience of the

[44] Starr (1949) 24-25; Millar (1965) 143-144; Millar (1992) 78: Arr. *Epict. Diss*. 1.2.19-24; 2.14.18; 4.1.45-48; 4.13.5.
[45] There is much to unpack with the social and political dynamics introduced by the emperor and his court in the imperial period, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2, on the dynamics of justice in the empire. See Tac. *Ann*. 3.36, on the use of the image of the emperor as protection against legal reprimand from the higher orders. cf. Price (1984a) 191-194. See Plin. *Ep*. 7.29; 8.6, on Pliny's letters discussing the honours given to Pallas, Claudius' powerful freedman.
[46] Ahl (1984) 174-208, for this very phenomenon of what he calls the 'art of safe criticism'. cf. Chapter 3.5.
[47] Purcell (1999) 183.

emperor's power, which suggests similarities in discourse on the emperor between the 'low' and the 'high'.

Another issue comes in the form of narratives of resistance, which is an explicit goal of Scott's model. A strong current in the historiography of the Roman empire concerns assessing responses to the Roman empire.[48] Coming in different forms, in the previous century it manifested in the debate on 'Romanisation', which betrays a contemporary concern with cultural continuity and change across the empire. Despite the attempts at nuance in this subject, the debate is almost always reduced to the binary opposition of compliance and resistance, narratives that on one hand favour the story of difference being elided under the 'superior' civilisation of Rome, and on other hand the heroic resistance to the creeping imperialism of the Romans, indicated by the persistence of 'native' forms of identity in the material record, with a middle ground stressing a more complex picture that depended on context.[49] It is as if modern Roman historians have wanted, and thus attempted, to place our evidence into normative categories of resistance and compliance, making it a more comfortable comparison to better documented responses to modern imperialism. However, the understanding of responses to modern imperialism are far from straightforward, meaning that such categories can rarely describe the situation at hand.[50] In a recent paper on the historiography of 'resistance' in Roman studies, Greg Woolf gave a bleak picture on the subject's future.[51] His conclusion was that no satisfactory 'history of resistance' had been made, hence explaining its lack of persistent interest in scholarship. However, Woolf suggested a solution to his highlighted problems of the lack of evidence, and the concentration on resistant groups at the edges

[48] Macmullen (1966); Bénabou (1976); De Ste Croix (1981); Dench (2005) 5-11; Whitmarsh (2010); Mattingly (2011).
[49] Woolf (1998) 6-7; Dench (2005) 5-11; Whitmarsh (2010). Mattingly (2011) 38-41.
[50] Webster and Cooper (1996).
[51] In a paper titled 'Who could resist Rome?'. at the Corpus Christi Classics Seminar, 22nd October 2014.

of society; namely, studying reactions and opinions concerning imperialism from the common texts of the field and seeing how they fit into narratives of resistance and compliance in order to reveal a more nuanced picture. Here, instead of adamantly drawing out narratives of resistance from the evidence concerning the Roman emperor, this thesis stresses the debate on the merits and faults of an emperor within imperial literature. The debate is not necessarily about whether the emperor should exist or not, but about his worthiness for the position, which encompassed actions, appearances, and interactions with his subjects.[52] Therefore, contours of acceptance and criticism of emperors can be observed without attempting to fit them into the extremes of resistance or sycophancy.

This brings us to the nature of the evidence–in particular the literary evidence–and finding different transcripts. Given the issues of textual transmission and the predominance of an 'elite' perspective, can there be an appreciation of opinion 'from below'? Scott's paradigm can help, but it is important to acknowledge the modes in which interactions between the wider population, or non-elite individuals, and the emperor are depicted in literary sources. Importantly, this is not to state that all descriptions of their interactions are literary façades meant to obscure historical interpretation, or rather that this means that nothing can be trusted, but rather that there is always a literary context to contend with in these stories, and that it needs to be appreciated before we can ascertain the nature and content of how people talked about the emperor.[53]

The aspect of how narratives construct the relationship between emperor and groups of people, such as soldiers or the *plebs* at Rome, will be dealt with further below in Chapter 2.3. However, the attention focuses on anecdotal material that depicts interactions between the emperor and a wider population, either as individuals or groups

[52] See further Chapter 3.
[53] cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 189-194.

of people.[54] Interestingly, the problem has its parallels in attempting to ascertain personality and character from anecdotes or *dicta* about emperors that appear in biographies or collections of sayings,[55] which is a subject that has close kinship with the one pursued here. As Yavetz stated, at first with caution, and then with unbridled optimism:

> It should be said that from the outset that of course Augustus' *dicta* must be taken with a grain of salt… For our purposes, however, it does not matter whether Augustus actually said certain things… It is with Augustus' public image that we are concerned. From this point of view, his *dicta* and *apophthegmata* are of primary importance. They reveal very interesting character traits, which, in my opinion, are undoubtedly his.[56]

Contradictions arise with the statement, for Yavetz at first rightly stressed that these anecdotes would have travelled through many media before reaching the surviving text, and that they reflect sayings that were attributable to that person in the context of the discourse. However, disregarding these caveats, and returning to the idea that in the end *real* nuggets of information about the emperor's personality remain, undermines the carefully analysed issues with the evidence at hand. For example, note the following passage from the *Historia Augusta*, where the author lists the personality traits of Hadrian: '*idem severus laetus, comis gravis, lascivus cunctator, tenax liberalis, simulator <dissimulator>, saevus clemens, et semper in omnibus varius*.'[57] The set of contradictions tells the reader nothing about Hadrian's personality, suggesting how obscure, and perhaps diversionary, this information can be.

Therefore, a stumbling block for scholarship has been the assessment of these anecdotes' authenticity. In an article about the problematic use of anecdotes in modern

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[54] cf. Saller (1980) 70-72, where Saller breaks down forms of story-telling, *exempla* and how they passed into literature, through collections of *exempla* to biographies.
[55] cf. Pelling (2002) 65-90 for *apophthegmata* in Plutarch.
[56] Yavetz (1990) 31-32; This is quoted as such in Laurence and Paterson (1999) 186, where Yavetz' argument is subject to scrutiny of his final point: that Augustus' character was somehow salvageable from these stories and sayings. However, cf. Yavetz (1990) 28, for a more balanced view on what these sources reveal about personality.
[57] SHA, *Hadr.* 14.

history in order to gain 'social, economic, and administrative details',[58] Saller gives the following possibilities of reconstructing the 'reality' behind the story since it was divorced from its context:

> The details in an anecdote could reflect any one of four 'realities': an accurate reproduction of the details of the time of the original story, anachronistic accretions grafted on at some unknown point during the transmission, accretions by our literary source reflecting the author's own times, or accretions by our literary source reflecting what the author envisaged the period of the anecdote to be like.[59]

These points are valid, particularly if one wants to reconstruct the real context of the events. However, discussing the discourse and stories that surround the emperor in the early principate is a different matter. In this sense, authenticity is not an issue, as the substance of discourse doesn't have to be truthful, for it is more important that these stories were said and circulated. Indeed, Saller implies this early in the paper,[60] and states explicitly at the end:

> In contrast, anecdotes can be valuable evidence for the attitudes and ideologies of peoples... First, several different levels of attitudes and beliefs should be distinguished, for example, with respect to the emperor. There is the level of ideology, which reflects what people thought an emperor should be. The anecdotes concerning Augustus' generosity and tolerance were held up as exempla for future emperors to emulate, and may be found to be more directly relevant to how later generations thought a good emperor should act than to Augustus' behaviour. To be distinguished from ideology are the people's beliefs as to what the emperor *really was like*: some anecdotes may reflect a cynicism that the emperor did not fulfil the ideal. In some matters the people's realistic beliefs should be distinguished in turn from what actually happened: for instance, Romans may have been aware that certain emperors were not as generous as they had hoped, but they may still have misjudged the actual extent of imperial beneficence. Rarely serving as evidence for what actually happened, anecdotes should be evaluated and interpreted according to whether they reflected ideology or beliefs about reality. Once these distinctions are made, the interesting

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[58] Saller (1980) 69.
[59] Ibid., 80-81.
[60] Saller (1980) 73: 'The important conclusion to be drawn about these contexts for generation and transmission is that when modern scholars tap anecdotes for historical information, they are using them for a different purpose than the Romans who recited them. Accuracy of content and reliability of sources were not matters of concern for the gossip, the story-teller, the orator, the moral philosopher, the literati, or the biographer, as Pliny indicates that they were supposed to be for the historian.' Saller is referring to Plin. *Ep.* 9.33.1: '*Incidi in materiam veram sed simillimam fictae dignamque isto laetissimo, altissimo planeque poetico ingenio; incidi autem, dum super cenam varia miracula hinc inde referuntur. Magna auctori fides. Tametsi quid poetae cum fide? Is tamen auctor, cui bene vel historiam scripturus credidisses.*'

> question of how ideology, realistic belief, and behaviour influenced one another can be addressed.[61]

These stories about the interactions between emperor and a wider population can be utilised to understand the thought-world concerning the emperor. Their importance should not be underestimated, as stated by Purcell:

> Those stories, *fabulae*, are integral to the working of the Roman system, and so is the paradox that their subject should be precisely the more covert behaviour of the rulers. What we are seeing in all of this is the most distinctive feature of the early principate: the intimate involvement of ordinary people in the construction and definition of the image of the emperor, his role, and his family.

Nonetheless, is it possible to ask the question of the suitability of sources, that is, whether some are better than others in finding different voices in the conversation about the emperor? As outlined by Teresa Morgan in her work on popular morality, there were forms of 'literary' work that had a wider appeal, such as oratory, mimes, and farces, and even forms of literature that were represented as having 'lower' origins, such as fable and proverb. It is from these forms of literature that Morgan could construct popular ethics.[62] However, to take fable as an example, despite one that refers to the emperor Tiberius and an *ardalio*,[63] and another with Augustus trying a case,[64] the animal stories provide more fluid images; ones that evade specific context:[65]

> RANAE METUENTES TAURORUM PROELIA
>
> Humiles laborant ubi potentes dissident.
> Rana in palude pugnam taurorum intuens:
> 'Heu quanta nobis instat pernicies!' ait.
> Interrogata ab alia cur hoc diceret,
> de principatu cum illi certarent gregis
> longeque ab ipsis degerent vitam boves:
> est statio separata ac diversum genus;

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[61] Saller (1980) 82.
[62] Morgan (2007) 4-8.
[63] Phaed. 2.5; *ardaliones*, seems to be a derogatory term for a court busy-body: '*est ardalionum quaedam Romae natio, trepide concursans, occupata in otio, gratis anhelans, multa agendo nil agens…*' cf. Mart. 2.7.7; 4.78.9. cf. Henderson (2001) 10-13; cf. Champlin (2008) 417. For more on this passage, see Chapter 3.5.
[64] Phaed. 3.10. cf. Henderson (2001) 38-41.
[65] Phaed. 1.30; Morgan (2007) 57-63.

expulsus regno nemoris qui profugerit,
paludis in secreta veniet latibula
et proculcatas obteret duro pede.
Ita caput ad nostrum furor illorum pertinet.[66]

The pertinence of struggles between the powerful have rippling effects down towards the weaker, which points to the interest in fables to give general lessons, such as the description of power relations between the strong and the weak.[67] If taken with Scott's paradigm, such interest in discrepant power relationships could open up a world where a 'hidden transcript' was being discussed. Accordingly, fables can be used historically if its context is appreciated. As shown by Morgan, this point is extremely valid for the topic of constructing popular ethics, or perhaps even for more popular understandings of power, but less stable when attempting to read reactions to the emperor specifically in these stories.[68] Therefore, caution is necessary when dealing with this material, to the extent that it should be avoided if not directly relevant.[69] Nonetheless, the reference to Augustus and Tiberius in Phaedrus provides an essential look at the figure of emperor, which can be exploited in aid of understanding the nature of the discourse about him.

The fluidity of fable is another issue of importance, and one that is shared by many of the anecdotal, incidental, and fabulous attestations of the emperor and his interactions with the people. Temporal and spatial accuracy and precision are blurred, which can make historical context more difficult to ascertain.[70] Take for instance the anecdote about Hadrian and the old woman, which Millar used on the first page of his *Emperor in the Roman World*.[71] When the woman asked for the emperor's time and the latter declined, she made the famous retort: 'Don't be king then.'[72] Millar's use of the anecdote served as

[66] Phaed. 1.30., cf. Ibid., 4.6.
[67] Morgan (2007) 63-68.
[68] Ibid., 57-68.
[69] Ibid., 63.
[70] Ibid., 236-239: 'An event which is supposed to have happened once in the past has universal relevance…'
[71] Millar (1992) 3.
[72] Dio 69.6.3, quoted in full below, 114.

a precursor for a theme in his work; namely the perceived accessibility of the emperor. Nonetheless, parallels of the same story–about Philip II, Demetrius Poliorcetes in Plutarch, and Antipater in an author called Serenus–[73] made Millar think about its authenticity.[74] It is the same problem as discussed above with the authenticity of anecdotes. However, the point to stress here concerns the notion of a similar story being told in different geographical and temporal contexts. The parallels of such stories do not restrict themselves to Greco-Roman antiquity. In a masterful paper, Edward Champlin explores the different competing narratives concerning Tiberius' character, looking at different anecdotes and vignettes of the emperor and his conduct, and also looking to world folk-literature to compare and contrast the stories to others across the world in different time periods.[75] Similar to the criticism of Yavetz above, he effectively shows the difficulty of stressing certain evidence over others to create a comfortable, non-contradictory reconstruction of an emperor's character, showing us that there were indeed different images of Tiberius in our evidence.[76]

However, Champlin seems to argue through use of world literature that the stories of Tiberius' bad actions were stereotypes, which often circulated around powerful men, and therefore could not be historically trusted.[77] Perhaps his purpose was to be iconoclastic of the received tradition of 'Tiberius the Monster' in an effort to rehabilitate the emperor, but the issue of fluidity needs comment. The first example Champlin used

[73] Plut. *Mor.* 179 C-D; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 42; The story about Antipater is quoted in Stobaeus: Stob. *Flor.* 3.13.48. All three stories have the exact same ending retort.
[74] Millar (1992) 4: Millar spends time discussing the potential purpose of these stories in Plutarch, but then argues that the conceptions evoked by the author 'imposed themselves firmly and concretely on the real life and routine of the emperor.' cf. Champlin (2008) 414: 'Tales of power gravitate naturally to a *princeps*: the cumulative effect of these monarchical stereotypes must be to cast doubt on the historical truth of any single item.'
[75] Champlin (2008) 408-425. cf. Champlin (2015) 277-295.
[76] Champlin (2008) 418.
[77] Ibid., 413-414. cf. Champlin (2015) 295, for the attribution of such tales to nefarious peddlers of fiction. To reiterate, finding a singular culprit does not diminish the creation of negative traditions, which, true or false, contributed to the discourse about an emperor.

is Tiberius and the Fisherman, showing the 'paranoia and the cruelty of the aged tyrant'.[78] Champlin thereafter looks and finds parallels in folk literature that concentrate on the punishment.[79] However, the story of a monarch and a fisherman (and indeed a large fish) have its parallels in ancient literature, notably in Herodotus with Polycrates,[80] and Juvenal in his fourth satire with Domitian.[81] Further analysis of this will be attempted in Chapter 3.4.[82] Also, finding parallels in other ancient and world literature is only part of the job, and subsequently using the fact to question the historicity of the stories would sell this evidence short.[83] Context does indeed matter. As Saller described in his second point about the utility of anecdotes:

> Secondly, when considering ideology and attitudes, attention should be given to the social, geographical, and chronological contexts of the narrator. The ideology and anecdotes of the imperial freedmen no doubt differed from those of the African *colonus*, and his in turn differed from those of the urban prefect. Anecdotes in the East may have been more influenced by the Hellenistic tradition of kingship than those in the West. The imperial ideology evolved over time, and with it the attitudes expressed in anecdotes may have changed.[84]

These contexts are essential. Indeed, they can be supplemented with what can be described as the literary context, which would include the author's context and use for

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[78] Champlin (2008) 408., citing Suet. *Tib*. 60, discussed below in Chapter 3.4.
[79] Champlin (2008) 409-414.
[80] Hdt. 3.42: 'Ἀνὴρ ἁλιεὺς λαβὼν ἰχθὺν μέγαν τε καὶ καλὸν ἠξίου μιν Πολυκράτεϊ δῶρον δοθῆναι·'
[81] Juv. 4.37ff, esp. the meeting at the court, 65-71: '*tum Picens "accipe" dixit "privatis maiora focis. genialis agatur iste dies. propera stomachum laxare sagina et tua servatum consume in saecula rhombum ipse capi voluit." quid apertius? et tamen illi surgebant cristae. nihil est quod credere de se non possit cum laudatur dis aequa potestas*.' cf. Mart. 13.91; Sen. *Ep*. 95.42, for more fish stories. cf. Courtney (2013) 168 and Chapter 3.4 below.
[82] Roman Satire provides an interesting case for its ambiguity. The method of its mockery is taken from the free speech (*parrhēsia*) of the Cynic, a person who assumes a low role to take jocular poses against those more powerful. However, it is argued by both Braund and Plaza that satire should not be read as subversive, but as buttressing the regime: 'Contrary to first appearances, Roman satire on political subjects affirms rather than challenges the status quo and buttresses the present regime' (Braund (1993) 67; cf. Plaza (2006) 54-56; cf. Ruffel (2003) 44). I do not dispute this astute point, but rather point to this world of discourse that satire is involved, criticising and making fun of emperors, utilising techniques seen as 'from below', requires further comment, particularly from the perspective that many actors in these forward and unbridled stories are from lower down the social scale (cf. Beard (2014) 135-136). This will be discussed in further detail below, Chapter 3.5.
[83] Millar (1992) 4; Saller (1980) 73; Champlin (2008) 414.
[84] Saller (1980) 82.

these stories, and also the context within the narrative as a whole. Nonetheless, they point to a fascination of how the emperor seemed.

As a final example, this mutual curiosity has been described by Wintrobe as the Dictator's Dilemma, which involves the problem faced by those in absolute power, the inability to know the minds of their subjects: [85]

> The dilemma is… a paradox: As the dictator's power over his or her subjects increases, his or her problem appears to become larger. The more threatened they are by the ruler, the more the subjects will be afraid to speak ill of or to do anything which might conceivably displease him or her… The greater the dictator's power, the more reason he or she has to be afraid… The problem is *two-sided*… As much as dictators want to be loved, the subjects want them to believe that they are loved, for only then are the people safe from them. If they can make their dictator believe that they truly worship (or even that they support) him or her, then he or she need not fear them; and if in turn the ruler does not fear them, they need not fear him or her.[86]

This paradox reveals the similar issue that Scott discussed in his system of different transcripts, as discussed above.[87] It points to an elaborate game that involved emperor and subject, entailing the discourse that existed between and about them. It also finds a direct parallel in the appearance of emperors and potential heirs going incognito; dressing up to find out what others truly think about them, such as Germanicus did amongst his troops in Germany.[88] Accordingly, smoke and mirrors are a part of the discourse, heightening the probability of maskings and falsehoods. It reveals a danger in such discourse, with the possibility of it being fatal to both sides. It also suggests an interesting power dynamic, which subordinates Wintrobe's 'dictator' by the fear of negative opinion being held by his subjects. This rejigs the nature of absolute power, revealing the precariousness of

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[85] See Wintrobe (1998) 20-2; cf. Back (1988) 283; cf. similar point in Chapter 2.1.

[86] Wintrobe (1998) 22. See Morgan (2015) 86-89 for a similar discussion on the difficulty of building 'trust' in relationships between ruler and ruled, in understandings of both 'good' kingship and tyranny, with a particular citation of a negative example in Seneca's *De Clementia*, 1.26.1: '*aliquando sua praesidia in ipsos consurrexerunt perfidiamque et impietatem et feritatem et quidquid ab illis didicerant in ipsos exercuerunt. quid enim potest quisquam ab eo sperare quem malum esse docuit*.' Also compare with Ibid., 1.26.2, and the trepidation of the people once cruelty has taken its toll.

[87] See above, 80-81

[88] Tac. *Ann*. 2.13; cf. Suet. *Ner*. 26, Dio 61.9.2, and Plin. *NH*. 13.126 for evidence of Nero's masquerading, and Dio 54.35.3 for Augustus'. cf. Jasnow (2015) 313-331 for analysis.

being a ruler, and giving his subjects the ability to criticise him (albeit a dangerous one). In this sense, it is a marrying between Scott's paradigm of a hidden transcript and Flaig's *Akzeptanz* thesis, in that there was an importance placed on how the emperor was perceived. However, one should not place this in a totalitarian framework, with binary oppositions between the benevolent and tyrannical, or the good and bad.[89] Rather, it reveals a spectrum of opinion that constantly scrutinised and criticised the emperor for his conduct, which in turn shows a deep curiosity in his position in the world. This phenomenon as present in the Roman world is essential to the success of this study, as it reveals a transcript of criticism that existed, and recorded the reception of an emperor from the perspective of his subjects.

This section has hopefully shown the problems and difficulties of the evidence, and the utility of using conceptual frameworks with which a wider perspective could be gleaned from our evidence. In the end, caution should be advised: attention to context will be appreciated first before historical analysis that points to the potential 'reality' of the discourse behind the stories of a wider population and the *princeps*. Nonetheless, the many interactions between the emperor and the wider population in text are numerous and will be tackled in the subsequent chapters. Next, there will be an exploration of how authors explore the relationship between emperor and the people in narratives, with a particular look at AD 69 and the parallel accounts of Tacitus and Plutarch. Hopefully this will be an interesting exposition of the interaction between emperor and people in the literary evidence, which will point to the world of discourse on the subject of emperor.

[89] A further discussion on this categorisation of the emperors will be undertaken below in Chapter 3. See Champlin (2008) 408-425 for a successful problematisation of the received impression of Tiberius as a 'bad' emperor.

2.3: Historical Narratives of Emperor and People

The purpose of this short section is to explore the interaction between groups of people and the emperor in ancient historical narrative, with the appreciation of the methodological issues outlined above.[1] The focus here is to exhibit the usefulness of this sort of analysis in order to appreciate the discourse concerning the Roman emperor, particularly with regard to his conduct towards his subjects.[2] With this in mind, the concentration will centre on Plutarch and Tacitus' parallel accounts of A.D. 69 and their interest in the interactions between large groups of people, be it a military contingent, or a civilian crowd, and the emperor. The discussion will include their depiction and characterisation, with the goal being to explore the substance of talk about the emperor, concentrating potential discrepancies that could point to a wider thought-world about the *princeps*.

Plutarch's account of the tumultuous civil war of A.D. 69, appearing in the only extant biographies of *Galba* and *Otho* that formed a part of the larger *Lives of the Caesars*, has been understudied and often derided.[3] These *Lives* have puzzled scholars for their style and content,[4] and they have been criticised for not having the same impact and aesthetic excellence as Tacitus' account in the *Histories*, or in comparison to his own *Parallel Lives*. For example, as Pelling put it when comparing their respective eulogies of Galba: 'it is easy – and right – to praise Tacitus for his greater epigrammatic force and bite.'[5] These criticisms aside, or perhaps because of them, the *Galba* and *Otho* have both

[1] See above, Chapter 2.2: Compare with work on crowds/collective forces, and leaders in narrative: Ash (1999); O'Gorman (2000) 49-55; Pelling (2002) 207-226, 242-242; Saïd (2004) 7-25; Hardie (2010) 9-27
[2] This is a comparable exercise in a more historiographical sense with the analysis undertaken concerning the emperor's timelessness in Chapter 4.2.
[3] Note Morgan (2006) 286 for his description of Plutarch's account as sausage meat.
[4] Syme (1980) 104-105: Syme called them 'sliced up narrative history': cf. Morgan (2006) repeats this Symian dictum thrice in his appendices (272, 285, 286). See Ash (1997) 189 for the scholarly criticism of omitting childhood stories of both emperors compared to Suetonius' account.
[5] Pelling (2010b) 423.

been largely neglected, and the more recent studies on them have concentrated largely on literary characteristics of the texts, such as Plutarch's use of Platonic philosophy,[6] his narrative structure,[7] and his characterisations of the main protagonists.[8] Their work is particularly important to the following analysis, especially their interest in Plutarch's depiction of collective forces and their relationship to the emperors. Hopefully, this can help our understanding of the relevant historical context, which in turn can provide a Plutarchan perspective of the thought-world of the Roman emperor.

In the *proemium* of the *Galba*, which served as the prologue to both extant lives,[9] Plutarch uses historical fact and philosophical authority to argue that military forces, if unsound and disunited, would be uncontrollable and given to irrationality, even if there was a good leader at the helm:

> ὁ δὲ Πλάτων, οὐδὲν ἔργον ὁρῶν ἄρχοντος ἀγαθοῦ καὶ στρατηγοῦ στρατιᾶς μὴ σωφρονούσης μηδὲ ὁμοπαθούσης, ἀλλὰ τὴν πειθαρχικὴν ἀρετὴν ὁμοίως τῇ βασιλικῇ νομίζων φύσεώς τε γενναίας καὶ τροφῆς φιλοσόφου δεῖσθαι, μάλιστα τῷ πρᾴῳ καὶ φιλανθρώπῳ τὸ θυμοειδὲς καὶ δραστήριον ἐμμελῶς ἀνακεραννυμένης, ἄλλα τε πάθη πολλὰ καὶ τὰ Ῥωμαίοις συμπεσόντα μετὰ τὴν Νέρωνος τελευτὴν ἔχει μαρτύρια καὶ παραδείγματα τοῦ μηδὲν εἶναι φοβερώτερον ἀπαιδεύτοις χρωμένης καὶ ἀλόγοις ὁρμαῖς ἐν ἡγεμονίᾳ στρατιωτικῆς δυνάμεως.[10]

The Platonic argument outlined by Plutarch in this segment is complex, particularly since it rests on a delicate balance in the relationship between leader and troops: for the virtues of the leader to be fully appreciated, the army had to be under control (σωφρονούσης… ὁμοπαθούσης), which was based on their obedience (τὴν πειθαρχικὴν ἀρετὴν) which, like kingship, harmoniously combined the passionate and the active with gentleness and humanity. This is an interesting passage, which can easily go unnoticed in the shade of

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[6] Ash (1997) 192-196.
[7] Georgiadou (1988) 349-356.
[8] Keitel (1995) 275-284.
[9] Bowersock (1998) 204. This is confirmed by the quite abrupt beginning to *Otho* (Ὁ δὲ νεώτερος αὐτοκράτωρ ἅμ' ἡμέρᾳ προελθὼν εἰς τὸ Καπιτώλιον ἔθυσε· Plut. *Otho* 1.1). cf. Georgiadou (1988) 351-352 for their connectivity.
[10] Plut. *Gal*. 1.3-4.

the following line, which describes the frightfulness of the 'uneducated and irrational impulses' of an uncontrolled soldiery. If this final phrase in the quotation is taken as absolute, then the nuance in Plutarch's argument is diminished: the precariousness of a symbiotic relationship is not necessarily a polarised one between the rational leader and the irrational group. Rather, there is a tension of rationality within the leader and the soldiery, both separately and when conjoined in a system, which can easily be disrupted. In other words, the irrationality of the soldiery is not inevitable, but is rather predicated on the ability of the 'head' to control the 'body'.[11]

The use of such terms highlights the weight of Platonic philosophy contained in this passage, and the *Galba* and *Otho* in general. First, the relevant concordance in Plato seems to come from the *Republic* at 375c-e.[12] This part of the dialogue discusses the precarious balance between the gentle and the spirited in the soul, without which a good guardian is not possible, despite the opposition of these traits:

> Τί οὖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ποιήσομεν; πόθεν ἅμα πρᾷον καὶ μεγαλόθυμον ἦθος εὑρήσομεν; ἐναντία γάρ που θυμοειδεῖ πρᾳεῖα φύσις… Ἀλλὰ μέντοι τούτων γε ὁποτέρου ἂν στέρηται, φύλαξ ἀγαθὸς οὐ μὴ γένηται· ταῦτα δὲ ἀδυνάτοις ἔοικεν, καὶ οὕτω δὴ συμβαίνει ἀγαθὸν φύλακα ἀδύνατον γενέσθαι. [13]

The use of similar terminology (θυμοειδὲς and πρᾷος) and a similar tension between parts, with their difficult reconciliation being necessary for functionality, mirrors the delicate mix of Plutarch's passage above.[14]

Second, Platonic imagery extrapolates the tension within to a macro level between groups of people, which involves the description of collectives as the irrational segment

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[11] For analysis on the headless imagery that runs throughout these biographies, see Ash (1997) 196-200, and Plutarch himself, Plut. *Gal*. 4.5: 'ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ λαμπρῶς τὸν πόλεμον ἐκφήνας ὁ Οὐίνδιξ ἔγραψε τῷ Γάλβᾳ παρακαλῶν ἀναδέξασθαι τὴν ἡγεμονίαν καὶ παρασχεῖν ἑαυτὸν ἰσχυρῷ σώματι ζητοῦντι κεφαλήν…'

[12] Cited by Ash (1997) 193, 207 n. 16 and Pelling (2010b) 419.

[13] Pl. *Resp*. 375c-d.

[14] Ash (1997) 193: The Platonic importance of balance in the soul is again seen in a related section at Pl. *Resp*. 410e.

of society. In a paper concerning the representation of the masses in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives,* Saïd argues that Plutarch's ideas on masses were influenced by the *Republic*, which compares the three parts of the soul, with the three parts of society, with the *demos* being:

> ἀλογιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν, "the irrational appetitive part" (439d), "which is the largest in each person's soul and is by nature most insatiable of money" (ὃ δὴ πλεῖστον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἐστὶ καὶ χρημάτων φύσει ἀπληστότατον, 442a). Accordingly, the "huge strong beast" (θρέμματος μεγάλου καὶ ἰσχυροῦ), which represents the people in book 6 is given to "violent emotions and desires" (τὰς ὀργάς… καὶ ἐπιθυμίας, 493a-b).[15]

Third, these Platonic representations of the people abound in Plutarch. Saïd has collated the terms in the *Parallel Lives* used to describe the people, which include words such as οἱ πολλοί, πλῆθος, ὄχλος, δῆμος, including the number of occurrences of each word.[16] Of interest are the adjectives used to describe them, which mostly seem quite pejorative. For instance, throughout the *Parallel Lives*, the people are called the following: lazy, ignorant, overconfident, insolent, violent, disorderly, loud and useless.[17] Moreover, bestial imagery can be observed in the *Moralia*, with examples from the *Praecepta Gerendae Rei Publicae* 800c (ὥσπερ θηρίον ὕποπτον καὶ ποικίλον) and 802d-e (δημαγωγία γὰρ ἡ διὰ λόγου πειθόντων ἐστίν, αἱ δὲ τοιαῦται τιθασεύσεις τῶν ὄχλων οὐδὲν ἀλόγων ζῴων ἄγρας καὶ βουκολήσεως διαφέρουσιν).[18] Furthermore, Rhiannon Ash has shown this to have resonance in the extant emperor biographies themselves, not only including the passage above quoted (*Galba* 1) but bringing in different parts of the narrative to argue the importance of the 'collective

[15] Said (2004) 14.
[16] Saïd (2004) 9ff for the relevant citations in Plutarch's works.
[17] Saïd (2004) 10 (all citations refer to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: ἀργός or σχολαστής (*Per.* 11.6; *Sol.* 22.3), ἀμαθεῖς (*Sol.* 5.6), θρασύτης or θρασύνεσθαι (*Lyc.* 2.5; *Sol.* 19.1; *Cor.* 5.4*)*, ὕβρις or ὑβρίζειν (Ibid., *Cam.* 12.4, *Cor.* 5.4, 23.6, *Lyc.* 5.2), βία (*Cam.* 39.4), κόσμον οὐκ ἐχούσης or ἀσύκτατον (*Pyrrh.* 13.7; *Per.* 12.5), πλῆθος ἄπορον καὶ θορυβοποιόν (*Mar.* 28.7), and ἄχρηστος (*Sert.* 13.9-10; *Pomp.* 28.1). See de Blois (1992) 4578-4599 for the elision of different types of crowds in Plutarch, notably the *demos* and the soldiery.
[18] Compare with other bestial images alluded to in Said (2004) 21, in particular, Plut. *Mor.* 821B.

forces' in the descent into chaos.[19] The uncontrollability is highlighted with the simile of the charioteer that has lost control of the reins at *Galba* 6.4:

> ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ Οὐεργινίου καὶ Οὐίνδικος στρατεύματα τρόπον τινὰ βίᾳ τοὺς ἡγεμόνας, ὥσπερ τοὺς ἡνιόχους κρατῆσαι χαλινῶν μὴ δυνηθέντας, εἰς μάχην ἐξενεγκόντα μεγάλην συνέρραξαν…

This is equated with the similar language found in Plato's *Phaedrus* 253-4, where 'the soul is divided into three forms, two of which are like horses while the third has the role of the charioteer', with the latter having to restrain the 'horse' given over to passion.[20] Such is the argument of the literary depiction of the military and the *demos* in Plutarch, both described in similar ways as a large group of people,[21] and the importance to the structure of the narrative in *Galba* and *Otho*.[22]

It is precisely this curiosity in the actions and words of the 'collective forces' towards the emperor and vice versa that makes this an interesting historical source to engage with. Take for instance the episode mentioned above in Chapter 1.3.3, which depicted the armies in Germania Superior questioning the acceptance of Galba:

> καί ποτε θέας οὔσης, καὶ τῶν χιλιάρχων καὶ λοχαγῶν τὸ ῾Ρωμαίοις σύνηθες εὐτυχίαν ἐπευχομένων τῷ αὐτοκράτορι Γάλβᾳ, διεθορύβησαν οἱ πολλοὶ τὸ πρῶτον, εἶτα ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἐπιμενόντων ἐκείνων ἀντεφώνουν "εἰ ἄξιος."[23]

Within the context of a growing discontent at Galba's principate,[24] Plutarch tells us about how a seemingly routine exercise of wishing health and happiness to the emperor Galba

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[19] Ash (1997) 192-196

[20] Ibid., 193, quoting Pl. *Phdr*. 254e: 'ὁ δ'ἡνίοχος ἔτι μᾶλλον ταὐτὸν πάθος παθών, ὥσπερ ἀπὸ ὕσπληγος ἀναπεσών, ἔτι μᾶλλον τοῦ ὑβριστοῦ ἵππου ἐκ τῶν ὀδόντων βίᾳ ὀπίσω σπάσας τὸν χαλινόν, τήν τε κακηγόρον γλῶτταν καὶ τὰς γνάθους καθήμαξεν καὶ τὰ σκέλη τε καὶ τὰ ἰσχία πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἐρείσας ὀδύναις ἔδωκεν. ὅταν δὲ ταὐτὸν πολλάκις πάσχων ὁ πονηρὸς τῆς ὕβρεως λήξῃ, ταπεινωθεὶς ἔπεται ἤδη τῇ τοῦ ἡνιόχου προνοίᾳ, καὶ ὅταν ἴδῃ τὸν καλόν, φόβῳ διόλλυται· ὥστε συμβαίνει τότ' ἤδη τὴν τοῦ ἐραστοῦ ψυχὴν τοῖς παιδικοῖς αἰδουμένην τε καὶ δεδιυῖαν ἔπεσθαι.' The similie should not detract from the similarity of themes discussed above in Plutarch's prologue to the biographies, namely about the instilling of obedience and the importance of control.

[21] De Blois (1992) 4599.

[22] For more interesting work done in this vein, see Godolphin (1935) 324-328; Keitel (1995) 275-288; Ash (1997) 189-204; Pelling (2010b) 417ff.

[23] Plut. *Gal*. 18.9.

[24] Ibid., 17-18, concentrating on Galba's age and his parsimony. cf. Suet. *Gal*. 12.3-13.1, with the Atellan farce verse, *venit Onesimus a villa*, supposedly referring to his stinginess. cf. ὀνήσιμος, meaning useful or beneficial. Irony? See below, Chapter 3.2. in the topic of generosity.

turned sour, where the soldiers at first expressed their discontent, and thereafter would only reply 'if he is worthy' at the persistent entreaties of the tribunes and centurions. It could perhaps be listed as consistent with other parts of the biography depicting the insubordination of a collective of troops. However, the description of noise and reply adds a different texture and dimension.[25] The multitude at first make a great noise, and then reply 'εἰ ἄξιος' to those waiting to hear the customary *vota*. Responding with the idea of worthiness evokes the process of acceptance to which the emperor was subject.[26] Furthermore, it is unclear from this evidence that these troops fit into the construction of the 'collective forces' as argued by Ash. With an analysis predicated on the irrational and bestial, and the total uncontrollability of the soldiery, then it would follow that entreaties to worthiness of an emperor would be drowned out with disorderly actions. However, this is not the case. It suggests that despite arguments for rhetoric and literary allusion obscuring the historical picture, the heterogeneity of the historical material allows for a more nuanced understanding of collective responses to the emperor; namely those including *verbal* reactions.[27] In this case, the repetition of 'if he is worthy' places an importance on the reactionary aspect of Roman politics, and the place of acclamation.[28] As argued by Campbell on a different, but related, matter:

> The political importance of acclamation is highlighted by the fact that from the time of Gaius emperors apparently considered their acceptance by the army as their first salutation. Indeed from this time part of the accession ceremony of a new emperor was perhaps carried out in the form of an acclamation.[29]

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[25] cf. Saïd (2005) 10: cf. θορυβοποιόν in 97, n. 17 above.
[26] See Chapter 1.2.2 for the discussion on acceptance.
[27] Compare with *Galba* 1.2, where Plutarch's description of an unruly band of soldiers uses words 'λαλιᾶς καὶ περιεργίας', which is not necessary the image one gets from irrational beasts. They respectively mean talk (or chatter) and *curiosity*. It is the substance of chatter and curiosity that is the subject of Chapter 3.5. I owe this point to my supervisor, Nicholas Purcell. cf. Leigh (2013) on this subject in general.
[28] Both Roueché (1984) 181-184 and Aldrete (1999) 87-91 argue for the value of acclamation as a manner of response to the emperor. Further, Aldrete argues for the importance of gesture as well: Aldrete (1999) 90: 'In these circumstances, however, gestures were not a one-way form of communication, but were employed as part of a truly interactive dialogue between ruler and ruled… public rituals, and particularly entertainments, were approved settings for the people to make known their opinions to the emperor on a variety of subjects.'
[29] Cambpell (1984) 126-127.

The episode in Plutarch suggests that this acceptance was reviewed regularly, and could be lost. In the end, it should not detract from Plutarch's thesis discussed above, which is more nuanced than a monolithic treatment of 'collective forces' acting as irrational beasts.

The question then concerns the criteria of worthiness, and whether or not nuance can be extrapolated from the evidence at hand.[30] Further thematic discussions on *congiaria*, donatives and generosity follows below, but the attestations of wishes for monetary gain in the biographies would suggest that the ability of an emperor to give was one of these criteria:[31]

> ἐπεὶ δὲ μεμφομένους ἀκούσας ἀφῆκε φωνὴν ἡγεμόνι μεγάλῳ πρέπουσαν, εἰπὼν εἰωθέναι καταλέγειν στρατιώτας, οὐκ ἀγοράζειν, πυθομένοις τοῦτο δεινὸν εἰσῆλθε μῖσος καὶ ἄγριον πρὸς αὐτόν.[32]

Galba's aphorism that he would not buy the soldiers is met with hatred and savage feelings, exhibiting a quality of a leader that Plutarch commends. This is consistent with both the bestial representation of the troops and Plutarch's criticism of demagoguery (Plut. *Mor.* 802d-e). It also seemingly creates a comfortable dichotomy between an "elite" and "common soldier" perspective, crudely being that the former opposes giving gifts for demagoguery, while the latter approves. This would be too simplistic.[33] For perspective, one can look to the *Life of Otho* and the aftermath of his death:

> ἀραμένων δὲ τῶν παίδων οἰμωγὴν, εὐθὺς ἅπαν τὸ στρατόπεδον καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐπεῖχε κλαυθμός· καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται μετὰ βοῆς εἰσέπεσον ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας καὶ ὠλοφύροντο, περιπαθοῦντες καὶ λοιδοροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς, μὴ φυλάξαντας τὸν αὐτοκράτορα μηδὲ κωλύσαντας ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. ἀπέστη δὲ οὐδεὶς, τῶν κατ' αὐτόν, ἐγγὺς ὄντων τῶν πολεμίων, ἀλλὰ κοσμήσαντες τὸ σῶμα καὶ πυρὰν κατασκευάσαντες, ἐξεκόμιζον ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις οἱ φθάσαντες ὑποδῦναι καὶ βαστάσαι τὸ λέχος ἐπιγαυρούμενοι. τῶν δὲ ἄλλων οἱ μὲν τὸ τραῦμα τοῦ νεκροῦ κατεφίλουν προσπίπτοντες, οἱ δὲ ἥπτοντο τῶν χειρῶν, οἱ δὲ προσεκύνουν πόρρωθεν. ἔνιοι δὲ τῇ πυρᾷ λαμπάδας ὑφέντες, ἑαυτοὺς ἀπέσφαξαν, οὐδὲν ἐκδήλως οὔτε πεπονθότες χρηστὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ τεθνηκότος, οὔτε πείσεσθαι δεινὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ κρατοῦντος δεδιότες. ἀλλ' ἔοικε μηδενὶ τῶν

[30] More on this in the thematic approach in the following section, Chapter 3.1.
[31] See Plut. *Gal.* 17, 18; Plut. *Otho* 3. See Chapter 3.3 for a discussion on generosity.
[32] Plut. *Gal.* 18.4.
[33] cf. above on this dichotomy, Chapter 2.2.

> πώποτε τυράννων ἢ βασιλέων δεινὸς οὕτως ἔρως ἐγγενέσθαι καὶ περιμανὴς τοῦ ἄρχειν, ὡς ἐκεῖνοι τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ὑπακούειν Ὄθωνος ἠράσθησαν·[34]

The wails and shouts of the people and the soldiers, accompanied by their lamentation and preparation for the funeral, kissing, touching and prostrating before the body. These emotional scenes are incongruous to the idea of a mob motivated solely by monetary gain. The emotionality could fit into the theme of irrationality, however, the reported devotion of these people toward Otho shown by action and voice, allows for a more complicated view of their opinions, potentially revealing the in turn complicated nature of the perception of an emperor from the perspective of his subjects.[35]

In contrast to Plutarch, Tacitus has been commended for his variegated interpretation of the very same collective forces.[36] As Ash argues for Tacitus' description of the feared mutiny against Otho at *Histories* 1.80-82, as compared to Plutarch's version in *Otho* 3:

> the fragmentation is striking… the soldiers act together, but Tacitus allows his audience to see the diverging motives which lie behind this apparently unified collective movement. By contrast, Plutarch restricts himself to external focalisation, which draws a veil over the soldiers' different motives.[37]

The passage in question is as follows:

> septimam decimam cohortem e colonia Ostiensi in urbem acciri Otho iusserat; armandae eius cura Vario Crispino tribuno e praetorianis data. is quo magis vacuus quietis castris iussa exequeretur, vehicula cohortis incipiente nocte onerari aperto armamentario iubet. tempus in suspicionem, causa in crimen, adfectatio quietis in tumultum evaluit, et visa inter temulentos arma cupidinem sui movere. fremit miles et tribunos centurionesque proditionis arguit, tamquam familiae senatorum ad perniciem Othonis armarentur, pars ignari et vino graves, pessimus quisque in occasionem praedarum, vulgus, ut mos est, cuiuscumque motus novi cupidum; et obsequia meliorum nox abstulerat. resistentem seditioni tribunum et severissimos

[34] Plut. *Otho* 17.6-11.
[35] Perhaps there is a connection in other expressions of grief at the loss of the potential future of an emperor, as seen at the death of Germanicus in Tacitus, or the grief of the city after the *lugubri prospectu* of Galba's death. see Tac. *Hist*. 1.40, 50, or the funeral of Pertinax in Dio 75(74). 4-5, These narratives of fear of the future is discussed further in Chapter 4.3.
[36] Notably Ash (1999) *passim* for arguing this. However, Tacitus is also noted for his derogatory terms for the mob, such as Tac. *Hist*. 1.32.1, where the clamour for the death of Otho is interpreted as *adulatio*, and the famous *plebs sordida* at Tac. *Hist*. 1.4.3.
[37] Ash (1999) 27.

centurionum obtruncant; rapta arma, nudati gladii; insidentes equis urbem ac Palatium petunt.[38]

The noise aspect reveals itself again in Tacitus' use of language–*fremit,* adding the dimension of the soldiers howling and sharply accusing the actions of their superiors. Ash's phrasing rests upon Tacitus' rhetorical and epigrammatic force of showing the different motives of the soldiers in question, to accentuate the chaos of the civil war. This historiographical point is interesting, but what is the historical significance of these differing motives attested by Tacitus of the troops for taking up arms and rushing to the Palatine to protect Otho? Four reasons seem to be provided: the first (and main one) being the fear of the treachery of their superiors; the second, ignorance and wine making them follow aimlessly; the third, looking for their opportunity to loot, the fourth, as is accustomed with a mob, desiring something new, often translated into English as revolution, with the night carrying away the loyalty of the 'better' section of the soldiery. It would be unsatisfactory to categorise these explanations as stereotypical biases of an "elite" perspective, for unrest of this sort could happen for various reasons.[39] Despite the rash action and emotion, different reasons for their actions are provided, working against a monolithic understanding of their motives and opinions. It thus gives us a potential range of indifference to devotion towards the emperor.

Tensions in these historical texts allow for the potential to glean discourses about the emperor from a wider perspective, which involves the conversation of acceptance, in turn cedes to an ancient thought-world about the Roman emperor. It must be stated that truth and fact were not the goals of this exercise *per se*: conversations about the emperor need not to have been true to have had an impact on the historical, social and cultural

[38] Tac. *Hist*. 1.80.

[39] The contradictions in a sense make it plausible: even if the mob, desiring something new, mobilised to then go and protect the sitting emperor. Compare with the reactions of the soldiers after the incident at Tac. *Hist*. 1.82.3: '*sensit invidiam miles et compositus in obsequium auctores seditionis ad supplicium ultro postulabat*.' This can be compared to the soldiers' obedience at the death of Otho

context of the Roman empire. Once rumour and stories promulgate, they become historical entities in their own right, revealing the reception of an emperor in the Roman world. It is this ancient thought-world that is being suggested in these historical narratives. The interest in our ancient sources to depict and record occurrences, sayings and interactions between the emperor and wider society reveals a curiosity about how the emperor seemed.

This curiosity is the subject of the following chapter, which involves a more thematic approach of the evidence in question. This includes anecdotes and stories of interactions between the emperor and people of humbler backgrounds, split roughly along 'topics of discussion' such as justice, emperors and *mirabilia*, generosity, wisdom and wit, and hopes and desires. This list should not be interpreted as an encyclopaedia of "what the subjects of the Roman empire actually thought about their emperor", but an account of situations where emperor and people came into contact with each other, revealing the mentalities of these episodes of interaction.

Chapter 3: Topics of Discussion

3.1: Introduction

> Considera igitur an in hac secunda ratione officiorum contineatur eloquentiae studium. Nam Caesarum est in senatu quae e re sunt suadere, populum de plerisque negotiis in concione appellare, ius iniustum corrigere, per orbem terrae litteras missitare, reges exterarum gentium compellare, sociorum culpas edictis coercere, benefacta laudare, seditiosos compescere, feroces territare.[1]

In an illuminating section of Fronto's letters–dubbed *de eloquentia*–the famous teacher and friend of the emperor Marcus Aurelius lists the different duties of a Roman emperor. The passage, and indeed the letter as a whole, is geared towards persuading Marcus Aurelius on the importance of excellent rhetorical skills. In other words, how to persuade effectively in order to govern smoothly.[2] Fronto's list of duties is one of great importance in the understanding of the role of the Roman emperor. Alongside things that one would expect such as ways to persuade the senate, ways to address the people, ways to deal with foreign kings, responding to queries and letters of provincials, aspects that form an essential part of Millar's understanding of the 'Emperor at Work',[3] there is also great importance placed on how the Roman emperor should be projected. Images of responsiveness, accessibility, and justice are all alluded to here.[4] Furthermore, there seems to be a tension in the passage between these duties of the emperor, in particular between those of response and suggestion, and those of force and compulsion. One phrase has particular resonance in these lines–*Feroces territare*–which means to frighten the savage; a reference perhaps to the martial role of the emperor, and the suppression of revolt and resistance both within and outside the empire. It does seem to intensify other

[1] Fronto, *ad M. Antoninum de eloquentia* 2.6; the cited text is from the more recent 1988 Teubner edition of M.P.J Van Den Hout (p. 139 Naber; Haines (Loeb) II 58).
[2] Millar (1992) 203-4 on the importance of the emperor's eloquence; Champlin (1980) 123 for the context of this passage, and other relevant concordances in other parts of Fronto's correspondence. cf. Ibid., 127, esp. Fronto, *Ep. Ver. Imp.* 2.1.9 (Naber, p. 119; Haines (Loeb) II 136)
[3] Millar (1992) 203. Millar uses the passage as a springboard to his argument about the day to day functions of the emperor, involving ability with oratory (204-207), writing of pronouncements and correspondence (207-209), and discussions of evidence on the emperor's daily schedule (209-212).
[4] These indeed correspond to some of the 'Topics of Discussion' about the emperor in this chapter.

clauses in the passage, particularly *reges exterarum genitum compellare, sociorum culpas edictis coercere* and *seditiosos compescere*. To have *benefacta laudare* sandwiched in between these more harrowing images of the emperor should draw attention to the juxtapositions of these quite different duties, and thus the difficulty of maintaining an equilibrium between the variant potential images of the Roman emperor.

Numerous images spring to mind, some of which were discussed in the previous sections with Plutarch's Platonic images of the army in civil war.[5] Moreover, the coin legends and reliefs that depict subjugated personifications of nations and their counterparts in art and architecture as seen at the *Sebasteion* at Aphrodisias.[6] There is a certain uneasiness between this image of a terrifying emperor, the man with whom you could not be candid lest he unleashes his many legions,[7] and the benevolent harbinger of peace to the Roman world.[8] It points to a schizophrenic mentality about the emperor, who is simultaneously different things to different people, and also an attempted reconciliation of inherent antitheses. This was seen in Chapter 1 concerning the nature of his power and of succession, and it is true of his reception within his reign. Nonetheless, we should always take care to appreciate these different images of emperors and not try to stress one over the other: they rather make a *mélange* that forms the substance of how the emperor was perceived by his subjects. In this chapter, an exposé of these different strands, pointing to the varying *mentalités* of the emperor, will be attempted.[9]

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[5] See above, Chapter 2.3.

[6] See Goodman (1991) 237 for speculation on the power of these images on numismatic circulation: reminders of the example made of Judaea (for example: *RIC* 159). Smith (1988) 50-77 for the *Sebasteion* at Aphrodisias.

[7] SHA, *Hadrian* 15.12-13: '*et Favorinus quidem, cum verbum eius quondam ab Hadriano reprehensum esset, atque ille cessisset, arguentibus amicis, quod male cederet Hadriano de verbo, quod idonei auctores usurpassent, risum iocundissimum movit. ait enim: "Non recte suadetis, familiares, qui non patimini me illum doctiorem omnibus credere, qui habet triginta legione*s."'

[8] See further, Chapter 3.6. cf. Lendon (1997) 114-115 for this balancing act.

[9] See above, Chapter 2.2 for a deeper discussion on the problems of interpretation that are raised with this question.

However, there is a danger to fall into comfortable categories, which in this case is the discussion of a 'canon of virtues'. It has been contested that a 'canon' exists, or that a defined set of virtues were outlined for each emperor. Indeed, this has been done effectively by Wallace-Hadrill over thirty years ago, when he showed that there was no consistent set of virtuous terms that were promulgated, were not necessarily equal to the ἀρεταί of Greek philosophical precedent, and often changed as the Roman principate progressed deeper into our era.[10] Wallace-Hadrill went further and saw a tension between different modes of understanding an emperor's virtues, which would only be elided and distorted by a strict reliance on a canonic view of a set of particular virtues. For him, this was between the Greek philosophical reflections on what constituted the duties of a good man, or king; the opinions and thoughts of the aristocracy, which involved their wishes to pressurise the emperor to conform to a behaviour conducive to their interests; and the promulgation of virtues on imperial media such as coinage. His solution was to appreciate the contexts of the evidence, in the 'way that individual sources adapt general assumptions that the ruler should be virtuous to their own purposes.'[11] This meant that the choice of criteria that would have created an 'ideal-type' of emperor would necessarily be dependent on context and agenda, suggesting that any overt concentration on a single virtue, or 'canon' of virtues, would omit important facets in the understanding of the Roman emperor. Thus, we move away from a singular 'ideal' type of ruler, and towards a dialogue of different understandings of the emperor throughout his reign, and importantly one that acknowledges the thoughts and opinions of a wider population. This point is a departure from Wallace-Hadrill's argument, which concentrated on the dialectic between Greek philosophy, the aristocratic elite, and official media.[12]

[10] For the discussion on this see, Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 299-319; cf. Ryberg, I. S. (1966) 238, and Weinstock (1971) 228-259 on the *clupeus virtutis*.
[11] Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 318.
[12] Ibid., 298-323.

In a similar vein, more recent work by Carlos Noreña has shown the wide variety of these terms that appear in different media from the ancient world; including literature, panegyric, inscriptions, and coinage.[13] However, Noreña's interest lies in the construction of an ethical profile of the Roman emperor, which is a looser taxonomy than a "canon of virtues", yet it is closer to a model than Wallace-Hadrill's conception.[14] For him, the concentration on virtues highlighted a shift in political discourse: from the discussion of the merits of different forms of government towards the discussion of 'the personal character of the reigning emperor', which manifested in discussion of the 'myriad of virtues and vices attributed to real emperors and imagined monarchs.'[15] Accordingly, a 'normative framework in which emperors operated' was created from this, producing a 'real-world model of behaviour for emperors to follow.'[16] Noreña goes further and argues that the emperor knew exactly what was expected from him, as the ideology and the public discourse on virtues justified and propped up the imperial system.[17] It seems that Noreña's goal was to chart and understand the virtues that were seen as important to the imperial regime itself. In other words, these were the terms that were most used by the government in the projections of its power, which conglomerated to form a 'coherent semantic and ideological system'.[18]

There are several points of potential discussion from Noreña's arguments. To start with the last point, there is no real issue in attempting to create an idea of policy or agency in the dissemination of images and ideals from the part of the Roman government.[19] However, as Wallace-Hadrill's work has shown, the difficulty then becomes how to

[13] Noreña (2001) 146-168; Noreña (2011).
[14] Noreña (2011) 55-62.
[15] Ibid., 56.
[16] Ibid., 56-57.
[17] Ibid., 56-57, 318-320 for further discussion on this argument by Noreña.
[18] Ibid., 57; cf. Ibid., 59 on coinage's ability to reconstruct his official 'taxonomy of imperial character', from the perspective of the regime itself.
[19] See Zanker (1988) as another example for his attempt at looking at the Augustan regime in this light.

understand the evidence in different areas of the political discourse. What is seen as essential to the concept of the emperor's virtues in one medium does not necessarily translate to another context. Thus, there can be danger in any exercise that attempts to construct a hold-all semantic system, or a single normative framework within which the emperor was understood and perceived.[20] It must be stated Noreña's primary goal was first to observe a centralised projection of power, and how it was received and re-projected by the provincial aristocracy in the Roman west.[21] This is different from the goal here, which is to explore an understanding of the emperor from a wider perspective, meaning that a more fluid understanding of the reception of the Roman emperor is required. Convergence in parameters and thought comes in the argument that the emperor was the resonant symbol that was shared empire-wide, the universalising factor in the interactions between Roman power and the provinces.[22] However, this does not mean that there was one set of rules, or one set of virtues, or one conversation, about what it meant to be the Roman emperor. This is too restrictive a view of a dialogue between subject and ruler on the ideals and realities of the autocratic emperorship.

Furthermore, there is a tension between the ideal and reality that is not fully appreciated in Noreña's model. The above statement about the 'real emperors' and 'imagined monarchs' is a short-hand explanation that points to a more complicated discourse than may appear at first.[23] The impression is that an ideal emperor is created from discourse that is then implemented in the real-life behaviour of the Roman emperor. However, this dichotomous understanding is problematic. As the vignettes in this chapter

[20] cf. Hekster (2015) 1 for a similar argument.
[21] Noreña (2011) 245-276 for his study of honorific inscriptions from the Roman west, and their use of similar titles and terms to honour the emperor, in a way to construct a dialogue between the centre and the periphery in how to honour the Roman emperor. It should be stated that his argument does not push a 'top-down' view of the honorific system, but a local engagement in the imperial system that in turn stood to reinforce social hierarchies, and helped legitimise local regimes. For a summary of this argument, see 271-273, 318-319.
[22] This forms an important *leitmotif* in Noreña's book: see Ibid., 5, 275, 318, 323.
[23] See above discussion on fiction and reality in literature in Chapter 2.2.

will show, the notion of an 'ideal' and a 'real', or even a 'good' or 'bad', model of the emperor is too simplistic. The nature of our evidence blurs the categories and stories, creating a disparate, and even contradictory view of the Roman emperor with respect to the supposed ethical program that seemed to define the expected and realistic roles that the emperor should and did fulfil. In other words, the Roman emperor could fulfil roles that were ideal, realistic, monstrous, and fantastic simultaneously, suggesting the existence of different *mentalités* of the emperor, and his position within that discourse as a liminal figure: evading easy definition.

A final point arising from Noreña's book is the concentration on the ethical profile of the emperor, and in particular the concentration on personality traits. The point that there was a concern in discourse about the character and conduct of the emperor is excellent and needs stressing, for it illuminates his reception as an exemplary figure for praise or derision.[24] Nonetheless, there was also a cognitive aspect to these conversations that did not necessarily always have to do with an ethical conundrum or a decision about what was right or wrong. This is not to say that ethics were not an important part of the emperor's reception, but it also must incorporate the accumulation of knowledge about him. In other words, the stories and tales about the emperor contributed to how he seemed, which meant that there was a curiosity about what the emperor did within the walls of his court, both imagined and real.

Therefore, whilst terms of vices and virtues will form important parts of the discussion, they will not frame the themes discussed. It is important to elaborate further on this decision. First, to concentrate on the *virtutes* would follow the categories that appear on official projections of power from the Roman state,[25] or would be coloured by

[24] Noreña (2011) 57.
[25] cf. Noreña (2001) 147; cf. discussion above, Chapter 2.1.

an aristocratic or upper-class bias in literature, which could be thus charged with an 'elite' understanding of the role of emperor.[26] In the end, the result would resemble the work done by numerous scholars who have talked about virtue and the emperor, including the examples of Wallace-Hadrill and Noreña provided above.[27] Instead, a more fluid treatment of the themes will be attempted. It is possible to over-correct, and believe that everything comes from an elite perspective, suggesting that all the evidence can only be used to construct the social and cultural history of the educated, literate, powerful, and socially-advanced sectors of society.[28] This does not deny that the view provided from much of our ancient literature comes through certain lenses, but equally, transmission of culture was not a one-way street, to use a crude analogy. The point of this exercise is to observe what was coming from the other direction, and see a world within an inclusive rubric, where difference and conflict no doubt existed, but conversations shared similar topics and vernaculars.

Second, the difficulties of appreciating the various virtues and vices that litter our sources, such as *pietas, liberalitas, humanitas, clementia*, *iustitia*, *indulgentia*, not to mention synonyms and Greek equivalents,[29] should not be underestimated: indeed, many of these specific 'virtues' have not received the attention that they deserve.[30] Needless to

[26] Both Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 317-318 and Noreña (2011) 55-57 argue for the aristocratic elements in the discourse of virtues. Compare with discussion in Chapter 2.2.

[27] See n. 30 below on the scholarship on virtue and vices of the Roman emperor, including the study of specific virtues.

[28] See discussion above in Chapter 2.2,

[29] The list provided was not meant to be representative of the quite complex and large list of terms that were associated with the emperor and imperial ideology, or even a list of 'most important' virtues. Rather, it is just an example of the variety of conceptual words. For an example of the diversity, see Noreña (2011) 37-38.

[30] Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 298-323, esp. 300-306. cf. Béranger (1953) for a discussion on the different virtues that contributed to the ideology of the principate. cf. Charlesworth (1937) 10-17, for an early discussion on the virtues, and the various media, a discussion of the *clupeus virtutis*, and a brief discussion of certain virtues, with a particular concentration on their dissemination on coinage. A similar, much deeper analysis, is achieved by Noreña (2011), building upon his earlier work (Noreña (2001) 146-168) by first observing Greek, Hellenistic, and philosophical precedents (37-55), then looking at the frequency of certain terms of virtue on coinage, in an attempt to form a 'taxonomy of imperial character', with a particular concentration on what Noreña calls the 'five core virtues': *aequitas*, *pietas, virtus*, *liberalitas*, *providentia*. These were the most 'publicised ethical qualities' of the emperor' on coinage (61, 63-100). Weinstock

say, to define and discuss each of these terms in their own right and to the extent that they merit would exponentially increase the size of an already large chapter. What should be stated is that these concepts are slippery at best, and often elide into each other.[31]

Lastly, a study that encompasses such a large breadth of space and time would necessarily involve certain caveats. In a lecture on the modern historiography of the ancient world, Teresa Morgan used an analogy from physics, which basically stated that one can observe either 'particles' or 'waves', but it is quite difficult to observe both simultaneously. The analogy for history is that one can undertake a deep study in a particular time period or region, or one can observe trends and changes during time and space, but it is difficult to encompass both breadth and depth in a single historical work. This is an issue with the present thesis, for it is an attempt to observe and synthesise differing opinions and perceptions of the Roman emperor for the first two centuries of the position's existence, whilst also attempting to appreciate nuance in specific context.[32] However, a prolonged attention to both would expand the size and remit of the present work, meaning that sacrifices and assumptions need to be undertaken.

Thankfully, there is a solution. There is a certain permanence to the institution of emperor. This is not to state that the office did not change over time, or that it remained a single monolith that survived for centuries, but rather that the *mentalités* of the emperor, its ambiguities, powers, pretensions, betray a certain stability.[33] This is a remarkable trait of the discourse about the emperor during the first two centuries, for it means that

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(1971) 228-259, for a detailed discussion of the virtues that appear on the *clupeus virtutis*, and their Caesarian and Augustan contexts; Fears (1981), 841-845, n. 67, for a bibliography of works for various virtues, including *aequitas, iustitia, aeternitas, clementia, concordia, felicitas, fides, hones, libertas, liberalitas, moderatio, pax, pietas, providentia, salus, spes,* and *virtus*. cf. Morgan (2007) 10-11. Furthermore, of interest is Morgan's recent work on *Fides*: Morgan (2015).

[31] See for example, Noreña (2011) 64, discussions on *aequitas* and collocations with similar terms, such as *temperantia*, *fortitudo*, and *prudentia,* citing Cic. *Cat*. 2.25, amongst others. Similar analyses are done for *pietas* (71-72), *virtus* (80), and *liberalitas* (84-85). For a different perspective, see Morgan (2007) 191-206, for a popular language of morality, which outlines a different taxonomy of ethics.

[32] See for example Chapter 2.3 for this approach.

[33] This is developed further in Chapter 4.2.

similarities of topics can be compared and contrasted through time and space, even when one appreciates the nuances and differences in context. Thus, the following section will attempt to map thematically the various vignettes of the Roman emperor that seemed to betray a wider appeal, alluding to a curiosity about how the emperor seemed in different contexts. These are as follows: justice, or the popular perception of the emperor in terms of the law and juridical contexts; generosity, or the interaction between emperor and subject through benefaction; wonder tales, or the understanding and location of emperors in *mirabilia* and paradoxographical literature; wisdom and wit, or making fun of the Roman emperor; and hopes and desires, or the place of the emperor in thoughts about a Golden Age. Unfortunately, this cannot be an exhaustive treatment of every potential interaction between people and *princeps*, but rather it is a synthetic exploration of different interactions across time and space in the first two centuries of our era.

3.2: Justice

In her discussion on the relationship of law and justice in popular morality, Morgan argues that there is an uneasy understanding of its interaction. The material she uses, which includes proverbs, fables, *gnomai*, and *exempla*, point to a world where justice and law are symbiotic.[1] In other words, 'sayings and stories which deal with justice are set in legal context or use legal imagery.'[2] Accordingly, justice was an important topic of discussion that transcended social boundaries. However, the stories reveal a tension between justice and the execution of law, which basically involves the reality of how the law could be abused or undermined. One example that Morgan provides involves Babrius' fable, which described a swallow who constructed her nest in the wall of a courthouse, but had her hatchlings eaten by a snake.[3] This meant to highlight how those of unequal status did not necessarily have equal access with respect to the law. As Morgan put it:

> Popular morality, it seems, would like to trust the law to resolve conflicts justly, but fears that it does not. The institution of the law, which exists to mediate conflicts, has developed faster than the public belief and confidence in institutions which it needs in order to function well.[4]

The problem comes to a head once the emperor becomes involved. How does one reconcile an inherent mistrust of the law and legal institutions, the desire for justice, and the paradoxical relationship of the emperor and the law, where he simultaneously lived according to, and above, it? As seen in Chapter 1, the issue of the emperor's relationship

[1] Morgan (2007) 169; cf. Ibid., for each of the stated genres respectively: 40-41, 66-67, 109-111, 136.
[2] Ibid., 169; cf. Noreña (2011) 64-65, esp. 62, for Noreña's discussion on the term *iustitia* being relatively less frequent than other types in imperial coinage, and that its corollary, *aequitas*, was meant to refer to fairness in the administration of the imperial mint. Thus, a 'virtue' of importance was left underrepresented in the 'official' ideological medium. This suggests that representation, meaning and reception could be different in different contexts. It also allows for the importance of justice to be amplified in a wider context, rather than stressing a narrower applicability to state ideology alone.
[3] Babrius 118; Of particular note is what the swallow states after the death of her nest: '"οἴμοι" λέγουσα, "τῆς ἐμῆς ἐγὼ μοίρης· ὅπου νόμοι γὰρ καὶ θέμιστες ἀνθρώπων, ἔνθεν χελιδὼν ἠδικημένη φεύγω."'
[4] Morgan (2007) 169.

to the law was and has been an important factor in understanding the nature of the office of emperor.[5] The liminal position of the emperor with accordance to the law meant that its ambiguity translated into his perception. This meant that the emperor could be seen as acting justly in interactions with his subjects, notably according to or even superseding the law, but simultaneously in discourse, he could be seen acting with cruelty and injustice. Thus, there is a tension between what he ideally seemed to be and what he was feared to be. This is not to question the historicity of these episodes, or to call them fictive, but rather to reiterate a different aspect. Whether true or false, once promulgated, these stories contributed to the mystique of the Roman emperor. Connections can be made once disparate anecdotes are aggregated, meaning that seemingly innocuous or singular tales, previously dismissed as unimportant historically,[6] can indeed be seen as relevant, as they point to a discourse about the perception of the Roman emperor.

The emperor was a locus of contested legality and justice, both in the presence of the emperor himself and his image,[7] where there was a competition for favour and fear of potential cruelty. As an introductory example, this is acutely observable in the often quoted anecdote about Hadrian:

> ἔφερε γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ οὐκ ἠγανάκτει εἴ τι καὶ παρὰ γνώμην καὶ πρὸς τῶν τυχόντων ὠφελοῖτο. ἀμέλει γυναικὸς παριόντος αὐτοῦ ὁδῷ τινι δεομένης, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὅτι "οὐ σχολάζω," ἔπειτα ὡς ἐκείνη ἀνακραγοῦσα ἔφη "καὶ μὴ βασίλευε," ἐπεστράφη τε καὶ λόγον αὐτῇ ἔδωκεν.[8]

Accordingly, the tension between what the emperor seemed to be, and what he was feared to be, is present in this passage.[9] It is interesting that the verb ἀγανακτέω is used at first, for it suggests that it would be understandable if the emperor had responded less than

[5] See above, Chapter 1.2, esp. 18-21, 26-27,
[6] See above Chapter 2.2 on these issues in general.
[7] Encounter with the emperor's image will be discussed below, 116-125.
[8] Dio 69.6.3. cf. Millar (1992) 3. cf. above, 89-90.
[9] Compare with Fronto's list above in Chapter 3.1, and esp. 105, n. 7 on Hadrian and Favorinus.

favourably to his interactions with those present.[10] It comes to a head once Hadrian speaks to the woman in question, at first with a curt refusal, then with acquiescence after her reprimand.[11] As such, the role of the emperor in this situation is blurred by an expectation and fear of rebuttal; that an audience could be met or denied with equal plausibility. Furthermore, the anecdote alludes to a perception that the emperor should be available to his subjects in order to serve justice, and that if this was not met, then he could be criticised and lose his acceptance.[12] Moreover, it is comparable to the preceding anecdote of Hadrian's actions with a wider population in Dio's narrative.[13] Hadrian's conduct towards the Roman people (τὸν δῆμον τῶν Ῥωμαίων) at a gladiatorial show is commented upon, where he not only refused to give them their request, but ordered a 'Domitianic' utterance (ἐκέλευσε τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τοῦ Δομιτιανοῦ κηρυχθῆναι "σιωπήσατε") to be stated by the herald.[14] The herald did not, but by gesture achieved Hadrian's wish, with the result that Hadrian did not get angry. Thus, there is an ambivalence to potential reaction of the Roman emperor, informed by examples of fear and expectation at what action would follow.

These contours of fear and expectation are explored in different contexts. First, there will be a discussion of the ubiquity of the emperor's image across the empire, and

[10] See Millar (1992) 271-272 in particular for this point. The citation he gives comes from Herodian 1.2.4, which is in the context of the beginning of the work, with Marcus Aurelius' death coming near, and Commodus' principate about to start: 'παρεῖχε δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀρχομένοις ἑαυτὸν ἐπιεικῆ καὶ μέτριον βασιλέα, τούς τε προσιόντας δεξιούμενος κωλύων τε τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν δορυφόρους ἀποσοβεῖν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας.' This both showed the way in which he conducted himself towards those he ruled (merciful and moderate), and how his actions towards approaching petitioners allowed for them to get near, despite the bodyguards, suggesting that this was not always the case. Of interest is the use of the verb ἐντυγχάνω, which does mean petition, but also to converse, giving the image of proximity between emperor and subject. It conjures an imagined world of spoken interaction between the emperor and his subjects, whether collectively or individually. Indeed, it can be comparable to similar petitionary images written by Ryszard Kapuscinski of the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, who would be approached by throngs of people outside his palace in his motorcade, and him receiving petitions through the windows (Kapuscinski (2006) 13).

[11] The boldness of her speech and her lower status is comparable to other evidence, discussed below in Chapter 3.5.

[12] Flaig (1992) and Chapter 1.2.2.

[13] Dio 69.6.1-2.

[14] On the importance of gesture in communication, see Aldrete (1999), esp. 78-9 on heralds.

how this led to problems of interaction and justice, particularly concerning charges of *maiestas* or improper conduct with respect of imperial images, and also the phenomenon of seeking asylum at an emperor's statue. Second, more unusual forms of evidence are explored to observe the theme of fear and expectation with respect to justice, highlighting how it was present not only in historical narrative and biographical works concerning the Roman emperor, but also legal texts, inscriptions, *acta* literature, and even *hermeneumata*. Third, there will be a discussion of the relationship between the emperor and brigandage, and how the perception of emperors and bandits was problematic in their similarity. In the end, it hopes to provide an alternative perspective of the perceptions of the Roman emperor from the perspective of his subjects with respect to justice, seeing how disparate and widespread the thought-world concerning the emperor was.

First, on encounters with the emperor's image.[15] It is perhaps an obvious point, but the ubiquity of the images of an emperor should not be underestimated. Other than resting on the assumption of the wide circulation of images through coinage and statuary edifices across the empire, there is an anecdote in Fronto about the continual encounter of imperial imagery in the everyday:

> Scis ut in omnibus argentariis, mensulis, perguleis, taberneis, protecteis, vestibulis, fenestris usquequaque, ubique imagines vestrae sint volgo propositae, male illae quidem pictae pleraeque et crassa, lutea immo, Minerva fictae sculptaeve; quom interim numquam tua imago tam dissimilis ad oculos meos in itinere accidit, ut non ex ore meo excusserit rictum osculei et savium.[16]

There is interest in Fronto's description of the various representations of Marcus Aurelius that he encounters 'anywhere and everywhere' in the streets at money-changers, porches, windows and tabernae, particularly in the sense that the representations could get it

[15] This theme has been discussed with relevant evidence in both legal and literary text by Bauman (1974) 82-92 and Hopkins (1978a) 221-225.

[16] Fronto. *Ad M. Caes.* 4.12.6 cf. Suet. *Titus.* 4.1 for the ubiquity of Titus' image, and cf. Apul., *Apol.* 85.2, of images of Antoninus Pius in a tribunal setting: '*pro tribunali procons. recitet apud virum sanctissimum Cl. Maximum, ante has imp. Pii statuas filius matri suae pudenda exprobret stupra et amores obiectet*?'; cf. Ando (2000) 232-239 for a different examination on the power and ubiquity of the imperial image.

wrong, suggesting that what the emperor and the imperial family looked like in the minds of the general population could be obscure and unknown; a general impression of greyness, uncertainty and contradiction in their thoughts on how the emperor looked.

Indeed, this is comparable to a scene at the beginning of the *Periplus of the Black Sea* in Trapezus in north-east Anatolia, where Arrian describes a statue of the emperor Hadrian that was not good or had any resemblance to him, with the result being a request for its replacement:

> ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀνδριὰς ἕστηκεν ὁ σὸς, τῷ μὲν σχήματι ἡδέως — ἀποδείκνυσιν γὰρ τὴν θάλατταν —, τὴν δὲ ἐργασίαν οὔτε ὅμοιός σοι οὔτε ἄλλως καλός· ὥστε πέμψον ἀνδριάντα ἄξιον ἐπονομάζεσθαι σὸν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τούτῳ σχήματι· τὸ γὰρ χωρίον ἐπιτηδειότατον ἐς μνήμην αἰώνιον.[17]

Furthermore, the ubiquity of images points to the numerous potential encounters that could ensue between the emperor and subject, often with litigious implications, which would be of higher probable occurrence than actual interactions between the emperor and a wider population.[18]

This proposition can roughly be divided into two categories. First is the problem of desecration of an image, and thus potential charges of *maiestas*. The title in the *Digest* that concerns the *Lex Iulia Maiestatis* has numerous excerpts concerning statues of the emperor,[19] which describe the possible problems of interpretation in legal cases when damage is inflicted upon an image of the Roman emperor. For instance, where as the excerpt from Scaevola's *Regulae,* which states that those who melt 'rejected' statues are not liable under the law of *maiestas*,[20] Venuleius Saturninus states in his *De iudiciis publiciis* that melting already 'consecrated' statues or images, or any similar action, would

[17] Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux*. 1.3-4. Compare with the curiosity of how the emperor *seemed* in Chapter 3.5.
[18] On the ubiquity of the Roman emperor, see Potter (1994) 137.
[19] *Dig*. 48.4; cf. Bauman (1974) 82-85.
[20] *Dig*. 48.4.4.1 = Scaevola *Reg*. 4.: '*Hoc crimine liberatus est a senatu, qui statuas imperatoris reprobatas conflaverit*.'

result in liability.[21] Therefore, there is a problem of consistency between these pronouncements, for the line between what could be argued as 'rejected' or 'consecrated' would have been subjective, not to mention whether or not the case would have been prosecuted at all.[22] This problem can be seen further in a rescript of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, included in the same title of the *Digest*:

> nec qui lapide iactato incerto fortuito statuam attigerit, crimen maiestatis commisit: et ita Severus et Antoninus Iulio Cassiano rescripserunt.[23]

Again, there is subjectivity to this ruling, as the believability of the stone being thrown indeterminately and happened to strike a statue of the emperor is at least questionable, meaning that it could be completely discretionary whether or not such cases were tried. In essence, it highlights the potential problems that could arise from the interaction between representations of the emperor and people across the empire.

With this in mind, statues are symbols of contention, as observable in the historical and biographical evidence. Similar to the legal evidence discussed above, Suetonius provides the potential cases that could be seen as *maiestas* in his narrative of Tiberius' life:[24]

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[21] *Dig* 48.4.6 = Venuleius Saturninus *de iudic. publ.* 2: '*Qui statuas aut imagines imperatoris iam consecratas conflaverint aliudve quid simile admiserint, lege iulia maiestatis tenentur.*' For a discussion of the origins of this particular problem, see Bauman (1974) 82-83, referring to a passage in Tacitus where Tiberius vetoes a case concerning a L. Ennius, who had been charged with *maiestas* for melting a silver statue of Tiberius (Tac. Ann. 3.70). The problem highlighted by both Bauman and Tacitus is where the injury lied, and under whose jurisdiction this case would fall under. This concerns the enormous powers of the emperor and thus the position of the Senate in that reality. However, despite the stern pronouncement of Tiberius, the problem remained ambiguous insofar as it seemed to be at the discretion of the jurors whether or not such damages against imperial images constituted *maiestas*. Bauman's concern was to establish precedents and cases where there were clear examples of desecration. I, however, do not think the line was terribly clear. Again, discretion mattered.

[22] See previous note on this issue. cf. Bauman (1974) 84 and Plin. *Ep.* 10.81.2, concerning the charges against the orator Dio Chrysostom for placing a statue of Trajan near the sepulchre of his wife and son. Trajan (Ibid., 10.82) rejects the suit: '*non ex metu nec terrore hominum aut criminibus maiestatis reverentiam nomini meo adquiri. Omissa ergo ea quaestione, quam non admitterem etiam si exemplis adiuvaretur…*' The implication is that such a case could have been taken up, if it was not or Trajan's intervention. Thus, there were many potential permutations from such cases.

[23] *Dig* 48.4.5.1 = Marcianus *Reg.* 5.

[24] cf. Gladhill (2012) 315-348 for an adjacent discussion of the dynamics between statuary representations of the Roman emperor and his argument of Suetonius' inversion of their form through his ecphrasis of their physical characteristics. This mixes well with the contention here that these statues were symbols of

> Statuae quidam Augusti caput dempserat, ut alterius imponeret; acta res in senatu et, quia ambigebatur, per tormenta quaesita est. damnato reo paulatim genus calumniae eo processit, ut haec quoque capitalia essent: circa Augusti simulacrum servum cecidisse, vestimenta mutasse, nummo vel anulo effigiem impressam latrinae aut lupanari intulisse…[25]

Thus, problems could abound from improper conduct with imperial images, which is reflected in further evidence. The nature of the evidence does not seem to make clear whether or not such instances resulted in trial and capital punishment, but it is not the purpose here to discuss the remit and validity of *maiestas* trials, but rather highlight the notion that images of the Roman emperor could be problematic nodes of contention in society. Furthermore, earlier in the *Tiberius*, it is said that the citizens of Nemausus in Transalpine Gaul threw down Tiberius' images and busts during his exilic years before he became emperor.[26] In the *Nero*, the emperor's statues were being decorated with props and verses in criticism of his proclivities and waning acceptability.[27] In the *Galba*, one of the reported *omina* that predicted the fall of the Julio-Claudians saw the heads of statues of the Caesars struck off.[28] In Plutarch's *Galba*, scenes of vigilante justice occur in proximity to fallen statues of Nero, where Spiculus the Gladiator gets destroyed.[29] In Dio, there is a case that is comparable to the list Suetonius provides above, where a woman

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contention. See also Varner (2004) *passim*, esp. 1-9 for a study on the impact of *damnatio memoriae* on the violent defacing of imperial portraiture as part of an emperor's legacy. cf. discussion below in Chapter 4.2.

[25] Suet. *Tib*. 58; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.74: In Tacitus' example, Granius Marcellus, proconsul of Bithynia, is being tried, and the charges of placing his statue above that of the imperial family, and also replacing the head of Augustus with Tiberius on another statue (which is similar to what is reported in Suetonius' account), are part of the accusations, rather than the impetus. cf. above 118, n. 21 on Tac. *Ann*. 3.70.

[26] Suet. *Tib*. 13.1: '*adeo ut imagines eius et statuas Nemausenses subverterint*.' cf. Chapter 1.3, for the issues of competition within the imperial family.

[27] Suet. *Ner*. 45.2: '*Statuae eius a vertice cirrus appositus est cum inscriptione Graeca; nunc demum agona esse, et traderet tandem. Alterius collo ascopa praeligatus simulque titulus: "Ego quid potui? Sed tu culleum meruisti*.' cf. Suet. *Dom*. 13.2, for another example of a quip placed on an imperial monument: '*Ianos arcusque cum quadrigis et insignibus triumphorum per regiones urbis tantos ac tot exstruxit, ut cuidam Graece inscriptum sit: arci*.' The Greek can be translated as 'enough', which should perhaps be seen as jocular.

[28] Suet. *Galb*. 1: '*Ac subinde tacta de caelo Caesarum aede capita omnibus simul statuis deciderunt*.'

[29] Plut. *Galb*. 8.7: 'Σπῖκλον μὲν οὖν τὸν μονομάχον ἀνδριάσι Νέρωνος ἑλκομένοις ὑποβαλόντες ἐν ἀγορᾷ διέφθειραν…' cf. Ibid., 22.4 and 26.7, where statues of Galba are overthrown by soldiers. cf. *Dig*. 48.4.7.4 = Modestinus, *Pand*. 12., which states that any violations of images or statues are more serious when perpetrated by soldiers.

gets sentenced to death for undressing in front of an image of Domitian: 'γυνὴ γάρ τις ὅτι ἀπεδύσατο ἐναντίον εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ ἐκρίθη τε καὶ ἀπώλετο.'[30] In the *Historia Augusta*, the author describes the fall of Commodus' regime as the 'casting down' of his statues: '*sane iam postero kalendarum die cum statuae Commodi deicerentur*.'[31] Under Caracalla are further stories of instances which correspond to Suetonius' list above, which includes a young knight who took a coin with the emperor's image into a brothel,[32] and an example of men being condemned for urinating near the statues and images of the *princeps*.[33] In a final example from the *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus orders his men to smear mud over Alexander Severus' name on his statues at the Praetorian camp at Rome, which was an example of Elagablus' efforts to defame his heir.[34] Despite the nuance and difference in these stories, they all contain the focal point of the Roman emperor's image at its core, with the correlation that these ubiquitous images were locations of social cohesion and conflict, used in a myriad of ways to express opinion, allegiance, and disparagement towards the emperor.

The second category of potential encounter concerns the use of these statues as refuges or asylums.[35] Similar to the issues of *maiestas*, the *Digest* contains many different excerpts concerning the status of statues and images of the emperor, particularly

[30] Dio 67.12.2. cf. Dio 68.1.1.
[31] SHA, *Pert*. 6.3. cf. Gleason (2011) 49 for a discussion of Commodus' fall, and Dio 74(73).2.1 in particular: 'πολλά γε ἐς αὐτὸν καὶ δεινὰ καὶ τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου συμβοησάντων. ἠθέλησαν μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ σῦραι καὶ διασπάσαι ὥσπερ καὶ τὰς εἰκόνας.' cf. Barry (2008) 222-246 for the evidence of collective violence and the mutilation of bodies during the ritual executions at the *Scalae Gemoniae* at Rome.
[32] Dio. 78(77).16.5: 'Ὅτι νεανίσκος τις ἱππεὺς νόμισμα τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ ἐς πορνεῖον ἐσήνεγκεν, ἔδειξαν· ἐφ' ᾧ δὴ τότε μὲν ὡς καὶ θανατωθησόμενος ἐδέθη, ὕστερον δὲ τελευτῆσαι φθάσαντος αὐτοῦ ἀπελύθη.'
[33] SHA, *M. Ant*. 5.7: '*damnati sunt eo tempore qui urinam in eo loco fecerunt in quo statuae aut imagines erant principis, et qui coronas imaginibus eius detraxerunt, ut alias ponerent, damnatis et qui remedia quartanis tertianisque collo adnexa gestarunt*.'
[34] SHA, *Heliogab*. 13.7: '*misit qui et in castris statuarum eius titulos luto tegeret, ut fieri solet de tyrannis*.' The last line, 'as was customarily done towards tyrants', is an interesting phrase as it suggests the normality of either reverential or destructive actions towards symbols of the emperor's image. cf. Chapter 4.2 for a discussion concerning the memorialisation of the emperor.
[35] Bauman (1974) 85-92.

pertaining to use of these as sources of protection or places of refuge.[36] The opinions of the jurists can be split into two groups, which take different stances on the validity of taking refuge at an imperial statue. Ulpian describes the duties of governors in cases of maltreatment of slaves at the hands of their masters. It is in this context that Ulpian provides an example from a rescript of Antoninus Pius which involved the fleeing of slaves to an imperial statue due to alleged brutal treatment, which is as follows:

> "Dominorum quidem potestatem in suos servos illibatam esse oportet nec cuiquam hominum ius suum detrahi: sed dominorum interest, ne auxilium contra saevitiam vel famem vel intolerabilem iniuriam denegetur his qui iuste deprecantur. ideoque cognosce de querellis eorum, qui ex familia Iulii Sabini *ad statuam confugerunt*, et si vel durius habitos quam aequum est vel infami iniuria affectos cognoveris, veniri iube ita, ut in potestate domini non revertantur. qui si meae constitutioni fraudem fecerit, sciet me admissum severius exsecuturum".[37]

Accordingly, those at the bottom of society were here seen to have used images and statues of the emperor for protection against their masters, and even if the rights of the master were protected, there was this sense that one could appeal to Caesar for protection.[38] However, more should be said about this problematic issue. Hopkins rightly pointed out that in this rescript Antoninus Pius had to tow a fine line between protecting the rights of the masters and saving the slaves from cruelty.[39] This could be developed further to comment on the ambiguous role of the emperor as mediator between different groups in society, being seen and expected to rule in favour or against people and groups in society according to appropriate context.[40] Thus, steering a 'delicate course' could

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[36] *Dig*. 1.6.2 = Ulp. *de off. procons*. 8; *Dig*. 1.12.1.1 = Ulp. *de off. praef. urb*. 1; Dig. 21.1.17.12 = Ulp. *ad ed. aedil. curul*. 1; *Dig*. 47.10.38 = Scaevola *Reg*. 4.; *Dig*. 48.19.28.7 = Callistratus *de cogni*. 6

[37] *Dig*. 1.6.2 = Ulp. *de off. procons*. 8; cf. *Dig*. 1.12.1.1 - Ulp. *de off. praef. urb*. 1. on the similar duties of the prefect at Rome. Compare with an early statement from Seneca in his *De Clementia*, on the ability of slaves to take refuge at the emperor's statue: Sen. *Clem*. 1.18.2: *servis ad statuam licet confugere*. cf. *Dig*. 21.1.17.12 = Ulp. *ad ed. aedil. curul*. 1, which includes the opinion that slaves who flee to statues should not be seen as fugitives; cf. Hopkins (1978a) 222.

[38] Hopkins (1978a) 222-224.

[39] Ibid., 222.

[40] The multivalency of potential legal cases that were brought to the attention of the emperor is staggering as shown in Millar (1992) 507-549, which provides a comprehensive look at the various cases. Whereas Millar's breadth and comprehensiveness cannot be matched here, certain relevant examples will be discussed further below: 125ff.

actually be the perception of support for one group over another, leaving a polarised impression of the emperor's conduct in terms of law and justice.[41] Moreover, it brings into relief the potential actors in this particular legal interaction: not only masters and the slaves, but also governors, urban prefects, and curule aediles. They had to navigate the intricacies and ambiguities of these cases that revolved around the contested legal space that an imperial image or statue created, which was a novel and abundant locus of interaction between different sections of society. This meant that the emperor was not only the mediator that had to solve disputes, in that he had the power to enact and override statutes, with expectations of fairness and civility being placed on him in order to find solutions to social and legal problems, but he was also the reason such interactions could occur in the first place. Depending on perspective, he could be seen as both the problem and the solution to this issue, no doubt at least to chagrin of slave owners. In the end, this created a disjunctive picture of the emperor, allowing him to be cast into different roles in the minds of his subjects.

Therefore, it should not be surprising that the second group of opinions concerning images and asylum would restrict the inviolability of that refuge. An excerpt from the jurist Callistratus outlines how it is prohibited to seek sanctuary at an emperor's image with intent to injure another person:

> Ad statuas confugere vel imagines principum in iniuriam alterius prohibitum est. cum enim leges omnibus hominibus aequaliter securitatem tribuant, merito visum est in iniuriam potius alterius quam sui defensionis gratia ad statuas vel imagines principum confugere: nisi si quis ex vinculis vel custodia detentus a potentioribus ad huiusmodi praesidium confugerit: his enim venia tribuenda est. ne autem ad statuas vel imagines quis confugiat, senatus censuit: eumque, qui imaginem caesaris in invidiam alterius praetulisset, in vincula publica coerceri divus Pius rescripsit.[42]

[41] cf. above Chapter 1.2, for the similar problem of the emperor's relationship to the law.
[42] *Dig*. 48.19.28.7 = Callistratus *de cogni*. 6.

This excerpt provides an interesting case, as it conflates what can be argued as two separate ordinances into one.[43] One concerns the seeking of sanctuary at a statue to incite injury, and the other is the use of portable images to do the same.[44] The differences are slight enough that confusion could occur, since both cite the end result being the incitation of some sort, either using an image as refuge after insulting someone, or using an image as protection in an act of provocation. However, instead of stressing the conclusion that the law made the seeking of sanctuary at imperial images restrictive, thereby suggesting that most cases ended against the refugee, it should be stated that it proves the status of these statues as places of contention between different groups in society, leading to intricate and complex legal issues with the emperor as its focal point.

A striking example of such an interaction is the case of Annia Rufilla in A.D. 21, as written by Tacitus. Her actions were described as part of a growing tendency for those of lower station in society provoking the *boni* in society by grasping an *imago Caesaris*. The result was a seeming change in the power dynamics between opposed groups: '*libertique etiam ac servi, patrono vel domino cum voces, cum manus intentarent, ultro metuebantur*.'[45] Against this general background was the more specific case of Gaius Cestius and Rufilla, with the latter abusing the former in public and then seeking protection from an *effiges imperatoris*.[46] In light of such occurrences, Cestius himself sought refuge in appealing to Drusus the Younger for aid, since he argued the laws effectively had been overturned and become useless.[47] The result was that Drusus set an

[43] Bauman (1974) 88.
[44] cf. *Dig*. 47.10.38 = Scaevola *Reg*. 4., which cites a *senatus consultum* that prohibited the carrying of a statue of the emperor for use at detriment of others. cf. Bauman (1974) 87-89 for a discussion on the origins of the law and the problem of distinction between movable and immovable asylum, and the problematic relationship between the rescript of Antoninus Pius in Callistrus' discussion with the *senatus consultum* cited by Scaevola.
[45] Tac. *Ann*. 3.36.1
[46] Ibid., 3.36.3
[47] Ibid., 3.36.2-4: '*abolitas legs et funditus versas…*'

example by convicting and imprisoning Rufilla.[48] It is interesting that both chose a recourse that involved the emperor or the imperial family. The early date of this example may point to the specific context of the problem; namely a struggle to understand fully the implications of autocratic rule in the early principate, with different sectors of society attempting to find their position within the power dynamic. However, this could be classed as a form of competition for imperial favour, which as a concept is not alien to the understanding of social and power relationships across the Roman empire, and it was not restricted to the early principate.[49] More specifically, the Callistratus excerpt above suggests that such cases remained problematic into the second century.[50] It alludes to the perception of the emperor as the source of law and justice that was not restricted to a certain sector of society.[51] This in turn problematises the power dynamic and the dichotomy of 'elite' and 'sub-elite' in the Roman empire. Utilising Scott's paradigm as discussed above,[52] what Rufilla was emboldened to do was to expose a 'hidden transcript': subversive opinions about one more dominant in comparison to her in society, in this case Cestius and his senatorial *milieu*. This was possible due to the altering power dynamics in society introduced by the emperor and his image. Within this understanding, the imperial image, and by proxy the emperor, would be seen as a protector of her opinions and thoughts, shielding her from potential reprimand and litigation from others in society. Accordingly, the emperor and his image was thus a pressure valve, adding to the idea that they were locations of social cohesion and conflict, where problems of justice could be negotiated. Furthermore, Cestius' actions indicate that recourse to the emperor was

[48] Tac. *Ann*. 3.36.4.
[49] The bibliography on this is enormous, with general views seen in the following volumes, which does not pretend to be exhaustive: Millar (1992), Veyne (1976), Ando (2000), Noreña (2011).
[50] *Dig*. 48.19.28.7 = Callistratus *de cogni*. 6.
[51] cf. Bauman (1974) 91 for further examples on the issue of asylum. Of particular note are Philostr. *VA*. 1.15., for a magistrate in Aspendos clinging to a statue of Tiberius during a food riot.
[52] Chapter 2.2; Scott (1985), Scott (1990).

similarly employed by the 'elite', and that their position below the Roman emperor allowed for the existence of their own 'hidden transcript' in light of his power.[53] The existence of multiple transcripts with no simple dichotomous 'elite' and 'sub-elite' division shows the intricate complexity of Roman society, and the precarious position of the Roman emperor within it. In terms of perceptions of the Roman emperor with respect to justice, it meant that he could be seen as a protector and a feared arbiter by his subjects. This is highlighted by the expectations of success and fear of failure with respect to justice and legal matters, not only shown above by the contentious space of the emperor's image, but also more generally in other representations of the emperor's conduct in legal cases with his subjects across the empire.

Importantly, the representations appear in more unusual genres of literature, which fall outside canonical historical and literary works. One such example is Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*: a book of dream interpretations written in the second century A.D.[54] There are a few dreams he describes in his work that involve the Roman emperor, particularly concerning civil cases. As Millar argues:

> Artemidorus… accepts appearances in court before the emperor simply as one out of many categories of crucial events in which men's anticipations of success or failure might be keenly aroused.[55]

The excerpts Millar refers to are Artemidorus' analyses of the different sorts of dreams, supplemented by an exemplary passage, with specific referrals to cases and petitions

[53] cf. below in Chapter 3.5 for a similar discussion on competing transcripts.

[54] On Artemidorus and the study of dreams, see Bowersock (1994) 77-98 and Price (1986) 3-37 on the concerns of Artemidorus, the profession of dream interpretation and its connection to scientific inquiry, and the difficulty of analysing the ancient conceptions of dream applicability, particularly with reference to Freudian theory. Bowersock argues for a more Freudian understanding of ancient dreaming, namely that the evidence outside Artemidorus was interested in the study of inner desires, rather than predicting the future. Price places Artemidorus within his intellectual *milieu*, with a particular concentration on his interest in predictive dreams, and what can empirically be said about the future from their interpretation. cf. in particular Artemidorus' distinction between ἐνύπνια ὄνειροι, Artem. 1.1; Price (1986) 10-12; Bowersock (1994) 80.

[55] Millar (1992) 528. cf. Artem. 2.30 on a different theme that involves an emperor, concerning dreams of being the emperor, and what it means for different people.

involving the emperor. The first refers to a dream about receiving something from the mouth of the emperor, resulting in favour of the receiver, using an example of a Chrysippus of Corinth, who dreamt that he received two teeth from the emperor's mouth, which resulted in him winning two cases in which the emperor was the judge.[56] The second example involves a Cilician who petitioned the emperor for his brother's inheritance, but dreamt that he sheared a sheep half-way, but was unable to get the remaining wool. This resulted in the false expectation of receiving half of the inheritance, when it transpired that he would receive nothing.[57] The third example warns against untrustworthy etymologies, with the case being a dream about a certain Νίκων (winner) helping an attorney with a case before the emperor. He thought that this was a propitious sign for the result of the case, but Nikon had lost a judgement previously, which in turn was the correct premonition for a defeat.[58] A final example highlights the intercessory power of the emperor:

> Ἔδοξέ τις ναύκληρος ἐν Μακάρων νήσοις εἶναι καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἡρώων κατέχεσθαι, ἔπειτα ἐλθόντα τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα ἀπολῦσαι αὐτὸν. Ἀγγαρείᾳ περιπεσὼν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιτρόπων τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος κατεσχέθη, ἔπειτα ἐντυχὼν τῷ βασιλεῖ ἀφείθη τῆς ἀγγαρείας.[59]

Thus, the dream of Agamemnon releasing the ship-captain from the bonds of the heroes in the Isles of the Blest translated into the emperor releasing him from his liturgy and the custody of the imperial procurators. These no doubt apocryphal stories stretch credibility,

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[56] Artem. 4.31: 'Ὅ τι ἂν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος δῷ ὁ βασιλεύς, δι᾽ ἀποφάσεως ὠφελήσει τὸν λαβόντα. Χρύσιππος ὁ Κορίνθιος ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ βασιλεώς δύο λαβὼν ὀδόντας μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ δυσὶν ἀποφάσεσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ βασιλέως δικαζόμενος ἐνίκησεν.' cf. Dio 65 (66) 1.3, where Nero loses a tooth in Vespasian's dream, meaning that he would become emperor. cf. below Chapter 4.2, 238.

[57] Artem. 4.51: 'Τὰ ἡμιτελῆ τῶν ἔργων ἀπραξίαν σημαίνει τελείαν καὶ οὐδὲ τὰς ἀρχὰς παρέχει. Ὁ Κίλιξ ἀδελφοῦ κλῆρον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως αἰτῶν ἔδοξε πρόβατον κείρειν μέχρις ἡμισείας, καὶ τοῦ πόκου λαβεῖν [τὸ πλεῖστον] τὸ περισσὸν οὐ δυνάμενος διυπνίσθη. Καὶ προσδοκία μὲν ἦν αὐτῷ τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ κλήρου λήψεσθαι, ἔλαβε δὲ οὐδέν.'

[58] Artem. 4.80: 'Μέμνησο δὲ ὅτι εὐφήμων ὀνομάτων ἄπιστοι αἱ ἐτυμολογίαι, ἐὰν μὴ καὶ τὰ καθ᾽ ὧν τέτακται τὰ ὀνόματα εἰς ταὐτὸ ῥέπῃ. Οἷον Παῦλος ὁ νομικὸς δίκην ἔχων ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἔδοξεν αὐτοῷ συναγορεύειν Νίκωνά τινα καλούμενον. Ἦν δὲ οὗτος ὁ Νίκων πάλαι ποτὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος δίκην ἡττημένος. Καὶ ὁ μὲν Παῦλος τῷ ὀνόματι μονῳ προσεῖχεν, ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ καταδίκης σημαντικὸς ὁ ὄνειρος ὀρθῶς καὶ κατὰ λόγον, ὅτι ἦν ὁ Νίκων λελειμμένος.'

[59] Artem. 5.16. cf. Millar (1992) 499. This fits into a wider theme of petition for exemption from civic duties, or liturgies, in the Greek world: see Millar (1992) 499-502; Dmitriev (2005); Zuiderhoek (2009).

but they reach a world of a *mentalité* that connects imagination with the emperor. They show a conceptual connection between expectations and fears about justice manifested in dreams, and their perceived correlation in reality.

A brief excursus is necessary: mention of procurators and other imperial officials being superseded by appeal to the emperor is an important theme in the study of the perception of the emperor's justice. An important example of this comes in the form of petitions from peasants and villagers across the empire.[60] One example is a fragmentary inscription from near Vaga in Africa (Béja, Tunisia) dated to 181 A.D., in which peasants complain of the excessive demands placed upon them, and ask for the intercession of the emperor:

> …ro]gamus domine per salutem tuam succurr[a]s nobis et [- - -] [-]nt aratorias IIII sartorias IIII messicias IIII et CVI[- - -] | [-]rum fructum et tabernae quae semper publicis usibus…[61]

Millar compares this inscription with another from the imperial estate *saltus Burutianus*, with similar language.[62] It seems that repeated complaints of the tenants against the procurators to the emperors go unheeded, resulting in a *subscriptio* from Commodus, which restated the rule that the procurators follow his commands.[63] Despite the curtness of the reply, it indicates a similar theme to the inscription from Vaga: that recourse to the

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[60] See Millar (1992) 246-247, 542-543 for examples of this sort of interaction. Millar creates a connection between the communities on imperial estates and villages of unknown status, sending petitions to the emperor as complaints of exploitation. cf. Abbott and Johnson (1926) nos.139, 141-144, for examples of petitions from imperial estates. For a newer editions and more comprehensive look at these inscriptions, see Hauken (1998), especially with additions to the dossier of related inscriptions of petitions/responses from similar communities; cf. Philo, *Leg.* 161, for evidence of Tiberius ensuring the proper delegation of just conduct on his subordinates, with particular reference to their relations with the Jews.

[61] *CIL* 8.14428 A, ll. 12-13; cf. Hauken (1998) 31-33 for transcription, suggestions for the *lacunae*, and commentary; Millar (1992) 542.

[62] Millar (1992) 246; *CIL* 8.10570 = *CIL* 8.14464 = *ILS* 6870, iii; For transcription, translation, and commentary, see Hauken (1998) 2ff, 8-10 for the following transcriptions: '*[Quae res co]mpulit nos m[i]serrimos homi\\[nes iam rur]sum divinae providentiae | [tuae supli]care. et ideo rogamus sa\cratissime Imp. subvenias…'*

[63] *ILS* 6870, iv: '*[Imp. Ca]es. M. Aurelius Commodus An\[toni]nus Aug. Sarmat. Germanicus | maximus Lurio Lucullo et nomine a\liorum. Proc. contemplatione dis\cipulinae et instituti mei ne plus | quam ter binas operas curabunt | ne quit per iniuriam contra perpe\tuam formam a vobis exigatur | et alia manu scripsi recognovi.'*

emperor was conceivable for complaints towards imperial officials, even from peasants or tenants at the imperial estates. Thus, there is a correlation between expectations and fears in this epigraphical material with the dreams that Artemidorus compiled. They indicate the liminal presence of the Roman emperor between the conduct of legal and petitionary procedure and the imagination of just outcomes.

Similar contours of hope for success can be seen in the *Hadriani Sententiae*. These are curious documents from the early third century, preserved with bilingual word-lists from the ancient world, which were called *Hermeneumata.* They are themselves bilingual texts that preserve legal pronouncements of the emperor Hadrian, meant to be a teaching aid for language learning.[64] Scholars have been mostly reticent in using them as a historical source, preferring to see them as fictitious wise judgements of a later date, and therefore providing little if no representative material for the conduct and execution of Hadrian's judicial activities.[65] However, their form and content can instead be used as evidence for the *mentalité* of the Roman emperor as an arbiter of justice. Here, questions about whether or not they represent a reality of the procedure of imperial judgement are secondary to the descriptions of interactions between emperor and subject, and what they can reveal about the concerns in the imagination of what could be expected from the Roman emperor in this juridical context. These *Sententiae* include actors from different sectors of society, including soldiers, freedmen, an owner of *tabernas*, and parents, involving cases on a wide array of topics, such as the request of military appointment and *congiaria*, to requests from parents to force their children to take care of them.[66] In these

[64] Lewis (1991) 267-280; Dickey (2012) 28; Millar (1992) 532.
[65] Dickey (2012) 28. cf. Lewis (1991) 269-270 for a scholar named A. Arthur Schiller's attempt to rehabilitate these texts as representative of hearings before the emperor. Of note is the papyrus *SB* 6.9526 = *P. Col*. 6.123 (cited by Ibid., 273), which gives us evidence of ἀποκρίματα resemble the *Hadriani Sententiae*. The papyrus is online: http://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.col;6;Apokrimata.
[66] Citations of the *Sententiae* come from the recent Teubner edition by Giuseppe Flammini, called *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana Leidensia* under the third book, and are separated by case, from nos. 1-15 (pages 67-77, or 3.1716-1960). See 1 = 3.1747-1759 for the soldier, 2 = 3.1760-1771 for the ex slave-owner asking for his lost freedman's *congiarium*. (Lewis (1991) 274-275 for further analysis), 7 = 3.1814-

sententiae, Hadrian does not always grant the wishes of the petitioner, but also refuses them. This suggests a perception that emperor was not an indiscriminate giver. Furthermore, there is a continual juxtaposition between the different potential reactions of the emperor, from sympathy and benevolence, to reprimand and cruelty. An example of the former would be the no. 12 in the *sententiae*, which gives a story about a father who had lost his sons to the military and feared for their safety from any action *extra ordinem*. He asks Hadrian to allow him to be a servant to them, and Hadrian responds by making him a centurion.[67] An example of the latter would be no. 15, in which Hadrian details the punishments for parricide:

> Fit quaedam lex eiusmodi omnibus hominibus, uti qui parricidium fecisset, publice in culleum missus consueretur cum vipera et simia et gallo et cane, impiis animalibus impius homo, et in plaustrum iunctum nigris bovis deportaretur ad mare et in profundum mitteretur; ostenderunt exemplum poenae, ut magis timeant *** sic crudelem opus fecit.[68]

The punishment for parricide of being tied in a sack with an assortment of dangerous animals, taken by cart and then thrown into the sea is couched in tradition, as an excerpt of Modestinus in the *Digest* indicates.[69] It is interesting that a description of such a punishment would appear in the bilingual teaching tradition, as it suggests a certain banality; such knowledge was seemingly common. It perhaps is what it tells us, an

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1827 on the *tabernae* owner and the freedmen who run them, 3 = 3.1772-1781, 10 = 3.1856-1878, 11 = 3.1879-1895, 12 = 3.1896-1914, 13 = 3.1915-1926, for petitions from parents on different matters. Further analysis will be undertaken below on the mentions of the *congiaria* in Chapter 3.3.

[67] *Hadriani Sententiae* 12 = 3.1896-1914. I include the Latin version: '*Interea autem interpellavit <quis> Adriano dicens: "Filii mei, Domine, militiae capti sunt."; Adrianus dixit: "Feliciter!' respondit: "Sed inscientes sunt et timeo ne quid extra ordinem faciant et miserum me relinquant." Adrianus dixit: "Ne quid timeas; in pace enim militant", cui pater dixit: "Remitte ergo me, Domine imperator, vel ministrum eorum esse, ut eos adtendam." Adrianus dixit: "Ne id faciant dii, ut te obsequentem filiis tuis faciam, sed vite accepta centurio eorum esto."'*

[68] *Hadriani Sententiae* 15 = 3.1946-1959.

[69] *Dig*. 48.9.9pr = Modestinus *Pand*. 12: '*Poena parricidii more maiorum haec instituta est, ut parricida virgis sanguineis verberatus deinde culleo insuatur cum cane, gallo gallinaceo et vipera et simia: deinde in mare profundum culleus iactatur. hoc ita, si mare proximum sit: alioquin bestiis obicitur secundum divi Hadriani constitutionem*.' The Hadrianic embellishment of the law is a seemingly interesting parallel; For further evidence of such punishment: Cic. *Ros. Am*. 70, Cic. *Inv. Rhet*. 2.149, and Suet. *Aug*. 33.1, for an example of Augustus showing his diligence for justice by not sewing up a parricide in the sack.

exemplum poenae, employed for fear.[70] The imagination of the emperor's status as an arbiter of justice thus straddles the potential for benevolence and the potential for punishment.

Furthermore, of particular interest are the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, and similar types of literature, such as the Acts of the Apostles and Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*.[71] The *Acta Alexandrinorum*, or the Acts of the Pagan Martyrs, are fictionalised accounts of Alexandrian embassies to Rome, where they face the Roman emperor and their Alexandrian Jewish antagonists. They attempt to evoke sympathy for the Alexandrians against an unsympathetic emperor, unfavourably depicted as siding with the Jewish community.[72] Andrew Harker's recent work on the *Acta*, *Loyalty and Dissidence in Roman Egypt*, has effectively compiled and synthesised the evidence, arguing for a consistency in narrative type across the documents, importantly in the depiction of the emperor.[73] Thus, exchanges are hostile, and the emperor is often perceived as tyrannical, regardless of which emperor is being portrayed. A full treatment of the various *Acta* papyri, which span over two centuries in both compositional and dramatic dates, would be impossible.[74] Thus, certain examples will be chosen to highlight the different representations of the Roman emperor, and the potential perceptions of his role as a judge in these hostile accounts.

[70] cf. Coleman (1990) 70-73, esp. 72, for the parallel of the emperor as patron of 'fatal charades': spectacles of death in the arena meant to solidify the emperor as 'the authority of the supreme purveyor of justice.' It places a great importance in the exhibition of autocratic power and the interaction with wider society. A deeper discussion follows below in Chapter 3.4.
[71] For a recent study and the connection of the *Acta* to the aforementioned Christian and Jewish texts, see Harker (2008) 32-34, 141-173. Harker also provides a recently up-to-date list of *acta* literature preserved on papyrus (Ibid., 179-211).
[72] Harker (2008) 1.
[73] Harker (2008) 91; cf. Ibid., 43.
[74] The richness of the record is well explained by Harker (2008) 31-47, 48-98. For the papyri used in this section, the number assigned by Musurillo in both the Oxford and Teubner editions of the texts will be used, alongside the corresponding papyrus collection publication number when first cited.

First are the so-called *Acta Isidori*, preserved on different papyri of different provenances,[75] which are accounts of the trial of Isidorus, a gymnasiarch of Alexandria, within the context of embassies to the emperor Claudius by the Alexandrian Greeks and Jewish community.[76] The less fragmentary col. ii. of recension A reveals the scene of the encounter in some gardens ([ἐν τοῖς] λιανοῖς κήποις) in the presence of King Agrippa, twenty senators, sixteen of whom were of consular rank, and certain *matronae* at the court.[77] The conversation begins with a plea from Isidorus to Claudius for a hearing: 'κύριέ μου Καῖσαρ, τῶν γονά[των σου δέομαι] | ἀκοῦσαί μου τὰ πονοῦν[τα τῇ πατρίδι.] | ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ· μερίσω σο[ι ταύτην τὴν] | ἡμέραν.'[78] However, in col. iii, the exchange had changed to hostility and insult, with Claudius accusing Isidorus of killing many of his friends, and Isidorus arguing that it was from the orders of the then emperor Gaius that he did so, and offered to do so again.[79] Thereafter are exchanges of insults of low birth: Claudius asks Isidorus if he was the son of a musician, to which Isidorus states that he is neither a slave or a musician's son, but a 'gymnasiarch of the great city of Alexandria' (διασήμου πόλεως [Ἀ]λεξαν|[δρ]εί[ας] γυμνασίαρχος), and ends by calling Claudius the son of a Jewess Salome.[80] The scene ends with Lampon, another Alexandrian delegate, calling Claudius deranged, leading to the order of their execution.[81] The impression is that Claudius did not give them the day for the hearing,

[75] For the complex information on provenance, date, and different published textual editions, see Musurillo (1954) 117-118 and Harker (2008) 187-189, under *APM* 4.A = Chrest.Wilck 14 = *C.Pap.Jud*. II 156A, 156d (cols i-ii: *BGU* 511 + col. iii: *P.Cair.Cat* 10448), *APM* 4.B = *P. Lond*. Inv. 2785 = *C.Pap.Jud*. II 156b, and *APM* 4.C = *P. Berol*. 8877 = *C.Pap.Jud*. II 156c.

[76] On the embassies and trials, see Harker (2008) 39-44. On the historical context of embassies from Alexandria to Gaius and Claudius, see Ibid., 9-31. On Isidorus and his contemporaries, see Philo *Flacc*. 18-21, 135-137, Musurillo (1954) 98 and Harker (2008) 15.

[77] *APM* 4.A.ii.4-8.

[78] Ibid., 4.A.ii.11-13; cf. Ibid., 4.B.i.6-9.

[79] Ibid., 4.A.iii.5-6: βασιλέως ἤκουσα τοῦ τότε | [ἐπ]ιτάξαντος. καὶ σὺ λέγε τίνος θέλεις | [κα]τηγορήσω.

[80] Ibid., 4.A.iii. 7-12: For Salome, part of the Herodian dynasty of Judaea, see Musurillo (1954) 128-130.

[81] *APM* 4.A.iii.14-17: 'τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἔχομεν ἢ παρα[φ]ρονοῦντι βασιλεῖ τόπον διδόναι.'

but quickly condemned them to death, being represented as unfairly biased towards the Jewish people.[82]

Comparisons to the reality of the situation, namely with the famous letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians calling for a calming of civil strife in the city and asking both communities to respect each other, have yielded a more balanced view of Claudius' conduct to the Alexandrian problem.[83] It is unfortunate that a deeper study into the Jewish-Greek relations in Alexandria cannot be elaborated here.[84] It is important to state, however, that Claudius does not apparently side with any one side over the other, and states that the Jewish community should respect his ruling, lest they feel his wrath:

> εἰ δὲ μή, πάντα τρόπον αὐτοὺς ἐπεξελεύσομαι καθάπερ κοινήν τεινα τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας.[85]

Thus, the impression of the emperor here is different from the one given by the *Acta Alexandrinorum*; a problem of great difficulty when attempting to reconstruct the historical reality of the situation and the nature of Claudius' actions towards Alexandria. However, the *Acta Isidori* as preserved date from much later to the late second or early third century, and present a more stylised view of these trials in front of the Roman emperor. This is not to discount the problem of historicity and the pursuit of historical evidence from this material, but to use them for a different purpose: the exploration of the perception of the Roman emperor from alternative perspectives, which similar to the evidence outlined above, give different and contradictory impressions of his reception. Moreover, they contribute to the discourse about the emperor, which is a historical phenomenon in its own right, as it frames how people thought about him. In the *Acta*

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[82] cf. *APM* 4.B.i.17-18: 'κύριέ μου Καῖσαρ | τί [μέλει σοι ὑπὲρ Ἀγρίπ]που Ἰουδαίου τριωβολείου…' cf. *APM* 4.C.ii.23-24: 'κ]αὶ ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην [θέλουσι | ταράσ]σειν…' as other examples of anti-Jewish sentiment. cf. Harker (2008) 43.
[83] *P.Lond*.6.1912 = *Sel.Pap*.II.212 (online: http://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.lond;6;1912).
[84] cf. Harker (2008) 10-24 for a deeper analysis of the historical context.
[85] *P. Lond*. 6.1912, ll. 98-100.

Isidori, the emperor Claudius is portrayed as a tyrant, prejudicially predisposed against the Alexandrians, and therefore the definition of an unjust ruler.[86]

Once compared to similar examples in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* and parallel forms of literature, such a polarised view of the Roman emperor is not surprising, despite any apparent disjunct between the 'reality' and the 'representation'. For example, the representation of Trajan in the *Acta Hermaisci* reflects a similar picture to the one constructed of Claudius in the *Acta Isidori*.[87] In this case, the delegations from both the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria appear at the emperor's court. There is an immediate juxtaposition between how the envoys from the different communities were treated. The Jewish delegation was greeted most cordially (ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ εὐμενέστατα αὐ|τους ἠσπ[άσ]ατο),[88] but the Greeks coldly, with an accusation of misconduct towards the Jews: 'Ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπηντή|σατο, ἀλλ᾽ [εἶ]πεν· χαιρετίζετέ με ὡς ἄξιοι τυγ|χάνοντ[ες] τοῦ χαίρεν, τοιαῦτα χαλεπὰ τολ|μήσαντε[ς] Ἰουδαίοις;'[89] Thus, the proceedings were presented as rigged from the start. In comparison, the account of an embassy to Caligula, where Philo describes the cold conduct of the emperor towards the Jewish delegation, in comparable fashion to the treatment of the Alexandrian Greeks in the aforementioned *Acta*:

> ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς αὐτὸν εἰσαχθέντες ἅμα τῷ θεάσασθαι μετ᾽ αἰδοῦς καὶ εὐλαβείας τῆς ἁπάσης νεύοντες εἰς τοὔδαφος ἐδεξιούμεθα, Σεβαστὸν Αὐτοκράτορα προσειπόντες· ὁ δὲ οὕτως ἐπιεικῶς καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἀντιπροσηγόρευσεν, ὡς μὴ μόνον τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸζῆν ἀπογνῶναι. σαρκάζων γὰρ ἅμα καὶ σεσηρώς, "ὑμεῖς," εἶπεν, "ἐστὲ οἱ θεομισεῖς, οἱ θεὸν μὴ νομίζοντες εἶναί με, τὸν ἤδη παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνωμολογημένον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀκατονόμαστον ὑμῖν;"… πόσης εὐθὺς ἀνεπλήσθησαν ἡδονῆς οἱ τῆς ἐναντίας μερίδος πρέσβεις,

[86] Harker (2008) 43.
[87] *APM* 8 = *P.Oxy*.1242. cf. Parker (2008) 189 for the information on the papyrus.
[88] *APM* 8.ii.30-31.
[89] *APM* 8, col. ii, 34-37. cf. Musurillo (1954) 162 who argues for the falseness of this vignette, and Trajan's strong record on justice (cf. Dio 68.6.2, 5.3). That Trajan was seen as a just emperor should not be doubted. Rather, it is important to acknowledge the possibility of as a less favourable representation, shown here that fits into the general theme of the *Acta*.

> ἤδη κατωρθωκέναι διὰ τῆς πρώτης ἀναφθέγξεως Γαΐου τὴν πρεσβείαν νομίζοντες·[90]

Gaius is shown as being predisposed against the Jewish delegation. The ironic mentions of clemency and humanity by Philo, and the questions of Gaius, indicate the presented unfairness of the emperor in this situation. There is a spectre of competition in this excerpt from Philo, and an expectation that the emperor should be a fair mediator in these proceedings, even if he did not fulfil this role in the presented situation.

There is an important distinction made in the previous statement. It could be argued that these representations of 'bad' emperors, in both the *Acta* literature and Philo, indicate the existence of a healthy and continued opposition to the Roman empire, and that they represent an affirmation of dissent towards the Roman order in Alexandria.[91] However, this may go too far. Within these stories, the emperor remains the conceptual centre of power and justice in the world, or the location where problems, dissent, and competition can be discussed and debated. This is not the same as wishing the existing order to be replaced or overthrown, but rather an engagement in the discourse of expectations and fears about the Roman emperor. This is particularly reflected in the comparison of the present emperor in the stories with other previous emperors. In the *Acta Isidori*, Isidorus reveals to Claudius his loyalty to the previous emperor, and promises to do the same for him.[92] Earlier in the *Legatio ad Gaium*, Philo engages in lengthy comparisons with both Tiberius and Augustus, including their respective treatments of the Jewish people, and laudatory descriptions of their reigns, thus providing a juxtaposition to the present age of

[90] Philo, *Leg*. 352-353. cf. Ibid., 361-3, where the hostility of Gaius continues and he makes fun of the Jews for not eating pork, much to the amusement of the Alexandrian Greek delegation; see Harker (2008) 32-33 for his analysis of this situation. For analysis concerning the godly understanding of the emperor, see Chapter 4.3 and the Conclusion.

[91] cf. Harker (2008) 8, 174. cf. above Chapter 2.2, on the discussion of the problematic concept of resistance in the study of the Roman empire. cf. Macmullen (1966) 84-90 for this interpretation of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*.

[92] *APM* A.iii. 5-6. See 131, n. 79 above.

Gaius.[93] Furthermore, the *Acta Appiani*, another example of *Acta*-related literature, records a heated exchange between the emperor Commodus and an Appian, another gymnasiarch and ambassador from Alexandria:[94]

> αὐτοκράτωρ εἶπεν·| νῦν οὐκ οἶδας τίνι [λα]λεῖς; |
> Ἀππιανός· ἐπίσταμαι· Ἀπ[πι]ανὸς τυράννῳ. | αὐτοκράτωρ [οὔκ,] ἀλλὰ βασιλεῖ.
> Ἀππια|νός· τοῦτο μὴ λέγε· τῷ γὰρ θεῷ Ἀντωνείνῳ [τ]ῷ π[ατ]ρί σου ἔπρεπε αὐτοκρατορεύειν.[95]

The dialogue continues to list the good qualities of Marcus Aurelius–his philosophy, his lack of avarice, and his love of goodness–and then Commodus' opposite qualities of tyranny, dishonesty, and crudeness.[96] Thus, Appian compares and contrasts the fitness of each to the emperorship, with the result being that Commodus did not meet his requirements.[97] In his conclusion, Harker argued that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were less about anti-Roman feeling in Alexandria, and more about the exhibition of Hellenic identity in the city at the expense of other ethnic and political groups.[98] This may be the case, but the open criticism of the emperor within these stories requires separate comment. The fact that other forms of literature shared this suggests a widespread appeal of this sort of discourse.[99] However, such discourse did not necessarily question the legitimacy of the

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[93] Philo, *Leg*. 141-142 for Tiberius, Ibid., 143-147 for Augusuts, Ibid.,156-158 for Augustus' treatment of the Jews, Ibid., 159-161 for Tiberius'. An example of the laudatory language is as follows, Ibid.,149: 'Οὐ μόνον ὅτι τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ γένους ἀρχὴ τις ἐγένετο καὶ πηγή, οὐδὲ ὅτι πρῶτος καὶ μέγιστος καὶ κοινὸς εὐεργέτης, ἀντὶ πολυαρχίας ἑνὶ κυβερνήτῃ παραδοὺς τὸ κοινὸν σκάφος οἰακονομεῖν ἑαυτῷ, θαυμασίῳ τὴν ἡγεμονικὴν ἐπιστήμην.' For more on representations of a Golden Age, and in particular, Philo's representation of Gaius, see Chapter 3.6.
[94] *APM* 11.A = *P. Yale* Inv. 1536; Ibid., 11.B = *P.Oxy*. 33.
[95] Ibid., 11.B.ii.3-9; cf. Musurillo (1954) 205-211.
[96] *APM* 11.B.ii.9-13. cf. SHA. *Marc*. 1.1.
[97] cf. Harker (2008) 90-91 for his analysis of the passage.
[98] Ibid., 175-176.
[99] A further comparison would be the trial scenes of Jesus in the gospels and Paul's trials in the *Acts of the Apostles*. They share similarities with the *acta* in the tradition of exhibiting trials. Of particular importance is Paul's appeal unto Caesar (*Acts* 22.25-27, 25.11-12). The legal and historical problems of making such an appeal were discussed in Sherwin-White (1963) 48-70. However, that Paul would appeal to Caesar indicates the perception of the supremacy of the emperor. However, see Rowe (2009) 95-102 for the argument of the essential subversiveness of early Christianity, and how the proclamation of Christ as King was incongruous with allegiance to the emperor. This suggests a simultaneous habitation of the *imaginaire* between Jesus and the emperor, which is a wrinkle in the perception of the Roman emperor that would require much further careful study.

emperorship, or the position in itself, but rather the acceptability of the person who was emperor.[100] The disappointment and open criticism of this literature suggest that it was part of a critique of a hoped ideal and feared reality of the imperial persona, which placed the emperor at the epicentre of mediation between themselves and their enemies, with hope for justice and a resignation at a harsh outcome.

A final example concerning justice is the collocation of brigandage and the Roman emperor. It would seem that the proximity of the emperor as a protector and bandits as disturbers of the peace would be contradictory, as they are antithetical figures in society.[101] However, as figures in the imagination, the bandit and the emperor could be seen as counterparts; perhaps even two sides of the same coin.[102] An interesting case is the story of Bulla Felix during the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, which appears in Dio. It recounts the tale of an Italian bandit, who with his six hundred men plundered Italy for a period of two years, and much to the chagrin of the emperors and the army he was able to avoid capture:[103]

> ἐδιώκετο μὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ συχνῶν ἀνδρῶν, φιλοτίμως αὐτὸν ἀνιχνεύοντος τοῦ Σεουήρου, οὔτε δὲ ἑωρᾶτο ὁρώμενος οὔτε εὑρίσκετο εὑρισκόμενος οὔτε κατελαμβάνετο ἁλισκόμενος· τοσαύτῃ καὶ μεγαλοδωρίᾳ καὶ σοφίᾳ ἐχρῆτο.[104]

[100] cf. above Chapter 1.2.2 for further discussion.
[101] cf. Jones (2001) 163, 166 for a more recently found monumental inscription in which Claudius is commemorated for saving the Lycians from brigandage, amongst other laudations, highlighting the position of emperor as a protector against bandits.
[102] Veyne (1990) 359; cf. Hobsbawm (1981) 56 and Shaw (1984) 51, for the citation of August. *De. civ. D.* 4.4, who argues for the close comparison of *regna* and *latrocinia.* cf. further discussion below, 139-140. On Bandits generaly in the Roman empire, including the historical and more mythical aspects of them, see Grünewald (2004), esp. chapters 4, 6, and 7 for conflicts with authorities, and their status as counterparts.
[103] Dio 77(76).10.1.
[104] Ibid., 77(76).10.2; cf. Forsdyke (2012) 39 for the use of rhetorical device called *polyptoton*, in which words of the same root are repeated; cf. Grünewald (2004) 110-120; cf. Gleason (2011) 56-60, for her analysis of the Bulla Felix episode, and the inclusion of two other subversive stories in Dio's Severan narrative, which are Dio 75(75).2.4 and Ibid., 76(75).5, which have to do with Claudius, a masquerading Syrian outlaw's infiltration of Severus' camp, and Numerianus the schoolmaster's precipitous military rise and subsequent retirement, respectively. Like Bulla Felix, they both throw the legitimacy of Severus' principate into relief. Of note is this pithy observation by Gleason (2011) 57, on the nature of these anecdotes: 'People enjoyed telling it because such stories were good to think about the legitimacy of imperial power.' As such, these stories were part of the imperial discourse concerning the emperor. Compare with similar discussion in Chapter 4.4.

Thereafter, Dio provides a few stories that illustrate his point, which are the following: Bulla's seeming omniscience in the movements from Rome towards Brundisium;[105] Bulla masquerading as a governor of his country (πλασάμενος ὡς τῆς πατρίδος ἄρχων), being about to persuade the jail-keeper to let two of his captured brigands escape being thrown to the beasts;[106] Bulla, again pretending to be someone else (ὥσπερ ἄλλος τις ὤν), tricking a centurion to follow him on the false information that he would lead him to the bandit leader. He then proceeded to ambush him, and hold a mock trial as a judge (ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα ἀνέβη σχῆμα ἄρχοντος ἀναλαβών), ordering that the centurion's head be shaved, and that he be sent back with the following message: 'ἄγγελλε τοῖς δεσπόταις σου ὅτι τοὺς δούλους ὑμῶν τρέφετε, ἵνα μὴ λῃστεύωσι.'[107] These stories about Bulla Felix are tales of reversal, where the authorities are shown to be incompetent, and the bandit leader instead fulfils the role as a protector of justice, literally masquerading as an authority in defiance of the 'real' authority. According to Brent Shaw's analysis of these passages, Bulla Felix is revealed as an anti-emperor, and should be seen as a semi-fictitious device, used as a challenge to the legitimacy of the sitting emperor whose power could be questioned.[108] This could certainly be the case, but there are several present tensions that require comment.

The description of Bulla Felix as a foil to the authorities, seeking justice for his companions and freedmen at the expense of the emperor and the military, has led to the analysis of this story as an example of a bandit tale, with questions of its historicity and

[105] Dio 77(76).10.2-3.
[106] Ibid., 77.10.3.
[107] Ibid., 77.10.4-5. cf. George (2011) 397 on the representation of slaves in material culture with shaved heads, with the implication that the centurion was in fact a slave. This conflation is enhanced by the next phrases' explanation of the statement, pointing out that many of Bulla's bandits were freedmen. This has similarities in Epictetus' discussion on freedom above in Chapter 2.2, and also the attestation of the emperor's protection of slaves who seek asylum at his statue after maltreatment from their masters. cf. above, 120-123.
[108] Shaw (1984) 48. cf. below Chapter 4.4. on further examples of bandits and the theme of masquerade in Herodian.

meaning.[109] The historiographical impetus for such analyses takes its cue from Eric Hobsbawm's book *Bandits*, in which he argues for the existence of 'social banditry' in peasant societies throughout history.[110] However, the problem of the historicity of such a perception and the reality behind what they convey formed the basis of the scholarly disagreement with Hobsbawm's thesis.[111] In terms of the study of banditry in the Roman world, Brent Shaw has articulated this issue as follows:

> The one aspect of them which cannot be ignored, however, it the question of their historicity. The bandit tales reflect all the tensions between the literate upper-class traditions of their authors and the obvious oral popular milieu from which they were ultimately derived. There can be no doubt that the stories themselves mirror popular aspirations attached to an ideal figure of the bandit, but our enquiry must press the linkage between this popular desire for a figure of protest and empirical reality.[112]

This is a similar predicament to the one discussed further above in Chapter 2.2. No doubt Shaw is correct in the mixed tradition of these stories, and also the stark reality of the actual experience of bandits and their actions in the ancient world.[113] However, the stress on the 'empirical reality' of bandits does not discount the power of the idea on the social imagination, particularly one that Shaw himself argues was a shared phenomenon that transcended social boundaries. Nonetheless, Shaw's careful balance in this statement is something that should be stressed, for one can easily go too far and argue that a story such as Bulla Felix in Dio derives entirely from a tale told amongst slaves.

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[109] Shaw (1984) 46-49; Forsdyke (2012) 39-40, 45.
[110] Hobsbawn (1981) 17: 'The point about social bandits is that they are peasant outlaws whom the lord and the state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported.'
[111] Shaw (1984) 4-5, n. 5.
[112] Shaw (1984) 44.
[113] Ibid., 5, for his discussion of a passage in Galen (Gal. *De Anatomicis Administrationibus* 1.2 (Kühn, C. G. (1981) *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Leipzig) 221-222), where he describes the skeleton of a bandit being left at the side of the road, with the local inhabitants refusing to bury it. cf. Shaw (1984) 5-6, for his discussion of this passage as an example of the complicated reception of bandits, and Ibid., 10, n. 25 for a compilation of inscriptions from across the empire on the tombstones of people who were killed by bandits (*interfectus a latronibus*).

For instance, Forsdyke argues that this episode is a case of slave tale; an example of the hidden transcript of a lower class that sees a world upside down and wished for different power relations.[114] There is a remarkable power to this argument, as Dio's narrative gives the impression of a folk tale: the intrepid bandit's cunning and humorous evasion of the Roman authorities and emperor. However, this cannot be taken in a vacuum or as fully representative of the potential perceptions of the Roman emperor, or that it can reveal a single perspective from one section of society. Instead, it adds to the mosaic of opinion about him and his role in society, which in an alternative implementation of Scott's paradigm would be simultaneous mixing of different hidden transcripts, rather than attempting to place it all as an expression of resistance of the low against the high. Accordingly, there must be a reconciliation between the different strands of discourse about the emperor. As a comparison, the scene in Apuleis' *Metamorphoses*, where in an attempt to get aid and free himself from the bandits who stole him, the attempted exhortation for safety towards the Roman emperor comes out as a donkey's bray.[115] An amusing episode that perhaps points to a wider theme of importance in this section: that the emperor could be seen as a protector against bandits, which is problematised by the Bulla Felix episode.

However, this should not be seen as inconsistent. Instead, it indicates the existence of a discourse that involved contributions between differing perspectives, allowing for the liminal placement of the emperor between the rule of law and banditry, and for him to be interpreted in different ways. This can be observed in the later equation of *regna* with *latrocinia* in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*:

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[114] Forsdyke (2012) 39-41.

[115] Apul. *Met*. 3.29: '*Sed mihi sero quidem, serio tamen subvenit ad auxilium civile decurrere et interposito venerabili principis nomine tot aerumnis me liberare. Cum denique iam luce clarissima vicum quempiam frequentem et nundinis celebrem praeteriremus, inter ipsas turbelas Graecorum genuino sermone nomen augustum Caesaris invocare temptavi. Et "O" quidem tantum disertum ac validum clamitavi, reliquum autem Caesaris nomen enuntiare non potui*.'

> Remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia? quia et latrocinia quid sunt nisi parva regna? Manus et ipsa hominum est, imperio principis regitur, pacto societatis astringitur, placiti lege praeda dividitur. Hoc malum si in tantum perditorum hominum accessibus crescit, ut et loca teneat sedes constituat, civitates occupet populos subiuget, evidentius regni nomen adsumit, quod ei iam in manifesto confert non dempta cupiditas, sed addita inpunitas. Eleganter enim et veraciter Alexandro illi Magno quidam comprehensus pirata respondit. Nam cum idem rex hominem interrogaret, quid ei videretur, ut mare haberet infestum, ille libera contumacia: Quod tibi, inquit, ut orbem terrarum; sed quia <id> ego exiguo navigio facio, latro vocor; quia tu magna classe, imperator.[116]

This negative equation of the political structure of bandit groups and imperial states is striking. It points to the potential of political coercion, economic exploitation, and imperial expansion in both structures, allowing for the comparison to be made. It is remarkable that in the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, there is evidence for calling the emperor 'brigand-leaders', such as in the *Acta Appiani*, Appian calls Commodus a brigand-leader: λῃσταρχος.[117] This is also seen elsewhere in Dio's narrative, in the context of a fragmentary description of the emperor Macrinus' death, in which he invokes the simultaneous distinction and similarity between emperors and bandits, and how his fall meant that he would be treated as a robber:

> φεύγων τε . . . . . σης ἢ νενικη . . . . , δραπετεύσας διὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν ὧν ἦρξε, συλληφθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων ὥσπερ τις λῃστής…[118]

This suggests that a similar direct conflation happens elsewhere and in reference to the Roman emperor.[119] To return to the story of Bulla Felix, the last impression of him provided by Dio is a retort of the bandit leader towards the famous jurist and praetorian prefect Papinian: 'καὶ αὐτὸν ὁ Παπινιανὸς ὁ ἔπαρχος ἀνήρετο 'διὰ τί ἐλῃστευσας;' καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπεκρίνατο 'διὰ τί σὺ ἔπαρχος εἶ;'[120] The implication of this exchange is

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[116] August. *De civ. D.* 4.4.
[117] *APM* 11.B.iv.7-8; For further examples, see Harker (2008) 90, 163.
[118] Dio 79(78).40.4-5.
[119] Indeed, in this and the subsequent chapter of Dio (Ibid., 79(78)40-41, he explores the nature and precariousness of imperial power: how quickly it can be lost, and how paradoxical it can be for one with such power to also be able to lose it. For further discussion on the nature of imperial power and the problem of legitimacy, see Chapter 1.2.
[120] Dio 77(76).10.7; cf. Champlin (2008) 410-411, on how this can be compared to other stories of similar retorts to authority in ancient and world literature. cf. Chapter 4.4.

similar to the Augustine's example of the pirate's reply to Alexander the Great and the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, where brigandry and imperial authority are seen as similar. Thus, there is a spectre for a simultaneously positive or negative impression of the Roman emperor from these stories, just as banditry can be seen in a similar paradoxical light.[121]

In the end, the story of Bulla Felix allows us to access a thought-world of the Roman emperor from a wider perspective. It contains concepts of a mixed social background that reveals differing images of the Roman emperor. In terms of justice, this section has attempted to give an impression of this rich variety of vignettes of the emperor's reception. It is remarkable that so many different fears and expectations of the Roman emperor could exist with respect to justice, meaning that he was the topic of discussion and disagreement in different media across social boundaries. The following sections add to this complexity.

[121] cf. Hobsbawm (1981) 53 for the paradoxical thought that if a bandit is just, then at a certain point he would not be able 'since the noble robber is just, he cannot be in real conflict with the fount of justice, whether divine or human. There are a number of versions of story of conflict and reconciliation between bandit and king…'

3.3: Generosity

> Natura autem benevolentissimus… In ceteris vero desideriis hominum obstinatissime tenuit, ne quem sine spe dimitteret; quin et admonentibus domesticis, quasi plura polliceretur quam praestare posset, non oportere ait quemquam a sermone principis tristem discedere; atque etiam recordatus quondam super cenam, quod nihil cuiquam toto die praestitisset, memorabilem illam meritoque laudatam vocem edidit: "Amici, diem perdidi."[1]

The above anecdote about the emperor Titus provides an illuminating impression of the perceived function of the imperial office.[2] The passage connects two closely related vignettes, justice and generosity, revolving around the expectation of favour from the emperor in the granting of requests. Equally important is the corollary that these requests and expectations would not necessarily always be met, as is shown in the above passage, where Titus' household officials advise him not to promise that which he could not deliver. To take Suetonius' example of Titus as an orthodox ideal would stretch the evidence on the logistics and feasibility of granting requests, but its inclusion helped Millar argue for the ideological expedience of the emperor's benevolence, which in turn added to the spectrum of potential interactions between emperor and subject.[3] Hence, we see similar tensions in the reception of the Roman emperor.

In his discussion of interaction between the emperor and private persons, Millar states that an important function of the emperor was his accessibility.[4] Indeed, this forms a part of a wider 'petition and response' thesis about his conduct towards the general population. As Millar states on the importance of the appearance of being accessible:

> It is crucial to all that has been said, that it was not merely a fact but a general expectation that the emperor would give ear to his subjects, and that the answers they would receive would be in both content and tone in some real sense his own, and would embody the values of that same traditional culture which both they and the

[1] Suet. *Tit*. 8.1.
[2] Millar (1992) 469, for his use of the same passage for the point about a 'conscious ideology' of the emperor to respond favourably to requests, juxtaposed by Millar to anxieties about the success of such approaches, reflected above in Chapter 3.2.
[3] Ibid., 469-470
[4] Ibid., 467.

> emperor shared: the expectation is far more significant than the fact it was not always fulfilled.[5]

This idea of an emperor's accessibility forms part of a wider historiographical theme in the study of the Roman empire and the nature of its society, which involves the understanding of the ideology that governed political and social interactions. Vivian Nutton called this the 'beneficial ideology', which was an intricate social and political contract that ensured peace and prosperity in the Roman empire, bolstered by consensus, and guaranteed by the Roman emperor.[6] This thesis has had a powerful impact on the study of the Roman empire. There is scholarship on a wide range of topics that involve the competition and exchange of benefits across the empire, from the proclamation of local, civic, or provincial identity through the medium of benefaction, to the importance of the emperor within this rubric of imperial benefits.[7] To elaborate further on the latter point, an essential component was the role of the emperor as supreme benefactor in the Roman world, which to Paul Veyne was fundamental to the emperor's *style monarchique*.[8] According to Veyne:

> Liberalities, or what were called such, were an important part of the Emperor's activity in the eyes of the average Roman. *Liberalitas* is the Latin word for the quality that makes a *euergetes*: the Greek work *euergesia,* or good deed, was translated as *beneficium,* benefaction. Ancient historians talk endlessly about the liberalities and benefactions of the Emperor, and either approve or disapprove of them according to their political and religious opinions.[9]

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[5] Millar (1992) 271.
[6] Nutton (1977) 210-214. cf. above Chapter 1.2 for similar themes.
[7] Noreña (2011) 106. There are numerous works on the provincial identity, competition and the concept of euergetism. See in particular: Veyne (1976) for a general overview, Price (1984a) for these themes with the imperial cult; Ando (2000) for both the engendering of provincial loyalty, and the importance of the emperor in the ideological framework; Noreña (2011) 101-177 for a recent discussion on the different 'benefits' of the Roman empire, the nomenclature of virtues that describe them, and their exhibition on coinage; Zuiderhoek (2009) for the importance of euergetism in the political and cultural life of the cities of Roman Asia Minor.
[8] Veyne (1976) *passim*, esp. 622, 636. cf. Noreña (2011) 106-107.
[9] Veyne (1990) 347. cf. Veyne (1976) 621 for the French original. cf. Nutton (1977) 219; cf. Forbis (1996) 29-42, for terms of financial generosity.

There are a few relevant sub-divisions that form part of this theme that require further comment. First, the concentration on the liberalities of the Roman emperor from the perspective of the government of the empire has seen it as a political action in order to encourage loyalty and reciprocal obligation from his subjects.[10] With this in mind, there has been a biased concentration on the importance of the emperor within that ideological framework (i.e. reasons why it would be necessary for him to be seen giving largesses), rather than looking at the perspective of the recipients in this transaction; namely concerning their expectations and fears concerning the emperor's generosity. As discussed above in Chapter 2.2, there are problems of bias with respect to this topic, which involve negative characterisations of the recipients of liberalities, including the citation of oft-quoted aphorisms such as *panem et circenses* and *plebs sordida*.[11] There is nothing incorrect in looking at the perspective of the government apparatus on such actions of generosity, or indeed exploring the prejudices and biases that existed between different sectors of society. However, a more nuanced approach to the interaction between the emperor and the people is required to create a fuller picture of the situation.

This point directs us to the second sub-division, which includes scholarship that has attempted to appreciate the nuances. There has been a significant interest in understanding the public interaction between people and *princeps*, which is the context where such acts of generosity are reported to have taken place. This concentrates predominantly on the city of Rome itself and the discussion of the urban *plebs'* relationship to the Roman emperor, which includes several themes of importance, such as displays of the emperor's

[10] Ando (2000) 201: 'Roman emperors… accepted the consensus of the population as expressed in their acclamations as one measure of their legitimacy. What is more, acclamations by the populace could balance and even suppress the disapproval of the Senate; they were the natural means of expressing gratitude for the *congiaria* and *frumentationes* that the princeps dispensed in his role as protector and patron of the *plebs*.' cf. Forbis (1996) 40, for a similar argument of political gain for the emperor as the reason for the implementation of the *alimenta* scheme. See further below, 149-154.
[11] See Chapter 2.2, 75.

liberality in the exhibition of games, the use of public spaces such as the Circus Maximus, amphitheatre and theatres as forms of communication and demonstration, and the importance of acclamation and theatricality as part of the intricate performance of interaction between the *princeps* and the people.[12] These are important topics of study, and they have been essential in the development of this thesis, but certain points should be stated outright. A thorough repetition of their findings and points would only serve to increase the size of this section exponentially. Therefore, instead of treating these themes separately in their own right as distinct topics, they will rather form the *basso continuo* behind the main theme of this section. In essence, it is about exploring the evidence of the interaction between the emperor and the wider population across the empire in terms of his giving, hopefully revealing the discourse about their hopes and fears in this context.

The evidence of generosity indicates that benefaction is an essential component in an emperor's life.[13] However, the forms and distribution of imperial beneficence is a complex problem with several moving parts, in particular because what could be considered as falling under the emperor's generosity is wide-ranging.[14] The essential point to make about the variegated evidence concerns consistency: it all falls under the rubric of the emperor's benefactions and generosity, even with the appreciation of the political, social, economic, and ideological contexts, as argued by Noreña:

> the subjects of a pre-modern empire had difficulty distinguishing between the institutional apparatus of the state and its embodiment in the figure of the emperor, and, even more important, because the ideal of imperial *beneficia* corresponded to a

[12] On the *plebs* in general, see Yavetz (1969a), Horsfall (2003), and Courrier (2014). On public spaces as arenas of interaction in society, see Yavetz (1969a) 9-37, Veyne (1976) 702-706, Millar (1992) 365-366, Zanker (1988) 147-152, Coleman (1990) 72; cf. Harries (2003) 125-140 for a late antique parallel; On acclamations, see Aldrete (1999) 90-97, Roueché (1984) 182-186, Ando (2000) 201-205; On theatricality and the emperor, Purcell (1999) 181-193, Bartsch (1994), esp. 10-12.

[13] cf. Chapter 1.3.2, for evidence of liberality with members of the imperial family.

[14] Veyne (1990) 347-377; cf. Millar (1992) for his discussion of the emperor's benefactions in different arenas: 368-375 (the people at Rome), 401-410 (on the acquisition of city status and the importance of the emperor), 410-434, 447-456 (for the interactions between cities and the emperor for the securing of privileges, maintenance of status, problems of exemptions, monetary contributions for building projects, reconstructions after natural disaster, and the maintenance of temples, priesthoods and festivals), 477-506 (for grants of citizenships, freedom, cash liberalities and exemptions from local liturgies).

popular *mentalité* and to the desire of the emperor's subjects to image that they were ruled by a "good" sovereign.[15]

Thus, there is an inevitable conflation of these different forms under the banner of the emperor's generosity, which makes it difficult to tease out the nuances of context. The first example from Dio about Marcus Aurelius will highlight the potential anatomy of discourse about imperial generosity. In the epitome of book 72, different examples of the emperor's generous and financial actions appear in the same chapter, something that is also reflected in other texts.[16] The first vignette is of Marcus' return to Rome and his audience with the people, in which there is an interactive scene, in which the people shout and gesture the number eight in order to get gold pieces for banquets, and Marcus replies and gives them eight hundred sesterces each.[17] This fits into the theme of the emperor giving out one-off gifts of money, known as *congiaria*, to the people,[18] and also the equivalent largess, or *donativum,* to the military.[19]

The second vignette involves Marcus Aurelius' remission of debts owed to what Dio calls 'τὸ βασιλικὸν' and 'τὸ δημόσιον', that is, to the *fiscus* and the *aerarium,* the

[15] cf. Noreña (2011) 107, for his discussion of the attribution of all governmental actions to the person of the emperor, citing Veyne (1976) 658-660.

[16] See for example, Suet. *Aug*. 41-42; Suet. *Tib*. 46-48; Suet. *Cal*. 17-18; Suet. *Claud*. 18-21; Suet. *Vesp*. 17-19; Suet. *Tit*. 8.3-4; SHA, *Hadr*. 7.6-12, 10.1, 17.3; SHA, *Ant*. 8-9; cf. Barbieri (1957) 838-877 for the extensive treatment of the different forms of the emperor's liberality, esp. 839 for his discussion on the problem of distinguishing *liberalitas* from *congiaria*, one-off donations to the people, and 875 for the same with *donativi,* similar donations but for the military.

[17] Dio 72(71)32.1-2: 'ἐλθὼν δὲ ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ πρὸς τὸν δῆμον διαλεγόμενος, ἐπειδὴ μεταξὺ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ τά τε ἄλλα καὶ ὅτι πολλοῖς ἔτεσιν ἀποδεδημηκὼς ἦν, ἀνεβόησαν "ὀκτώ" καὶ τοῦτο καὶ ταῖς χερσίν, ἵνα δὴ καὶ χρυσοῦς τοσούτους ἐς τὸ δεῖπνον λάβωσι, προσενεδείξαντο, διεμειδίασε καὶ ἔφη καὶ αὐτὸς "ὀκτώ," καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀνὰ διακοσίας δραχμὰς αὐτοῖς κατένειμεν, ὅσον οὔπω πρότερον εἰλήφεσαν.' Aldrete (1999) 91 on this scene; cf. Dunbabin (2003) 72-102 on public dining and banquets.

[18] Millar (1992) 135-139 for further examples; cf. Barbieri (1957) 837-8 for a discussion on the definitions of *liberalitas* and *congiarium*; '*In senso traslato questa parola esprime il dono concreto che viene dato per liberalità del donatore, per esempio il* congiarium*, ossia la distribuzione di una somma di denaro fatta dall'imperatore al popolo in determinate circostanze*.'

[19] Veyne (1990) 338-341. Some examples: *RG* 15.3; Suet. *Aug* 101.2; Suet. *Tib*. 48.2; Tac. *Ann*. 12.69.2; Plut. *Galb*. 2.2; Suet. *Dom*. 2.3; SHA, *Hadr*. 5.7; SHA, *Marc*. 7.9; Hdn. 1.5.1 On donatives to the military and examples, see Campbell (1984) 165-171. cf. Chapter 1.3.3 for the connection of the *congiaria* and *donativa* with the imperial succession.

treasuries of the emperor and the state, respectively.[20] The problems of distinction in the organisation and revenue of the government's wealth aside, these distinct bodies of wealth nonetheless exhibit a wavering between public and private, which should not be surprising given the ambiguities of the office of the Roman emperor. Here, the power of the emperor is such that a remission of debts for both were under his jurisdiction, which could only add to the idea of the emperor being the primary benefactor in the government, and the primary source of generosity.[21]

The third vignette records Marcus' donations to many cities, in particular a donation to Smyrna for earthquake relief.[22] Importantly, the final phrases of the chapter expose the spectre of refusal in the actions of the Roman emperor:

> ἀφ᾽ οὗπερ καὶ νῦν θαυμάζω τῶν αἰτιωμένων αὐτὸν ὡς οὐ μεγαλόφρονα γενόμενον· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα οἰκονομικώτατος ὡς ἀληθῶς ἦν, τῶν δ᾽ ἀναγκαίων ἀναλωμάτων οὐδὲ ἓν ἐξίστατο, καίπερ μήτε τινὰ ἐσπράξει χρημάτων, ὥσπερ εἶπον, λυπῶν, καὶ πλεῖστα ὅσα ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔξω τῶν ἐγκυκλίων δαπανῶν'.[23]

Dio is incredulous that Marcus was still in the third century being accused of not being generous, offering various examples as evidence to illustrate that the emperor always undertook necessary expenditures, never forcibly exacted money, and also paid above the ordinary expenditures. This elucidates the wide-reach of the emperor's potential generosity and the personal discretion in decisions involving the action and refusal of gift-giving, allowing for an equally wide-range of potential opinions and interpretations

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[20] Dio 72(71)32.2: 'ταῦτά τε ἔπραξε, καὶ τοῖς ὀφείλουσί τι τῷ βασιλικῷ καὶ τῷ δημοσίῳ πᾶσι πάντα τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἀφῆκεν ἀπὸ ἐτῶν ἓξ καὶ τεσσαράκοντα, χωρὶς τῶν ἑκκαίδεκα τοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ· καὶ πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν γράμματα ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ καυθῆναι ἐκέλευσε.' cf. Millar (1963b) 29-42 on the remit of the imperial *fiscus,* and esp. 41 on the difficulty of distinguishing between public and the private in terms of its impact and revenue. cf. Millar (1992) 198-199. On the *aerarium*, see Millar (1964b) 33-40.

[21] cf. Noreña (2011) 107. cf. Barbieri (1957) 876, on evidence on the remission of debts, including the parallel account of remission under Hadrian in Dio (Dio 69.8.1[2]) and the Hadrianic inscription commemorating the event (*CIL* 6.967 = *ILS* 309).

[22] Dio 72(71)32.3: 'χρήματά τε πολλαῖς πόλεσιν ἔδωκεν, ἐν αἷς καὶ τῇ Σμύρνῃ δεινῶς ὑπὸ σεισμοῦ φθαρείσῃ· καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ βουλευτῇ ἐστρατηγηκότι ἀνοικοδομῆσαι προσέταξεν.' cf. Philostr. *VS* 2.9(582) for Marcus' tears at Aelius Aristides' lamentation for Smyrna's devastation. cf. 145, n. 14 above on the emperor's generosity towards cities, esp. Millar (1992) 423.

[23] Dio 72(71)32.3.

of those actions.[24] It is significant that the perception of these actions fell under the ethical rubric of the emperors' generosity, contributing to his perception and legacy. This may feel like a truism, but it needs to be emphasised as it is a different mode of thinking from a more modern economic approach. As with the concept of justice, here there is expectation and fear with respect to generosity.

To tie it further with understandings of justice, it is interesting to note that examples of generosity feature in the *Hadriani Sententiae*. As noted above, the corpus contain examples of interactions between people of different social standing and the emperor Hadrian.[25] Of particular note are petitions on financial issues, such as the case of a woman petitioning against her child's guardian for the dereliction of maintenance payments and the appropriation of the child's *congiarium*:[26]

> Petente quadam muliere de curatore filii sui, qui ei triennium non praestiterat alimenta, et hodie congiarium eius abstulit, Adrianus curator interrogavit, quando esset procurator datus, et si quid praestitisset pupillo. Curator <dixit>, quoniam socius eius absens esset, et non potuisset aliquid solus praestare; Adrianus dixit curatori : "Propter hoc ergo datus es, ut fame neces pupillum? pro modo ergo facultatis alimenta ei praesta."[27]

In this case, Hadrian finds against the guardian and orders him to supply some of the maintenance for his ward in order to prevent the death of the child. It indicates a potential mentality that the emperor's indulgence and generosity would safeguard the maintenance of children. Interestingly, it bears close resemblance to a nearly-mid first century papyrus from near the south coast of the Dead Sea in Arabia. It forms part of the 'Babatha dossier', which contains legal documents on a Jewish woman called Babatha attempting to secure

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[24] cf. Dio 72(71)3.3-4, for the example of an ethical appraisal of Marcus' refusal to give a donative to the troops, exhibiting the necessary characteristics to control the troops. This concern is important in the historiographical understanding of the Roman emperor, as discussed above in Chapter 2.3, in discussing the negative examples of Galba and Otho. However, such refusals allow for the interpretation of him 'οὐ μεγαλόφρονα γενόμενον'.

[25] See above Chapter 3.2, 128-130.

[26] Lewis (1991) 279.

[27] *Hadriani Sententiae* 11 = 3.1879-1895.

the *tropheia* for her son Jesus from the pair of his guardians.[28] Of note is the deposition recorded in *P. Yadin* 15, and in particular lines 5-15, where Babatha argues for the dereliction in duty from the guardians, request for the resumption of maintenance payments through the implementation of an *alimenta* scheme. It involves an interest of 1.5% on a security for her property, which is then sequestered as the child's upkeep. The case progesses, with one of the guardians being summoned to the tribunal on the charges that he profited from the money of the orphan.[29] It is important to note that this sort of thing could and did occur in the empire, and that an illiterate Jewish woman could use legal channels to secure her interests, and that recourse to the Roman government was an option.[30] Thus, the more fictitious *Hadriani Sententiae* and the documentary evidence of the Babatha dossier converge in theme, even if there is no direct appearance of the emperor in the proceedings.[31]

Furthermore, this evidence touches upon another scheme of imperial generosity; namely the *alimenta* in Italy at the turn of the first century.[32] In short, these were fund raising initiatives in order to finance small monthly cash payments for the upkeep of children across Italy. The Veleian inscription of the *alimenta* lists that 245 boys of legitimate birth received sixteen sesterces per month, 34 girls of legitimate birth 12 sesterces per month, and a boy and a girl of illegitimate birth 12 and 10 sesterces per month respectively.[33] They were paid for by the donated interest on a loan given by the

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[28] *P.Yadin* 14ff; 'τροφεῖα' (*P.Yadin* 15. l.6) is also used in the Greek version of the *sententia* (*Hadriani Sententiae* 11 = 3.1880) cf. Lewis (1991) 279 for the connection. See in particular Grubbs (2002) 250-254 for the papyri of the dossier, selected translations, and analysis of the legal problems.
[29] *P. Yadin* 15. ll. 5-15, Online at: www.trismegistos.org/text/23494; Grubbs (2002) 252-253 for translation and commentary.
[30] Grubbs (2002) 251.
[31] There is mention of the governor of Arabia, Julius Julianus (*P. Yadin* 14; *P, Yadin* 15, esp. ll. 10-11: 'μακαριωτάτοις καιροῖς ἡγ[ε]μων[ί]ας Ἰ[ουλίο]υ [Ἰουλιανοῦ…]'. For perceptions of fortune, hope, and a prosperous age, see discussion in Chapter 3.6 and 4.3.
[32] On the explanation of the nature of the system, see Duncan-Jones (1964) 123-124, 145, Duncan-Jones (1976) 288.
[33] *CIL* 11.1147 = *ILS* 6675; cf. Veyne (1990) 367.

government to the landowners.[34] The workings of the loan system, the impact on the economy of Italy, whether or not it reflected agricultural issues, and the debate on their purpose, whether for charitable, eugenic, or ideological reasons, have all interested scholars for generations.[35] However, the rationalisation in the over-explanation of the economics of the *alimenta* may go too far, particularly when other factors outside monetary or demographic gain can help colour decisions. As Bossu puts it when discussing these explanations:

> Au fond, elles veulent toutes "rationaliser" le project: elles lui attribuent une fonction qui est acceptable pour les "utilitaristes" des temps modernes, c'est-a-dire qui ne se content pas de l'*indulgentia* mentionnée dans les inscriptions… L'acte de donner, de se montrer généreux est inhérent à la dignité de l'empereur et les *alimenta* forment un autre exemple.[36]

It is the reported aspect of the recipients that is of interest here, and what that could potentially tell us of the perception of the emperor with respect to the *alimenta* and generosity in general.

A potential example would be Pliny's description of a similar scheme for children at Rome in the *Panegyricus*. In his discussion of Trajan's generosity, Pliny concentrates specifically on children, and thus the beneficiary of alimentary schemes. The first scene, one where the populace gathers for the reception of a *congiarium* is worth furnishing:

> Adventante congiarii die, observare principis egressum in publicum, insidere vias examina infantium futurusque populus solebat. Labor parentibus erat, ostentare parvulos, impositosque cervicibus adulantia verba blandasque voces edocere: reddebant illi, quae monebantur. Ac plerique irritis precibus surdas principis aures adstrepebant; ignarique quid rogassent, quid non impetrassent, donec plane scirent differebantur.[37]

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[34] Duncan-Jones (1976) 288.

[35] For analysis of these issues, see Veyne (1990) 367-377, Duncan-Jones (1976) 291-319, Patterson (1987) 124-144, and esp. Bossu (1989) 373-382, for a clear description of the scholarship on the *alimenta.* For the issues of Trajan's scheme and the demographic makeup of the participant landowners, see Garnsey (1968) 367-381; For the argument of increasing the birthrate of Italy, see Duncan-Jones (1964) 127 and Patterson (1987) 127-133. For stress on the ideological and a careful refutation of previous arguments, see Woolf (1990) 197-228. See Houston (1992-3) 97-105 for an illuminating discussion on what farmers could spend the loan money on in agricultural terms. For a more recent discussion and scholarship, see Pagé (2012) and Dall'Aglio et al. (2014).

[36] Bossu (1989) 382.

[37] Plin. *Pan*. 26.1-3.

Pliny provides a vivid picture of the customary expectations and fears of the populace at the appearance of the Roman emperor: they place their children on their shoulders and teach them to get the attention of an emperor passing by, in hope of receiving favour, but in realisation of probable rejection.[38] It is an acknowledgement that not all requests could be acquiesced to, and that it was an issue in perpetuity. Pliny switches to Trajan's perspective, and commends his refusal for the alternative of them being enrolled into the care of the government, from the *alimenta* as children to the *stipendia* of the military:[39]

> Tu ne rogari quidem sustinuisti, et quamquam laetissimum oculis tuis esset conspectu Romanae sobolis impleri, omnes tamen, antequam te viderent adirentve, recipi, incidi iussisti, ut iam inde ab infantia parentem publicum munere educationis experirentur, crescerent de tuo, qui crescerent tibi, alimentisque tuis ad stipendia tua pervenirent, tantumque omnes uni tibi, quantum parentibus suis quisque deberent.[40]

The temporal aspect is reiterated by Pliny, who turns to the future to argue for the securement of stability and prosperity, and the importance of the emperor in the direction of the *pauperes*:[41]

> Locupletes ad tollendos liberos ingentia praemia et pares poenae cohortantur, pauperibus educandi una ratio est bonus princeps. Hic fiducia sui procreatos nisi larga manu fovet, auget, amplectitur, occasum imperii, occasum rei publicae accelerat frustraque proceres plebe neglecta, ut desectum corpore caput nutaturumque instabili pondere, tuetur. Facile est coniectare quod perceperis gaudium, cum te parentum, liberorum, senum, infantium clamor exciperet. Haec prima parvulorum civium vox aures tuas imbuit, quibus tu daturus alimenta hoc maximum praestitisti, ne rogarent.[42]

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[38] This passage reveals the spectre of impossibility at meeting all requests, and the difficulty of interaction and accessibility in terms of logistics and the emperor's refusal. cf. Millar (1992) 469; cf. Chapter 3.2, 128-130 for further discussion, and Chapter 3.5 for similar vignettes of interaction.

[39] cf. Patterson (1987) 127-128 for the argument that the *alimenta* fit into a Trajanic ideology for the replenishment of the military, citing Plin. *Pan*. 28.

[40] Plin. *Pan*. 26.3. cf. Woolf (1990) 226 for a comment on the connection of the image of *pater patriae* with the alimentary scheme–the parental concern for children seen directly, and as a metaphor for the emperor's generosity in general. Compare with familial terms discussed in Chapter 1.3.1.

[41] It is interesting to note the care for posterity in this passage: (Plin. *Pan*. 26.4) *'Recte, Caesar, quod spem Romani nominis sumptibus tuis suscipis. Nullum est enim magno principe immortalitatemque merituro impendii genus dignius, quam quod erogatur in posteros.'* The mention of *spes* is of importance, as it opens up a different conversation about the hope for a secure future. For further discussion on these themes, see Chapter 3.6 and 4.3.

[42] Plin. *Pan*. 26.5-7. Note the inclusion of the Platonic image of a body without a head, with the analogy being the destruction of the state; cf. discussion of this imagery in Plutarch, Chapter 2.3.

The image is that of the emperor being the ultimate *tutor* in the lives of the people, and perhaps their only failsafe. This is an important point, and perhaps also a truism: the implication is that the actions of the emperor had repercussions down the social scale, meaning that his action and words mattered to them. One could accuse Pliny of laudatory hyperbole as is the wont in panegyrical literature,[43] yet this idea of the emperor as a safeguard of justice and aid is reflected elsewhere, as shown above, and also by honorific inscriptions on behalf of the children of the *alimenta* in Italy. The evidence is as follows.

They range in location and time period, from the beginning of the scheme in the first years of the first century AD to the early years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius in the 160s, and come from the mountains of Umbria to the coast of Latium.[44] All of them contain similar, but not identical, formulaic dedications to the current emperor or a potential successor, sometimes mentioning the emperor's *liberalitas* and *indulgentia*, and then the mention of the dedicators (variations of *pueri et puellae alimentari*) save for one from Sestinum in Umbria, in which the recently deceased Antoninus Pius is the dedicatee.[45] The earliest one in the dossier, from Ameria, is set up by public decree, and perhaps funded by the municipality, but the majority seem as if they were dedicated by the beneficiaries themselves.[46] Thus, there is an impression of a direct line of commemoration between the *pueri et puellae* of the scheme and the emperor. Scholarly debate has been undertaken on the cost of these dedications, which could perhaps reveal

[43] However, see Bartsch (1994) 148-154, for a different analysis of Pliny's *Panegyricus* as an attempted reconciliation between 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts of the emperor's subjects, using Scott's paradigm to explain Pliny's argument, and an attempt to distance it from the view of it as an unproblematic representative of imperial ideology. cf. Chapter 2.2.

[44] cf. Woolf (1990) 206 for his discussion of these inscriptions. *CIL* 11.4351 (Ameria, 101-102 AD); *CIL* 11.5989 = *ILS* 328 (Tifernum Mataurense, 136 AD); *CIL* 11.5956 (Pitinum Mergens 139 AD); *CIL* 11.5957 (Pitinum Mergens, 149 AD); *CIL* 9.5700 (Cupra Montana AD. 148-149); *CIL* 11.6002 (Sestinum, 161 A.D.); *CIL* 14.4003 = *ILS* 6225 (Ficulea, 162 A.D.); *AE* (2009) 207 (Cereatae Marianae, Hadrianic date: the mention of his third consulship gives a *terminus post quem* of 119 A.D., but the inscription is quite fragmentary, with the reconstruction of the word *puellae* being the clue that this is an alimentary dedication); *CIL* 11.5395 = *ILS* 6620 (Asisium - unknown emperor)

[45] *CIL* 11.6002: '*divo | Antonino | Aug(usto) Pio | alimentari(i)*.'

[46] Woolf (1990) 206.

the economic situation of the beneficiaries involved in the scheme. In particular, Duncan-Jones and Woolf are diametrically opposed on whether or not they were actually poor, with Duncan-Jones arguing that the low rate of the subsidies meant that they were for the poor, and Woolf arguing for a wider range of statuses.[47] However, not all of the beneficiaries had to be extremely poor or destitute to the extent that building a statue became unaffordable, and also it is dangerous to assume that the *alimenta* were the sole source of subsistence for these children. Decrying the material effectiveness of the *alimenta* should not discount what the act of liberality could mean to the community and society. Indeed, this is where both scholars more or less line up in thought. As Duncan-Jones argues:

> exchanges of this kind were important in Roman munificence: the recipient was expected to show tangible signs of gratitude as part of the social rapport which the gift established.[48]

Woolf pushes this idea further, and argues that these inscriptions should be read as part of the reciprocal network of patronage and *beneficia*, thus stressing the ideological aspect of the *alimenta* scheme as a method of symbolic binding of the emperor with people and communities across the Italian peninsula.[49] Thus, what is more important to him than the demographic, economic, and agricultural impact of the *alimenta* is their performative aspect as a cultivation of the relationship between the emperor and his subjects, and indeed that such interactions were a two-way street.[50] It places the *alimenta* within the wider network of the emperor's benefactions, and one in which the recipients took an

[47] Duncan-Jones (1976) 301-302 and Woolf (1990) 206-207
[48] Duncan-Jones (1976) 302.
[49] Woolf (1990) 226-227.
[50] Ibid., 227-228: 'The *alimenta* were theatre, drama played out by the emperors to the people with the imperial and local aristocracies taking bit parts. Appreciating that theatre involves entering into the thought world of the participants: such *verstehen* can only ever be partly realised, but the contextualisation of the alimentary schemes in customs of food-giving and patronage, in imperial myth and moral crisis can evoke a shadow of the original performance.'

active role within this performance of reciprocity, thus binding different people from different backgrounds together under the rubric of the emperor's generosity.

These vignettes of imperial generosity leave the impression of an ideological concern for the presentation of the emperor as being 'good'. It is notable that the evidence that points to potential opinions of a wider population on this matter seem to conform to these notions, thus confirming Veyne and Noreña's 'beneficial' emperor in an age where no one talked politics.[51] One should not despair and think that this is a façade, and that the engagement of a wider population in the framework of the beneficial ideology is false or simply a ruse to confuse the dominant in society, for it seems to be a fundamental aspect of how the Roman empire functioned.[52] However, it would be incorrect to assume that this was the only manner in which the emperor was perceived, thus leaving the picture incomplete. What follows is an attempt to colour in other aspects of a fragmentary picture with evidence that points to the wondrous, fantastical, teratological, and humorous; vignettes of the Roman emperor that deserve attention and closer scrutiny.

[51] Veyne (1990) 295-296; cf. Noreña (2011) 106-107.
[52] cf. Chapter 2.2.

3.4: Wonder Tales

The topics of conversation about the Roman emperor that have been discussed thus far are ones that figure prominently in historical treatments of the Roman empire, namely concerning themes of the dispensation of law and justice, the importance of benefaction and euergetism in political and social relationships across the empire, and what each contributes to the historical understanding of the interactions between the emperor and his subjects. These are essential components to understanding the function of the emperor in the Roman world. Needless to say, this chapter has been indebted to the depth and breadth of Millar's *Emperor in the Roman World*. Despite the criticisms levied against him by Keith Hopkins on what had been left out,[1] the vast array of topics covered by Millar concerning the different aspects of the emperor's life and duties is astounding, even more so due to the convincing argument of 'petition and response' that weaves throughout the work.[2] That there is often a perception of a personal interaction of the emperor with his subjects in different contexts is a phenomenon that should not be understated, for it seemed ideologically incumbent for the emperor to be seen as accessible to his subjects.[3] Millar's project is therefore to delineate the emperor's role in the government of the empire, looking at where, how, and with whose assistance he conducted the business of governance. However, the focus here is to explore how the emperor seemed instead, meaning that the impressions and perceptions of the Roman emperor from the viewpoint of his subjects had an effect on the way the emperor was thought and talked about.

Whereas Millar was constructing a historical understanding of the emperor's duties, this thesis is focused on the historically relevant perception of the Roman emperor from the perspective of his subjects, and how it manifests in the discourse about him. The

[1] Hopkins (1978b) 178-186.
[2] cf. Chapter 3.2-3 for a deeper discussion of this argument.
[3] Millar (1992) 3-4.

content of this discourse has been the focus of this chapter in particular. Much of the content of this discourse necessarily coincides with the content that Millar provides. However, a focus on how people perceive and what they say about the Roman emperor allows for a greater prominence of spurious or fictive sources and perspectives.[4] What this means is that different relevant perspectives of the Roman emperor can be constructed, which involve seemingly contradictory and ambiguous representations. When taken together, the juxtapositions seem inherently bizarre, to the extent that it seems unbelievable that they could be characterising the same figure. However, this can be reconciled and explained. First, what is important to assert is that the variant vignettes of the emperor that are discussed in this section and in this chapter as a whole should be seen together in a continuum that comprises the thought-world on what the emperor was. Given the perspectives that aggregate to form this thought-world, it should not be surprising that the emperor could be interpreted as an ambiguous or contradictory figure.

Second, there are several axes in which the emperor is caught in the middle, which leads to an assertion that he is a liminal figure: caught between polarities of morality, power, and divinity, which makes the understanding of his nature extremely difficult. However, this is only problematic if one insists in a consistent characterisation of the Roman emperor–that the historical understanding of his actions had to be logical, rational, and neatly delineated. Put in another way, this means that he could be different things to different people, suggesting that perspective mattered, and that he could occupy roles that seem illogical and irrational, particularly to a modern observer. This also means that polarised perspectives of the Roman emperor which seem unequivocal are just as valid as hazy and ethereal perspectives, that is that perspectives on the emperor's more administrative and judicial roles as delineated over a century ago by Theodor Mommsen

[4] See discussion in Chapter 2.2.

in his *Staastrecht* are still just as important as more monstrous impressions. In the end, they all come together under the discourse of the emperor, co-existing simultaneously in the discussions of what he was, is, and meant to be. This suggests that anything could be cited and alluded to, leading back to the impression of an enigmatic and contradictory figure. However, the discourse is reconciled by it being a function of the different perspectives that form that impression. They form a map of the potential roles and guises that the emperor was cast in, allowing for the construction of a historical framework that appreciates these disparate perspectives as being historically relevant openings into how and what the subjects of the emperor thought about him.

This section in particular explores the gaudy side of the emperor, examining the evidence for the emperor's proximity to *mirabilia* and wonder. Perhaps the most important thing to stress here is how the content of these stories is not the most absurd or bizarre component from a modern perspective, but rather how normal it seems for the emperor to be a part of miraculous and wondrous stories, and that it could be conceived of in the same breath as more realistic and concrete examples of an emperor's duties and actions.[5] His status as emperor meant that there was a cognitive association between him and the wondrous. This means that he could be seen in roles that suggest ambiguity and contradiction, or instance as an arbiter and patron of oddity as opposed to a monster himself. However, this seeming polarity becomes hazier when both characterisations exist simultaneously in discourse. In the end, they both populate the thought-world about what the emperor seemed to be, thus both contributing to his reception.

An interesting example that can act as a bridge between the themes of justice and generosity to tales of wonder is an excerpt from Menander Rhetor. It comes from his

[5] A neat example of this seeming contradiction is the triumph, which is discussed in greater detail further below, 172-173.

basilikos logos, a third century epideictic treatise on how to compose an imperial encomium:[6]

> Καὶ ἐν μὲν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τὸ ἥμερον τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ὑπηκόους ἐπαινέσεις, τὴν πρὸς τοὺς δεομένους φιλανθρωπίαν, τὸ εὐπρόσοδον. Οὕτως οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τόν πόλεμον ἔργοις ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῖν θαυμάσιος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατ' εἰρήνην θαυμασιώτερος· τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἀγάσαιτο τῶν ἔργων; καὶ προσθήσεις ὅτι καθάπερ οἱ Ἀσκληπιάδαι σώζουσι τοὺς ἀρρωστοῦντας, ἢ καθάπερ τοὺς καταφεύγοντας ἐπὶ τὰ ἄσυλα τεμένη τοῦ κρείττονος ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ῥᾳστώνης τυγχάνοντας (οὐ γὰρ ἀποσπᾶν ἐπιχειροῦμεν οὐδένα) οὕτως ὁ βασιλέως ὄψεσιν ἐντυχὼν τῶν δεινῶν ἀπήλλακται.[7]

This particular passage is about the commendation of the emperor for his justice, which involves his gentleness towards subjects, humanity towards the needy, and accessibility (εὐπρόσοδον). It has references to themes about the perception of the emperor that have already been discussed above, and it provides an interesting counterpart to Millar's thesis of the Emperor at work.[8] Furthermore, there are parallels to the idea of refuge and asylum, in that he who comes into the sight of the emperor would be set free from peril.[9] That this passage appears in a handbook on imperial encomia, laudatory orations on praising the Roman emperor, would perhaps discount it as material of excessive flattery, or templates from which further examples of laudation could be embellished.[10] However, such a conclusion would discount the interesting parallels in other evidence. Even if not literally veracious, that this passage is from the discourse about how one should talk about an emperor is relevant to the theme at hand. Perhaps more importantly, it forms a bridge between a thematic and conceptual divide in both this section and the evidence; between the realistic and the wondrous. The translation by Russell and Wilson renders the second line of the excerpt as 'thus not only is the emperor to be admired for his deeds in war, but

[6] Men. Rhet. II. 368: 'Ὁ βασιλικὸς λόγος ἐγκώμιόν ἐστιν βασιλέως.'
[7] Ibid., 375.8-18
[8] See above Chapter 3.2
[9] See above discussion on the emperor's statue as a place of refuge, in Chapter 3.2, 120-125.
[10] See above Chapter 2.2 on the problems of interpretation. cf. Rees (2002) 25-25 on the issue of excessive flattery in panegyric.

even more so for his acts in peace.' The conveyed meaning of the phrase is not incorrect, save perhaps potential latitude of meaning from the word θαυμάσιος. This could entail something admirable, but also wondrous, extraordinary, and moving towards the absurd. Such a phrase would then imply that the actions and conduct of the emperor were something that could be described as wondrous.

The purpose of the following section is to explore and describe the stories of the Roman emperor that involve wondrous topics, including his appearance in wonder tales, *mirabilia,* and paradoxographical literature.[11] Before relevant evidence can be discussed, certain points need to be made. The section will be split up as follows: First, there will be a discussion of the appearance of *mirabilia* and paradoxography in ancient literature, and connected relevant themes, which involves the problems of locating the wondrous in knowledge and the world, the importance of imperialism and Rome itself as a place to order, collect, and display wonders, and the issues of morality and fiction with respect to the interest in *mirabilia*. Second, there will be a discussion of the relevance of the themes outlined previously in the reception of the Roman emperor, with a particular concentration on previous interpretations of the emperor and his association with *mirabilia*. Third is the discussion of the different evidence that connects the emperor with *mirabilia*, which will consider, respectively, the emperor being a patron and arbiter of wonders, and his characterisations as a monster himself within various contexts, such as in the arena, triumphal procession, the gardens at Rome, and at court. However, the dichotomy between the two should not be overstressed, as both appear simultaneously in discourse, showing that the line between the emperor as a patron of wonders and a wonder himself was hazy, and that he was seen to take on different guises.

[11] cf. Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 155: 'It is thought that works of paradoxography appealed both to an elite audience, including those with antiquarian interests and authors using the compilations for their own writings, and to a non-elite audience as the subject was simultaneously entertaining and educational.'

First, on the nature of *mirabilia*, and their appearance in ancient literature. With the campaigns of Alexander the Great and the birth of the Hellenistic successor kingdoms thereafter, came a growing curiosity and interest in paradoxographical treatises and literature, which recorded fantastic stories about paradoxical and unbelievable phenomena.[12] As Gabba stated in an article about the tastes for truth and falsity in historical literature:

> The extension of geographical knowledge after Alexander encouraged contact with distant peoples, to whom strange customs could be attributed, and with previously unknown countries, where stories of the most fantastic kind could be located. The result was the emergence of a literature which was specifically and explicitly paradoxographical; in some cases, for instance that of Callimachus, learned research was involved; but the result for the most part was a pseudo-historical literature, popular and escapist.[13]

The existence of both the genre, and its stories within other forms of literature, show the curiosity and taste for the wondrous. There are certain aspects that require further discussion, some of which were alluded to in the Gabba quotation above: namely, the connection of the wondrous to spatial configuration and the expansion of empire; and the problems of credibility and fiction, with closely concomitant issues such as the interest of these stories in the evidence, the moral depravity of such interests, their status as baser forms of curiosity and literature, and thus their 'popular' appeal.

It is difficult to pin down the location of *mirabilia* in the world. It would be simpler to argue that the spatial configuration of such stories could be delineated according to the distant and the near, with the geographically and conceptually 'far' being simultaneously the location of wondrous things. This is no doubt part of the story, but it would be

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[12] Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 403-408; Gabba (1981) 52-53; Beagon (2005) 18-20. Even with its existence in prior literature, the idea of an expanded interest should not be underestimated. cf. Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 380-408, for a description of the genre in Greek literature: the organisation of their works, concerns, and arguments for credibility; cf. Ibid., 425-442, for the various appearances of paradoxographical tales in different genres of literature. cf. Dench (2005) 283-287, for a brief history on the taste for the strange, from Homer through Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age, to the displays of the Roman potentates of the late Republic.

[13] Gabba (1981) 53.

incomplete. Further to the problem of geographical distance are the interactions between the centre and the edges, the celestial and infernal, and the temporal.[14] This tension could be described as the simultaneous distance and proximity in the concept of the wondrous. In other words, there is a symbiotic relationship between the distant and the adjacent, whether in geographical, spatial, or temporal terms. This is well exemplified by two passages of Plutarch. The first comes in the *proemium* to his *Life of Theseus*, in which he depicts both a simultaneous curiosity in edges of the world and the haziness of the inquiry, for reasons of distance (in its different meanings) and the lack of knowledge, allowing for their population with incredible and wondrous things:

> Ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς γεωγραφίαις, ὦ Σόσσιε Σενεκίων, οἱ ἱστορικοὶ τὰ διαφεύγοντα τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτῶν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις μέρεσι τῶν πινάκων πιεζοῦντες, αἰτίας παραγράφουσιν ὅτι "τὰ δ᾽ ἐπέκεινα θῖνες ἄνυδροι καὶ θηριώδεις", ἢ "πηλὸς ἀιδνής", ἢ "Σκυθικὸν κρύος", ἢ "πέλαγος πεπηγός," οὕτως ἐμοὶ περὶ τὴν τῶν βίων τῶν παραλλήλων γραφὴν τὸν ἐφικτὸν εἰκότι λόγῳ καὶ βάσιμον ἱστορίᾳ πραγμάτων ἐχομένῃ χρόνον διελθόντι, περὶ τῶν ἀνωτέρω καλῶς εἶχεν εἰπεῖν· "τὰ δ᾽ ἐπέκεινα τερατώδη καὶ τραγικά, ποιηταὶ καὶ μυθογράφοι νέμονται, καὶ οὐκέτ᾽ ἔχει πίστιν οὐδὲ σαφήνειαν.[15]"

Thus, the temporal distance of Plutarch's subject matter leads him into an apology for his method, moving from the world of reason and basis in historical actions to that of the monstrous, poetical and mythographical.[16] Furthermore, it seems that geographical and temporal distance are equated here; both are locations where wondrous things exist, suggesting that these different types of distance were conceptually similar. Accordingly, the location of *mirabilia* is far away in this description.

However, this temporal and spatial distance is juxtaposed with the appearance of wondrous phenomena at the centre, exemplified by Rome in Plutarch's second passage. As the nucleus of the empire, Rome was the place were *mirabilia* would be transported

[14] Beagon (2007) 21-35, for a careful discussion of these different locations of the wondrous, especially in Pliny's *Natural History*.
[15] Plut. *Thes*. 1.1-3.
[16] cf. Bowersock (1994) 1-27 for a discussion of such intersections in ancient literature.

and displayed as part of the trappings of imperial expansion.[17] This status of Rome as a locus for curiosities is seen in the second Plutarch passage, from the treatise *De Curiositate* in the *Moralia*:

> Ὥσπερ οὖν ἐν Ῥώμῃ τινὲς τὰς γραφὰς καὶ τοὺς ἀνδριάντας καὶ νὴ Δία τὰ κάλλη τῶν ὠνίων παίδων καὶ γυναικῶν ἐν μηδενὶ λόγῳ τιθέμενοι περὶ τὴν τῶν τεράτων ἀγορὰν ἀναστρέφονται, τοὺς ἀκνήμους καὶ τοὺς γαλεάγκωνας καὶ τοὺς τριοφθάλμους καὶ τοὺς στρουθοκεφάλους καταμανθάνοντες καὶ ζητοῦντες εἴ τι γεγένηται " σύμμικτον εἶδος καὶ ἀποφώλιον τέρας", ἀλλ' ἐὰν συνεχῶς τις ἐπαγάγῃ τοῖς τοιούτοις αὐτοὺς θεάμασι, ταχὺ πλησμονὴν καὶ ναυτίαν παρέξει, οὕτως οἱ τὰ περὶ τὸν βίον ἀστοχήματα καὶ γενῶν αἴσχη καὶ διαστροφάς τινας ἐν οἴκοις ἀλλοτρίοις καὶ πλημμελείας πολυπραγμονοῦντες τῶν πρώτων ἀναμιμνησκέτωσαν ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι χάριν καὶ ὄνησιν οὐδεμίαν ἥνεγκε.[18]

Plutarch's purpose here is to comment on the taste of his described πολυπράγμονες,[19] whose interest lies not in the beautiful and intellectual, but the irregular and deformed,[20] catered by the so-called 'market of monsters', in which you could find people with no calves, short arms, three eyes, and bird-heads, along with other wonders of 'commingled shape and misformed prodigy.'[21] Thus, the τέρατα of legend and foreign lands are brought into the centre of the empire, for the tastes and consumptions of its inhabitants, meaning that there is an experiential factor in the encounter of the wondrous that problematises its distance and unbelievability.

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[17] Beagon (2007) 29-31 for Rome as the location of the wondrous; cf. Rutledge (2012) for Rome as a place for collecting wonders, intersecting especially with artifacts and art history, and esp. 221ff for the place of the Emperor in this rubric; cf. Murphy (2004) 20, for a discussion of how Pliny's *Natural History* places Rome at the centre of a world of knowledge, bordered by the exotic. cf. Clavel-Lévêque (1984), esp. 15-16 for the status of the games at Rome as the arena of social interaction, and the space in which the exotic and wondrous were displayed–a sign of Rome's widespread domination of nature and the world; cf. Edwards (1993) 119; Gunderson (2003) 637-658.

[18] Plut. *Mor.* 520.C-E. cf. a discussion of this in Trentin (2011) 197, including the comparison with a passage in Quintilian on the higher price of deformed slaves, also echoing sentiments described by Plutarch in the above quotation – (Quint. *Inst.* 2.5.11: '*Nam sermo rectus et secundum naturam enuntiatus nihil habere ex ingenio videtur; illa vero quae utcumque deflexa sunt taminquam exquisitiora miramur non aliter quam distortis et quocumque modo prodigiosis corporibus apud quosdam maius est pretium quam iis quae nihil ex communis habitus bonis perdiderunt.*'

[19] On *polypragmosyne*, see Leigh (2013), esp. 123 on the emperor's status as a *curiosus* himself.

[20] cf. Mart. 8.13 for an example of a potential πολυπράγμων, who was left disappointed in his search for an unintelligent slave: '*Morio dictus erat: viginiti milibus emi. redde mihi nummos, Gargiliane; sapit.*'

[21] The quotation is a fragment from Euripides' *Cretans* (Eur. *Fr.* 472a = 996), here given in the Loeb translation of Plutarch's *Moralia.* Further commentary on the translation and the other appearances of the fragments is done in the main text.

There are other themes relevant to the wondrous in the above. For instance, it is important to comment on the Euripides fragment that Plutarch alludes to in this passage. Other than in the *Moralia*, it appears in a different form in his *Life of Theseus*, ending instead with κἀποφώλιον βρέφος, a 'hybrid birth of monstrous shape', rather than the 'marvel' or 'portent' that is referred to with τέρας.[22] The word ἀποφώλιον has been rendered differently in different commentaries, but there is a meaning of 'emptiness' or 'sterility'. Perhaps there is also a reference to the word φωλεία, which denotes a bestial life in a hole or a cave.[23] This phrase therefore denotes both a depravity and uniqueness– not repeated and without offspring–in the teratological. This meaning should be a part of the passage inserted by Plutarch into his description of the monster-market. Moreover, there is also an encounter of intellectual, mythological and the teratological in Plutarch's choice of phrase. The allusion to Euripides would perhaps be satisfactory to intellectual erudition, but it is important to note that it comes from the context of the description of the Minotaur; an evocation of the mythological, present at the market in Rome.

Citation of this particular myth brings to mind an example in Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum* of what Coleman called 'Fatal Charades': examples of capital punishment being exacted through the spectacle of mythological reenactments.[24] In this particular poem, Martial describes a staged scene of bestiality in the new Colosseum that was a rendition of the mythological scene of Pasiphaë and the bull; the union that bore the Minotaur:

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[22] Plut. *Thes*. 15.2; Translation from the Loeb edition.

[23] A *TLG* search produced an entry for the word in the *Lexicon* of Photius, a ninth century patriarch of Constantinople: Photius, *Lexicon* (A-Δ) 2719 'Ἀποφώλιον· ὀλίγου ἄξιον, ἀπαίδευτον, ἄτεχνον, μάταιον. οἱ δὲ ἄγριον ἢ ἀδόκιμον ἢ θηριώδη, ἀπὸ τῶν φωλεῶν.'

[24] Coleman (1990) 63-64: Coleman discusses the scene in the context of bestiality in the Roman world, within a history of staged executions. cf. Bowersock (1994) 8-9 for a similar comment on Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum*. cf. Gunderson (2003) 637ff., for a more general appraisal of the arena as a locus for communication, Wiedemann (1992) 3ff., on games as an interactive play of power, and cf. Edwards (1993) 99ff., for a similar argument with respect to theatre, especially with concern for the moral aspect.

> Iunctam Pasiphaen Dictaeo credite tauro: vidimus, accepit fabula prisca fidem. nec se miretur, Caesar, longaeva vetustas: quidquid Fama canit, praestat harena tibi.[25]

An ancient tale is rendered a reality in the arena under the auspices of the emperor; a story of temporal distance brought close for autopsy and thus made more credible. It is therefore conceptually similar to the description of Plutarch's monster-market and an interest in *mirabilia*. Furthermore, it suggests a continual play between different worlds, which perhaps would be more simply and more comfortably kept separate, but instead belong together in the same conceptual space. Therefore, 'fact' and 'fiction', 'myth' and 'reality', 'intellectual' and 'baser' pursuits are mixed together in the perception of the wondrous.

This wavering is also present in the issues of fiction and morality with respect to *mirabilia*. Both the passages of Plutarch above highlight these issues. The first one illustrates the problem of the line between fiction and history:[26] there seems to be a haziness between what could be considered truth or fiction, and thus what could be included in a work about historical events. Indeed, Plutarch states in the same chapter that he attempted to infuse reason into what he called τὸ μυθῶδες and thus take on the guise of history,[27] which seems to concede a symbiotic relationship between what was considered true or false, rather than arguing that it is an example of the stark polarity between the historical and the legendary, which is something that is reflected in wonder tales. This is similar to what Bowersock argued in his appraisal of literature in the early Roman empire, and was essential to his argument for understanding of its history: 'For

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[25] Mart. *Spect*. 6(5). Allusion to the patronage of the emperor here is key, as Martial places him as the overseer of the re-enaction of myth, meaning that he is the patron of the wondrous. This idea will be elaborated further below, 173-174.

[26] cf. above Chapter 2.2 and Bowersock (1994) 1-27.

[27] Plut. *Thes*. 1.5: 'εἴη μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐκκαθαιρόμενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἱστορίας ὄψιν· ὅπου δ' ἂν αὐθαδῶς τοῦ πιθανοῦ περιφρονῇ καὶ μὴ δέχηται τὴν πρὸς τὸ εἰκὸς μεῖξιν, εὐγνωμόνων ἀκροατῶν δεησόμεθα καὶ πράως τὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν προσδεχομένων.' These are lines of equivocation rather than complete contrast, pointing to a potential spectrum of believability left to the decision of the reader. Despite the potential lack of credibility, the fabulous are still recorded. cf. Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 383 for the concern for credibility, by citing authorities on the subject and autopsy. cf. Plin. *NH*. 7.8 and Gell. 9.4.3, 13, for similar citations of authority in the discussion of paradoxical stories.

any coherent and persuasive interpretation of the Roman empire it becomes obvious that fiction must be viewed as part of its history.'[28] It follows that *mirabilia* would fall under this understanding.[29]

Indeed, such arguments appear elsewhere. At the beginning of book 7 of the *Natural History*, Pliny discusses that which he does not want to omit from his study of the human animal: the stories about peoples who live far from the sea, which would seem to be *prodigiosa* and *incredibilia* in the views of many.[30] Pliny proceeds to justify his choice by blurring the line between the credible and incredible:

> Quis enim Aethiopas ante quam cerneret credidit? Aut quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit? Quam multa fieri non posse prius quam sunt facta iudicantur? Naturae vero rerum vis atque maiestas in omnibus momentis fide caret, si quis modo partes eius ac non totam complectatur animo… Nec tamen ego in plerisque eorum obstringam fidem meam potiusque ad auctores relegabo, qui dubiis reddentur omnibus, modo ne sit fastidio Graecos sequi, tanto maiore eorum diligentia vel cura vetustiore.[31]

Within Pliny's universalising rubric of knowledge concerning nature, the possibility of the miraculous becomes more feasible, particularly when the unknown slowly becomes the known. Nonetheless, this argument does not discount the possibility of fiction, and trust has to be placed in the authors who transmit these stories, with the ultimate onus remaining on the audience about whether or not to buy into them. A similar dilemma is presented by Aulus Gellius. It describes the story of transit between Greece and Italy, where Gellius happened upon old Greek paraodoxography books. He describes them as being simultaneously unbelievable, and from authors of some authority:

> Erant autem isti omnes libri Graeci miraculorum fabularumque pleni, res inauditae, incredulae, scriptores veteres non parvae auctoritatis.[32]

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[28] Bowersock (1994) 12; cf. Gabba (1981) 54 for a similar argument and the vexatious problem of distinguishing 'true' and 'false' as experienced by ancient historiographers.
[29] cf. Bowersock (1994) 31-37 for this argument
[30] Plin. *NH*. 7.6; cf. Beagon (2005) 116-117: Pliny implies the Mediterranean with it being the centre of the system, meaning populations far away were exotic in their distance from it.
[31] Plin. *NH*. 7.6-8. The omitted lines contain further examples of the great variety in humanity and nature, and accordingly the logic of their difficulty in comprehension.
[32] Gell. 9.4.1-3.

He then states that he includes some of the stories, so that the reader would not be ignorant to them, which echoes Pliny's sentiment.[33] Later in the text, Gellius bemoans the interest in *non idoneae scripturae taedium,* but at the same time justifies their inclusion with mention of Pliny himself, who he states was a writer of great authority, and not only had heard and read, but also had known and seen that which he wrote.[34] Therefore, there seems to be a disdainful, but keen, interest in these tales.

Therefore, the line of fiction and fact is difficult to delineate. Perhaps it is the ambiguity of these stories that is appealing, as they occupy liminal spaces in the mind.[35] Indeed, this could be said of the moral reticence exhibited towards *mirabilia* and the teratological by the authors cited above, particularly the second quotation by Plutarch:[36] they decry the interest in them, but nonetheless engage in the discourse. Then, it perhaps would be too simple to describe it in dichotomous terms: the good and morally upright deriding popular or credulous attitudes towards these stories. This is not to discount the importance of negative moral interpretations of *mirabilia*, but rather to suggest that they were part of a shared conceptual spectrum in which these stories were understood.[37] This could be a way to explain an apparent dissonance in the evidence; between the derision of *mirabilia* in moral and intellectual terms, and the continual appearance of such tales in

[33] Gell. 9.5.
[34] Ibid., 9.12-13. For further analysis of this text and the paradoxographers Gellius mentions, see Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 410-424.
[35] cf. Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 448-451, for a discussion on the Romans' interest in *paradoxa*. cf. Gabba (1981) 57-61 for the discussion of the appeal of the utopian and local in paradoxography, and how that they infiltrated historical texts, which to him indicated the wide appeal of these stories in different contexts, leading to a reassessment of what was perceived to be legendary or historical.
[36] cf. Romm (1992) 95. cf. Dench (2005) 288-290 for emphasis on narratives of luxury and the moral judgement of emperors, delineating the 'good' from the 'bad' in their conduct towards the 'freakish'.
[37] Murphy (2004) 8 for the argument that Pliny's *Natural History* included such stories in order for the remit of his knowledge collection to be complete (cf. Plin. *NH*. 7.6-8). Note, however, Ibid., 7: 'we know much less about the symbolic culture of antiquity than that of today because of the aristocratic bias of the surviving literary sources. The oratory of courts and schools, epic poetry and imperial history imply versions of Roman culture, but they value certain tones and registers and suppress others, embracing tragic and heroic codes while they exclude the banal, the commercial, the technical, and the trivial.' I would argue that interest in paradoxography gives us evidence that transcends this preventative barrier; a potential window into a shared register between divisions in society.

variant forms of literature, from paradoxographical treatises such as that of Phlegon of Tralles, to the biographies and histories of Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dio. It is also useful to acknowledge the existence of a negative moral or intellectual perspective without adopting it as our own, meaning that paradoxical stories, as well as paradoxographical texts, should be part of the historical understanding of the Roman empire. Furthermore, it may point to the wider appeal of paradoxography that Gabba argued for, but it would not be in spite of its ambiguities, but because of them.[38] They could be a part of a wider conceptual framework in which these stories circulated, in which credulity and moral judgement were tested. This subjectivity should not be seen as historically unusable or irrelevant, for they are a potential window into a common thought-world; one that involved a curiosity about the Roman emperor.

It is therefore important to locate the Roman emperor within this discourse of *mirabilia*. As alluded to above, the implication of the growing thirst for wonder knowledge is that it is inexorably tied to the expansion of power. As more of the earth becomes a part of the aegis of the empire, there is a greater interest in attempting to order and compile what may lie at the edges and in between, what Purcell calls a 'conceptual geography' of the world.[39] It therefore binds the peripheries of the mind to the reality of their centre, facilitated by the route connections laid down by the power of imperial expansion. What is particularly interesting for our purposes is the status of the Roman emperor as the 'traveller' on this journey. Even if vicarious, his patronage means that he is the mediator between the extremes, and the orderer and organiser of the world,

[38] See 160, n. 13 above.
[39] Purcell (1990) 178, 179: 'Alexander was Odysseus' successor, and the king's experience was crystallised as empire by his journeying and the accounts that were written of it. In the actual journeys of the later generals like Pompey, Lucullus, Mucianus, or the vicarious experience of emperors through their emissaries, the concern was with the individual who reaches significant places and… 'knew the minds' of their inhabitants.'

including the obscure edges.[40] He is then inevitably coloured by these conceptions; wondrous by association, and obscured through them. The curiosity included the discourse of the emperor, interested in his own wonder tales and how he seemed, glorious or monstrous as they may have been.

To continue with the theme of imperial expansion as catalyst, it has been argued that the collection and display of *mirabilia* are part of the intricate negotiation of power.[41] In a recent work named *Pliny the Elder's Natural History–the Empire in Encyclopedia,* Trevor Murphy argues for Pliny's work being a cultural artefact of the Roman empire; a compendium that collects universal knowledge as the corollary to Rome's vast empire.[42] A part of this argument includes the importance of the emperor's position, which involved the ability to control *mirabilia* as part of his imperial remit:

> The collection, selection, control, and publication or display of knowledge about nature was also an attribute of the emperors' power; emperors were the most authoritative of natural historians, not in the sense of observers or writers about nature, but as arbiters of what was to be regarded as true.[43]

This is an important manner in which to describe the emperor's position in terms of wonder tales: stories show him to be this mediator, and therefore the apex of power in the world.

However, when juxtaposed with other interpretations of the emperor and *mirabilia*, a different impression could be taken, which points to the wavering of themes just discussed above. These other interpretations can be exemplified by the following two works of scholarship. First is Emma Dench's *Romulus' Asylum*. This work is a wide-ranging and interesting appraisal of Roman identities and their construction over a long

[40] On the wonder of the edges of the world in Pliny's *Natural History*, see Beagon (2007) 21-23.
[41] Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 450: 'the possession of the unique, of the strange, also had its function within power relations: it could be considered a symbol of domination.'
[42] Murphy (2004) *passim*. but particularly 197-203. cf. Beagon (2005) 23-24, esp. n. 73 for a brief bibliography on these points.
[43] Murphy (2004) 197. cf. Champlin (2008) 414-415 for a similar argument with respect to Tiberius.

period of history, spanning from the middle republic to the high empire. Within this greater rubric of discussion is a chapter on race, blood, and physiognomy, which includes a discussion of the taste for the strange and deformed.[44] Dench's interest lies in attempting to describe the Roman fascination with what she terms as 'freakish'.[45] She is interested in looking at attestations for anything that could be described as such, which in Latin are *mirabilia*, *prodigia*, *monstra*, *ostenta, ludibria* and *miracula*.[46] Thus, all these terms are put under the label 'freak' as a shorthand to accentuate the otherness of the deformities she is describing; something that denotes prodigious difference, used to invoke what Dench calls a 'Roman anxiety' for perceived disorder in nature.[47] It is this construction of otherness that the emperor is then juxtaposed, as Dench argues that a 'general connection in Roman thought between freakishness and the person of the emperor includes the idea of the collection and display of freaks, the prominence of freaks within the imperial court, and the emperor himself as freak.'[48] The repeated use of the word 'freak' is appropriate in this sense, as it attempts to view the emperor through a lens of obscurity and difference, coloured by prejudicial conceptions of otherness.

Indeed, this is a similar approach to one taken by Robert Garland in *The Eye of the Beholder*. This work is a general history of deformity and disability in Greek and Roman antiquity, which contains a chapter with the particular goal of describing the Roman interest in deformity during the imperial period.[49] Part of that chapter is a discussion of the emperor and his 'singular status and excessive power', which to Garland made him a

[44] Dench (2005) 280-292.
[45] cf. Dench (2005) 281-282 for this term, and esp. n. 167, on the problems of this term. I prefer the terms *mirabilia*, wondrous, and monstrous to describe the evidence, with no real preference for a hold-all term.
[46] Ibid., 281-282.
[47] Ibid., 282. For further on the study of wonders and *mirabilia* in the ancient world, Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 373-460, Beagon (2007) 19-40, (esp. 29-32 for the Roman emperor); On deformity and their connection to the emperor: Garland (1995). esp. 45-58, Trentin (2011) 195-208.
[48] Dench (2005) 283; Bowersock (1994) 33 for a similar argument.
[49] Garland (1995) 45-58.

monstrosity himself, much like the deformed people he kept.[50] It should be stated that both works form important inspirations for this section, but there will be important departures taken here. Importantly, the concentration on the 'freakishness' and 'monstrosity' of the Roman emperor alone would reveal an incomplete picture. This should not be seen as a criticism, as the relevant sections of both works concentrate on placing deformity into its ancient context. Here, however, it is important to see where the emperor figures in this discourse of wonder, which is a subtle difference in approach.

Proximity to the wondrous complicated the emperor's reception, which is a point that Dench implies in her discussion of this topic:

> If the emperor's display of his ability to muddle 'normal' categories and conventions of society could suggest deep truths about the arbitrary nature of his power, other stories about emperors and freaks suggest in addition the quality of refinement gone berserk, like the excesses of tyranny.[51]

The emperor as 'freak' would be one-sided. It should rather be compared and contrasted to Murphy's understanding of the emperor as a patron and mediator of wonder, as discussed above.[52] However, it would be simplistic to distill these into 'good' or 'bad' vignettes of the Roman emperor, as both coexist and contribute to the reception of the position. Therefore, in the following discussion of the emperor and *mirabilia*, the importance of both in the discourse will be stressed rather than attempting to place examples of the emperor (or individual emperors) as a mediator or a *monstrum* into set categories of 'good' or 'bad' emperors. This is not the same as denying the existence of a 'good' or 'bad' interpretation of the emperor, but rather to state that the emperor could seem both good and bad simultaneously.[53] This does not mean to push the emperor too

[50] Garland (1995) 50-51.
[51] Dench (2005) 289. cf. Garland (1995) 45 for a similar argument.
[52] See above 168; Murphy (2004) 197.
[53] This is similar to the interpretation of Tacitus' Tiberius in the *Annals* - a brooding, calculating emperor, having been exhibited by good and bad qualities, but with the added difficulty of not knowing his countenance precisely. Tiberius' *dissimulatio* may be a special case, but it forms part of the larger discourse

far on the scale towards incomprehensibility, but rather to stress his liminality, counterpointed by the other vignettes of the emperor as described in this chapter. This section does not set out to explain or delineate a 'Roman anxiety' to deformity in its entirety *per se*, or social perceptions and reactions to wonder or disorder, but rather to place the Roman emperor within a discourse of *mirabilia* and wonder.[54] The Roman emperor populating these stories could highlight his position in the *mentalité* of his subjects, suggesting that he could be a patron and arbiter of wonders, or monstrous in himself, enhancing both the obscurity and the curiosity of what the emperor was.[55]

First is the evidence of the emperor as patron and mediator. This comes in different forms, including the collection and display of wondrous things from across the world in different contexts, in the presence of the emperor at his court and his own private collection, or in public display at the arena or during a triumphal procession.[56] The intricacies of the pageantry and the negotiation that are involved in the study of the triumph and the arena are separate topics in their own right, which have both received singular attention and also deserve a greater appraisal, and as such differences should not be underestimated. However, it would be impossible to undertake this task of complete differentiation here. The centrality of the Roman emperor means that there is a regression towards the mean: his status as patron and mediator in these different contexts means that similarities can be extrapolated, particularly with reference to the emperor himself and the involvement of *mirabilia*. Moreover, the specific concern here is to explore the

about the Roman emperor. cf. Champlin (2008) 408-205, Pelling (1993) 58-85 and further discussion above in Chapter 2.2 and below, 186.

[54] North (1986) 256: 'prodigies began in the late Republic to shift from their traditional ground and to cluster—not within senatorial proceedings and minutes—but in significant moments in the lives of great men.' Cited by Dench (2005) 282.

[55] cf. Garland (1995) 49-52 on the argument on the Roman emperor's fascination with the monstrous and his power and status making him a monster himself.

[56] For the relevant evidence on this topic, see Beagon (2007) 30-32; Garland (1995) 48-52, and esp. Rutledge (2012) 221-286. For the triumph, see Gagé (1933) 1-43; Versnel (1970), esp. 356-396; McCormick (1986) 11-34; Beard (2003b) 550-552; cf. Edwards (1993) 119; cf. Gunderson (2003) 640-658.

perception of the interaction between the emperor and the wondrous in our sources across both time and space, rather than a separate historical analysis of any single context, such as a triumph. It is therefore the similarities across these contexts, rather than their differences, that will be stressed here, as they all show the emperor's proximity to *mirabilia*.

It is best to commence with the triumph, as it can represent the bridging of the conceptual chasm between the imperial centre and the conquered periphery, and indeed between the emperor's more concrete role of conqueror and that of an arbiter of wonder.[57] The triumph is a context in which wonders were brought to Rome from afar, exhibiting Rome's world power, and importantly for the imperial period, the position of the Roman emperor as the triumphant general and patron of the *mirabilia* on display.[58] The Flavian triumph of A.D. 71, as described in detail by Josephus, was full of displays of riches and natural rarities, which were collected in greater concentration than usual, and exhibited the vastness of the Roman empire.[59] This included vast quantities of gold, silver, and ivory, which seemed to flow like a river;[60] embroidered cloth and gemstones, with the latter in such great quantity that it was hard to imagine their rarity;[61] statues of the gods made with expensive material for the occasion; and many animals and multitudes of captives as part of the procession.[62] Additionally, Josephus describes in detail the 'carried

[57] cf. above, 167-171 for a discussion on the historical importance of both sides of this seeming dichotomy.
[58] See Beard (2003b) 551-552 and Beard (2007) 123 on the triumph being a physical realisation of Roman imperialism, and Beard (2003a) 37-43 on the triumph as a performance of imperial power at its centre, and particularly on examples where the display was 'fake' (See Tac. *Ann*. 2.41.2 for Germanicus, Suet. *Cal*. 47.1, for Gaius, and Tac. *Agr*. 39.1, Plin. *Pan*. 16.3 for Domitian). Compare with Gunderson (2003) 654 for a similar argument for the fabrication of truth in the Flavian amphitheatre.
[59] Joseph. *BJ*. 7.133: 'σχεδὸν γὰρ ὅσα τοῖς πώποτε ἀνθρώποις εὐδαιμονήσασιν ἐκτήθη κατὰ μέρος ἄλλα παρ' ἄλλοις θαυμαστὰ καὶ πολυτελῆ, ταῦτα ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἀθρόα τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἔδειξε τὸ μέγεθος.'
[60] Ibid., 134.
[61] Ibid., 134-135: 'τοσοῦτοι παρηνέχθησαν, ὥστε μαθεῖν ὅτι μάτην εἶναί τι τούτων σπάνιον ὑπειλήφαμεν.'
[62] Ibid., 136-138: 'ζῴων τε πολλαὶ φύσεις παρήγοντο κόσμον οἰκεῖον ἁπάντων περικειμένων… ἐπὶ τούτοις οὐδὲ τὸν αἰχμάλωτον ἦν ἰδεῖν ὄχλον κόσμητον, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν ἐσθήτων ποικιλία καὶ τὸ κάλλος αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς κακώσεως τῶν σωμάτων ἀηδίαν ἔκλεπτε τῆς ὄψεως.' Compare with descriptions

stages' or floats, on which reenactments of the battle scenes in the Jewish War were shown to the spectating public, which also included the representations of fortifications, temples, and natural formations.[63] Furthermore in detail are the descriptions of the spoils of the war, including those from the Temple in Jerusalem.[64] Finally is the description of the imperial family in pomp:

> μεθ' ἃ Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἤλαυνε πρῶτος καὶ Τίτος εἵπετο, Δομετιανὸς δὲ παρίππευεν, αὐτός τε διαπρεπῶς κεκοσμημένος καὶ τὸν ἵππον παρέχων θέας ἄξιον.[65]

The Flavians appear as a unit as patrons of the event and conquerors, and the ostentatious display of riches and wonders from across the *oikoumene* is directly connected to them. Thus, the specific spoils of the Jewish War along with the display of the vast power and geographical enormity of the Roman empire are combined to prove the clout of Vespasian and his sons, and similarly to Murphy's argument about Pliny's *Natural History*, and to help exhibit the emperor as an arbiter of the wonders of the world.[66]

The proximity of the emperor to *mirabilia* is a theme that is observable throughout the history of the early principate. To continue with the Flavians and public display of

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of Gaius' triumph in Suetonius and Dio (Suet. *Cal*. 47; Dio 59.25.3–5), which both detail the farcical display of both his spoils and captives. cf. Dench (2005) 37-38 for analysis of these scenes.

[63] Joseph. *BJ*. 7. 139-147: (quoted fom 139) 'θαῦμα δ' ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα παρεῖχεν ἡ τῶν φερομένων πηγμάτων κατασκευή·' It is notable that Josephus uses the word θαῦμα, or cognates, throughout the passage (Ibid., 132-152), accentuating the 'wonder' of the procession. cf. Tac. *Ann*. 2.41.2 for a similar, if shorter, parallel: '*vecta spolia, captivi, simulacra montium fluminum proeliorum'*.

[64] Ibid., 148-151, which included the golden table, menorah, and the laws of the Jewish people. cf. Beard (2003b) 550-551.

[65] Joseph. *BJ*. 152. cf. Tac. *Ann*. 2.41.3: '*augebat intuentium visus eximia ipsius species currusque quinque liberis onustus*'. Note that both depict that the family is a spectacle in itself, which conceptually places them in the same category as the others displays in the triumphal procession.

[66] Murphy (2004) 197-201; cf. Beagon (2005) 23-24. There could be an objection to the specificity of the Flavian context. While acknowledging this context of the attempt establish Vespasian's legitimacy, it nonetheless exhibits wider themes of importance: Negotiations of power and legitimacy were always essential to the function of the principate within the conversation of acceptance. These themes were discussed above in Chapter 1. Therefore, what could be seen as a specific political act can also be interpreted within a wider theme across the history of the emperorship–namely the importance of displaying the emperor as a patron and mediator of wonders. It was part of the mystique of the Roman emperor, which helps us understand the nature of the position and its reception. Indeed, a similar issue is observable in the discussion of Vespasian's healing miracles at Alexandria, as discussed in Luke (2010) 77-106, from Suet. *Vesp*. 7; Tac. *Hist*. 4.81–2; Dio. 65.8.1–2. Unfortunately, there is not enough space to discuss these events in detail, but they should also be seen within the wider context of emperors and *mirabilia*.

wonder as a bridge into this material, the aforementioned *Liber Spectaculorum* of Martial contains many examples of vast geography and wonders of the world being collocated at Rome under the emperor, and in this case, the Flavian amphitheatre. In addition to this are descriptions of executions as mythological reenactments, *venationes*, *naumachiae*, and gladiatorial combats.[67] Accordingly, the nature of the shows and the descriptions are different, but they all fall under the auspices of the emperor; he is the equalising factor and patron, and so accordingly is at the determining reason for the occurrences in the arena. In poem 3, Martial describes the vast diversity of races and tongues being present at Rome: '*vox diversa sonat populorum, tum tamen una est, cum verus patriae diceris esse pater'*.[68] In poem 17, an elephant is calmed by the presence of the emperor after its fight with a bull.[69] In poem 33, a doe bows down at the feet of Caesar, and the Molossian hounds that were chasing it cease; a feat attributed to the emperor's divine presence.[70] As such, the curious events that occur in the amphitheatre are explained by the emperor's presence.[71]

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[67] A list of the relevant examples: Mart. *Spect*. 1-33. I follow the recent numbering as delineated by Coleman in her commentary of the work. See Coleman (2006) xlv-lxiv for a discussion on the problematic and elusive identification of the 'Caesar' mentioned in the poems. in which she argues for a middle ground, which means mixed composition dates for different epigrams, even if they were collected and published under Domitian. See esp. ibid., xlvi, n. 92 for the scholarship on the commonly accepted date of A.D. 80 being the inauguration of the amphitheatre under Titus, and Buttrey (2007) 101-112 who argues strongly for a Domitianic date. However, I agree totally with Coleman (2006) lxiv in her argument for Martial's Caesar to be an 'idealised abstraction': 'In any case, readers in either category may have been less preoccupied with imperial prosopography, or even with amphitheatrical *Realien*, than with the marvels of Man's mastery over the natural world… For scholars today who are preoccupied with historical specificity, the 'Caesar' of most of the epigrams, and the occasion of any particular manifestation of his wizardry, must remain a tantalizing puzzle. Yet, if one sets that conundrum aside, Martial's 'Caesar' starts to look almost like an idealized abstraction, above identification; maybe that impression is not so far from the experience of some of the readers among Martial's wider public, especially those further afield, as the instances of imperial largesse in the capital merged into one glorious legend of theatrical marvels on the sands of the arena.'

[68] Mart. *Spect*. 3.

[69] Ibid., 20: *'Quod pius et supplex elephas te, Caesar, adorat, hic modo qui tauro tam metuendus erat, non facit hoc iussus nulloque docente magistro: crede mihi, nostrum sentit et ille deum.'*

[70] Ibid., 33: *'Concita veloces fugeret cum damma Molossos et varia lentas necteret arte moras, Caesaris ante pedes supplex similisque roganti constitit, et praedam non tetigere canes. haec intellecto principe dona tulit. numen habet Caesar: sacra est haec, sacra potestas, credite: mentiri non didicere ferae.'*

[71] Coleman (2006) lxxv for further examples of the different guises that 'Caesar' is depicted in the *Liber Spectaculorum*. cf. Coleman (1993) 72-74 for an earlier iteration of this argument.

Indeed, the occurrence of such *mirabilia* in the presence of the emperor appears in different contexts and sources of the early principate. Natural oddities gravitated towards him, whether they were part of the emperor's entourage at court or were gifts from across and outside the empire, and whether they were kept at court or displayed to the public.[72] To start with the first emperor, King Porus sent Augustus an assortment of wonders from India; animals including large snakes, a tortoise, a partridge, and a man who was born without limbs;[73] Pausanias tells us that Augustus took the tusks of the Calydonian boar from Tegea and displayed them at the sanctuary of Dionysus at Rome;[74] Suetonius reports that wondrous animals were also displayed by Augustus in different contexts across Rome;[75] Pliny the Elder states that he displayed two preserved giants called Pusio and Secundilla at the Sallustian Gardens, and that Augustus' female relatives kept dwarves in their entourage.[76] Such a cornucopia of *mirabilia* surrounding the Roman emperor continues through the reigns of different emperors. Tiberius similarly kept a dwarf as part of a group of court jesters, or *copreae*, as they were called;[77] he also received reports of wonders from across the empire, including the finding of a large skeleton, from which a large tooth was sent to Tiberius himself to inspect,[78] a report from Lisbon of a cave which

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[72] The following list is indebted to the evidence included in Beagon (2007) 30-31, Garland (1995) 48-49, and Dench (2005) 287-288. For a comprehensive look at the emperor and wonders in Pliny's *Natural History*, see Baldwin (1995b) 56-78. On imperial colletions at Rome, see Rutledge (2012).

[73] Strabo 15.1.73.

[74] Paus. 8.46.1, 5: 'καὶ ὑὸς τοῦ Καλυδωνίου τοὺς ὀδόντας ἔλαβεν ὁ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς Αὔγουστος... τοῦ δὲ ὑὸς τῶν ὀδόντων κατεᾶχθαι μὲν τὸν ἕτερόν φασιν οἱ ἐπὶ τοῖς θαύμασιν, ὁ δ' ἔτι ἐξ αὐτῶν λειπόμενος ἀνέκειτο ἐν βασιλέως κήποις ἐν ἱερῷ Διονύσου…'

[75] Suet. *Aug*. 43.3.

[76] Plin. *NH*. 7.75; cf. Suet. *Aug*. 83: note how there is quite a bit of evidence for Augustus' proximity to *mirabilia*, even though Suetonius states he avoided dwarves and cripples (*Nam pumilos atque distortos et omnis generis eiusdem ut ludibria naturae malique ominis abhorrebat*). cf. Dench (2005) 287-288 on the complex and contradictory reception of Augustus' persona, and how this translates to a contradictory tradition of him being rejecting such oddities as luxuries, but having them gravitate towards him regardless. cf. also Trentin (2011) 202, on the place of deformed individuals at court.

[77] Suet. *Tib*. 61.6. cf. Chapter 3.5 on the open criticism of emperors. For more on the *copreae,* their name, and the evidence for them, see Beard (2014) 143-144, and Purcell (1999) 182-183 on performers at the court of the emperor, and their effect on his perception.

[78] Phlegon, *Mir*. 13-14; cf. Beagon (2007) 34, n. 64 for other findings of large skeletal remains. cf. Paus. 8.29.3-4.

had a shell-playing Triton, and another on the existence of Nereids.[79] Gabbara, a giant from Arabia was brought to the emperor Claudius;[80] Phlegon of Tralles tells stories about hermaphrodites, including one who had suddenly changed from female to male and was subsequently sent to Claudius, and another with a similar change who was kept at Agrippina's country house at Mevania.[81] Moreover according to Pliny, Claudius is also sent a phoenix,[82] and a hippocentaur that had been preserved in honey.[83] Indeed, Claudius himself is depicted as an oddity to be kept at court, as observable in Suetonius' *Claudius*, where is mother calls him a *portentum*,[84] and Augustus is not sure how to deal with him:

> *Sin autem* ἠλαττῶσθαι *sentimus eum* et βεβλάφθαι καὶ εἰς τὴν τοῦ σώματος καὶ εἰς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρτιότητα, *praebenda materia deridendi et illum et nos non est hominibus* τὰ τοιαῦτα σκώπτειν καὶ μυκτηρίζειν εἰωθόσιν.[85]

Under Nero, Tacitus describes the prodigious and depraved nature of Nero's court, including a deformed man named Vatinius,[86] as well as opulence of his feasts and banquets, which included birds, beasts and marine life from distant places.[87] According to Suetonius, there was even a story that Nero kept an Egyptian omnivore that would eat anything given to him.[88] Phlegon reports that a child with four heads was presented to

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[79] Plin. *NH*. 9.9: This passage also contains a report to Augustus from the governor of Gaul on dead Nereids found on the shore.
[80] Plin. *NH*. 7.74.
[81] Phlegon, *Mir*. 6-7.
[82] Plin. *NH*. 10.5.
[83] Plin. *NH*. 7.35: '*Claudius Caesar scribit hippocentaurum in Thessalia natum eodem die interisse, et nos principatu eius adlatum illi ex Aegypto in melle vidimus*.' Note that there are reports of two centaurs here, and one with the alleged autopsy of Pliny. cf. Beagon (2007) 37-38 for the preservation of such wonders, and Phlegon, *Mir*. 34-35, who reports of the centaur being preserved in the imperial storehouses during Hadrian's reign. However, it doesn't seem clear that Phlegon is reporting on the same persevered centaur.
[84] Suet. *Claud*. 3.2.
[85] Ibid., 4.2, cf. Ibid., 3-4. For Claudius' illness, see Levick (1990) 13-14, and esp. 200, n. 7; Osgood (2011) 9, and Valente et al. (2002) 393-395 for a modern differential diagnosis of both his congenital ailments and his death. Also, it would require further research, but a potential answer for why the descriptions of Claudius are in Greek could be that the science of physiognomy comes from Greek learning.
[86] Tac. *Ann*. 15.34.2: '*Vatinius inter foedissima eius aulae ostenta fuit, sutrinae tabernae alumnus, corpore detorto, facetiis scurrilibus…*'
[87] Ibid., 15.37: '*volucres et feras diversis e terris at animalia maris Oceano abusque petiverat*.' For more on Tacitus and this interest in paradoxography, and in particular these cited passages of the *Annals*, see Woodman (1992) 173-188. On banquets being a place for the exhibition of monstrosities, see Trentin (2011) 202-203,
[88] Suet. *Ner*. 37.2: '*creditur etiam polyphago cuidam Aegypti generis crudam carnem et quidquid daretur mandere assueto, concupisse vivos homines laniandos absumendosque obicere*.'

Nero.[89] Furthermore, Pliny states that Nero possessed hermaphrodite mares,[90] and that his wife Poppaea was said to have bathed in the milk of donkeys, and also wanted to provide her favourite mules with gold shoes.[91] According to Suetonius, Domitian kept a boy with a small head, dressed in red at his feet at gladiatorial shows.[92] Under Trajan, Phlegon reports a story of a two-headed foetus being born, who was then thrown into the Tiber at the behest of the haruspices,[93] and also reports of a woman in Alexandria giving birth to multiple offspring, with Trajan providing their upkeep.[94] Pausanias records a story of an emperor, arguably Lucius Verus, who wanted to build a canal for navigation to connect Antioch to the sea. The works revealed the remains of a giant, identified by the oracle at Claros to be that of Orontes from India.[95] This story connects two themes: that of the emperor as an imperial voyager who alters the landscape by the building of thoroughfares, and the discoverer and arbiter of wonders. Thus, the parallel themes of imperialism and *mirabilia* are combined under the auspices of Roman emperor himself.[96]

As final examples to round off the period in question, the *Historia Augusta* gives examples of Elagabalus' famed luxurious tastes and exotic wild animals,[97] and that he enjoyed the company of men with different physical deformities for his amusement.[98] The

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[89] Phlegon, *Mir.* 20.
[90] Plin. *NH.* 11.262.
[91] Ibid., 11.238; Ibid., 33.140; cf. Dio 62.28.1 for both stories; cf. Baldwin (1995b) 74 for the citations.
[92] Suet. *Dom.* 4.2: '*Ac per omne gladiatorum spectaculum ante pedes ei stabat puerulus coccinatus parvo portentosoque capite.*' cf. Zadorojny (2015) 294-295 for this passage as part of his argument that colour forms an interesting tool in the characterisation of the emperor in Suetonius' *Lives*: 'To put it bluntly, in each *Life* the Princeps is the only figure who can own colour, interact with colour, and have a say, for better or worse, over matters of colour.' As such, it provides an extremely interesting historiographical manifestation of imperial power.
[93] Phlegon. *Mir.* 25.
[94] Ibid., 29: 'οὗς αὐτοκράτωρ Τραιανὸς ἐκέλευσεν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων χρημάτων τρέφεσθαι.' It is interesting that Trajan is the one depicted taking care of these children, particularly when compared to his alimentary initiatives in Italy. cf. above Chapter 3.3.
[95] Paus. 8.29.3-4; see Jones (2000) 476-481 for his identification of the emperor as Lucius Verus and the corroborating evidence, including discussion of the remains of the mythical Orontes and his provenance.
[96] cf. discussion above, 167-168, esp. Purcell (1990) 178-192.
[97] SHA. *Heliogab.* 22-24.
[98] Ibid., 29.3: '*Habuit et hanc consuetudinem, ut octo calvos rogaret ad cenam et item octo luscos et item octo podagrosos, octo surdos, octo nigros, octo longos et octo pingues, cum capi non possent uno sigmate, ut de his omnibus risus citaret.*'

Historia Augusta goes on to describe how Alexander Severus, his successor, disposed of all the *mirabilia* and oddities Elagabalus had accumulated.[99] Notably, he gave them to the public: '*Nanos et nanas et moriones et vocales exsoletos et omnia acroamata et pantomimos populo donavit*'.[100] All this evidence shows the Roman emperor in close proximity to the wondrous, which helped shape the nature of the discourse about him. To build upon the theme alluded to in the context of Alexander Severus, the difference in potential interpretation is nicely exhibited by juxtaposition between the public display of these wonders, as opposed to their maintenance, hidden away in the court of the emperor. This question of the accessibility of *mirabilia* was seen above in the evidence from the triumph and games, and is a theme that is reflected in the evidence. Martial, Pliny and Josephus separately admonish Nero for keeping his collection of wonders locked away at the *Domus Aurea*, whilst simultaneously praising Vespasian for doing the opposite, which is part of a moral discourse involving these wonders, and how they effect the perception of an emperor.[101] However, as argued above, the line between narratives of 'good' and 'bad' is not clearly defined, meaning that the emperor could easily slip into either characterisation, since all this evidence depicts the emperor having patronised and maintained *mirabilia*, whether in a private collection or part of a euergetical public display.

In the end, it is interesting that the emperor would be depicted as closely associated with *mirabilia*, and that his reception would be affected by this. This gives the impression of the emperor as an inherently complex and ambiguous individual. However, to leave it

[99] SHA, *Alex. Sev.* 34.2-4. cf. Garland (1995) 49-50, Beagon (2007) 32 and Trentin (2011) 203 for this evidence and their analysis.
[100] SHA. *Alex. Sev.* 34.2.
[101] Mart. *Spect.* 2; Plin. *NH.* 34.84; 35.120; cf. Joseph. *BJ.* 7.158-160 cf. Beagon (2005) 23 and Beagon (2007) 31 for further analysis on this juxtaposition, and Darwall-Smith (1996) 58-68 on the *Domus Aurea* and Vespasian's *Templum Pacis*. For more on the function of the *Templum Pacis,* see Noreña (2003) 26-27.

at that would be similar to concluding that there were binary 'good' or 'bad' understandings of the emperor. Alternatively, there is a flexibility to his reception in that he could be cast into different roles by different people, which all contributed to the discourse about who he was, and what he was meant to be.[102] As regards to *mirabilia*, it should be remarkable that the emperor is seen in close proximity to unbelievable and bizarre things, particularly from a modern perspective. It seems that it was normal for the Roman emperor to be associated with the wondrous. Therefore, there was a cognitive association of the emperor and *mirabilia*, which could be interpreted in moralistic terms (as perhaps either 'good' or 'bad'), but not in a way that it was an impossibility. In other words, it was obvious for the emperor to be close to *mirabilia* because he was the emperor.[103] Furthermore, this cognitive association allowed for the emperor to seem as wondrous as the wonders themselves. Hopefully, the following short examples will illustrate these points.

First are the stories of the emperor and marine life. As argued by Purcell, fish were paradoxical and ambiguous, much like the wonders discussed above, particularly concerning their consumption:

> Eating fish could be as morally ambiguous, therefore, as eating dog, as taxonomically disturbing as a diet of locusts, and as dissonant with the dispositions of Nature as a nice glass of sea-water.[104]

Briefly, there are several axes of ambiguity that concerned the sea and marine life, which included the sea's paradoxical poverty and provision of luxury, and that fish could be thought of as inedible, yet also an important source of food.[105] Therefore, it should not be

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[102] See above, 170-171.
[103] cf. Garland (1995) 49, Beagon (2007) 31, Murphy (2004) 197, and Dench (2005) 287; cf. Veyne (2002) 19, who cites Fusel de Coulanges on how the emperor was a god because he was emperor. This suggests an interesting parallel to the imperial cult and questions of the emperor's divinity, which could be reconciled with his proximity to these wonders. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.3.
[104] Purcell (1995) 132.
[105] Ibid., 133-136, 144; cf. Plin. *NH*. 9.104-105, who comments on the inedibility of fish, and its potential as a source of luxury and corruption.

surprising that stories about marine life are similar to stories about wonders and *mirabilia*, and accordingly that the emperor would also be present within this context.[106] Interestingly, the emperor can be portrayed as having a commanding effect on the sea and its inhabitants, which is perhaps a reflection on the perception of his power, significantly in relation to a liminal and feared sea. Pliny tells of a story where a fish jumped out of the water and landed at the feet of Octavian, which was interpreted by seers as testament to his future dominion of the seas.[107] He also provides an anecdote on how a small fish attached itself to the rudder of Gaius' ship, preventing its movement.[108] In his section on killer whales, Pliny provides a story of an encounter between Claudius and a whale that had gotten caught up between a shipwreck and the harbour at Ostia:

> Orca et in portu Ostiensi visa est oppugnata a Claudio principe. Venerat tum exaedificante eo portum, invitata naufragiis tergorum advectorum e Gallia… Praetendi iussit Caesar plagas multiplices inter ora portus profectusque ipse cum praetorianis cohortibus populo Romano spectaculum praebuit, lanceas congerente milite e navigiis adsultantibus, quorum unum mergi vidimus reflatu beluae oppletum unda.[109]

It is notable that Claudius is described as having personally led the attack by boat to encounter the 'beast'; as such the emperor is seen to fight a monster of the sea, bringing into relief the direct association of an emperor with the wondrous. Furthermore, there is a sense of wonder to the proceedings, particularly when Pliny describes it as a *spectaculum*, making it conceptually akin to shows in the arena that were described above–an aquatic *venatio* of sorts.[110]

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[106] For the relevant references in the *Natural History*, see Baldwin (1995b) 56-78. See also Purcell (1995) 137 for the citation of Oppian's *Halieutica* (1.56-72), a poem on fishing, which includes a dedication to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and the imagery of plentiful fish giving themselves willingly to the emperor.

[107] Plin. *NH*. 9.55: '*piscis e mari ad pedes eius exilivit, quo argumento vates respondere, Neptunum patrem adoptante tum sibi Sexto Pompeio— tanta erat navalis rei gloria— sub pedibus Caesaris futuros qui maria tempore illo tenerent*.'

[108] Plin. *NH*. 32.4: '*tenuit et nostra memoria Gai principis ab Astura Antium renavigantis; ut res est, etiam auspicalis pisciculus, siquidem novissime tum in urbem reversus ille imperator suis telis confossus est…*'

[109] Ibid., 9.14-15.

[110] See above, 174. cf. Coleman (1993) 56, Suet. *Claud*. 21.6, Tac. *Ann*. 12.56, and Dio 61(60).33.3 for evidence of Claudius' staged *naumachia* at the Fucine Lake. Potentially, Claudius and the killer whale

Finally, there are scenes that depict the emperor being presented with a large fish by a fisherman, which includes Suetonius' story of Tiberius being presented with a mullet on Capri,[111] Seneca's anecdote about Tiberius being given a huge mullet, which he promptly sent to be sold,[112] and Juvenal's Fourth Satire, in which a fisherman presents Domitian with a turbot of similarly large proportions, prompting a meeting of the imperial advisors to discuss finding a suitable plate to hold it.[113] The story about Tiberius on Capri will be discussed below, but it is important to tease out the relevant themes that are shared by these stories. First is the size of the fish in question, which is invariably large, and accordingly described with hyperbole, as Juvenal does with his turbot–*incidit Hadriaci spatium admirabile rhombi*.[114] This is comparable to other instances in the poem where the fish is described: in line 45 as a 'monster' (*monstrum*), line 72 for the lacking of a dish big enough for such a fish (*sed derat pisci patinae mensura*), and lines 121 and 127, both instances describing the turbot as a 'beast' (*belua)*. Thus, its size and bestial proportions makes it strange and paradoxical; a true wonder from the sea. Second is the exorbitant prices that went with fish of such sizes: again in his fourth satire, Juvenal describes a mullet that was bought for six thousand *sestertii* by a Crispinus, an elusive member of Domitian's court.[115] Juvenal continues to joke that he could have bought the

should be seen within the context of spectacle. See Coleman (1993) 48-74 for similar evidence, and esp. 66-67 for evidence of *venationes* with an aquatic element, particularly Mart. *Spect*. 34.3-4: '*vidit in undis et Thetis ignotas et Galatea feras*'.

[111] Suet. *Tib*. 60; cf. Champlin (2008) 408-409, 423-424 for his analysis of this passage, including his arguments on its parallels in international folk literature, as discussed above in Chapter 2.2, 90.

[112] Sen. *Ep*. 95.42., cf. Suet. *Tib*. 34.1 for Tiberius attempting to regulate the market after three mullets sold for 30,000 sesterces. cf. Champlin (2008) 423-424.

[113] Juv. 4.37ff., esp. 65-72. cf. Courtney (2013) 168-169.

[114] Juv. 4.39; cf. Sen. *Ep*. 95.42 for his description: '*Mullum ingentis formae… quattuor pondo et selibram fuisse aiebant*.' cf. Suet. *Tib*. 60: '*grandem mullum*.' cf. Andrews (1949) 186 on the various evidence for the size and price of these specimens.

[115] Juv. 4.14-15. See Baldwin (1979) 109-114, and esp. n. 1 for the discussion on the prosopographical identification of Crispinus as *eques* and praetorian prefect, against which Baldwin argues quite strongly for him being a *scurra* (dandy or jester) at court, with reference to Juv. 4.31. That he is called a *monstrum* at Ibid., 4.2 bolsters this point, suggesting that he himself was a wonder himself, as were the *copreae* that were discussed above (175).

fisherman for less.[116] Remarkably similar sentiments are articulated by Pliny the Elder, where Asinius Celer bought a mullet for eight thousand *sestertii* in the time of Gaius, and the creeping luxury is described by the exchange rate of three cooks for the price of one fish.[117] These fish are presented as symbols of luxury and depravity. Yet paradoxically, the concentration is placed on the luxurious aspect of mullet trade, in that they would cost so much, which is starkly juxtaposed to the implied poverty of the fishermen who are depicted in these stories, who seem invariably to give their *monstra* as a gift. Such is the paradox of seafood:

> A taste for fish was something only affordable by the seriously well-to-do; the very wealthy went even further than eating them and reared them, nurturing them with personal attention while they appropriated for their own exquisite life-style other aspects of the destitution of the sea-shore.[118]

The paradox is taken further in Seneca's anecdote about Tiberius and the mullet. As with the evidence above, Seneca admonishes the buyer for spending five thousand *sestertii* on the fish, yet is not as outraged with the first individual who had given it to Tiberius as a present, since he thought it 'Caesar worthy'.[119] Thus, such large fish, whilst being monsters and symbols of luxury to be avoided, are simultaneously seen to be obvious gifts for the emperor,[120] which nicely fits into the theme of this section on how such *mirabilia* gravitated to him. The preponderance of this evidence that places the emperor in close proximity with paradoxical marine life suggests that he himself was shaped by that association. In other words, the narratives of luxury and the monstrosities of the deep inevitably coloured the way in which the emperor was perceived.

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[116] Juv. 4.25-26: '*potuit fortasse minoris piscator quam piscis emi*'. cf. Andrews (1949) 186 for the evidence on the prices of mullets in antiquity.
[117] Plin. *NH*. 9.67.
[118] Purcell (1995) 136.
[119] Sen. *Ep*. 95.42: '*Numerare tantum Octavio fuit turpe, non illi qui emerat ut Tiberio mitteret, quamquam illum quoque reprenderim: admiratus est rem qua putavit Caesarem dignum.*'
[120] On gift-giving towards the emperor, see Millar (1992) 139-144.

Second are the stories where the emperor is depicted as a mediator in problems arising with the wondrous.[121] Several anecdotes depict the emperor in a situation that places him in the role of an arbiter in order to settle disputes and give opinions that were meant to prove decisive.[122] As such, they could be associated with legal disputations and dispensations of justice, which were discussed above in Chapter 3.2. As argued above, there is a spectre of hope and fear when it concerns the potential reaction of the emperor in these situations, allowing for the possibility that he could respond either positively or negatively.[123] However, there is a significant difference, given that the subject matter that is being disputed has to do with wondrous objects instead. The 'tale of the unbreakable glass' should be viewed within this rubric, and it appears in different forms and sources.[124] Petronius' version has Trimalchio tell a story of a cup that could not be broken: the inventor goes in front of the emperor to show him his invention, gives an demonstration of its malleability and inability to shatter, but unexpectedly gets beheaded in order to keep knowledge of the invention contained.[125] The alleged reason for this response was the fear that gold would become worthless if such an invention were to hit the market.[126] Pliny the Elder provides a less morbid parallel about flexible glass in the time of Tiberius'

[121] The closest to a systematic analysis of this sort of material is Champlin (2008) 408-425, on Tiberius.
[122] Two examples are worth mentioning, but unfortunately cannot receive full attention. Both involve Tiberius calling for enquiries and seeking help to solve issues pertaining to the wondrous. These include the story of the tooth mentioned above (175) and the story of the death of Pan being shouted at near the island of Paxoi in the Ionian Sea, and consequently being lamented at Palodes on the shore of Epirus (Plut. *Mor.* 419b-d). They are dealt with in Champlin (2008) 422, 414 respectively.
[123] cf. below Chapter 3.5
[124] Champlin (2008) 411 for the phrase and a discussion of the relevant evidence, to which the following passage is indebted.
[125] Petron. *Sat.* 51.
[126] Ibid.: '*quia enim, si scitum esset, aurum pro luto haberemus*.' cf. Ash (2015) 269-271 for an illuminating discussion on the moral ambiguity of gold, and indeed how this ambiguity is depicted in Tac. *Ann.* 16.1-3, which show's Nero's treasure-hunt to find Dido's gold, which contains similar themes to what is been discussed in this section.

principate, which resulted in the destruction of the workshop in which it was made, accompanied by similar reasoning for the feared devaluation of precious metals.[127]

In Dio's version of this story, which occurs also under Tiberius, the inventor is rather an architect who also invents a pulley system to repair a portico that had been leaning.[128] Due to the emperor's jealousy, the man is exiled from the city. However, in the scene in which the inventor pleads for pardon from Tiberius, the tale of the unbreakable glass gets repeated, which bears greater resemblance to Petronius' version with its morbid conclusion.[129] Problems of historicity aside,[130] they are historically relevant as they exhibit perceptions of an emperor dealing with wondrous invention in different ways, accompanied by reasoning for why this was the case. This is also why the story about Vespasian and the mechanical engineer should be seen as similar to the previous stories, which tells of another wondrous pulley mechanism that gets suppressed by the emperor:

> mechanico quoque grandis columnas exigua impensa perducturum in Capitolium pollicenti praemium pro commento non mediocre optulit, operam remisit praefatus sineret se plebiculam pascere.[131]

Despite the significant differences, the presence of the emperor is common, which suggests that there was a conceptual framework in which the emperor was expected to deal with these situations, whether positively or negatively. To push it slightly further, the desired outcomes of Petronius' and Suetonius' different stories are quite similar, given that it was meant to be protective by keeping the value of gold stable and securing jobs for the *plebs*, but the manner in which it is achieved is different. This could indeed be a moral discussion of what 'good' or 'bad' emperors do, but it also betrays a cognitive

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[127] Plin. *NH*. 36.195. However, Pliny goes onto state that this was of little consequence, since under Nero similarly strong cups called *petrotos* (stony, presumably in reference to their durability) that sold for 6000 sesterces.
[128] Dio. 57.21.5-6.
[129] Ibid., 57.21.7
[130] cf. Plin. *NH*. 36.195 for his remark on this matter: '*eaque fama crebrior diu quam certior fuit*.' cf. above, 164-166, on truth and fiction.
[131] Suet. *Vesp*. 18

aspect that places the emperor in a position to make these decisions, and in all cases to the detriment of the wondrous invention at hand. It suggests that he is an arbiter and protector, much akin to how he is portrayed with *mirabilia* in general.

In a similar way that Suetonius organised his *Life of Caligula*, so now we turn to exhibitions of the emperor's monstrosity: '*Hactenus quasi de principe, reliqua ut de monstro narranda sunt*.'[132] As outlined above, the proximity of the emperor to *mirabilia* and the wondrous allowed for the imagination of the Roman emperor to encompass more fantastical and monstrous guises, in which he was the object of wonder and fear.[133] Indeed, Seneca likens a ruler that takes delight in cruelty to a beast:

> Crudelitas minime humanum malum est indignumque tam miti animo; ferina ista rabies est sanguine gaudere ac vulneribus et abiecto homine in silvestre animal transire. Quid enim interest, oro te, Alexander, leoni Lysimachum obicias an ipse laceres dentibus tuis? Tuum illud os est, tua illa feritas.[134]

Thus, the emperor's actions allow him to be conceptually linked to the bestial, and accordingly start to be viewed as a beast himself. As a bridge from the previous discussion, the anecdote about Tiberius and the fisherman on Capri provides an interesting case study. As outlined above, this story has parallels with others that present

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[132] Suet. *Cal*. 22.1. cf. Gladhill (2012) 315-348 for an exploration of Suetonius' ecphrases of the emperor's bodies, looking at the lines between biography and sculpture. Gladhill argues that Suetonius inverts the omnipresence and power of the imperial image by using his description to influence his audience's perception of the principate. Using physiognomic readings as reflections of characteristics, he explores the 'good' and 'bad' emperor axis through the physical appearance of his emperors. It is notable that his arguments focus on the contrast between his elevation and depicted beauty against baser, more monstrous descriptions, which fit into the themes of this section. Unfortunately, a full appreciation of physiognomy is impossible here. See Garland (1995) 86-104 and Barton (1994) 95-131 on the status of physiognomy in Greek and Roman antiquity.

[133] Garland (1995) 51. Note that this is a similar argument as the one above (Chapter 3.2), in which nature and power of the Roman emperor was open to ambiguous interpretation, with the spectrum of cruelty and justice, and generosity and parsimony could be equally exhibited. cf. Braund and James (1998) 285-311, on the depiction of Claudius' monstrosity in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. and in particular Sen. *Apoc*. 5.1-3, which describes Claudius' physical appearance as monstrous. The richness of the themes that are treated in this short article is astounding, which ranges from physiognomy to the Saturnalia. These themes are more properly served in Chapter 3.6.

[134] Sen. *Clem*. 1.25.1; cf. Braund and James (1998)
293; Braund (2009) 367-369, for the juxtaposition of *crudelitas* and *clementia*, and particularly on the reference to Alexander's savagery, with relevant citations in works by Seneca and others that relate to the specific story with Lysimachus.

a large fish to a monarch, but here, the encounter is unexpected, prompting a gruesome reaction from the emperor:

> In paucis diebus quam Capreas attigit piscatori, qui sibi secretum agenti grandem mullum inopinanter obtulerat, perfricari eodem pisce faciem iussit, territus quod is a tergo insulae per aspera et devia erepsisset ad se; gratulanti autem inter poenam, quod non et lucustam, quam praegrandem ceperat, obtulisset, lucusta quoque lacerari os imperavit.[135]

This has been described as an example of a tradition that depicts Tiberius as tyrant: dissimulating, grim, cruel.[136] It is remarkable that an emperor would be depicted as terrified (*territus*) of a fisherman, which calls to mind Fronto's *de eloquentia*, in which the emperor is called to 'frighten the savage' (*feroces territare*),[137] which suggests that it was within the remit of the emperor to be terrifying as well, particularly those at the edge of society. This indicates a liminality that is shared by both the emperor and the fisherman in that they could be feared.[138] Furthermore, if juxtaposed to the passage from Seneca's *De Clementia*, where the cruel ruler becomes a monster by association, so also potentially is Tiberius in Suetonius' vignette when sea creatures are used to torture the fisherman.

A further parallel can be created to compare the potential reactions of the emperor in such situations, and the contours of justice and monstrosity: Vedius Pollio and his man-eating *muraenae*.[139] There is a consistency within the different traditions of this story, that tell of Vedius Pollio's cruelty from his feeding of slaves to morays. The version in Seneca's *De Ira* has a slave being punished for breaking a crystal cup by being fed to his

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[135] Suet. *Tib*. 60

[136] See Syme (1958) 420-430 for a description of this received tradition on Tiberius' characterisation, with particular reference to Tacitus' treatment. The ambiguity of this tradition that gets so excellently analysed by Champlin is also present here.

[137] Fronto, *ad M. Antoninum de eloquentia* 2.6; (p. 139 Naber; Haines (Loeb) II 58). See above, Chapter 3.1,

[138] cf. Purcell (1995) 136 for the precarious life of a fisherman, who seems to occupy the edge of society, being more prone to chance and the potential boom or bust of the sea. See also Chapter 2.2 on Wintrobe's Dictator's Dilemma (See Wintrobe (1998) 20-21), which describes a monarch's inability to know the minds of his subjects, meaning that they could be feared. cf. Chapter 3.5.

[139] On Vedius Pollio's identity, see Syme (1961) 23-30. For the evidence, see Purcell (1995) 141, which are as follows: Sen. *De Ira*, 3.40.2; Sen. *De Clem*. 1.18; Plin. *NH*. 9.77; Dio 54.23.

eels. As with the slaves who fled to statues of the emperor for asylum, so to does this slave to Augustus,[140] with the result being the destruction of Vedius' cup collection and his fish-ponds. Seneca then gives Augustus' verbal reprimand:

> Fuit Caesari sic castigandus amicus; bene usus est viribus suis: "E convivio rapi homines imperas et novi generis poenis lancinari? Si calix tuus fractus est, viscera hominis distrahentur? Tantum tibi placebis, ut ibi aliquem duci iubeas, ubi Caesar est?"[141]

However, when compared to the story of Tiberius and the fisherman, and the nature of the evidence in terms of imperial justice, the answers to these rhetorical questions could be a 'yes', and indeed perpetuated by Caesar himself. Such was the unpredictability of the potential response by the emperor, which was predicated on *bene usus est viribus suis*. So too was the reception of the emperor with respect to wonders, since by his close proximity to them in the Roman *mentalité,* he would be coloured by their implications.

The point of this juxtaposition is to highlight how the evidence can reveal different perspectives, and that there are always potentially negative characterisations possible with any topics that have been discussed thus far, whether it concerns the public display of *mirabilia* in the arena, or a large fish being presented to the emperor at court.[142] An excellent example of the themes explored in this section comes in the form of Dio's description of Commodus' exploits in the arena. It comes in the context of Dio's description of senatorial acclamations toward Commodus, calling him the first and most fortunate, which fits into a wider theme, which remains observable in the epitome, of

[140] See Chapter 3.2. Compare, however, with the story from Suet. *Aug*. 67.2, where Augustus orders the legs of a trusted slave broken after being bribed. Also, Suet. *Cal*. 32.2 for cutting his slave's hands off and handing them around his neck for his guests to see. cf. Trentin (2011) 201-202 for more examples of this sort.
[141] Sen. *De Ira*, 3.40.2.
[142] cf. Garland (1995) 50-52; cf. Trentin (2011) 195-207.

Commodus' expectation of constant honouring.[143] However, the reaction of the people at Rome was one of feared anticipation at what the emperor would do:

> τοῦ δὲ δὴ λοιποῦ δήμου πολλοὶ μὲν οὐδὲ ἐσῆλθον ἐς τὸ θέατρον, εισὶ δ᾽ οἳ παρακύψαντες ἀπηλλάττοντο τὸ μέν τι αἰσχυνόμενοι τοῖς ποιουμένοις, τὸ δὲ καὶ δεδιότες, ἐπειδὴ λόγος διῆλθεν ὅτι τοξεῦσαί τινας ἐθελήσει ὥσπερ ὁ Ἡρακλῆς τὰς Στυμφαλίδας. καὶ ἐπιστεύθη γε οὗτος ὁ λόγος, ἐπειδή ποτε πάντας τοὺς τῶν ποδῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει ὑπὸ νόσου ἢ καὶ ἑτέρας τινὸς συμφορᾶς ἐστερημένους ἀθροίσας δρακόντων τέ τινα αὐτοῖς εἴδη περὶ τὰ γόνατα περιέπλεξε, καὶ σπόγγους ἀντὶ λίθων βάλλειν δοὺς ἀπέκτεινέ σφας ῥοπάλῳ παίων ὡς γίγαντας.[144]

There are several themes in this passage that are relevant to the emperor as a monstrosity, which can be compared with the general discussion above.[145] As described, the people did not dare to enter the arena due to fears that Commodus would reenact the myth of Hercules and the Stymphalian birds.[146] Myths are restaged in the arena, thus making the wondrous an enacted reality, with the emperor himself at its centre. As outlined above, there is a connection between myth and reality, which is played out in the reported fears of the would-be spectators. What is essential here is the contamination of the emperor in this process: instead of being perceived as a hero, Commodus the ersatz-Hercules is feared for the rumour that he would turn his bow and arrow towards the crowd and kill

[143] Dio 73(72).20.2 for the acclamations of the senators; Ibid., 73(72).15.1-6, for the excessive honours given to Commodus: 'διά τε τἆλλα καὶ ὅτι ἠναγκάζοντο, ἃ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ κατ᾽ εὔνοιαν ἐψηφίζοντο, ταῦτ᾽ ἐκείνῳ διὰ φόβον ἀπονέμειν ἐξ ἐπιτάγματος.' For a discussion on the interesting dynamics of fear, representation, and interchangeability of personal identities in Dio's contemporary books of history, see Gleason (2011) 33-80, and esp. 33-52 for Commodus' reign.

[144] Dio 73(72).20.2-3. cf. Hdn. 1.14.7-15.7. for Herodian's descriptions of the reactions of the people towards Commodus' exploits in the arena. Herodian displays Commodus as losing favour with the people for producing a 'dark spectacle' (τότε σκυθρωπὸν εἶδεν ὁ δῆμος θέαμα) by debasing the emperorship due to his appearance in the amphitheatre as a gladiator. The moral judgement aspect of this conversation should not be ignored, and indeed has been an important theme in this section and the thesis as a whole, however, it is interesting to compare and contrast the reactions of the crowd to Commodus' exploits. What seems common in their descriptions is an ambivalent fascination and disgust, whatever the authorial justifications, suggesting an ambivalent reaction to the emperor. As such, an excellent contrasting image appears in Hdn 1.15.1, where rumour had spread across Italy to come and see what they hadn't seen or heard of before: 'διαδραμούσης δὲ τῆς φήμης συνέθεον ἔκ τε τῆς Ἰταλίας πάσης καὶ τῶν ὁμόρων ἐθνῶν, θεασόμενοι ἃ μὴ πρότερον μήτε ἑωράκεσαν μήτε ἠκηκόεσαν.' At first glance it would seem contradictory to the quoted Dio passage above, but when combined they highlight the fascination and uncertainty in the understanding of the Roman emperor, which elucidates his status as an oddity in of himself.

[145] See above, 160-167.

[146] Hekster (2002) 120ff, 146-147 for Commodus' gladiatorial display and his presentation as the Roman Hercules.

them, like Hercules had the Stymphalian Birds.[147] Indeed, there are ambivalences of identity at play throughout the passage, for not only is Commodus an emperor impersonating a deity in the arena, the would-be spectators fear that they too will be perceived as beastly–themselves figures to be feared. Furthermore, this is stressed by the subsequent story that Dio provides, which he argues made the potential Stymphalian birds encounter a believable event. Combined with what was described above about the teratological, namely the interest in the 'freakish' or deformed, and the emperor's status as a 'patron of human oddity',[148] the spectre of a staged gigantomachy using rounded-up disabled people without legs as giants (with appendages attached to their knees to make it appear as if they had serpents for legs instead) should not be surprising.[149] Indeed, this same scene is repeated in the *Historia Augusta*, with the manner of their execution the main difference:

> debiles pedibus et eos, qui ambulare non possent, in gigantum modum formavit, ita ut a genibus de pannis et linteis quasi dracones tegerentur, eosdemque sagittis confecit.[150]

The staged mythical reenactment becomes a gruesome scene of mass execution, with the emperor at the centre perpetrating the act, meaning that he is the focal point of the display, and also that he has muddled his status with his proximity to the mythological and the teratological. In other words, he is feared to be a monster as well.[151]

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[147] cf. Ibid., 12-13 on the ambiguity of Hercules

[148] See above 170-171, n. 51. For Commodus' interest in *mirabilia* and the deformed, see SHA, *Comm*. 10.4-11.4.

[149] cf. Coleman (1990) 44-73 on her 'fatal charades'. This evidence from Dio should be read within that context. What seems different here is that the 'giants' are the sick and the disabled across the city, which could both show the subversion of this form of execution (hence the fear of the crowd), and the precarious status of the disabled in the Roman world; cf. Garland (1995).

[150] SHA, *Comm*. 9.6. cf. Garland (1995) 51-52; cf. Dio 73(72).21.1-2; Hdn. 1.15.4-5. for further examples of Commodus' exploits in the arena and the consequent reaction.

[151] Compare with Beard (2003a) 39: 'one of the characteristics of monstrous despots is that they *literalize* the metaphors of cultural politics - to disastrous effect.' Thus the line between the performance of ideology and it becoming a reality is thin, also suggesting a similarly thin line between being an emperor and a monster.

In his chapter named 'The Roman Emperor in his Monstrous World', Garland describes the paradoxical nature of the emperor and his power due to his anomalous position, reflected in the monstrosities he patronised, which in turn made him monstrous himself:

> Freakish both in appetite and behaviour, taste and temperament, the emperor was more licensed than Petronius' grossly self-indulgent Trimalchio to satisfy his grotesque whims.[152]

This is an important point, and indeed it helps explain much of the evidence that has been discussed in this section. However, Garland is not quite there. The continuum of stories that show the emperor in close proximity to *mirabilia* betray a much more complicated picture, which does not so easily fit into archetypal categories of 'good' and 'bad', with Garland concentrating on the latter. The vignette is more complex: there is the potential that the emperor could be benevolent and monstrous simultaneously. These stories were formed and discussed over time and space, attributed to emperors for many reasons, but all pointing to a larger thought-world about his nature. It points to a certain precariousness that would shape the opinion of an emperor during his reign, and indeed after it, and were essential components of the conversation of acceptance. These sorts of stories added to the mystique of the imperial office, obscuring the machinations of the emperor in his court. This is testament to a curiosity of what the emperor seemed to be, which is contrasted to exploring what the emperor actually did. They are two sides of the same coin: the vulgarisation of these wondrous stories meant that they formed part of what the emperor was in popular discourse, thus colouring the perception of him. This discourse continued throughout his reign and into his legacy, which is an essential theme to the remainder of this thesis, which will concern making fun of the emperor, or speaking openly, ambiguities of the Golden Age, and the formation of an imperial afterlife.

[152] Garland (1995) 51.

3.5: Wisdom and Wit: Making Fun of the Emperor

> καί ποτέ τις ἀνὴρ Γαλάτης ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ βήματος ὑψηλοῦ ἐν Διὸς εἴδει χρηματίζοντα ἐγέλασεν· ὁ δὲ Γάιος ἐκάλεσέ τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἀνήρετο "τί σοι δοκῶ εἶναι;" καὶ ὃς ἀπεκρίνατο (ἐρῶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ λεχθέν) ὅτι "μέγα παραλήρημα." καὶ οὐδὲν μέντοι δεινὸν ἔπαθε· σκυτοτόμος γὰρ ἦν. οὕτω που ῥᾷον τὰς τῶν τυχόντων ἢ τὰς τῶν ἐν ἀξιώσει τινὶ ὄντων παρρησίας οἱ τοιοῦτοι φέρουσι.[1]

The above anecdote provides a convenient and interesting transition from the wondrous to interactions between him and his subjects, particularly concerning themes of jocularity and open speech. The context of Xiphilinus' epitomised section of Dio concerns Caligula's pretensions towards the divine, precipitated by a decree that the emperor should sit on a high platform even in the senate-house, so that he would be elevated and unable to be approached.[2] This physical separation, as argued by Dio, allowed for Gaius to claim a further divine separation from his subjects.[3] This was compounded by the display of Gaius in the guise of numerous deities, changing appearance and costume to impersonate Gods such as Zeus, Poseidon, Hercules, Dionysis, Hera, Aphrodite, and Artemis.[4] As with the Wonder Tales, the emperor's proximity to the mythological and wondrous is being described here, with the emperor being the wonder in question. Concomitant with that, however, is the spectre of negativity and fear in its interpretation, a similar theme to what was described above. The tone of these passages is one of derision and ridicule against the absurdity of Caligula's actions, which culminates in the anecdote of the Gaulish shoemaker near the end of the chapter. With reference to what Dio had been describing prior, with Caligula on a high step in the guise of Zeus, the Gaulish man

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[1] Dio 59.26.8-9.

[2] Dio 59.26.3: 'ἡσθέντος τε ἐπὶ τούτῳ τοῦ Γαΐου καὶ φήσαντος αὐτοῖς κατηλλάχθαι πανηγύρεις τέ τινας ἐψηφίσαντο καὶ ὅπως καὶ βήματι ὑψηλῷ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ, ὥστε μηδένα ἐξικνεῖσθαι…' The passage also states that Caligula's statues got similar treatment; cf. Chatper 3.2, 116-120.

[3] Dio 59.26.5: 'ἐπαινούμενος οὖν διὰ ταῦτα τὰ μὲν φόβῳ τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἥρωα τῶν δὲ θεὸν αὐτὸν ἀνακαλούντων, δεινῶς ἐξεφρόνησεν. ἠξίου μὲν γὰρ καὶ πρότερον ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον νομίζεσθαι…' cf. Suet. *Cal*. 22.2-4, esp, Suetonius' first phrase of the cited section: '*Verum admonitus et principum et regum se excessisse fastigium, divinam ex eo maiestatem asserere sibi coepit…*'

[4] Dio 59.26.5-8; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 22.2, where statues of Gods from Greece get imported and altered to carry the bust of Gaius.

let out a laugh.[5] This prompted the emperor to ask the man who he seemed to be. The Greek "τί σοι δοκῶ εἶναι;", is actually quite loaded with a few interpretations. Perhaps it could be taken as rhetorical, meaning that it was clear that he seemed to be Zeus, making the laugh absurd. Similarly rhetorical is that it could be interpreted as a statement of fact, that it should be clear that he was emperor, with all that is sinister behind that implied.[6] Similarly possible is the straight-forward understanding of the question, of what he *seemed* to be, which brings us to an interesting proposition.

The implication that Gaius' display was open for interpretation and opinion, even if it was not always expressed openly, exposes a dynamic in the perception and critical discussion of the Roman emperor. It finds its parallels in Wintrobe's Dictator's Dilemma, as it is in the interests of the autocratic ruler to obtain this information–something that is a potential interpretation of Gaius' question to the shoemaker.[7] Thoughts and opinions about the Roman emperor would be kept secret unless expressed in different forms, whether openly or more obscurely. Nonetheless, ancient literature is littered with attestations of spoken opinion of these different forms that thus give the impression of how the emperor seemed, and interestingly, it is often exhibited using interactions between individuals or groups of non-elite backgrounds expressing themselves towards the power of the emperor. This phenomenon is of great interest to this thesis, as it is a potential window into a thought-world concerning the emperor, and particularly in this case about the discourses of criticism using humour and joke.[8] Therefore, this section concerns these humorous scenes and jokes. It should be noted that the evidence provided

[5] Beard (2014) 135 for her interpretation of this scene.
[6] See Ahl (1984) 174-208, Rudich (1993) and Rutledge (2001) for the history of potential misfortune if one was not more careful with one's words. See above Chapter 2.2 for the problem of speaking truth to power, and also the subsequent discussion in this section of this problem of open speech towards the Roman emperor.
[7] See above Chapter 2.2; Wintrobe (1998) 20-22.
[8] This is similar to a 'hidden transcript'. as discussed above in Chapter 2.2, in which 'true' opinions of subordinates in power relationships are obscured, but surface intermittently in 'hidden' forms, such as in privy conversations between themselves, and folkish expression, such as fable and song.

here does not pretend to be exhaustive in that it will catalogue and analyse every attestation of a humorous encounter with the emperor,[9] but will cover problems and themes that are evoked in these jokes. This includes the problem of 'elite' as opposed to 'popular' discourses, the extent to which such evidence can reveal a 'hidden transcript', or rather concealed opinion being veiled in jocularity, the problem of 'good' and 'bad' characterisations, and what such discourse can tell us about the thought-world concerning the Roman emperor.

Indeed, the example provided above can be a good springboard to these themes, which are relevant to this section as a whole. Translators have rendered 'μέγα παραλήρημα' as 'piece of absurdity', which in truth does not convey the full spectrum of its meaning, as it only seems to give a visual aspect: basically that Gaius looked absurd. It seems related to the verb παραληρέω, which means to talk nonsense, or be raving mad, and it seems to give the sense of being gibberish or engaging in incomprehensible chatter.[10] Perhaps then, alongside a sight that is risible, is the meaning that the Gaulish shoemaker called the emperor crazy. Understandably, the boldness of such a statement directed toward an emperor without consequence required explanation. The argument adopted by Dio once it was determined that nothing bad happened to the man was that it must have been due to his lower station.[11] This sentiment is echoed by Tacitus in the *Annals*, in the context of the popular reaction at Rome to Nero's divorce of Octavia and

[9] Beard (2014) 128-155 for a discussion of this sort of evidence, Toner (2009) 100-101 for a shorter section on jokes and the emperor, and Laurence and Paterson (1999) 183-197 for the evidence of the emperor's *dicta*, including those with humour.

[10] Outside of its appearance in Dio, and in Zonaras and Xiphilinus, a *TLG* search gives a majority of examples for the word's use after the tenth century in Byzantine authorship, yet they retain the meaning of 'nonsense' or 'absurdity'. cf. Winterling (2009) 104-106 on a discussion on ancient views on 'insanity' in his assessment of the strong historiographical impact of the view that Caligula was crazy. It is here that the thoughts of A. Cornelius Celsus on *insania*, and in particular how his view of the 'disease' would manifest itself in incomprehensible chatter seem a most relevant parallel to the choice of the word 'παραλήρημα': Celsus, *Med*. 3.18.1-2: '*Incipiam ab insania, primamque huius ipsius partem adgrediar, quae et acuta et in febre est:* φρένησιν *Graeci appellant. Illud ante omnia scire oportet, interdum in accessione aegros desipere et loqui aliena.*'

[11] Beard (2014) 135.

subsequent betrothal to Poppaea, which was an active and vociferous support of Octavia: *'inde crebri questus nec occulti per vulgum, cui minor sapientia ex mediocritate fortunae pauciora pericula sunt'*.[12] Thus, both authors overlap to state that despite the implied danger, both the shoemaker and the people at Rome did not received reprimand for their outspokenness, meaning that their boldness came from the lack of consequences due to their non-elite backgrounds, or even as Tacitus states, their lack of wisdom and their 'not knowing any better'. This could be interpreted as elite prejudice against the *humiliores* in society, which in turn problematises the historicity and historical relevancy of these attestations.[13]

This reveals the problem of 'elite' and 'popular' perspectives, and the issue of historical relevance. Firstly, the existence of several jocular interactions between an individual or group of people of a non-elite background and the emperor is an invaluable source of material, which reveals an aspect of the imagination of the emperor's conduct towards his subjects. However, as Beard rightly stated in her recent work on laughter in ancient Rome, not all such interactions between the emperor and his subjects would have been humorous.[14] This may seem like a historical truism, but it should be noted that the potential reality of these situations could be unsavoury or violent, as suggested by

[12] Tac. *Ann*. 14.60.5; cf. Ps.Sen. *Octavia* ll. 273-281, where a chorus of the Roman people appear and give their support to Octavia and her ancestry. There have been numerous debates on various important aspects of the play, such as its date, genre and political purpose: Kragelund (1982); Flower (1995); Kragelund (2002); Ferri (2003); Boyle (2008). Such uncertainty means that a caveat must be placed with any historical conclusion taken on its context. In essence, it provides us a literary construction of the people, which is by no means monolithic or straightforward, particularly since there are two choruses, one that favours Octavia (273-376), and another that favours Poppaea (877-982), and it provides interesting elaborations on what Tacitus describes in the chapter cited above. See Ferri (2003) 382-384 on the two choruses, parallels with Greek tragedy, and the trope of the fickle mob. cf. Chapter 4.3.

[13] cf. Morgan (2007) 66 for a comparison in fable of a similar sentiment; namely that the more prominent are in greater danger, and that there is 'safety in obscurity': Phaed. 4.6.11-13: '*Quemcumque populum tristis eventus premit, Periclitatur magnitudo principum; Minuta plebes facili praesidio latet.*' cf. Braund (2009) 224, 243ff for this sentiment in Seneca, Sen. *Polyb*. 6.4: '*Multa tibi non licent, quae humillimis et in angulo iacentibus licent*.' cf. in general, Sen. *Clem*. 1.7.4, 1.8.1-5. (eg. *Grave putas eripi loquendi arbitrium regibs quod humillimi habent…*)

[14] Beard (2014) 136.

evidence collated by Yavetz for the *plebs* at Rome during the Julio-Claudian period.[15] That a bold openness in the discussion of the Roman emperor could bring consequences is discussed by Epictetus in his *Discourses* 4.13 (Πρὸς τοὺς εὐκόλως ἐκφέροντας τὰ αὐτῶν), which is a treatise about those who are too frank with their own affairs, particularly when one could be tricked into revealing too much. The anecdote Epictetus provides is one of military incognito informants, who were seemingly ubiquitous at Rome, drawing people into their trust, and thus increasing the potential of being caught saying bad things about Caesar:[16]

> οὕτω καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ οἱ προπετεῖς λαμβάνονται. παρακεκάθικέ σοι στρατιώτης ἐν σχήματι ἰδιωτικῷ καὶ ἀρξάμενος κακῶς λέγει τὸν Καίσαρα, εἶτα σὺ ὥσπερ ἐνέχυρον παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ λαβὼν τῆς πίστεως τὸ αὐτὸν τῆς λοιδορίας κατῆρχθαι λέγεις καὶ αὐτὸς ὅσα φρονεῖς, εἶτα δεθεὶς ἀπάγῃ.[17]

There is seemingly no class bias in these seizures. Therefore, there is the spectre for a favourable or unfavourable reaction to frankness of opinion. We are in a similar conceptual space as to what has been described throughout this chapter; namely that these anecdotes allude to a *mentalité* concerning the emperor, in which expectations and fears of his reactions are negotiated in discourse. This is subtly different to the creation of a historical account that would concentrate on the realities of the potential interactions between emperor and subject–topics that have indeed been discussed in this thesis as a whole, and more systematically by Millar.[18] Rather, what we have here is the existence of a shared imagination concerning jokes with, or at the expense of, the emperor. Therefore, it can provide an account of both jocular and critical discourse about him, which reveals

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[15] Yavetz (1969a) 24-37, on the violent protests of the *plebs* and the consequent reactions of the emperor to them.

[16] Millar (1965) 143 on the dating of the anecdote; cf. Rudich (1993) 286: Suet. *Tit*. 6.1, which details Titus' time as praetorian prefect, and gives a similar anecdote to the one provided by Epictetus: '*praefecturam quoque praetori suscepit numquam ad id tempus nisi ab eq. R. administratam, egitque aliquanto incivilius et violentius, siquidem suspectissimum quemque sibi summissis qui per theatra et castra quasi consensu ad poenam deposcerent, haud cunctanter oppressit*.' cf. Millar (1992) 61-66.

[17] Arr. *Epict. Diss*. 4.13.5

[18] Millar (1992), esp. 363-549.

a functional critique on what the emperor was perceived to be, both positively and negatively.

Similar tensions are observable in the utilisation of a literary perspective. Work in this vein has given fruitful and thought-provoking analyses of the stock characterisations of the Roman emperor, such as Champlin's article 'Tiberius the Wise' and Jasnow's 'Germanicus, Nero and the Incognito King in Tacitus' deserve particular mention. Both utilise examples from world literature to explore the different literary guises in which the emperors get portrayed.[19] Moreover, in attempting to construct the perception of the emperor by using this method, the context of the time period within which it was utilised and the people that it characterises becomes important for a historical interpretation of the evidence. For instance, to use narratological analysis for the example provided above, the Gaulish shoemaker can be interpreted as a 'focalisation', where the author puts words into the mouth of the character in order to put into relief a certain opinion, which can be built upon to help aid our understanding of its historical context. If this was indeed a focalisation, does it then reveal an opinion of the source or the author in question about the emperor Caligula? Is it a device in itself used to engage with a discourse of criticism towards the office of emperor? If so, how representative of a wider thought-world can it be? These questions both reveal the inherent tension and bias present, and their tantalising utility. In short, the problematic depiction of non-elite actors in their encounters with the emperor reveal an interest in this sort of interaction, even if it could be argued that they were used for "elite" perspectives. As argued above, a more *inclusive* understanding of the discourse criticising the Roman emperor allows for different voices to be heard in the rubric. This not only appreciates the literary context of criticism, but also points to a world

[19] Champlin (2008) 408-425; Jasnow (2015) 313-331.

where it seemed plausible that a shoemaker could and would openly criticise an emperor, suggesting a *mentalité* that such action would be tolerated, despite the inherent dangers.[20]

Indeed, the perspective of the 'elite' in terms of *libertas* has received greater attention, particularly in terms of negotiating a right for political free speech in an autocratic environment. More recently, studies seem to concentrate on the understanding of the rhetorical techniques of hiding one's opinion properly, thus being able to claim plausible deniability in the face of claims of derision.[21] Interest also lies in exploring the role that 'free speech' had in the judicial aspect of *maiestas* trials, which have allowed the early principate to be interpreted as an oppressive police state, which actively sought to oppress the opinions of the elite in Roman society.[22] Material abounds on this topic, which involves the discussion and understanding of terms such as *libertas* and *parrhesia*, using figured speech to disguise opinion, the problem and number of accusations of *maiestas* and its impact on society.[23] In essence, this section attempts to come at the issue of free speech from a different angle. Instead of exploring the definitions of terms and the nuances of *maiestas* in a general sense, it rather analyses a more specific register of evidence by analysing the attestations of jocular interactions between an emperor and individuals or groups of people of a lower station, in order to find a wider perspective on the issue of the freedom of speech and criticising the emperor.[24] Such evidence can be a potential window into a shared thought-world about the emperor. As Beard argues:

> …in Roman writing, confrontations between the ruler and individual representatives of the ruled were overwhelmingly delineated, debated, and discursively formulated in terms of laughing and joking. Literary representations, at least, used of laughter to

[20] See deeper discussion on these themes in Chapter 2.2.
[21] Ahl (1984); Bartsch (1994); Sluiter and Rosen (2004).
[22] See Rudich (1993) and Rutledge (2001) in particular.
[23] Compare with discussion of *maiestas* with respect to the emperor's statue in Chapter 3.2.
[24] This is inspired by the work of Scott; cf. further discussion of his points in Chapter 2.2. This is not to say that perspectives on *libertas* and further topics concerning free speech aren't extremely relevant, but rather that it unfortunately can't be given full treatment in this thesis.

> facilitate communication across the political hierarchy, allowing a particular form of jocularized conversation to take place between high and low.[25]

Thus, this sort of evidence was part of this discourse of power relations between emperor and subject, potentially revealing a shared critical register of making fun of the emperor, and is an integral part of the historical understanding of the perception of the Roman emperor.

There is also the problem of the categorisation of these stories, particularly concerning the moral designation of a 'good' or a 'bad' emperor. To return to the anecdote about Gaius and the Gaul, the assertion that nothing ill happened to the shoemaker is written with a tone of surprise, with the more believable and expected outcome was the man's execution for such ridicule. There is a disjunct between this anecdote and the impression received about Gaius.[26] For instance, there are numerous allusions to his cruelty throughout Suetonius' *Life,* and the constant fear of execution is presented as a permanent possibility around Gaius.[27] It adds a wrinkle to perceived stereotypes of Caligula's character as a tyrant and as a monster if he is seen to be magnanimous towards the Gaulish shoemaker. This suggests a possibility of a spectrum of different opinions that could exist about the emperor, espousing positive, negative, or ambivalent sentiments.[28] That being so, the extent to which archetypes of the Roman emperor could be created becomes more nuanced. In terms of jocularity, the basic characterisation is as follows:

> The basic Roman rule… was that good and wise rulers made jokes in a benevolent way, never used laughter to humiliate, and tolerated wisecracks at their own expense.

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[25] Beard (2014) 136; cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 188-189 on how this discourse 'crossed class and social lines.'

[26] Dio 59; Suet. *Cal*. 11, 22ff, esp. 33 on his morbid sense of humour; Philo, *Leg*. *passim*, esp: 28-31, on the demise of Tiberius Gemellus; 73, on Gaius' cruelty; 119, on Gaius as slave-master.

[27] See for instance, Suet. *Cal*. 32.3: '*Lautiore convivio effusus subito in cachinnos consulibus, qui iuxta cubabant, quidnam rideret blande quaerentibus: "Quid," inquit, "nisi uno meo nutu iugulari utrumque vestrum statim posse?"'* An appropriate parallel, complete with an example of laughter.

[28] cf. Champlin (2008) 414, and above in Chapter 2.2, 90-91, esp. n. 74, on the similar impression about the tradition of Tiberius' character and conduct.

> Bad rulers and tyrants, on the other hand, would violently suppress even the most innocent banter while using laughter and joking as weapons against their enemies.[29]

With Gaius being seen as a 'bad' emperor, the story in Dio would thus seem incongruous– for it seems that Gaius 'tolerated' a wisecrack, rather than suppressing it unequivocally. It does not require much digging to find examples that do not fit comfortably with this basic rule. However, being overly critical on the lack of nuance in this short characterisation would miss the point, which Beard rightly stresses as 'basic', and rather is representative of something wider: 'they point to a bigger truth–a political lesson as much as an urban myth–that laughter helped to characterise both good and bad rulers.'[30] If taken a step further, this 'truth' is representative of a discourse that utilised jokes and laughter as tools to help understand and criticise an emperor. Moreover, and similar to the arguments outlined above, there is ambivalence to this discourse: there is a moral aspect of how 'good' or 'bad' emperors respond to jocularity, but the impression is not necessarily binary. As before, there is an unpredictability to the nature of the emperor's reaction, which means that he could respond favourably or unfavourably, with hope for a good outcome, accompanied by fear that it could end badly, which is something that is seemingly shared across the received impression of 'good' or 'bad' emperors.[31] Therefore, instead of a polarity, there was a framework in which the emperor is seen as a focal point of laughter and joking, from which moral interpretations could be inferred, all contributing to how the emperor was perceived.[32]

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[29] Beard (2014) 130. To be fair to Beard, she does describe the nuance, and does stress that this juxtaposition is only a 'basic' rule to understand the characterisation, without putting to much weight on its accuracy. It still provides a pithy statement about the nature of the evidence and how it has been understood. cf. Trentin (2011) 200 for a similar sentiment.

[30] Beard (2014) 130. cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 193 for a similar interest in the characterisation of emperors through their *dicta.*

[31] cf. Chapters 3.2-3.

[32] cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 184 on a similar argument on having 'to hand on the emperor's every word', with particular reference to Tiberius' characterisation in Dio 57.1, concerning the emperor's notoriety for being difficult to read and his inconsistency in reaction. cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.74.5. for Cn. Piso's remark to follow Tiberius' lead lest he makes the wrong choice.

These numerous points and issues are the necessary background to assessing the evidence for making fun of the emperor. A good example is the emperor Vespasian. For instance, Beard cites him as providing a neat example of an emperor's *civilitas*:[33]

> ἐς δὲ δὴ τἆλλα πάντα κοινὸς καὶ ἰσοδίαιτός σφισιν ἦν. καὶ γὰρ ἔσκωπτε δημοτικῶς καὶ ἀντεσκώπτετο ἡδέως· εἴ τέ τινα γράμματα, οἷα εἴωθεν ἀνώνυμα ἐς τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας, προπηλακισμὸν αὐτῷ φέροντα, ἐξετέθη ποτέ, ἀντεξετίθει τὰ πρόσφορα μηδὲν ταραττόμενος.[34]

It is notable that Dio refers to how Vespasian treated his subjects, and that he joked on a 'popular' level, and would give as good as he got. In particular, the exchanges seem to get heated, if we take the work προπηλακισμός (literally to sling mud) at its meaning for slander, ridicule, and insult. The contents of such insults are unknown, but what seems important is how Vespasian was unfazed by them, with Dio providing an extremely interesting context of how such insults were circulated, and even how an emperor could respond. The word ἐξετέθη suggested that the anonymous slanderers set up their insults in written form, giving the image of phrases marked out or painted on walls,[35] with the emperor responding in kind (ἀντεξετίθει) with appropriate retorts. First, this suggests that the form of joking that is alluded to here is not a restrictive category, but one that is shared across class and social boundaries, and carried out in the public realm.[36] Second, what Dio does not say is also of note, given that it would seem entirely plausible that an emperor would *not* take such insults lightly and instead prosecute perpetrators, evoking the image from Epictetus of the informants eavesdropping waiting to catch people out.[37]

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[33] On *civilitas*, see Wallace-Hadrill (1982a) 32-48, and Chapter 1.2.2 for further discussion.
[34] Dio 65(66)11.1; cf. Suet. *Vesp*. 13.1 for a similar sentiment: '*Amicorum libertatem, causidicorum figuras ac philosophorum contumaciam lenissime tulit*.' cf. Ibid., 22-23 on Vespasian's propensity for joking and making fun of himself.
[35] For the evidence of graffiti and its content on emperors, see Chapter 1.3; cf. Franklin (2001) 108, on *CIL* 4.8075, discussed above in Chapter 2.2, 78, n. 25.
[36] cf. Laurence and Paterson (1999) 189, who don't cite this particular passage, but provide apt analysis: 'Using *dicta* was an excellent way of constructing a persona attractive to all sorts and conditions of people, and of exploring a broader shared culture.' cf. SHA, *Hadr*. 20.1: '*In conloquiis etiam humillimorum civilissimus fuit*…'
[37] See above, 195.

It perfectly encapsulates the nature of fear and expectation when it comes to making fun of an emperor; in how people were able to criticise an emperor, with expectations on how an emperor should respond, and that there was always a lingering danger to the imperial response. In the end, it gives a tantalising glimpse into the nature of such attestations, and how much of these interactions would have been transitory in medium to the extent that they could not survive for posterity.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a public nature to the form and content of these jokes: on the streets, in the arena and theatres, at the baths, at dinner, and in the presence of the emperor himself. One can then perhaps infer that people enjoyed these jokes within the same contexts. This may seem counterintuitive to the seemingly clandestine anonymity of Dio's letters, but these were publicly posted. Indeed, the subsequent example of Vespasian's *civilitas* that Dio uses in the passage is in a public setting. It involves a certain Phoebus who had rebuked him during Nero's trip to Greece when Vespasian had seen the emperor's antics and was told to 'go to the crows'–ἐς κόρακας–which could be idiomatically translated as 'go to hell!'. After Vespasian assumed his principate, the new emperor responded to Phoebus in kind, but it was interpreted as wit, since nothing ill happened subsequently to Nero's erstwhile freedman.[38] The phrase is seemingly common, and is used as an 'imprecation', as Liddell and Scott state in their entry under κόραξ, perhaps referring to improper burial and being left out to the ravenous birds. In a search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database, it appears across the corpus, notably in the comedies of Aristophanes.[39] It also appears once more in Dio in a shorter and more general form, where Phoebus uses the rebuke to dismiss someone who had been

[38] Dio 65(66).11.2: 'ὑπὲρ τούτου οὖν ἀπολογουμένου τοῦ Φοίβου οὔτε τι κακὸν αὐτὸν εἰργάσατο, οὔτε ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ ἄλλο οὐδὲν πλὴν αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὅτι "ἐς κόρακας ἄπελθε."'
[39] For example, Ar. *Ach*. 864; Ar. *Eq*. 1314; Ar. *Nub*. 123, 133. cf. also Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, for examples of comic fragments: Ath. 1.8e.

refused audience with Nero.[40] All this shows the morbidity of this sort of humour, and how in a different context there could be an unsavoury outcome to the situation.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this sort of joking evokes a certain *urbanitas*, a form of joking that seems conceptually related to the streets and crowds of the city. It is an elusive category that appears intermittently in our sources, which depict humour and knowledge of a lower status.[41] The study of this phenomenon would require a thesis in its own right, but there is a point of similarity that needs to be stressed here. Much like the *mirabilia* and also the dream-book interpretations discussed above, there is an ambivalent reception of this *urbanitas*–looked down upon, yet something to engage and be conversant in.[42] It is interesting that the emperor would be depicted as part of this world as well. This sort of *apologia* is seen in the same book of Dio cited above about Vespasian's *civilitas*, which records Domitian's habit of impaling flies and an anonymous witty remark about it:

> τοῦτο γὰρ εἰ καὶ ἀνάξιον τοῦ τῆς ἱστορίας ὄγκου ἐστίν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι γε ἱκανῶς τὸν τρόπον αὐτοῦ ἐνδείκνυται, ἀναγκαίως ἔγραψα, καὶ μάλισθ᾽ ὅτι καὶ μοναρχήσας ὁμοίως αὐτὸ ἐποίει. ὅθεν οὐκ ἀχαρίτως τις εἶπε πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτήσαντα "τί πράττει Δομιτιανός;" ὅτι "ἰδιάζει τε, καὶ οὐδὲ μυῖα αὐτῷ παρακάθηται."[43]

As stated by Dio, this anecdote is simultaneously unworthy of history, yet worth recording as relevant to the understanding of Domitian's character. It follows that the content of the anecdote and its jocular medium are also ambivalent in this manner: both unworthy and

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[40] Dio 62(63)10.1a: 'καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἐδέχετο αὐτόν, ἐκείνου εἰπόντος "καὶ ποῦ ἀπέλθω;" ὁ Φοῖβος ὁ ἀπελεύθερος τοῦ Νέρωνος ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ "εἰς κόρακας."'Perhaps a different transmission of the same story with Phoebus and Vespasian.

[41] This was discussed in detail by Prof. Nicholas Purcell in a paper entitled '*Vernacula Urbanitas*', which included evidence of such a 'lower-class sense of fun' from the *Natural History*, the antics and discussion at Trimalchio's Dinner in Petronius' *Satyricon*, and particularly Tac. *Hist*. 2.88, and the practical joke gone wrong on the outskirts of Rome, in the context of the Vitellian army camp and the *Nonae Caprotinae*: 'inter *incuriosos milites* ***vernacula utebantur urbanitate****: quidam spoliavere, abscisis furtim balteis an accincti forent rogitantes*.'

[42] cf. Quint. *Inst*. 6.3.17 on *urbanitas*.

[43] Dio 65(66).9.3-5. On the importance of recording such material, see the discussion of Dio's historiography in Chapter 4.2.

necessary at the same time. It therefore follows that this is a similar framework of understanding to the appearance of emperors in *mirabilia*: just as the emperor could be seen to close to wondrous things, so also he could be the subject of a joke.

Returning to Beard's paradigm of how good emperors can take criticism, it should be noted that the tradition is not as neat as Dio's statement at 65(66).11.1., in which Vespasian was accustomed to respond with wit and grace. Again in the same source, which is in the historical context of Vespasian's visit to Alexandria during the civil wars of A.D. 69-70 and his pursuit of the emperorship,[44] the Alexandrians taunted the emperor for increased taxes and Vespasian's pursuit of money:

> οἱ δ᾽ οὖν Ἀλεξανδρεῖς διά τε ἐκεῖνα, καὶ ὅτι καὶ τῶν βασιλείων τὸ πλεῖστον ἀπέδοτο, χαλεπῶς φέροντες ἄλλα τε ἐς αὐτὸν ἀπερρίπτουν καὶ ὅτι "ἓξ ὀβολοὺς προσαιτεῖς", ὥστε καὶ τὸν Οὐεσπασιανὸν καίπερ ἐπιεικέστατον ὄντα χαλεπῆναι, καὶ κελεῦσαι μὲν καὶ τοὺς ἓξ ὀβολοὺς κατ᾽ ἄνδρα ἐσπραχθῆναι, βουλεύσασθαι δὲ καὶ τιμωρίαν αὐτῶν ποιήσασθαι.[45]

Here, Vespasian is seen to respond angrily to the shouts of the Alexandrians, resorting to fine them the amount of six obols about which they were chanting, with view of punishing them further. To reiterate the publicness of such proceedings, the medium of their discontent was in rhythmical chanting. Indeed, Dio is specific that this aspect is what raised Vespasian's ire, which was the anapaestic rhythm of the chants, which seems to contain one syllable too many, perhaps making it uncomfortable:[46] 'καὶ ἐκ τοῦ κατακεκλασμένου τοῦ τε ἀναπαίστου σφῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ὅ τι οὐκ ὀργήν οἱ ἐνεποίει'.[47] It is notable that it is a recitative metre, used in the *parabases* of Attic comedy, or the chorus' chant to the audience. This accentuates the image of a collective recitation. This is evidence in support of acclamation and shouts in public towards the emperor being

[44] For a discussion on the chronology of the early years of Vespasian's principate, see Henrichs (1968) 51-54.
[45] Dio 65(66).8.4-6.
[46] ὀβολοῦς προσαιτεῖς.
[47] Ibid., 65(66).8.4-5.

the method with which honours, and indeed grievances, could be expressed to the higher authority.[48] As such, the impact of Vespasian's taxation is being exemplified in Dio by the audible frustrations of the Alexandrians, which is an interesting way of expressing and understanding the effects of an emperor's actions, insofar as they were scrutinised in a public verbal reaction. Furthermore, it seems to find corroboration in Suetonius' account with the nickname of *Cybiosactes*, or 'Salt-fish dealer', which the Alexandrians were accustomed to call him after a previous ruler who had been stingy.[49] This evidence seems to contradict Vespasian's image of clemency, on which Suetonius gives a few examples of this and his wit with particular reference to similar monetary issues.[50]

Moreover, a negative interpretation of Vespasian's conduct is shown by the story of Empona in Plutarch's *Moralia*, in which he recounts a story about the wife of Julius Sabinus, who took part in the Batavian revolt of Julius Civilis in A.D. 69. It is within the context of Plutarch's dialogue concerning love, in which Empona is the *exemplum* of a devoted wife in her steadfast loyalty to her husband in his self-imposed hiding. After a lacuna in Plutarch's text, the story culminates in her execution at the orders of Vespasian, presumably after the couple had been caught.[51] The climax of the story is Vespasian's anger at the woman's brave retort, when she claims she had been happier in the cave than

[48] Cameron (1976) 162-168 on the evidence of these sorts of interaction from the time of Augustus towards late antiquity, and esp. 162: 'From Augustus on it became normal and common for the people to make requests of the emperor at the circus and theatre–requests to which he was morally obliged at least to reply'. cf. Roueché (1984) 182-183; cf. Aldrete (1999) 89-92

[49] Suet. *Vesp*. 19.2: '*Alexandrini Cybiosacten eum vocare perseveraverunt, cognomine unius e regibus suis turpissimarum sordium*.' cf. Str. 17.1.11 for the nickname belonging to the son-in-law of the thirteenth Ptolemy. cf. Ath. 3.118a, in which a fragment of Alexis' *Apeglaukomenos* comedy from the Hellenistic period contains a passage about the price of κύβιον, which seems to be the cured fish referenced in the nickname, and how it cost three obols. What is more interesting is the supposed fluctuation in prices of the salt-fish dealer (here ταριχοπώλης). Perhaps the cry of 'six obols' is related to the selling of fish. For popular epithets given to emperors, see Bruun (2003) 69-98. The evocation of fish, and the implication that being such a dealer was dishonest, perhaps should be viewed with other fishy stories that emperors appear in: see above Chapter 3.4.

[50] Suet. *Vesp*. 23.1-3, which includes the various corrupt practices of Vespasian, including a tax on toilets, along with his witty remarks in response, in this case asking his son Titus whether or not the money stank.

[51] Plut. *Mor*. 770c-771c.

Vespasian had been happy ruling.[52] Despite the absence of humour, the boldness of Empona is part of this theme of open response towards an emperor, accentuated by her subordinated role as a subject and a woman. This evidence is not meant here to place Vespasian within a category of 'bad' emperors, but rather to show that the number and nature of such stories allowed for emperors to be cast in this light, and remembered accordingly. Therefore, these anecdotes about jokes and vocal expressions can be vehicles of a thought-world about the Roman emperor, in which his subjects negotiated who the emperor seemed to be. In other words, it was a way to explore and understand the power-relationship between ruler and ruled, with humorous or morbid outcomes being two sides of the same coin.

This potentiality is something that has been observable in representations of the interactions between emperor and subject throughout this chapter. Indeed, many have humorous turns, such as the interaction between Hadrian and the Old Woman,[53] and the example of Bulla Felix's masquerades that fooled Septimius Severus across Italy.[54] Certain examples are conceptually related to stories with humour, such as the evidence of the 'tale of the unbreakable glass'.[55] The more humorous counterpart involves the emperor Claudius and Titus Vinius before his fame in 69 as one of Galba's advisers. Like the 'tale of the unbreakable glass', this story involves crockery:

> δειπνῶν δὲ παρὰ Κλαυδίῳ Καίσαρι ποτήριον ἀργυροῦν ὑφείλετο· πυθόμενος δὲ ὁ Καῖσαρ τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκάλεσεν, ἐλθόντι δὲ ἐκέλευσεν ἐκείνῳ μηδὲν ἀργυροῦν, ἀλλὰ κεράμια πάντα προσφέρειν καὶ παρατιθέναι τοὺς ὑπηρέτας. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν διὰ τὴν Καίσαρος μετριότητα κωμικωτέραν γενομένην, γέλωτος, οὐκ ὀργῆς ἄξιον ἔδοξεν·[56]

[52] Plut. *Mor.* 771c: 'καίτοι τὸν οἶκτον ἐξῄρει τῶν θεωμένων τὸ θαρραλέον αὐτῆς καὶ μεγαλήγορον, ᾧ καὶ μάλιστα παρώξυνε τὸν Οὐεσπασιανόν, ὡς ἀπέγνω τῆς σωτηρίας πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀλλαγὴν κελεύουσα· βεβιωκέναι γὰρ ὑπὸ σκότῳ καὶ κατὰ γῆς ἥδιον ἢ βασιλεύειν ἐκεῖνον.' cf. Ash (2008) 567-568 for further analysis of this passage, its moral implications, and how it differs from Dio's at 65(66).16.2.
[53] Dio 69.6.3. cf. Chapter 3.2, 114-115 on this anecdote
[54] Dio 77(76).10. cf. Chapter 3.2, 136-137, for analysis.
[55] See Chapter 3.4, 183-184, for analysis.
[56] Plut. *Galb*. 12.4-5. For analysis of this passage, and particularly Plutarch's characterisation of Claudius in this passage in comparison to images in different authors, see Ash (2008) 560-561.

Claudius' wit was such that he teased the stealer of his silver cup by bringing out earthenware at the next dinner. Plutarch interprets the scene as a joke, attributing his moderation being the reason that this incident seemed worthy of laughter, and not anger. '῎Εδοξεν' is the operative word here, which places the onus on interpretation and perspective. For instance, Suetonius in his description of Claudius at dinner describes situations where Claudius was the butt of jokes, rather than vice versa.[57] Furthermore, as Ash points out, other authors characterise Claudius differently, particularly with respect to his short temper.[58] Tacitus' version of this cup story is telling in this manner:

> servili deinceps probro respersus est, tamquam scyphum aureum in convivio Claudii furatus, et Claudius postera die soli omnium Vinio fictilibus ministrari iussit.[59]

The humorous gloss Plutarch provides in his version is absent from Tacitus', and instead focuses on Claudius' anger and Vinius' humiliation.[60] Thus, tradition effected the reception of an emperor's sense of humour, which reveals in this particular case the different ways a story could be interpreted, and also how a joke could be taken seriously or not.

As Laurence and Paterson argued in their article on imperial *dicta*, the witty remarks of emperors were important contributing parts of biography and history, and reflected that they were 'matters of key importance to those around him.'[61] Accordingly, these sayings became important ways to think about the emperors in question, were seemingly subject

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[57] Suet. *Claud*. 8, which revolved around those present, and in particular the *copreae*. cf. above Chapter 3.4, 175 n. 77.
[58] Ash (2008) 560-561, with the examples of Tac. *Ann*. 11.26.2 and Sen. *Apoc*. 6.2.
[59] Tac. *Hist*. 1.48.3.
[60] Tacitus' characterisation of the scene as Vinius being disgraced as if a slave reveals an important theme, which Matthew Roller discusses at length the perception of a master-slave relationship and its applicability to understanding the Roman emperor. For Roller, it serves as a vehicle in understanding the meaning of *libertas,* and therefore the perspective of the literate elite on the autocracy in which they were living. It should be noted that the master-slave paradigm is conceptually similar to the dominant–subordinate relationship described by Scott, but the differences lies in what parts of society are included in this understanding, on which Roller concentrates on the elite. See Roller (2001) 214-247.
[61] Laurence and Paterson (1999) 183-187, quotation from 183-184.

to keen observation, and had implications for the legacy of these emperors as well. The importance of legacy to the reception of the Roman emperor will discussed further in Chapter 4, but it should be stated that many of these *dicta* survive through sources written many years after their dramatic dates. This reflects the longevity of these stories in the imagination about emperors, and how they become timeless character sketches, malleable to different contexts, and part of the conversation about what the emperor was and should be.

These different potential interpretations through time makes this evidence fascinating, such as the jokes of Augustus that appear in the treasure trove of miscellany that is Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.[62] Analysis of all thirty-one examples would be enjoyable, but a couple will suffice. One portrays a petitioner hesitating in his quest to present a request to Augustus, who asks the man if he thought he was giving a coin to an elephant.[63] Similar versions of the story with slight variation appear both in Quintilian and Suetonius as examples of wit, which points to the longevity of this story in particular.[64] However, while Augustus is commended for dispelling the tension, his joke does not hide the elephant in the room. For, given how stressful it must have been to present a petition to an emperor, the metaphor was quite apt. So, by way of this joke, not only is the legacy of Augustus' wit maintained, but also a seeming truth about the emperor's presence: one of potential jocularity, but present fear and danger.

Another anecdote from Macrobius highlights a connectivity of genre in these stories–between history, biography, fable, and *mirabilia*. Verses 29 and 30 both contain

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[62] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.4.1-31.

[63] Ibid., 2.4.3: '*Idem Augustus cum ei quidam libellum trepidus offerret et modo proferret manum modo retraheret, "putas," inquit, "te assem elephanto dare?*"'

[64] Quint. *Inst*. 6.3.59: '*cuius est generis <illud> Augusti, qui militi libellum timide porrigenti "noli" inquit "tamquam assem elephanto des*"'; Suet. *Aug*. 53.2: '*Promiscuis salutationibus admittebat et plebem, tanta comitate adeuntium desideria excipiens, ut quendam ioco corripuerit, quod sic sibi libellum porrigere dubitaret, quasi elephanto stipem*.'

stories about talking birds being trained to acclaim Augustus on his victory at Actium with versions of the phrase '*ave Caesar victor imperator*'. The result is that he buys the birds at the sum of 20,000 sesterces.[65] After Augustus had bought four different birds, the stories end with a poor shoemaker attempting to get into the racket by purchasing a raven to perform a similar deed:

> qui impendio exhaustus saepe ad avem non respondentem dicere solebat, "opera et impensa periit." aliquando tamen corvus coepit dicere dictatam salutationem. hac audita dum transit Augustus respondit, "satis domi salutatorum talium habeo." superfuit corvo memoria, ut et illa quibus dominum querentem solebat audire subtexeret: "opera et impensa periit." ad quod Caesar risit emique avem iussit quanti nullam adhuc emerat.[66]

Thus, despite Augustus' menagerie of talking birds being full, he accepted yet another at higher price for the amusement of the bird repeating his owner's frustrations. A charming story no doubt, but there is a precariousness to these stories in general, with the potential that the emperor could respond negatively to these requests. It also alludes to a historical phenomenon of expectations of generosity from the emperor, which gives a humorous flair to counterpart examples of the emperor's generosity discussed above in Chapter 3.3.[67] Furthermore, there is a flair of popular imagination in these stories about talking birds, not only in the lowly origins of such fabulous accounts, but to the interesting parallel of a talking raven that appears in Pliny's *Natural History*, in which there was a young raven who flew from its nest at the Temple of Castor and Pollux, and was interpreted as a religious bird by the cobbler across the way. It was accustomed daily to greet Tiberius, Drusus and Germanicus by name before returning to its perch at the cobbler's. Its death by a jealous neighbour prompted the latter's exile from the city and

[65] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.4.29: the second bird got trained to acclaim Antony, the defeated triumvir. Augustus bought this bird also.
[66] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.4.30.
[67] A parallel story could be the one about Hadrian in the baths giving a soldier slave so he could rub his back down, with the result of others looking for the same generosity from the emperor at his next visit. SHA. *Hadr*. 17.6-7; cf. Beard (2014) 135-136.

an elaborate funeral for the bird.[68] This story contains similar ingredients to the one in Macrobius, but it importantly suggests historical relevancy, insofar that Pliny notes their esteem by the people of Rome: *'Reddatur et corvis sua gratia, indignatione quoque populi Romani testata, non solum conscientia*'.[69] Whatever the historicity of Macrobius' anecdote, this corroborating evidence supports the existence of these talking birds in the imagination and stories of the common people. This necessarily extends to the emperor also, as Augustus, Tiberius, Germanicus and Drusus all appear in the stories as recipients of salutations. Therefore, as Purcell argued: stories, or '*fabulae*', were 'integral to the working of the Roman system' and that there was an 'intimate involvement of thousands and thousands of ordinary people in the construction and definition of the image of emperor, his role, and his family.'[70]

This point can perhaps be observed in the genre of fables itself, and in particular within the corpus of Phaedrus. As argued by Morgan, it is difficult to define precisely what fables are,[71] but they 'function generally as moral and educational' stories.[72] It has been argued that they also provide opportunities to gain access to a different, more popular perspective, as hidden transcripts that contain opinions of the weak against the strong.[73] Given their timeless appeal and applicability, finding the relevant context for the early empire can be challenging.[74] However, the *oeuvre* of Phaedrus contains fables of direct relevance to the context of the early Roman empire and the emperor in particular.[75]

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[68] Plin. *NH*. 10.121-124. I owe this reference to Prof. Purcell's *Vernacula Urbanitas*, cf. above, 202 n. 41.
[69] Plin. *NH*. 10.121.
[70] Purcell (1999) 183, analyses the scene in Suet. *Aug*. 70.1 about the 'dinner of the twelve gods' during a famine, with epigrams and lampoons circulating about it.
[71] Morgan (2007) 57-59, on different definitions supplied by antiquity
[72] Ibid., 60.
[73] On this matter, see Chapter 2.2. cf. Morgan (2007) 59 on modern scholarship on fable that interprets them as such, and also Forsdyke (2012) for a recent study in Greek history using fable to access slave culture.
[74] See Chapter 2.2, 88-89, for analysis of Phaed. 1.30 on this issue. cf. Morgan (2007) 62 on this problem as well.
[75] Henderson (2001) 10. On Phaedrus, see Champlin (2005) 97-123.

One fable is about the encounter of Tiberius and an *atriensis*, or steward,[76] in which Tiberius reprimands the man for expecting too much for his actions:

> Heus!" inquit dominus. Ille enimvero adsilit,
> donationis alacer certae gaudio.
> Tum sic iocata est tanta maiestas ducis:
> "Non multum egisti et opera nequiquam perit;
> multo maioris alapae mecum veneunt."[77]

As Champlin points out, the wit and wisdom of Tiberius is highlighted in this passage for posterity, which gives a distinct image of that emperor's legacy with respect to his appearance in Tacitus.[78] However, Champlin uses this passage as an example of how Tiberius' image in popular imagination was one of a wise old man, which seems to contradict his argument in the article 'Phaedrus the Fabulous' that Phaedrus was not a Greek freedman at all, but rather a Roman aristocrat.[79] Indeed, the lampooning of a parasite at court seems to fit into the more general theme of disdain for these characters, which would include freedmen that surrounded the emperor.[80] Thus, there seems to be a logical contradiction at hand here: a genre that conveys a popular mentality, yet also betrays seemingly elite Roman concerns. However, there is a solution. First, the form of the story is structurally similar to the jokes that have been discussed throughout this section: the encounter of the emperor with a subordinate, resulting in humour, but with the fearful expectation of unfunny reprimand. Therefore, this fable fits into that thought-world of the emperor which sought to discuss and criticise how the latter dealt with his subjects.

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[76] Phaed. 2.5.1. Phaedrus calls his milieu *ardaliones*, which is a rare word that according to the *TLL* 2.0.481.20 corresponds to the Greek work ἄρδαλος, described in the LSJ ὁ μὴ καθαρῶς ζῶν (which has similar unclean connotations to the scatological *copreae*) or ἀρδάλιον, which means water pot, which makes sense given his job of sprinkling water on the hot ground. Nonetheless, there is a negativity to its meaning, and should perhaps be seen in the same company as the *scurrae* or parasites of the court.
[77] Phaed. 2.5.21-25. cf. Henderson (2000) 10-31 and Champlin (2008) 417 for analysis of this fable.
[78] Champlin (2008) 417, 424-5. For more on Champlin's Tiberius, see above Chapter 3.4.
[79] Champlin (2005) 117.
[80] cf. Plin. *Ep*. 7.29, 8.6 for perspective on Pallas, the freedman of Claudius

The second part involves the idea of the hidden transcript, and the question of the dominant-subordinate relationship. The nature of the position of Roman emperor suggests that his subjects would necessarily experience the subordinated role, which would also include those higher up on the social scale. As such, the subversive element of the fable still remains in that it still criticises power structures. The final interpretation may be distinctive, and therefore imbued with elite concerns, but the material from which that interpretation is formed is part of a shared conceptualisation of the Roman emperor, suggesting that he was a contested space, open to scrutiny and criticism from his subjects. Thus, instead of stressing a negative characterisation of this evidence as being contaminated with elite concerns, it rather opens up a different, more inclusive mentality, which in turn can provide a different way in how the Roman emperor was perceived, including rather than excluding those of an elite milieu. In other words, it is extremely interesting that fable was a shared way to criticise and understand the Roman emperor, which is testament to his impact on the minds of his subjects. It is in this context that these stories of jokes and humour should be viewed.

3.6: Hopes and Desires: A Golden Age

Denique quod optimum videri volunt saeculum, aureum appellant;[1] this is how Seneca ends a portion of his 115th letter. It comes within the context of a discussion of the contemporary love of money and care of the superficial.[2] The description of a Golden Age is here associated with wealth and money and is discussed negatively by Seneca–desire for wealth is framed in terms of metal and typifies the moral depravity of the age in question. To him, there is a connection between the use of metal imagery in poetry to describe the gods, and the assumption that wealth is the highest attainment for mankind, which culminates in the widest assumption and appellation–the Golden Age.[3] Seneca is able to bring several themes pertinent to the Golden Age into his discussion: invocations of divinity when discussing the presence of a Golden Age,[4] the moral dubiousness of coveting wealth and money, and the seeming ubiquity of using the word *aureus* with passages of time.[5] Indeed, there is a banality to the manner of this statement: 'Finally, that they wish to view as the best age, they call Golden.'[6]

All this suggests a certain malleability to the term 'Golden Age', and how it can be interpreted differently according to different times and contexts–used here in a moralistic argument on wealth. Its broad designation makes it a descriptor that can more comfortably be associated with wider perspectives, which have been pursued in this chapter. As an epilogue to 'Life of an Emperor', what follows is a short discussion of the

[1] Sen. *Ep*. 115.13.
[2] Ibid., 115.11: '*Admirationem nobis parentes auri argentique fecerunt…*'
[3] Ibid., 115.12: '*Accedunt deinde carmina poetarum, quae adfectibus nostris facem subdant, quibus divitiae velut unicum vitae decus ornamentumque laudantur.*' Seneca (Ibid., 115.13) also quotes Ov. *Met*. 2.1-2, 107-109, which describes the palace and chariot of Sol, both of which are wrought in gold.
[4] On Seneca describing the popular connection between wealth and dedications to the gods, Sen. *Ep*. 115.11: *'Deinde totus populus in alia discors in hoc convenit; hoc suspiciunt, hoc suis optant, hoc dis velut rerum humanarum maximum, cum grati videri volunt, consecrant.*'
[5] cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 27f for more negative interpretations of a 'Golden Age'
[6] cf. Baldry (1952) 90, for the status of this term after the Augustan age as a commonplace and further evidence; cf. *App. Verg. Aetna* 9: '*aurea securi quis nescit saecula regis?*'; cf. Tac. *Dial*. 12.3: '*ceterum felix illud et, ut more nostro loquar, aureum saeculum…*'

framework of the Golden Age being used to understand and describe the Roman emperor, with a particular look at how the use of Golden Age imagery can not only reveal elite concerns and perspectives, but also more popular ones. In this way, this particular vignette can be seen as a small-scaled simulacrum of this whole chapter, as it contains many of the themes that have been discussed throughout: the desires of justice, the hope for plenty and generosity, the proximity to the wondrous and miraculous, the closeness of the emperor to those of lower social position, and the jocular discourse involving the emperor, all find parallels within the idea of the 'Golden Age'.[7]

It would be impossible, however, to give this wide topic the full appreciation it deserves. There are numerous aspects of the Golden Age that could be discussed here, which could include wide reaching analyses of similar texts and traditions in different contexts, including Greek antiquity and other world cultures, to a more specific appraisal of the use of golden age imagery in Augustan literature and art.[8] What follows is a more specific discussion of a passage of Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*, in which Philo describes the celebrations following the accession of Gaius to the principate. The discussion of this text will be the context from which scholarly and historiographical points will be appreciated. In other words, instead of a historiographical essay on the wide array of scholarly work on the Golden Age, only work deemed pertinent to this section in particular will be discussed. As a preview, what will be concentrated on is signs and suggestions that framing the emperor through a 'Golden Age' lens had a wider appeal to his subjects in general, a matter which has been a goal throughout this thesis. In particular,

[7] cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 29-32 for the importance of the emperor with the idea of the return of the Golden Age.

[8] Baldry (1952) 83-92, which explores use of golden age imagery in ancient literature from Hesiod towards the Augustan Age; Forsdyke (2012) 53-59 for a comparative approach between Greek evidence and other folk traditions; Versnel (1993a) 89-135 on Kronos and the *Kronia*, 136-227 on the Roman counterpart of Saturn and the Saturnalia, and esp. 192-205 on the Augustan age. For a similar discussion by Versnel, see Versnel (1993b) 99-122; For more work on Augustan ideology and a new Golden Age, see Weinstock (1971) 191-196, Zanker (1988) 167-183.

there will be discussions of the Saturn(al)ian characteristics as delineated by Versnel in his *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, alongside Scott's hidden transcript paradigm, and Forsdyke's more recent implementation of this to write a history of slaves in ancient Greece.[9]

Before the discussion of Philo's *Legatio*, a couple of preliminary themes should be stated with respect to the Golden Age and how it relates to understanding the Roman emperor. First is a definition. Roughly, the 'Golden Age' denotes a time of happy existence, an imaginary utopian world typified with no hard labour, peace, and plentiful abundance that provided for all needs and wants; a time that had existed in a bygone era deep into the mists of time and had certainly vanished from the earth.[10] Yet with Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, the idea of the return of a Golden Age was fostered,[11] pointing to an important novelty of the paradigm in the imperial period: that the Golden Age could be renewed and brought back, and that it was closely related to the Roman emperor. In short, the emperor fulfilled the role as supreme benefactor, ensuring the maintenance of peace and prosperity in the empire, which was framed with the blissful image of the Golden Age.[12]

A second point is the ambiguous reception of the Golden Age. Connected with material plenty and licence, the Golden Age was a time when Kronos, or Saturn in the Roman tradition, ruled. As Versnel shows in his study of Kronos and Saturn, and in particular the Saturnalia (a festival of reversal filled with revelry, licence, and waiving of

[9] Versnel (1993a); Scott (1990); Forsdyke (2012)
[10] Baldry (1952) 83-84; cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 20; cf. Versnel (1993a) 192.
[11] On the fourth *eclogue*, see du Quesnay (1976) 25-99 and Miller (2009) 254-256; For Vergil's originality, see Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 20-22 and Gatz (1967) 87-103.
[12] Versnel (1993a) 195-198, for the importance of the emperor within this paradigm, and in particular, the emperor as a benefactor and being honoured as such by communities across the empire. See in comparison the theme of benefaction that runs throughout the second chapter, and particularly in 3.2 and 3.3. Also, Versnel brings about the connection between the Golden Age and the divine status of the emperor. This theme will be elaborated on further in the discussion of the emperor's divinity in Chapter 4.3.

social norms),[13] there were both attractive and unsavoury aspects of these deities.[14] To elaborate on the myths, rituals, and festivals would unfortunately fall outside the scope of this section.[15] Nonetheless, the notion of ambiguity is important to point out. As Versnel puts it:

> Though on the one hand generally pictured as a realm of bliss and happiness on the brink of history, it is also described as the amorphous period before human civilisation during which man led a slothful, and indeed beastly life.[16]

The interpretation of the Golden Age to have both positive and negative aspects; it is precisely in this respect that the malleable paradigm can be usefully compared to perceptions of the Roman emperor. As this chapter has endeavoured to expose, the Roman emperor fulfilled a number of different roles in the mentalities of his subjects, which were shaped by their hopes and fears; hopes for justice, peace and prosperity, and fears of rebuke and reprimand. Accordingly, the connection between the Roman emperor and depictions of the age of Saturn is striking, allowing for the interpretative framework of the Golden Age, with both its positive and negative aspects, to be applied to the reception of the Roman emperor.

Indeed, it is this framework that Philo utilises to describe the early reign of Gaius. The work describes the encounter of both Alexandrian Greek and Jewish embassies with Gaius within the context of ongoing inter-community strife in Alexandria in the early first century A.D.[17] However, before the description of the audience with the emperor, Philo gives a lengthy account of Gaius' rise to power, using the opportunity to view Gaius

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[13] Versnel (1993a) 146-148 on the customs and evidence of the Saturnalian festival, and 191, on the anxiety of it lasting longer than it should.
[14] For instance, alongside the revelry associated with the Saturnalia is the gory images of Saturnian cult– Macrob. *Sat*. 1.7.31: '*cumque diu humanis captitibus Ditem et vivorum victimis Saturnum placare se crederent…*' cited in Versnel (1993a) 146.
[15] cf. Versnel (1993a) for a full treatment, esp. 106 for Kronos and 142-146 for Saturn.
[16] Versnel (1993b) 99.
[17] For more on this context and the generically similar *Acta Alexandrinorum*, see above Chapter 3.2 and Harker (2008) 31-34.

critically, both in terms of what is expected from a good ruler,[18] and also how he compares to the examples of his two predecessors, Tiberius and Augustus.[19] Within this long diatribe are the following details of revelry:

> ἐφ᾽ οἷς ὅ τε Ῥωμαίων δῆμος ἐγεγήθει καὶ πᾶσα Ἰταλία τά τε Ἀσιανὰ καὶ Εὐρωπαῖα ἔθνη. ὡς γὰρ ἐπ᾽ οὐδενὶ τῶν πώποτε γενομένων αὐτοκρατόρων ἅπαντες ἠγάσθησαν, κτῆσιν καὶ χρῆσιν ἰδίων τε καὶ κοινῶν ἀγαθῶν οὐκ ἐλπίζοντες ἕξειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχειν ἤδη νομίζοντες πλήρωμά τινος εὐτυχίας, ἐφεδρευούσης εὐδαιμονίας. οὐδὲν γοῦν ἦν ἰδεῖν ἕτερον κατὰ πόλεις ἢ βωμούς, ἱερεῖα, θυσίας, λευχειμονοῦντας, ἐστεφανωμένους, φαιδρούς, εὐμένειαν ἐξ ἱλαρᾶς τῆς ὄψεως προφαίνοντας, ἑορτάς, πανηγύρεις, μουσικοὺς ἀγῶνας, ἱπποδρομίας, κώμους, παννυχίδας μετ᾽ αὐλῶν καὶ κιθάρας, τέρψεις, ἀνέσεις, ἐκεχειρίας, παντοίας ἡδονὰς διὰ πάσης αἰσθήσεως. τότε οὐ πλούσιοι πενήτων προύφερον, οὐκ ἔνδοξοι ἀδόξων, οὐ δανεισταὶ χρεωστῶν, οὐ δεσπόται δούλων περιῆσαν, ἰσονομίαν τοῦ καιροῦ διδόντος, ὡς τὸν παρὰ ποιηταῖς ἀναγραφέντα Κρονικὸν βίον μηκέτι νομίζεσθαι πλάσμα μύθου διά τε τὴν εὐθηνίαν καὶ εὐετηρίαν τό τε ἄλυπον καὶ ἄφοβον καὶ τὰς πανοικίας ὁμοῦ καὶ πανδήμους μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν τε καὶ νύκτωρ εὐφροσύνας, αἳ μέχρι μηνῶν ἑπτὰ τῶν πρώτων ἄπαυστοι καὶ συνεχεῖς ἐγένοντο.[20]

There are several notable aspects in this passage.[21] Philo describes a universal phenomenon of rejoicing that spreads across the *oikoumene*, from the Roman people to the whole of Italy, and the European and Asian nations. He suggests the existence of subjective judgements of emperors in comparison with each other, in that there were different opinions about their actions and legacies, and that they could fluctuate.[22] Also, the reason that Philo provides for the outpouring is the expectation of good fortune and happiness. Accordingly, Philo is suggesting that the future hopes and desires of large populations in the empire are conceptually affected by the emperor.[23] Furthermore, this language fits in nicely with the laudatory tone of honours given to emperors by

[18] Philo *Leg*. 44-51
[19] Ibid., 141-151.
[20] Ibid., 10-13.
[21] cf. Versnel (1993a) 200-201 for his analysis of this passage.
[22] The ebb and flow of opinion and how it could reveal very contrasting vignettes of both the same and different emperors in comparison has explored in this chapter; cf. Philo, *Leg*. 141-151 for this theme in Philo. For another succinct example see Chapter 3.4 on Tiberius. For the comparisons of historical legacies and memory, see Chapter 4.2.
[23] For more on this phenomenon, see Chapter 1.3. on how potential emperors are honoured in similar terms, and Chapter 4.3 on the concept of fluctuating fortune in the lives and health of emperors.

communities across the empire, which have been discussed above in both Chapters 1 and 3, particularly in the 'Justice' and 'Generosity' sections.

However, what stands out here is Philo's framing of the scenes of enjoyment and revelry as a manifestation of a Κρονικὸς βίος–a 'Life of Kronos', which refers to the Golden Age when Kronos reigned. The examples that Philo provides contain all the ingredients of the *Saturnia Regna*: happiness, prosperity, feasting, and the topsy-turvy role reversals between the high and low, creditors and debtors, masters and slaves. Furthermore, Philo is not alone in recording the revelry surrounding the accession of Gaius in this manner, with notable other examples such as Suetonius describing the happy crowds that met him on Tiberius' funeral train towards Rome,[24] and the utopian metaphors utilised in a decree from Assos.[25] Therefore, there is evidence for this sort of conceptualisation from separate traditions. Still, Philo's mention of a Life of Kronos is exceptional, and thus requires further comment.

As mentioned above, 'Golden Age' imagery, which involves descriptions of times when Saturn or Kronos reigned, has a rich history. There are thus many avenues of relevant analysis that could be made, which could involve a comparative approach exploring the continuities and changes of the imagery from Greek poetry through philosophy towards the Augustan age and beyond.[26] More specifically, both Wallace-Hadrill and Versnel have separately argued for a more nuanced approach to understanding the Golden Age, arguing that its reception was more ambiguous than the overtly laudatory

[24] Suet. *Cal*. 13: '*tamen inter altaria et victimas ardentisque taedas densissimo et laetissimo obviorum agmine incessit…*'

[25] *Syll*.^{3} 797 = *IGR* 4.251 = Smallwood, *Gaius*, 33 = *I.Assos* 26: 'ἐπεὶ ἡ κατ᾽εὐχὴν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐλπισθεῖσα Γαίου | Καίσαρος Γερμανικοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἡγεμονία κατήγελται, | οὐδὲν δὲ μέτρον χαρᾶς εὕρηκε ὁ κόσμος, πᾶσα δὲ πόλις | καὶ πᾶν ἔθνος ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ὄψιν ἔσπευκεν, ὡς ἂν τοῦ | ἡδίστου ἀνθρώποις αἰῶνος νῦν ἐνεστῶτος'. Similarly, it comes in the context of ab embassy, here sent on occasion of Gaius' accession. cf. *IG* 7.2711 from Acraephia, which has evidence for a Boiotian embassy for like purpose.

[26] cf. Baldry (1952) 83-92; cf. Forsdyke (2012) 53-59.

tone suggests.[27] This potential wavering of opinion brings about the theme of subversiveness and the carnivalesque in representations of the Golden Age.[28] In short, scholarship since the mid-twentieth century has sought to excavate the remains of popular culture from literature in an attempt to reconstruct a cultural history from below, most famously taking inspiration from Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World,* which studied the subversiveness of the carnival as a festival of reversal.[29] In a similar vein, Scott has argued for a similar reading of these sorts of festivals when studying social dynamics in South East Asia, and indeed referred to the Saturnalia as an 'authorized ritual occasion when it is possible to break the rules… that allow subordinates, momentarily to turn the tables.'[30] Accordingly, a festival of reversal was an arena of direct encounter between the high and low, where roles could be reversed and traditional power structures could be subverted; and which therefore could reveal popular concerns normally kept hidden under normal circumstances.

At first glance, Philo's summary of the activities is extremely promising. As Versnel argues in his analysis of this passage:

> The *Saturnia Regna* have returned and brought peace, prosperity and justice and, even more emphatically, social equality to the unmatched extent that the masters are not better off than their slaves.[31]

It could follow, then, that Philo's passage is a prime example of subversive opinion; a potential window into the thought-world of a more 'popular' perspective. However, one must be more nuanced in the analysis of this material than simply ascribing it to popular

[27] Wallace-Hadrill (1982b) 27-32 and Versnel (1993a) 205-210 on his analysis of a negative interpretation of a *Saturnia regna* in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*.
[28] On the 'carnivalesque', see Versnel (1993b) 99-111 and Braund and James (1998) 298-299.
[29] See Forsdyke (2012) 8 and Beard (2014) 60-62 for a discussion of this work and its influence. For attempts at studying 'popular' culture in antiquity, see Horsfall (2003) 20-21; Morgan (2007) 3-4; Toner (2009) 5-7; Kurke (2011) 3; Forsdyke (2012) 16-18; Versnel (1993a) 115-121 and 160-161, n. 106 provides discussion of the carnivalesque and its utility in a Greek or Roman context.
[30] Scott (1985) 287, n. 88; cf. Forsdyke (2012) 14-15 on Scott's influence.
[31] Versnel (1993a) 200.

viewpoints willy-nilly.[32] For instance, in a recent criticism of the Bakhtinian approach, Beard has problematised the transposition of the carnivalesque into the ancient world, in particular as regards the Roman festival of the Saturnalia, arguing that either the evidence does not exist for the Bakhtinian carnival, or that what does survive does not sit well with that paradigm.[33] Moreover, Beard makes the valid point that the aspects of inversion which were part of such festivals could serve to *reinforce*, rather than challenge the status quo.[34]

With this in mind, there are a couple of points that could alleviate these concerns. First, it should be stated that even if conceptually related, Philo describes the revelry surrounding Gaius' accession as if it were exhibiting the life of Kronos, and that it was experienced across the empire for a long period of seven months, rather than the ritualised Saturnalia at Rome. As such, they are in different contexts, allowing for greater spontaneity during the festivities, and perhaps less controlled than the impression of the finite period of the Saturnalia.[35] Second, it is interesting that Philo's interpretation of such events is through an overly negative lens, which is bolstered by his seemingly incredulous description of the honours paid to Gaius in comparison to his two predecessors, Augustus and Tiberius.[36] Accordingly, there are several potential differing perspectives as described by Philo, which includes that of wider revelry at the joyous accession of Gaius, and that of his own milieu of the Alexandrian Jewish community, as well as a wider Jewish

[32] cf. further discussion of this problem in Chapter 2.2.
[33] Beard (2014) 63-64 for a short explanation of the festival, and that its 'distinctive features' such as 'the gross overconsumption, the emphasis of inversion, on the lower bodily stratum, and even the laughter…' are mostly absent from representations of the Saturnalia.
[34] Ibid., 62 and 64, in which Beard distinguishes between the return of primordial equality stressed in the Saturnalia and the more Bakhtinian reversal of fortune. cf. Braund (1993) 68 for a similar argument concerning Roman satire: 'the satire which at first sight may appear to be so revolutionary and anarchic and likes to lay claim to a certain freedom of speech can itself, in its denigration of earlier emperors, be viewed as a disguised form of flattery and affirmation of the present regime.'
[35] cf. Beard (2014) 65, calling it a 'rather prim–or at least paternalistic–occasion'. For a more 'carnivalesque' reading of the Saturnalia in particular, see Versnel (1993a) 146-163.
[36] Philo *Leg*. 141-151.

perspective on the desecration of the Temple at Jerusalem.[37] Third, the long list of descriptions include signs of happiness, feasting, 'every kind of pleasure appealing to every sense', and examples of equality between high and low.[38] This fits more comfortably with a carnivalesque interpretation. Therefore, the examples of revelry as described in the above passage could in fact be a window into a wider perspective, and particularly one that involves perceptions of a Roman emperor.

Yet, does this passage reveal 'popular' concerns about the Roman emperor? Perhaps, but not in a direct, unfiltered manner. The power dynamics in the passage seem to be the most revealing, which suggest the existence of the hopes and desires of a wider population across the empire being manifested in reality in direct response to the accession of an emperor. Accordingly, Gaius provides the environment in which social norms are revised, and exuberant celebration can occur, which suggests that he was perceived to safeguard the hopes and desires of a wider population across the empire, instead of those few within his milieu.[39] Yet the ubiquity of Golden Age imagery, and the fact that it was a common motif in the literature and poetry of the elite means that one has to be careful with the extent this is ascribed to a popular mentality. However, this dichotomous designation between 'elite' and 'popular' is problematic. Instead, there is a *shared* thought-world about the Roman emperor, in which he can be understood and described in this context along the lines of the Golden Age. In other words, the emperor could be thought about as a harbinger of a Golden Age, yet there was subjectivity in this interpretation, allowing for nuances and differences in opinion to exist within a similar framework of reference.

[37] On Philo's interpretations of Roman rule, see Barraclough (1984) 449-452.
[38] cf. Versnel (1993a) 200 for the adapted transition of the passage.
[39] This is a similar impression to the expectations and fears concerning the emperor as discussed in detail above throughout Chapter 3.

Indeed, it is fascinating that the Roman emperor was associated with the Golden Age, given its ambiguities as described by Versnel.[40] Depending on context and perspective, the theme of the Golden Age could give a more negative impression. Of particular note is Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*.[41] In this work, Claudius is depicted in the role of the foolish '*Saturnalicius princeps*'.[42] As Braund and James describe it:

> Claudius' rule is represented as something suited to festival time, but not to the seriousness of everyday political use, hence the horror of discovering that the monster-emperor was in for a lengthy turn of office.[43]

This negative interpretation of Claudius' rule is further enriched by his teratological description when he meets Hercules after his death:

> Tum Hercules primo aspectu sane perturbatus est, ut qui etiam non omnia monstra timuerit. Ut vidit novi generis faciem, insolitum incessum, vocem nullius terrestris animalis sed qualis esse marinis beluis solet, raucam et implicatam, putavit sibi tertium decimum laborem venisse. Diligentius intuenti visus est quasi homo.[44]

This representation connects the Saturnalian context with the world of *mirabilia*, in which Claudius himself is the 'sea-monster' of unknown provenance, which further highlights the absurdity of his status as emperor.[45] Accordingly, this vignette stresses the negativity of this interpretation of a potential Golden Age gone wrong, giving an impression of the scope of potential interpretations. The issues of authorship and its subsequent audience being within a small circle should not be problematic, as the *Apocolocyntosis* draws upon themes of wide resonance. Indeed, it is interesting that these seemingly 'subversive' descriptions are utilised by Seneca to describe Claudius, which reveals power dynamics

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[40] Versnel (1993b) 109-111.
[41] See Versnel (1993a) 205-210; Braund and James (1998) 285-311; Dickison (1977) 634-47.
[42] Sen. *Apoc*. 8.2.
[43] Braund and James (1998) 298. cf. Sen. *Apoc*. 12.2: '"*dicebam vobis: non semper Saturnalia erunt*."' cf. Fronto, *Principia Historiae* 20 (Haines (Loeb) II 217) on the importance of unserious aspects of the emperor's time within the context of Fronto's advice to Lucius Verus, which vibes well with the impression given in the expectations for wondrous things and displays as described above in Chapter 3.4: '*imperium non minus ludicris quam seriis probari atque maiore damno seria, graviore invidia ludicra neglegi*.'
[44] Sen. *Apoc*. 5.3-4.
[45] cf. Chapter 3.4 and in particular, wondrous stories of emperors encountering sea life and being perceived as the monstrosities themselves.

that place him and his milieu in a subordinate position, using this satirical medium to reveal a 'hidden transcript' of opinion, even if Seneca is not the typical 'subordinate' imagined.[46] However, this does not necessarily serve to problematise this issue, but rather bolsters the present argument that they all form strands of the same wider conversation, with many layers of complexity, which is evidence for a thought-world concerning the emperor from the perspective of his subjects.

In the end, allusions to a Golden Age and an emperor throughout the period in question should be seen in this subjective and impressionistic light, altered by context, whether positive or negative.[47] It highlights how Golden Age imagery became a powerful tool in shaping the understanding of what the emperor was and could be, in terms of both hopes and fears. This is much like many of the themes that were explored in the third chapter, from expectations of justice, generosity, and wonder, to fears of punishment and monstrosities. Moreover, it also points to the theme of comparison and how emperors could have their memory and legacy reshaped with the alteration of context, seen succinctly in the historical context of Seneca's Apocolocyntosis. This word of legacy is where we now turn.

[46] cf. Braund (1993) 67-68 and Chapter 4.2. on Roman strategies of shaping memory.

[47] There are many allusions to the Golden Age (or its demise) with different emperors throughout our period, helpfully compiled by Gatz (1968) 138-139, which unfortunately cannot receive full treatment. They include: Augustus: Verg. *Aen*. 6.792-794; Tiberius: Suet. *Tib*. 59.1; Nero: Sen. *Apoc*. 4.1; Calp. *Ecl*. 1.42 ;1.64; 4.6-7; 4.140. Sen. *Clem*. 2.1.3; Domitian: Mart. 6.3. Antoninus Pius: Aristid. *Or*. 26.106. Marcus Aurelius: Dio 72(71).36.4. Commodus: Dio 73(72).15.6; SHA. *Comm*. 14.3 Pescennius Niger: SHA *Pesc*. 12. 6; Probus: SHA *Prob*. 23.2.

Part 3: The Legacy of An Emperor

Chapter 4: The Permanence of an Emperor in Transition

4.1: Introduction

In an early fifth century letter addressed to his friend Olympius, Synesius of Cyrene describes the utopian remoteness of the southern extremity of Cyrenaica, praising its culture and rustic lifestyle in comparison to more worldly or better connected areas of the Mediterranean world. Part of that utopian reality was the lack of much news or knowledge about the Roman emperor–the tax collectors would come and go–but other than that, not much was known:

> ταῦτά σοι καὶ τοιαῦτα παρ' ἡμῖν ὥρια καὶ ἀρχαῖα καὶ πενήτων ἀγαθά· βασιλεὺς δὲ καὶ βασιλέως φίλοι καὶ δαίμονος ὄρχησις, οἷα δὴ συνιόντες ἀκούομεν, ὀνόματά τινα καθάπερ αἱ φλόγες ἐπὶ μέγα τῆς δόξης ἐξαπτόμενα καὶ σβεννύμενα, ταῦτα δεῦρο ἐπιεικῶς σιγᾶται, καὶ σχολὴ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς τοιούτων ἀκροαμάτων. ἐπεὶ καὶ βασιλεὺς ὅτι μὲν ζῇ τις ἀεί, τοῦτ' ἴσως ἐπίστανται σαφῶς (ὑπομιμνήσκονται γὰρ ἅπαν κατ' ἔτος ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκλεγόντων τοὺς φόρους), ὅστις δὲ οὗτός ἐστιν, οὐ μάλα ἔτι τοῦτο σαφῶς· ἀλλ' εἰσί τινες ἐν ἡμῖν οἳ μέχρι καὶ νῦν Ἀγαμέμνονα κρατεῖν ἥγηνται τὸν Ἀτρείδην, τὸν ἐπὶ Τροίαν, τὸν μάλα καλόν τε καὶ ἀγαθόν· τοῦτο γὰρ παιδόθεν ἡμῖν ὡς βασιλικὸν παραδέδοται τοὔνομα.[1]

There is a fascinating temporality to Synesius' words here. In this description, the permanence of their old tradition is compared with the fleeting igniting and extinguishing of the emperor and his favourites. The specifics of a certain emperor or his rule is lost to the continuity of time. This is intriguingly similar to the conception of time, or *kairos*, that Morgan described in her *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire*.[2] Accordingly, time often stood static, only really punctuated with events, rather than a conception of time that moved directionally. This is interestingly similar to what is described by Synesius in the passage. What is even more intriguing about this is that the *concept* of an emperor existing is an accepted phenomenon, but that who that may be is open to debate. The example used by Synesius is Homeric, stating that certain of his fellow countrymen

[1] Synesius of Cyrene, *Letters*, 148.130-143; cf. Birley (1999) ix for the reference, and Lendon (1997) 267.
[2] Morgan (2007) 248-251.

supposed that Agamemnon was still king, 'the one went against Troy, the very good and great one'. Of course, it could be stated that Synesius is utilising trope and literary allusion, particularly revolving around bucolic fantasy and the simplicity of a rural and agrarian lifestyle, as well as the Homeric flourish. However, the mention of Agamemnon is striking in the sense of a static popular opinion, and perhaps how he and an emperor could be conflated. For instance, in Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*, a ship-captain dreamt of deliverance from Agamemnon, which resulted in him being excused from his civic duties.[3] Furthermore, Suetonius mentions the accusation put against a poet who depicted Agamemnon negatively in a tragedy during Tiberius' reign.[4] This suggests a comparison at least, or a conflation between the emperor and the Mycenaean king, which can be pushed back further from Synesius' fifth century context into the world of Suetonius and Artemidorus, with the latter in particular potentially referring to a similar thought-world that allowed for such elisions to take place.[5]

With this in mind, there is universality to the emperorship that Synesius describes in this letter; namely, the impression that the emperor had always existed, and would always exist. It is a hint to a peculiarity about the reception of the emperor: the idea and office of emperor as an entity was an important component to the understanding (and criticism) of the position, which is contrasted to the same process towards individual emperors. In other words, discourse (or criticism) contributed both to reception of the individual emperor in question, and to the idea of the emperor as a whole. It should be stated that this designation is not dichotomous, and that this was not a phenomenon that

[3] cf. Artem. 5.16, discussed above in Chapter 3.2, 126. See Millar (1992) 499 on the passage and similar gifts of immunity from the emperor.
[4] cf. Suet. *Tib*. 61.3: '*obiectum est poetae, quod in tragoedia Agamemnonem probris lacessisset*'. cf. the attestations of Pompey the Great being called Agamemnon in Dio 42.5.5: 'Πομπήιος μὲν δὴ κράτιστος πρότερον Ῥωμαίων νομισθείς, ὥστε καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονα αὐτὸν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι…' cf. Plut. *Caes*. 41.2; Plut. *Pomp*. 67.5.
[5] Compare with the proximity of the emperor to the mythological discussed above in Chapter 3.4.

appeared instantaneously from the time of Augustus, but rather formed and gestated over time and across the two centuries that have been the remit of this thesis, and indeed beyond. There seemed to be an idea, or template, of what the emperor was and what he should be, which was continually modified by the discourse of the legacies of past emperors, and constantly added to by the actions and words of sitting emperors.

This tradition is a manifestation of the discourse about the Roman emperor that had a temporal aspect. Much literary evidence that was discussed in the previous chapters are posthumous retrospectives on the particular emperor in question, with more contemporary aspects being much rarer, such as the graffiti on the walls of Pompeii, or perhaps even inscriptions produced in the subsequent months or years after the event. With this in mind, the history being constructed in this thesis has sought both to describe the discourse about the emperor in thematic terms, relevant to the hopes and concerns of his subjects, and also to acknowledge how this was conducted throughout time. It is this complex temporality that is the subject of this chapter, which seeks to explain the appearance of the emperor as a transcendent figure across time, how this was manifested in the discourse about him, namely concerning criticisms of an emperor's legacy and memory, and how it could have a historical impact.

Therefore, the chapter will be divided as follows. As a continuation of the introductory part of this chapter, first there will be a discussion of the commemoration of the Roman emperor, with a particular concentration on his posthumous criticism in historical text and its contributions to an emperor's legacy. The subsequent section builds upon this by further discussing narratives of fear and fortune concerning the potential death of an emperor, with a particular look at *fortuna* and the evidence for *devotiones* on behalf of the emperor's health. It is in this section that the ever present issue of the emperor's divinity will be discussed. The final section will discuss the manifestation of

challenges to the legitimacy of an emperor through the appearance of pretenders masquerading as previous emperors or members of the imperial family, and how this is representative of both the discourse on the legacy of an emperor, and a window into the thought-world of expectations and fears concerning a Roman emperor.

Before continuing, there will be a short meta-analysis of this thesis, with relevant strands of argument from all chapters being combined to provide the context and inspiration for this section in particular. The first chapter of this thesis discussed the nature of the office of emperor and the precariousness of its maintenance, which included the question of the succession and the designation of the next emperor. It also included the idea that 'acceptance', which was important in the establishment of a new principate (which essentially entailed the ratification of a new regime from relevant sections of society), and how this conversation of acceptance included a wider population of people. The second and third chapters dealt with the continuation of this conversation during the reign of an emperor, exploring the different topics of discussion that concerned the Roman emperor, and the different guises he was perceived in, which all contributed to the image of what he seemed to be. The fourth chapter builds upon these themes by looking at the peculiar phenomenon of the emperor's legacy, which has relevance on a historical level, and indeed a meta-historical level.

This thesis has hopefully so far shown the precariousness of the emperor's position and the various, seemingly contradictory roles he fulfilled in the minds of his subjects. The bizarre coexistence of absolutism and accountability in the office of emperor at first seems irreconcilable, but it becomes less difficult to accept under the rubric of universalism. There seemed to be an acceptance to the idea of an emperor existing at all times, but not always of an inviolable individual emperor. This would allow for a great deal of flexibility in what an emperor could be, given the stability of the idea,

and the ability to criticise an emperor's conduct. This delicate balance has been a challenging concept to come to terms with throughout this thesis, but it was also one that the emperor's subjects wrestled with. Most importantly, however, is that they contributed to the discourse of what the emperor was and should be, which in turn is testament to an ever-evolving thought-world about the Roman emperor.

Thus, the tensions of the office of emperor were indeed perceived and commented upon, which can explain why the characterisations of an individual emperor could seem so contradictory. This is part of the systemic criticism that existed which concerned the emperor–the discourse and criteria of what it meant to be a good or bad one. It seemed that it was a cleansing mechanism that allowed for the shaping of an emperor's memory, or as a challenge to the sitting emperor, but not necessarily to the system in itself. In other words, whereas Flaig was correct in his acceptance thesis insofar as an individual emperor could lose his acceptance, there was a strong legitimacy to the idea of the emperor that was not necessarily challenged.[6] This notion that there was and will always be an emperor was powerful, and this had repercussions and implications for the perception of the role of the emperor through time. The designated universality of the position allowed it to maintain its legitimacy. The understanding of this idea goes a long way in explaining why the emperor was perceived in so many different guises, with many different fears and expectations placed upon him. He was a steady presence in the passage of years. In other words, the emperor *is*.

In terms of a meta-narrative, this phenomenon gives both the evidence and this thesis an interesting perspective. Throughout my research for this project, I was struck by the extremely flexible nature of the evidence in terms of its applicability through different times and places. It seemed that the way one *talked* about the emperor changed little

[6] Discussed above in Chapter 1.2.2, and esp. Flaig (2010) 276-277.

throughout the centuries, and even well into late antiquity and the medieval period, despite the palpable and apparent differences in the political, social, economic, and cultural makeup of the times. This suggested a certain permanence to the Roman emperor that in modern historiographical parlance is termed his universality, which described the idea that the emperor had always existed, and always would. It is this idea that allows for a biographical periodisation of Roman imperial history from Augustus to occur, as the way to think and write about history becomes shaped by the steady presence of an emperor. Importantly, it is this enduring consciousness of permanence which makes possible and useful a study of the imperial office over three centuries and different contexts, as exemplified by Millar's seminal *The Emperor in the Roman World*. It allows for theses such as Anthony Kaldellis' in *The Byzantine Republic* to be constructed about the nature of the government during middle Byzantium, and how it inherited essential qualities from its Roman predecessor. Finally, it allows for the present thesis to be written the way it has been, divided across segments of an emperor's life, exploring similarities of perception and narrative across two centuries. Yet this idea of permanence should not be mistaken for synchronicity; instead, there is a tension between this idea of permanence and the repeated episodes or revolutions of critical discourse that continuously altered and shaped what it meant to be an emperor in the minds of his subjects, added to not only by the words and deeds of the emperors themselves, but also from the reshaping and rewriting of previous emperors' legacies, creating the *mélange* that was the discourse of the Roman emperor.

4.2: Commemorating and Criticising the Roman Emperor through History

> Incohavit, cum in Germania militaret, somnio monitus: adstitit ei quiescenti Drusi Neronis effigies, qui Germaniae latissime victor ibi periit; commendabat memoriam suam orabatque, ut se ab iniuria oblivionis adsereret.[1]

Thus the Younger Pliny describes a dream that his uncle had on duty in Germany, which inspired him to write his history of the German wars: in it, Drusus, father of Germanicus and Claudius, and brother of Tiberius, appeared in apparition, exhorting Pliny to praise his memory and save him from obscurity.[2] This is an emotive and evocative illustration of the culture of commemoration at Rome.[3] As Flower put it in her recent book, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*:

> Roman memory (*memoria*) was designed precisely in opposition to the vast oblivion into which most of the past was conceived as having already receded. Such an attitude was a product of a world in which life was often short and unpredictable…[4]

Within this context, Pliny the Elder is inspired by unresolved memories of the past, urged on by effigies of a broken branch of the imperial family, urged to preserve and enhance the fallen for posterity's sake.[5] Therefore, this passage is a window into perceptions of memory, as it shows strategies of commemoration that the Romans used to combat oblivion. From this passage alone, it is notable that the clout of a great man is worth cultivating, and that a method for doing this is the writing of history.

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[1] Plin. *Ep*. 3.5.4, cited in Flower (2006) 3. For more on dreams, see Chapter 3.2.

[2] On the dates of Pliny's military service at Rome, see Syme (1969) 205-208, with three separate posts between the years 46-58 A.D, with the interval between the second and third being four years. His nephew is vague enough that it could have happened at any point during his time in Germany. However, it seems to be more politically expedient to have an earlier date for this dream, to his service before the death of Claudius in 54, using the opportunity to praise the memory of emperor's father. I owe this point entirely to my supervisor, Nicholas Purcell. cf Hekster (2015) 49-50, n.24 for coin types under Claudius that stress the paternal bond between him and Drusus, and in particular the stress on his German campaigns, making it a ripe situation for Pliny. cf. also Ibid., 56-7 for the resurrection of Drusus coin types under Vespasian, for a new paternal-filial context for the success of Pliny's history.

[3] For this argument and analysis of this passage, see Flower (2006) 2-4. cf. Marincola (1997) 47-48.

[4] Flower (2006) 3.

[5] cf. Ibid., 4, who argues for this 'emotive and very personal' reading of Pliny's motivations, and how this could have affected his contribution to historiography and Drusus' memory, citing Tac. *Ann*. 1.33.2 on his popularity. For more on Drusus, see Chapter 1.3.2.

There are several potential avenues to explore Roman strategies of memory, which is a complex and variegated topic. As Flower argued in the above mentioned book, which explores methods of commemorating and damning elite and imperial personas from the late republic to the early empire, memory was a

> symbolic space, a power and definitive marker of elite status, (which) stretched across the various visual and textual media and between the generations to ensure the survival and continuity of the community and of the particular culture of its political families… The politics of the present were expressed in terms of a narrative of the past, by those who had or claimed the authority to shape and to pass on that narrative.[6]

Accordingly, the commemoration of the past was a complex tapestry, which was passed on and added to with each successive generation through different media, which according to Flower's wide designation includes monument, text, and ritual.[7] In terms of commemorating and remembering in the Roman world, which would include the emperor, these memory games could range from architectural monuments such as tombs and mausolea, to texts such as honorific inscriptions, funeral speeches and historical works, and to ritualistic activity such as the funeral trains involving the procession of ancestral masks, the consecration of a recently deceased emperor, and the civic and provincial rituals involving the imperial cult.[8] Added to these various methods is the aspect of negative memory, most famously known under the modern term *damnatio memoriae*, which is the damnation of an individual's legacy through various ways, such as the the mutilation of their portraits and images, the removal of their *imago* from their family's ancestral masks, and the erasure of their name from inscriptions.[9] All this reveals

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[6] Flower (2006) 276. cf. Veyne (1988) 8-9 on a similar argument in the construction of historiography.
[7] Flower (2006) 276.
[8] For monuments, see Davies (2000) 13-48; See Flower (2006) 115-256 on the strategies of memory in the early imperial period, particularly to do with *damnatio memoriae*; On the *imagines*, funeral processions, and *laudationes* see Flower (1996) 16ff, 223-255; 91ff; and 128ff. On the consecration of the emperor, see Price (1987) 56-105 and Bickerman (1973) 3-25. On the imperial cult in general, see Price (1984a), Fishwick (1987) vol. 1.1, Fishwick (1991) vol. 2.1 and Gradel (2002), and the next section.
[9] For a clear general discussion and different methods of defacing or altering portraits, see Huet (2004) 237-253. For a complete recent appraisal, see Flower (2006) esp. 132-138 with particular look at the famous case of Cn. Calpurnius Piso as recorded in the famous document known as *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*. For the mutilation of portraits, see Varner (2004), esp. 2-9 for his general discussion of

the vast potential for different methods of commemoration, and also how subjective the production of memory could become.

Accordingly, there are numerous avenues that could be taken to provide a comprehensive account of Roman memory and the treatment of an emperor's legacy. However, the remainder of this section will be devoted to the discussion of the contribution of historiography to an emperor's legacy, looking at the part of history in the production of memory.[10] This is particularly relevant given that the vast majority of evidence used in the thesis as a whole was precisely part of this tradition, which is to say the textual remains of the discourse about the Roman emperor. It takes further inspiration from the phenomenon of the universality of the emperor, as described above in the introduction to this chapter, with the peculiar effect it had on the construction and shaping of historical narrative, as hinted by Pelling: 'Given the power now exercised by one man who dominated the world, the line between imperial biography and history was always likely to be a thin one.'[11]

Returning to the excerpt from Pliny about his inspiration for writing a history of the German wars, there seems to be an impact to history which is meant to resonate in the context of its publication and subsequent reception. This idea of history being able to contribute to the discourse gives the medium power in how an emperor is understood and received, which means that it in itself was a part of the reception of the emperor that placed him in a more passive role, not necessarily able to control and shape his narrative or legacy fully, particularly since the conversation continues decades or even centuries after his death.

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damnatio. For the provincial politics and the unsystematic dynamics of divinisation or damnation, see H-v. Cauwenberghe (2008) 161-179.

[10] cf. Sailor (2008) 9.

[11] Pelling (2010) 418; cf. Marincola (1997) 30-31 for his analysis on historiography's reaction to one-man rule. cf. Feeney (2007) 190-193 on the emperor's effect on historical time, *fasti*, and the writing of annalistic history.

The inspiration for this argument comes from the first third of a book about early modern scholarship and its pitfalls by Constantin Fasolt, titled *The Limits of History*. In that section, Fasolt write about successes and pitfalls of modern historical writing, particularly concerning the purpose of writing history and the generic expectations of this pursuit. He argues that history is going through an existential crisis brought along by what he describes as the strict adherence to the tenets of history, which are as follows: First, that 'the past is gone forever,'; second, 'to understand the meaning of a text, you must first put it in the context of its time and place'; and third, 'you cannot tell where you are going unless you know where you are coming from.'[12] Accordingly, historians strive to look back at the past and provide an accurate account of that time and context in the past, which has the danger of being lost to oblivion, either without received bias from the historian's period, or the expressed acknowledgement of that bias, in order to give the most accurate and unadulterated account of the truth.

In short, Fasolt problematises this premise by arguing that the writing of history was an inherently political act. This is more than saying that there is inherent bias in every pursuit of historical knowledge. In fact, he goes further by arguing that history in its very structure has political implications, insofar as it involves the act of looking into the past and interpreting it for its utility in the present and future.[13] The following quotation is a telling paradigm of his viewpoint:

> History only appears to be a form of knowledge about the past. In truth history serves to confirm a line between now and then that is not given in reality. The complementary relationship between history, politics, and nature… goes deeper than mere agreement on dividing respective spheres of influence... The prohibition on anachronism? It merely seems to be a principle of method by which historians secure the adequacy of their interpretation. In truth the prohibition on anachronism defines the purposes for which the discipline of history exists: to divide the reality of time into past and present. History enlists the desire for knowledge about the past to meet a deeper need:

[12] Fasolt (2003) ix.
[13] Ibid., 3-45.

> the need for power and independence, the need to have done with the past and to be rid of things that cannot be forgotten.[14]

Fasolt's iconoclastic approach to historical thought directs its blows toward the process and writing of modern historiography and its expectations. However, his point about the relation of history to politics, and that history can be a powerful tool in shaping how one receives the past could have resonance in how the Romans approached memory. It seems that ancient historians were more comfortable with what Fasolt highlights as problems in the philosophy of modern historiography, particularly stressed by the different methods and concerns present in ancient historiography. An important point of departure is the notion that ancient historians were involved in politics, and indeed their experience counted in favour of their authority as historians.[15] Thus they had political lives; Dio and Tacitus both held consular rank as part of the senatorial elite, Suetonius was an *ab epistulis* in Hadrian's court, and Plutarch being involved in local politics of his native Chaeronea and Boeotia, and his ties with philhellene Romans. Even Herodian, whose elusive political career has been difficult to extrapolate from his histories constructs a narrative that is interested in emperor and political history, whatever Herodian meant by his statement in 1.2.5: 'ἔστι δ' ὧν καὶ πείρᾳ μετέσχον ἐν βασιλικαῖς ἢ δημοσίαις ὑπηρεσίαις γενόμενος'.[16]

Moreover, the self-professed goals of ancient historians feel much more profound than those of its modern counterpart. This is seen in ancient historiography's reflection about its utility in the present and future for subsequent audiences, seen again neatly in

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[14] Fasolt (2003) 13.

[15] Marincola (1997) 133-148, and esp. 143-144 for historians writing under the Roman empire; Sailor (2008) 7-8: 'In justifying his historiographical activity, a historian often used in his favor his own political experience, which established his right to speak knowledgeably about the events he was reporting. Writing history was then a lot like politics, in that the practitioners of each were, at least in theory, to be drawn from the same pool.' I was referred to Sailor's volume by my colleague Dr Bram ten Berge when I delivered a version of this section at a seminar in Oxford.

[16] cf. Kemezis (2014) 307: 'While it is true that claiming to have political experience was a standard authority-building technique for ancient historians generally, Herodian's version of that claim is deliberately, even parodically, generic and unverifiable.'

Pliny's quotation above. Of course, there are different approaches and opinions in antiquity on what this constitutes,[17] but the aspect that is pertinent here is the goal of timelessness; that history pretends to be something to withstand the ages; to be reinterpreted accordingly in the future. In more immortal words of Thucydides: 'κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται'.[18] In our period, this concern is also reflected in what Pliny tells Tacitus about the ravages of memory and time, and his expectation that they would stand that test:

> Nec ipse tibi plaudis, et ego nihil magis ex fide quam de te scribo. Posteris an aliqua cura nostri, nescio; nos certe meremur, ut sit aliqua, non dico ingenio (id enim superbum), sed studio et labore et reverentia posterorum. Pergamus modo itinere instituto, quod ut paucos in lucem famamque provexit, ita multos e tenebis et silentio protulit.[19]

Reverentia Posterorum–the fear of oblivion is combated by the hope for future recognition, helped by their own care for posterity. There is thus a personal and emotive context to their pursuits, with the hope that they themselves may be remembered also. This sentiment is well-articulated by Sailor:

> a history stands on a continuum with lyric poetry and encyclopaedias, with tombs and public architecture, with priestly duties and triumphal processions, with cultivated dress and comportment. The function of a history is to be a writer's public *monumentum* both present and posthumous, to attract good repute and weight to his name – in short, to be a "big deal" and to make him a "big deal" as well.[20]

Thus, the claim to be effectively immortal through their actions, including their writing, is perhaps something to take seriously.[21] In this sense, there seems to be a competitiveness in the field of memory, which is all the more contentious with the existence of a supreme figure such as the emperor within that rubric. As this thesis has

[17] For a discussion on the call to history, see Marincola (1997) 34-62.
[18] Thuc. 1.22.4.
[19] Plin. *Ep*. 9.14.
[20] Sailor (2008) 9.
[21] cf. discussion on timelessness in Chapter 4.1.

exhibited thus far, there was a great importance placed on how the emperor seemed.[22] Accordingly, historical treatments of the emperor would play a part in that reception, both as being a part of the wider discourse about a certain emperor, and as an authoritative interpretation of his legacy for a subsequent audience. This means that history would be a contentious space for the discussion of emperors, which is to say that historiography was an arena in which the emperor's deeds and actions could be scrutinised in great detail. Indeed, as seen in the third chapter, much evidence points to this contestation, which serves to contribute to the way an emperor is perceived in posterity.[23] This suggests a certain 'unsafeness' to the composition of history: perhaps it was dangerous in the sense that criticisms towards any emperor could be interpreted as slights to a contemporary one, but this is not to argue the existence of authorial intent to resist the emperor explicitly or to question the legitimacy of the Principate systemically, nor the thought that Rome was a police state akin to an Orwellian dystopia, suggesting that everyone was in danger of fatal repercussion. Instead, the idea should be framed differently, in the sense of the contestation of the historical legacy of the Roman emperor, and the important role that historiography had in that conversation. In other words, there always was an inherent risk in thus criticising the emperor, but it was an important contributing part of the discourse of what the emperor was and what he should be. So, 'safe' is a euphemism that sterilises history, and thus makes it seem inconsequential to the context in which it was written, and to what it could mean for subsequent audiences.

[22] cf. Chapter 1.2 particularly, on the charismatic nature of the emperorship and idea of 'acceptance', inviting scrutiny on the emperor.

[23] For an excellent discussion concerning the potential reception of history by the regime, see Sailor (2008) 252-259, on the ways that Tacitus' *Annals* could have been received. cf. Syme (1958) 499: 'No emperor could approve of a work like the *Annales* of Cornelius Tacitus', from his arguments that it was filled with criticisms against Hadrian (492-503), which even if not fully convincing to a modern reader (see Sailor (2008) 256) nonetheless allows for the possibility that it could have been interpreted as criticism. cf. Turpin (2008) 399.

The themes discussed above will be drawn out from the discussion of three passages, which includes one from Dio, and two from Tacitus, from both the *Annals* and the *Histories*. To start with Dio, much of the later books of his *Roman History* survive in epitome and excerpt, truncated versions of the narratives of the contemporary Severan world that he himself witnessed. Despite the difficulties of the text, there is much that one can glean from them, as shown by Maud Gleason in her article on the identity crises exhibited in Dio's contemporary narrative, through images of impersonation and masquerade.[24] She shows the interesting work that can be done with the anecdotal material that abounds in those books, which have been essential in understanding the perception of the Roman emperor, as utilised in previous sections of this thesis.[25] One in particular includes a description of Dio's inspiration for writing his history, which comes at the point in the narrative at the end of Commodus' life and the beginning of the civil wars leading to Septimius Severus' principate:

> βιβλίον τι περὶ τῶν ὀνειράτων καὶ τῶν σημείων δι᾽ ὧν ὁ Σεουῆρος τὴν αὐτοκράτορα ἀρχὴν ἤλπισε, γράψας ἐδημοσίευσα· καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκεῖνος πεμφθέντι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐντυχὼν πολλά μοι καὶ καλὰ ἀντεπέστειλε. ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ἐγὼ τὰ γράμματα πρὸς ἑσπέραν ἤδη λαβὼν κατέδαρθον, καί μοι καθεύδοντι προσέταξε τὸ δαιμόνιον ἱστορίαν γράφειν. καὶ οὕτω δὴ ταῦτα περὶ ὧν νῦν καθίσταμαι ἔγραψα. καὶ ἐπειδή γε τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ Σεουήρῳ μάλιστα ἤρεσε… τὴν δὲ δὴ θεὸν (Τύχην) ταύτην ἐπιρρωννύουσάν με πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν εὐλαβῶς πρὸς αὐτὴν καὶ ὀκνηρῶς διακείμενον, καὶ πονούμενον ἀπαγορεύοντά τε ἀνακτωμένην δι᾽ ὀνειράτων, καὶ καλὰς ἐλπίδας περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος χρόνου διδοῦσάν μοι ὡς ὑπολειψομένου τὴν ἱστορίαν καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἀμαυρώσοντος, ἐπίσκοπον τῆς τοῦ βίου διαγωγῆς, ὡς ἔοικεν, εἴληχα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτῇ ἀνάκειμαι.[26]

There are several points that should be commented upon here. The nature of the times was such that it was substance of history, which is alluded to by the mention of civil strife at the beginning. However, it is interesting that Dio's first stated experience in erudition

[24] Gleason (2011) 33-86.
[25] See Chapter 3.2 and 3.4 for analyses of passages of Dio's contemporary books, in particular Dio 77(76).10 on Bulla Felix, and Dio 73(72)20.2-3, on Commodus in the arena.
[26] Dio 73(72).23.1-5.

and publishing was for a book on dreams and portents, which adds an interesting wrinkle to what could be seen as acceptable themes for the writing of history.[27] That this was a field of interest and erudition should not come as a surprise when compared to contemporaries; Artemidorus and Aelius Aristides are notable examples of those who thought and wrote about dreams and their interpretations.[28] Within this context, both Dio's penchant for dream interpretation and the fact that he received his inspiration via a dream would suggest a certain seriousness placed on the power of dreams on the imagination, and importantly for this context, their interpretative power in explaining political events and phenomena in the world that concerns the Roman emperor.[29]

Moreover, this material was important in the very relevant sense of *omina imperii,* or the portents for the future power of a potential emperor, and signs (including dreams) litter the narratives of historians of the period, which includes an interesting case of Dio mentioning Vespasian's dream of receiving a tooth from Nero which directly reflects a dream interpretation of Artemidorus of receiving teeth from a King.[30] The similarity of this evidence suggests a shared framework of understanding, which transcended genre, and which in this particular case utilises dream interpretation to make sense of the transition between one emperor to the next. Indeed, Dio's supposed role in providing encouragement to Severus can show the political nature of this material, and how it could elicit serious consequences. Therefore, Dio used his work as a historical agent to affect change for the future, which not only affects his own clout, but that of Severus as well.

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[27] cf. a similar intellectual debate on the acceptability of studying *mirabilia* as a worthy pursuit, as discussed in Chapter 3.4.

[28] On Artemidorus and dream interpretation in antiquity, see Price (1986) 3-37; On Aristides, Artemidorus, and the medical context for dream interpretation, see Israelowich (2012) 71-86. For more on dreams, see Chapter 3.2.

[29] cf. a more skeptical interpretation of this scene in Marincola (1997) 50-51.

[30] Dio 65(66).1.3: 'καὶ παρ᾽ ὀνείρατος ἔμαθεν ὅτι, ὅταν ὁ Καῖσαρ Νέρων ὀδόντα ἀποβάλῃ, αὐταρχήσει· καὶ τοῦτό τε τὸ κατὰ τὸν ὀδόντα τῇ ἐπιούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ συνηνέχθη…'; Artem. 4.31. Cited above in Chapter 3.2, 126 n. 56.

The evocation of *to daimonion* and Fortune in his inspiration should also be commented on, even though would be impossible to discuss the intricate detail of the religiosity here.[31] In my opinion, it exhibits the lofty claims of historiography as something that should be undertaken as a calling or obligation, with the end product being preserved for posterity and having divine sanction. Thus, there is a universality of history being there to stand the test of time and provide accounts of importance for the future. It is also interesting that Severus is mentioned as having read Dio's book approvingly, given its favourable prognostication for his future emperorship. In a Fasoltian sense, Dio seems entirely comfortable with the political implications and purposes of his work (both the dream interpretations and the greater history), given that it concerned the direction of the state and the person of the emperor. Indeed, this emperor-centric conception of historical writing is observed further in an earlier section of book 73, which comes in the context of Commodus' exploits as a gladiator in the arena, and describes the necessity of including all the details for the memory of those in the future who may find importance in it.[32] Even with the apology for the nature of the account, it was deemed relevant for the presence of the emperor and the sensory experience of the exhibition. It is even further bolstered by Dio's treatment of Severus in later books, which exhibits him unfavourably in many ways,[33] which suggests the power of historical writing in the interpretation of an emperor's life, and how open-ended that interpretation could be. Essentially, Dio reveals part of the process of the construction of history and also how the passage of time could alter the interpretation of that history: at first, it would include *omina* that were favourable

[31] For more on fortune and its interpretative impact on the lives of emperors, see Chapter 4.3.
[32] Dio 73(72).18.3-4: 'Καὶ μή μέ τις κηλιδοῦν τὸν τῆς ἱστορίας ὄγκον, ὅτι καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα συγγράφω, νομίσῃ. ἄλλως μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν εἶπον αὐτά· ἐπειδὴ δὲ πρός τε τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἐγένετο καὶ παρὼν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ καὶ εἶδον ἕκαστα καὶ ἤκουσα καὶ ἐλάλησα, δίκαιον ἡγησάμην μηδὲν αὐτῶν ἀποκρύψασθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτά, ὥσπερ τι ἄλλο τῶν μεγίστων καὶ ἀναγκαιοτάτων, τῇ μνήμῃ τῶν ἐσέπειτα ἐσομένων παραδοῦναι.' cf. Gleason (2011) 45-46.
[33] For a discussion of his treatment by Dio, see Gleason (2011) 52-60.

to the potential emperor and thus receive his personal approbation; but it could also include less savoury aspects of an emperor's conduct, allowing posterity to interpret and reinterpret his legacy, outside the power of the princeps to alter. It shows that the promise and legacy of Severus' reign remained contested and open for scrutiny, which opens up the reigns of other emperors to similar criticism.

Tacitus also provides an illuminating case on the political nature of emperor history. There are many potential passages from his *oeuvre* that could come under scrutiny with this particular topic in mind, but two will be included here, *Histories* 1.1, and *Annals* 1.9-10., the latter of which involves the discussion of Augustus' legacy in the aftermath of his death. Sailor's lengthy treatment of the preface to the *Histories* is of particular note, as it attempts to dissect the problems raised by Tacitus in his short history of historiography and its apparent decline, whilst simultaneously elevating his subject as worthy of record, its difficulty, his own lack of bias, and a *recusatio* for not extending his history beyond the end of Domitian's principate.[34] Accordingly, Tacitus highlights the importance of political history to posterity, and the dangers of writing it under the power of an emperor:[35]

> Mihi Galba Otho Vitellius nec beneficio nec iniuria cogniti. dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim: sed incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est. quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi Nervae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui, rara temporum felicitate ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet.[36]

Thus, Tacitus attempts to accentuate his closeness to the conduct of politics in the age, whilst also absolving himself from any implication of unfair bias, either negative or positive, towards any emperor in particular.[37] This is part in parcel of the nature of his

[34] Sailor (2008) 121-160.
[35] Tac. *Hist*. 1.1.
[36] Ibid., 1.1.3-4.
[37] Sailor (2008) 152; Marincola (1997) 144.

subject–in a Fasoltian sense, the closeness of the political is patent in this historical endeavour. Despite any negative connotations that it could evoke are downplayed, as Pelling argues: 'his political experience and the insight he will have gained... builds his authority with his readers even as it may arouse their suspicions.'[38] As such, despite the difficulties, Tacitus' subject is one of great importance: *cura posteritatis*; posterity was a stated goal, and so he deals with this material for later generations. To evoke Pelling yet again, Tacitus' use of his personal voice in this preface, and his involvement of the reader (*facile averseris*), invites his audience to be critical in their reading of his history, as they had been wont to do, regardless of assurances of fairness and non-bias.[39] This puts into relief his final line of this passage, on the felicity of his own times, opening it up also to scrutiny on whether or not 'they can (actually) say what they feel'.

This can be pressed further. Tacitus elevates the importance and impact of his histories in competition to the emperor, since he is asserting his independence in thought and historical inquiry. His apparent deferential refusal to engage first then in a history of Nerva and Trajan due to *temporum felicitate* means to assert its impartiality to the felicitous age in which he writes.[40] This allows for what is not included, namely the accounts of those reigns, to be placed under similar scrutiny to those of previous emperors, and in particular allowing for the silence about Augustus' reign to reflect his silence on Nerva and Trajan, and perhaps even on how this would reflect onto Hadrian later. Accordingly, Tacitus creates a power struggle over the production of historical memory for future generations. As Sailor puts it, Tacitus' preface

> makes a strong declaration of authorial control and of authenticity: *Histories* is not really Trajan's version of the past rendered in Tacitus' words, but, rather, emphatically the creation and property of the historian himself.'[41]

[38] Pelling (2009) 149.
[39] Ibid., 150 on Tac. *Hist*. 1.1.2.
[40] Sailor (2008) 157.
[41] Ibid., 160. cf. Turpin (2008) 399.

This shows that the history of the emperorship itself was a contested space, over which an emperor did not necessarily have full control.

This is reflected in Tacitus' treatment of Augustus' death. As Tacitus describes it, in the immediate context of Augustus' funeral there was much talk about his principate and legacy: '*Multus hinc ipso de Augusto sermo*'.[42] The talk included trivialities and both positive and negative remembrances: from the coincidence of dying in the same room in Nola as his father Octavius,[43] the number of offices he had held,[44] his conduct during the civil wars,[45] the security and peace in the empire, and the adornment of Rome itself,[46] to the bribery,[47] proscriptions and betrayals,[48] periods of war and conflict,[49] his desire for divine honours,[50] and the vicissitudes of his family.[51] Indeed, the final point about Tiberius is telling to the subjectivity of opinion:

> ne Tiberium quidem caritate aut rei publicae cura successorem adscitum, sed, quoniam adrogantiam saevitiamque eius introspexerit, comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quaesivisse.[52]

Thus, Tacitus gives agency to those present in the aftermath of Augustus' death to give their own variant perspectives on the memorable deeds of the deceased emperor. Furthermore, Tacitus gives Augustus an imagined perspective also, with his hope that he would seem better than his successor. Whether or not this was true is immaterial, as it serves to add further patterns in the formation of Augustus' memory. Tacitus is playing with time here, giving the impression of numerous voices adding to the tradition of Augustus' legacy, through the present time of Tacitus' context of criticising Rome's first

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[42] Tac. *Ann*. 1.9.1
[43] Ibid., 1.9.1.
[44] Ibid., 1.9.2.
[45] Ibid., 1.9.3-4.
[46] Ibid., 1.9.5.
[47] Ibid., 1.10.1-2.
[48] Ibid., 1.10.2-5.
[49] Ibid., 1.10.4
[50] Ibid., 1.10.6
[51] Ibid., 1.10.5, 7.
[52] Ibid., 1.10.7. cf. Tac. *Hist*. 2.47.2, for Otho's concern for how future generations would remember him.

emperor, providing this tradition and his treatment of it for posterity's sake. Accordingly, the formation and reception of an emperor's memory and legacy is not a static, monolithic phenomenon, but constantly changing according to context and interpretation.

In the end, this shows the contribution of historians to that conversation of an emperor's legacy, adding to a larger discourse of who the emperor was and who he should be that had numerous participants across time. Furthermore, there is an uncertainty in the future, which reveals an anxiety that the Romans attempted to alleviate through their shaping of memory. In effect, this anxiety translated to fear about the fortune of emperors and their families, leading to interesting manifestations of this phenomenon.

4.3: Narratives of Fear and Fortune

In a summary of the historiographical tradition about the Roman *plebs*, Zvi Yavetz used a small section of Tacitus' *Annals* to sum up his view that the stock characterisation of the people was overtly negative: 'Hence the rulers could not rely on the people's affections, these being fleeting and unblest: '*brevis et infaustos populi Romani amores*.'[1] What Yavetz wanted to stress was the opposite; that the loves of the Roman people were not fleeting, and that they in fact remembered their allegiances.[2] However, there is an alternative reading to Tacitus' text. In the context of the chapter, Tacitus was discussing the scene of Germanicus' triumph, and had just informed the reader of public devotion of the people toward Marcellus and Drusus. This had been disadvantageous to their longevity, suggesting that their popularity was their demise:

> sed suberat occulta formido reputantibus haud prosperum in Druso patre eius favorem vulgi, avunculum eiusdem Marcellum flagrantibus plebis studiis intra iuventam ereptum.[3]

Therefore, the statement about the brief and unfortunate devotions of the Roman people has another meaning; they were short and unfortunate because of the short lives of their favourites, rather than them being fickle. This suggests an innate fear for the future of their favourites, and perhaps hopes that misfortune would not come to pass, revealing a potential manner of thinking concerning the success or demise of an emperor as perceived by his subjects. This section is about this phenomenon, which will at first consider the

[1] Yavetz (1969a) 4-5: Yavetz was quoting Tac. *Ann.* 2.41.3; cf. Yavetz (1965) 101. The use of the religious word *infaustus* is striking, for it points to the potential role of bad luck and fortune in the demise of these favourites. It is all the more striking in the fact that this term and synonyms such as *felix* and *fortunatus* are found with the positive antonym *faustus* when describing the future of the emperors. It seems that it is with this language that the hope of the future was described. cf. Noreña (2011) 136-138.
[2] Yavetz (1965) 101: '*La plèbe romaine avait donc une longue mémoire et nous n'aurons aucun mal, dans le cours de cet exposé, à réfuter le jugement de Tacite*.'
[3] Tac. *Ann.* 2.41.3.

case of fear and fortune as depicted by Tacitus in the *Annals*, followed by a discussion of a method to combat this anxiety, namely the *devotiones*.

Germanicus, like many figures in Tacitus' *Annals*, is enigmatic and difficult to understand. His significance does not adhere to a strict chronology, as he is simultaneously a relic of the past and a symbol of the future.[4] As such, his characterisation seems anachronistic: This is similar to the argument that Pelling offered in his 1993 essay on Tiberius and Germanicus; that Germanicus cut an attractive figure, but was anachronistic; unsuited to the brutal world of the Principate. This anachronistic quality, which O'Gorman describes as a 'continual movement between retrospection and ... anticipation',[5] is present in the passage above. The scene of Germanicus and his children is focalized through the onlookers, who now not only see the present triumphal parade, but the past and future appearing simultaneously *in situ*.[6] The first line *augebat visus*, which has been translated as 'sight... intensified' suggests a keen and broadened interpretation that points to a revelation: namely of the hope for the future embodied in Germanicus and his family. However, the antithesis immediately comes after, with an *occulta formido*–a hidden dread existing within the mind of the spectator: that his past kin, his father Drusus, and his uncle Marcellus, had not been so fortunate and had met early demises. The fear is accentuated by a common denominator: *favorem vulgi* and *flagrantibus plebis studiis*; popular favour, popular zeal or perhaps even just popularity. With that being the case, different scenarios are acted out: one where the hopes of the spectators are realised and Germanicus and his kin will take the reins of empire, and another where the *brevis et infaustos amores* of the people meant the doom and demise of the family.

[4] Pelling (1993) 77-8; O'Gorman (2000) 46.
[5] O'Gorman (2000) 55.
[6] Ibid., 55.

Tacitus' point may reflect the range of potential perceptions and emotions from a wider perspective, which could be informed by popular morality.[7] The striking allusion here concerns *Fortuna*. This is a slippery concept, and there are different, seemingly contradictory ways to approach this idea in antiquity.[8] Scholarship has largely created two broad concepts of Fortune: one that emphasises the good aspect, that there was a 'force of a benevolent goddess' that brought good luck: and another, that was unpredictable, fickle, and often brought bad luck, connected to the Greek concept of *tyche*.[9] This version is apparent in from Isidore of Seville:

> Fortunam a fortuitis nomen habere dicunt, quasi deam quandam res humanas variis casibus et fortuitis inludentem; unde et caecam appellant, eo quod passim in quoslibet incurrens sine ullo examine meritorum, et ad bonos et ad malos venit. Fatum autem a fortuna separant: et fortuna quasi sit in his quae fortuitu veniunt, nulla palam causa; fatum vero adpositum singulis et statutum aiunt.[10]

From this understanding of fortune, it is an unknowable force that affected good and bad alike, with no consideration of merit. The allusion to this world of understanding is what Tacitus has focalised through the people in *Annals* 2.41.3: the people fear their love was unlucky, and that this will lead to an unpropitious future. This opens a potential window into a popular mentality, informing perceptions of the future of an imperial favourite, which in turn could also inform how they perceive the emperor.

This uncertainty is exploited in Tacitus' narrative to accentuate the antagonism within the imperial family, including the exploration of problematic relationships between a sitting emperor and another imperial family member, or between two potential heirs to the emperorship. This is an important theme that runs throughout the *Annals,* which elevates the fear of chaos from the perspective of the people.[11] The people are also cast in

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[7] Morgan (2007).
[8] Morgan (2007) 33, 77, 111-113, 134-135, 161-162, 165, 242-243.
[9] Noreña (2011) 136; Kajanto (1981) 525ff. cf. Chapter 4.2 on Dio's inspiration from *Tyche*.
[10] Isid. *Etym*. 8.11.94.
[11] See, for example, Tac. *Ann*. 3.31.1: '*nam triennio ante Germanici cum Tiberio idem honor neque patruo laetus neque natura tam conexus fuerat*.'

the role of an antagonist; exhibited as vociferously taking the side of one over the other, something which would seem to have consequences for the development of the narrative. The antagonism between Tiberius and Germanicus is outlined early, where Tiberius is shown to have seized power after Augustus' death quickly, with the fear that Germanicus, his son by adoption,[12] would take the initiative and become emperor himself:

> sed defuncto Augusto signum praetoriis cohortibus ut imperator dederat; excubiae, arma, cetera aulae; miles in forum, miles in curiam comitabatur. litteras ad exercitus tamquam adepto principatu misit, nusquam cunctabundus nisi cum in senatu loqueretur. causa praecipua ex formidine, ne Germanicus, in cuius manu tot legiones, immensa sociorum auxilia, mirus apud populum favor, habere imperium quam exspectare mallet.[13]

One of the reasons that Tacitus provides for Germanicus' ability to assume the role as emperor is his favour with the people. It also becomes a primary reason for there to be animosity between them, for we have a juxtaposition between a popular potential emperor within whom the hopes of the wider population lie, and a dissimulating emperor who preferred to remain distant and aloof.[14] Therefore, Tacitus uses the people to signify that all is not well in the *Domus Augusta*:

> neptem eius Agrippinam in matrimonio pluresque ex ea liberos habebat, ipse Druso fratre Tiberii genitus, Augustae nepos, sed anxius occultis in se patrui aviaeque odiis, quorum causae acriores, quia iniquae. quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem. nam iuveni civile ingenium, mira comitas et diversa ab Tiberii sermone vultu, adrogantibus et obscuris.[15]

The disquiet signified by the people returns when Germanicus appears in front of them at his triumphal procession in Tac. *Ann*. 2.41 quoted above. There is a fear that Germanicus would meet an early end, and that the potential for him becoming emperor would diminish. The fear would come true, and their despair justified at his death. Even at his demise, the antagonism is accentuated by the cries of the people at his funeral:

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[12] Tac. *Ann*. 1.3.5.
[13] Ibid., 1.7.5-6.
[14] Ibid., 1.76.4; Ibid., 1.54.2.
[15] Ibid., 1.33.1-2.

> Dies, quo reliquiae tumulo Augusti inferebantur, modo per silentium vastus, modo ploratibus inquies; plena urbis itinera, conlucentes per campum Martis faces. illic miles cum armis, sine insignibus magistratus, populus per tribus concidisse rem publicam, nihil spei reliquum clamitabant, promptius apertiusque quam ut meminisse imperitantium crederes. nihil tamen Tiberium magis penetravit quam studia hominum accensa in Agrippinam, cum decus patriae, solum Augusti sanguinem, unicum antiquitatis specimen appellarent versique ad caelum ac deos integram illi subolem ac superstitem iniquorum precarentur.[16]

The atmosphere in the city is one of deep mourning, which culminates in the people shouting that the state had fallen and that there was no hope left. This is the manifestation of the fear that was hidden in the triumphal scene of *Annals* 2.41.3; that a favourite had now met an early and unpropitious end. However, *augebat visus* is implied again; the object of laudation has now shifted from Germanicus to Agrippina. Similar to the triumphal procession, Agrippina is now the timeless figure; someone that represents the glorious past of her ancestry and the hope for the future; that she and her progeny (and for that matter Germanicus') may outlive their opponents.[17] The words used here, *decus patriae*, the honour of her country, *solum Augusti sanguinem*,[18] the only one with Augustan blood, and *unicum antiquitatis specimen*, the sole example of ancient (morally better) times, all highlight an interest in the past; one that was made present by the existence of Agrippina, and also projected into the future by the prayer for her and her children. As such, this branch of the *domus Augusta* is representing different aspects of time simultaneously. The rift between Tiberius and Germanicus widens even in death, and the people at Rome are thus presented as one sided, unquestionably in favour of Germanicus and his kin, to the detriment of Tiberius.[19]

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[16] Tac. *Ann*. 3.4; The fact that the people are presented in their tribes is interesting – it was a state affair, so they came organised in their official capacity. cf. *Tabula Siarensis* b. II 155 ([*quo ad lugendum Germanicum Caesarem efusissime accensae] essent tribus urbanae…*) transcribed and translated in Lott (2012), 94-95.
[17] cf. Flower (2006) 138-143 on her afterlife.
[18] cf. above Chapter 1.2. This may point to the different conceptions of the imperial family, and in this case, one that stresses blood relations, rather than looser concepts of kinship; Smith (2006) 33
[19] cf. Tac. *Ann*. 2.84. This passage is quite arresting, as it juxtaposes the reported joy of Tiberius to have twins entering his house, including the allusion to fortune in his words, and the people's pain that Drusus' gain would be Germanicus' demise. It's a zero-sum game, and the people come out on one side or the other.

Tacitus' historiography is complex and qualified: his opinions and thoughts on the republic and empire are brought out by the comparison between Tiberius and Germanicus, and it is but one comparison and theme that runs throughout the *Annals*.[20] As Pelling has argued, Germanicus is not just a simple foil for Tiberius:

> we should rather think of the whole world in which Germanicus moves, his style of fighting, leadership, and politics, as a contrast to the world and atmosphere of the principate, so devious and complex, so subtle and unsavoury. Germanicus and his style serve as a sort of alternative, which helps to highlight what is distinctive about the principate itself.[21]

Yet, this does not mean that the assessment of Germancius is overtly favourable, for Germanicus is seen 'rather as he (Tacitus) regards the past, particularly the republican past: nostalgically attractive, brilliant, the sort of thing it is good to write about; but out of keeping with the real needs of the modern world.'[22]

These themes continue in the later books of the *Annals*. Similar scenes are constructed: exposure of the young men of the imperial family in public, in the context of which the people are shown to be taking sides, with an interest in the past, present and future of the *domus Augusta*.[23] It is within this sort of scene, in the context of Claudius' Secular Games,[24] that Britannicus and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus are shown in the 'Trojan' game. Within the bustle of this scene, Tacitus brings the reader to concentrate on the juxtaposition between Britannicus and the future Nero: not only has Tacitus told the future of the empire lies in Nero, but also that the *favor plebis* was on his side, and from this early date.[25] This is compounded further in the next chapter: '*verum inclinatio populi supererat ex memoria Germanici, cuius illa reliqua suboles virilis*.'[26] The reader is

[20] Pelling (1993) 59-85, esp. 78.
[21] Ibid., 68.
[22] Ibid., 77-78. cf. Tac. Ann. 4.32-33.
[23] Compare with the fuller treatment in Chapter 1.3.
[24] cf. Weinstock (1971) 191-197. cf. Zanker (1988) 167ff.
[25] Tac. *Ann*. 11.11.2: *'favor plebis acrior in Domitium loco praesagii acceptus est*.' cf. Chapter 1.3.2 above on similar scenes.
[26] Tac. *Ann*. 11.12.1.

reminded of Germanicus and his popularity in the past, which is now being transferred to his last remaining scion, Nero. Again, this is visually accentuated with their appearance at more circus entertainments, in the context of Nero's assumption of the *toga virilis*: '*ut spectaret populus hunc decore imperatorio, illum puerili habitu, ac perinde fortunam utriusque praesumeret*.'[27] From the opposite appearance of Britannicus and Nero, the people are shown to be making assumptions of the future, to the presumed detriment of Britannicus. In other words, a potential rift is accentuated by the projected thoughts of the spectating public; they are cast in the middle of dynastic politics.[28]

All of this is evidence of a sophisticated narrative that has different layers of temporality, using the perspective of the people in different ways to accentuate both the rifts in the imperial family and indeed how uncertain the future was for emperors and their kin: vicissitudes of fear and fortune move on as time continues, transferring to new situations and new characters. Tacitus gives the impression that this uncertainty was in full view of the emperor's subjects, toying with the future stability and prosperity of the empire. Yet, however fruitful the scrutiny of one source may be, does this translate to perceptions of the future and the fear of the untimely demise of an imperial favourite?

An interesting source of evidence for the anxiety of the future comes in the form of *devotiones* on behalf of the health of an emperor.[29] These are related to the *devotiones* of the republican period, which saw either the self-sacrifice of a general or the dedication of an enemy's territory and population to the gods of the underworld.[30] Accordingly, in the imperial period, as Versnel puts it, there was 'a new phenomenon of people making vows to offer their lives for the well-being of the emperor.'[31] A particularly interesting

[27] Tac. *Ann*. 12.41.1.
[28] cf. Rogers (1955) 190-212.
[29] Versnel (1980) 562-577; Versnel (1993a) 219-227.
[30] Versnel (1976) 365-410 on the complex distinction between these different types of *devotiones*.
[31] Versnel (1993a) 219.

case comes from Gaius' principate, within the same context of the Golden Age revelry that was discussed in Chapter 3.6 above. After the time of celebration, Gaius fell deathly ill, to the extent that there was a precipitous fall from happiness to sorrow, described by Philo in close proximity to the long account of the celebrations following Gaius' accession:

> συννοίας τε καὶ κατηφείας πᾶσα οἰκία καὶ πόλις γεγένητο μεστή, ἰσορρόπῳ λύπῃ τῆς πρὸ μικροῦ χαρᾶς ἀμφικλινοῦς γενομένης. τὰ γὰρ μέρη πάντα τῆς οἰκουμένης αὐτῷ συνενόσησε, βαρυτέρᾳ νόσῳ χρυσάμενα τῆς κατασχούσης Γαίον· ἐκείνη μὲν γὰρ σώματος ἦν αὐτὸ μόνον, ἡ δὲ τῶν πανταχοῦ πάντων, ψυχικῆς εὐσθενείας, εἰρήνης, ἐλπίδων, μετουσίας καὶ ἀπολαύσεως ἀγαθῶν.[32]

Such was the empathetic fear for the demise of Gaius, which seems to square well with the emotionality of the people's responses concerning Germanicus and his family, as discussed above. Yet, this context is further enriched by corroborating evidence for *devotiones*. In Suetonius' account of this episode, people surrounded the Palatine, with some vowing to fight as gladiators, and others by placing placards devoted their lives for his health.[33] Dio provides similar information, but this time providing names:

> Πούπλιος δὲ Ἀφράνιος Ποτῖτος δημότης τε ὢν καὶ ὑπὸ μωρᾶς κολακείας οὐ μόνον ἐθελοντὴς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔνορκος, ἄν γε ὁ Γάιος σωθῇ, τελευτήσειν ὑποσχόμενος, Ἀτάνιός τέ τις Σεκοῦνδος ἱππεύς τε ὢν καὶ μονομαχήσειν ἐπαγγειλάμενος·[34]

According to this evidence, anxieties about the health of an emperor were thus alleviated: by dedicating their lives, they would thus ensure the future of the emperor, and furthermore, ensure that peace and prosperity would continue in the empire. Moreover, it is not restricted to this context,[35] but also seen in more stylised and formal contexts in hundreds of inscriptions involving the formula *devoti numini maestatique eius*, which are

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[32] Philo, *Leg*. 15-16

[33] Suet. *Cal*. 14.2: '*non defuerunt qui depugnaturos se armis pro salute aegri quique capita sua titulo proposito voverent*.'

[34] Dio 59.8.3. cf. Suet. *Cal*. 27.2, where Gaius forces a man who had vowed to fight as a gladiator to do so after he recovered.

[35] For a collection of this evidence, see Versnel (1980) 565-575.

dedicatory *vota* to the emperors that call for peace and prosperity in the empire, ranging from the time of the Severans through the third century into the late empire.[36] This suggests an active participation in an ideology that saw the emperor as the provider of peace; a potential response within a wider context of possible interpretations of the role of the emperor in the world, which included the emperor as an upholder of justice, a generous benefactor, and a mediator between the known and unknown phenomena in the world.[37]

The context of *devotiones* brings us to a subject that has largely remained in the background so far in this thesis; namely the place of the imperial cult and the divinity of the emperor within the discourse of who an emperor was in the *mentalité* of his subjects. I have left the subject to this chapter in order to explore it in a different way, in contrast to the illuminating scholarly work on the organisation of the imperial cult, and in particular, civic building, competition and organisations of temples, festivals, and ritual activities across the empire.[38] Still, the divinity of the emperor and indeed the manifestation of the imperial cult require comment. As argued above, the emperor was a difficult figure to conceptualise,[39] which is a notion reflected in scholarly treatments of the emperor's divinity also. This aspect boils down the question of whether the Romans actually believed that the emperor was a god. Unfortunately, there is no space to recount the scholarly treatments of the divinity of the emperor from the early twentieth century

[36] cf. Charlesworth (1937) 22, 31 n.52 for evidence of this formula, and an argument seeing these inscriptions as evidence for vociferous loyalty. For instance one to Julia Domna, Septimius Severus' wife (*CIL* 2.810) from Cáparra in Lusitania: *Iuliae Aug(ustae) matri castror(um)* | *coniugi Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L(uci) Sept(imi)* | *Severi Pii Pertinacis Aug(usti)* | *et matri M(arci) Aur(eli) Ant(onini) Imp(eratoris)* |*… ordo splendidis[simus]* |*Ca[perensium d(evotus)]* | *[n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) e(ius)*]
[37] See Chapter 3 for a fuller treatment of these roles.
[38] In general on the imperial cult, see Price (1984a) for the idea of civic competition in the east; Fishwick (1987-2005) for the epigraphical and archaeological evidence of the imperial cult in the western part of the empire; Gradel (2002) for a more recent appraisal of the imperial cult in Italy. cf. Hopkins (1978a) 197ff.
[39] See Chapter 1.2.

onwards.[40] Still, it is important to outline the studies that have informed this thesis. First is the basic premise included in Veyne's essay on the position of the emperor, which included a quotation from the nineteenth century French historian Fustel de Coulanges: '*Il n'était pas dieu en vertu de son mérite personnel, il était dieu parce qu'il était empereur.*'[41] This is an important conceptual distinction, as it ties the emperor's power and charisma to his position, and importantly acknowledges his divine status in antiquity. Subsequent scholars have made similar arguments on the place of the emperor in relation to the divine in attempts to come to terms with his ambivalent position between humans and the gods. For instance, Hopkins argued that the emperor's 'subjects who rarely see an emperor come to terms with his grandeur and power by associating him with the divine'.[42] Further, in an article that explores the Greek terminology for the divine appellations of emperors, and thus deals with the concepts of divinity in and language of honour in relation to the emperor, Price ultimately draws an ambivalent conclusion:

> The predication of *theos* places the emperor within the traditional religious system. He was located in an ambivalent position, higher than mortals but not fully equal of the gods. The cult he received was described as *isotheoi timai*, and the *eusebeia* which the cult displayed was compatible with honours not fully divine.[43]

Yet, it is possible to be stronger in asserting that subjects of the emperor perceived divine qualities in him, without necessarily removing the ambivalence that Price observed in his studies. Gradel describes 'religion' as a concept:

> defined by action of dialogue–sacrifice, prayer, or other forms of establishing and constructing dialogue–between humans and what they perceive as 'another world', opposed to and different from the everyday sphere in which men function.'[44]

[40] See Price (1984a) 7-22 for a short introduction to the prior scholarly *communis opinio* cf. Gradel (2002) 4-8 for his polemic against a christianising and monotheistic interpretation of the emperor's divinity.
[41] de Coulanges (1891) 191-192, quoted by Veyne (2002) 19.
[42] Hopkins (1978a) 197.
[43] Price (1984b) 94.
[44] Gradel (2002) 5.

Perceptions of the emperor, part of a dialogue and often portrayed the emperor as being in 'another world', suggests a certain religiosity to the way people thought about him. This thesis has furnished vignettes that discuss the emperor's divinity, and therefore manifestations of an 'imperial cult', but through alternative means than a theological discussion of the nature of the emperor's divinity or a direct study of ritual practices in a provincial and civic context. Rather, it looks at different conceptual contexts, in which the emperor is cast in different roles, yet is still imbued with religiosity. These include the expectations of justice and generosity, the fear of reprimand and retribution, and in particular, the emperor's proximity to wondrous things and being the instigator of a Golden Age. As such, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the emperor was thought about in close proximity to the divine.

More specifically, what this section has hopefully shown, through the examples of *devotiones* and interpretations of fortune, is that the emperor was conceived of in terms that were related to divine matters.[45] In this case, what was at stake here were concepts and strategies that served as ways to understand and secure an uncertain future, in which the health of the emperor and the concomitant prosperity of the *oikoumene* were inextricably linked, but not guaranteed.

[45] Indeed, Versnel (1993a) 219 argues that the *devotiones* were rituals as part of the emperor cult.

4.4: Contested Acceptance: Impersonations, Resurrections, and the Afterlife of an Emperor

During the principate of Commodus, a certain Maternus, who was an ex-soldier turned bandit, ravaged Gaul and Italy with his band of criminals, attacking cities, freeing prisoners from their cells, and burning settlements.[1] The story continues to reveal Maternus' grander designs, which were to overrun Italy also and challenge the emperor's legitimacy. This culminated in the planned attack, to take place in the spring festival of the *Hilaria* dedicated to the goddess Cybele, in which disguises and masquerades were a prominent part of the festivities.[2] Maternus hoped that with his disguise as a praetorian he could infiltrate the guards in the procession, and thus cut down Commodus at the opportune moment.[3] However, was betrayed and ultimately executed:

> ἀλλὰ προδοσίας γενομένης διὰ τινων τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ προκατελθόντων εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν κατειπόντων (φθόνος γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἐς τοῦτο παρώξυνεν, εἰ δὴ ἔμελλον ἀντὶ λῃστοῦ δεσπότην ἕξειν καὶ βασιλέα), πρὶν ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἑορτὴν αὐτός τε ὁ Μάτερνος συλληφθεὶς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπετμήθη, καὶ οἱ συνωμόται ἀξίας ὑπέσχον δίκας. ὁ δὲ Κόμοδος θύσας τε τῇ θεῷ καὶ χαριστήρια ὁμολογήσας τὴν ἑορτὴν ἐπετέλει, παρέπεμπέ τε τὴν θεὸν χαίρων. καὶ σωτήρια τοῦ βασιλέως ὁ δῆμος μετὰ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἐπανηγύριζεν.[4]

As with other stories of bandits, which were discussed in Chapter 3.2, Maternus could be interpreted as a foil to Commodus, appearing to challenge the legitimacy of his rule. Moreover, the description being in the context of the *Hilaria*, which incorporates elements of a festival of reversal, accentuates a link between a bandit and an emperor as opposite sides of the same coin, in which bandits could be come emperors and vice versa.[5] This

[1] Hdn. 1.10.1-3. On Maternus, problems of authenticity and fiction, and connections to themes of banditry, see Grünewald (2004) 120-136.
[2] Hdn. 1.10.5.
[3] Ibid., 1.10.6: 'ἔδοξε δὴ τῷ Ματέρνῳ καιρὸς ἐπιτήδειος εἶναι εἰς τὸ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν λαθεῖν. ἤλπισε γὰρ αὐτός τε ἀναλαβὼν τὸ τῶν δορυφόρων σχῆμα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ὁπλίσας ὁμοίως ἀναμίξας τε τῷ πλήθει τῶν αἰχμοφόρων καὶ τῆς πομπῆς νομισθεὶς μέρος, μηδενὸς δὴ προφυλαττομένου, αἰφνιδίως ἐπιπεσὼν τὸν Κόμοδον διαχρήσεσθαι.'
[4] Ibid., 1.10.7.
[5] For analysis of this episode, see Shaw (1984) 45-46.

story in particular also brings up the question of being an impostor vying for power. In this scene, Maternus has designs on becoming emperor himself, and uses a disguise in order to achieve this goal. However, in this confrontation, he fails: as Herodian describes, his true identity gets revealed. This is accentuated by the actions of Commodus and the people in consequence to Maternus' attempts, with sacrifices to the gods and thanksgiving for the safety of the emperor. Nonetheless, it is an episode where Commodus' principate is challenged, leading to an evaluation of his principate before its reaffirmation.

Within this rubric of imposters and impersonators is the evidence of the appearance of false emperors or members of the imperial family, which litter the histories and biographies of emperors.[6] Like the story of Maternus above, these apperances share similar characteristics: such stories involve an individual who invariably is of lower status, who is found to either resemble or be impersonating a deceased emperor or member of the imperial family in a region at suitable distance to the sitting emperor. As time wears on, rumour spreads of the resurrection of this formerly deceased individual, escaping notice and evading authority until his luck runs out, when he invariably gets executed.

Indeed, this is a skeletal representation of the story of Clemens, the slave of Agrippa Posthumus who had impersonated his deceased master before being caught.[7] In Tacitus' version, Clemens, who is presented as cunning and crafty, goes to the isle of Planasia where Agrippa was being held.[8] After finding that he had been killed, he vanished to improve his resemblance to his master: '*donec crinem barbamque*

[6] Impersonators: Agrippa Posthumus (Tac. *Ann*. 39-40, Dio 57.16.3-4); Drusus, son of Germanicus (Tac. *Ann*. 5.10); Nero (Tac. *Hist*. 1.2.1, 2.8-9. Suet. Ner. 57; Dio 63(64).9.3, 66.19.3b). cf. Potter (1994) 109; On False Neros, see Bowersock (1987) 308-311. For discussion on Nero's appearance in Talmudic legend, see Bastomsky (1969) 321-325, and in general, Pappano (1937) 385-392. cf. Gleason (2011) on impersonation in general. cf. the joke of Macrobius, (Macrob. *Sat*. 2.4.20) where a young man who looks like Augustus gets an audience with the emperor. cf. Grünewald (2004) 137-154 on this topic.
[7] Tac. *Ann*. 2.39-40; Dio. 57.16.3-4.
[8] Tac. *Ann*. 2.39.1

promitteret: nam aetate et forma haud dissimili in dominum erat'.[9] Thereafter, rumour spread, allowing for the cultivation of the story that Agrippa was in fact not dead, but alive.[10] Accordingly, the story allows Tacitus to put Tiberius' legitimacy into relief, exposing a familiar theme in the Tiberian hexad of the brooding, sinister, and untrusting emperor.[11] Furthermore, Tacitus also accentuates the popularity of the imposter Agrippa, stating:

> vulgabatur interim per Italiam servatum munere deum Agrippam, credebatur Romae; iamque Ostiam invectum multitudo ingens, iam in urbe clandestini coetus celebrabant.[12]

This affects the perception and legacy of Tiberius and Agrippa in multiple dimensions. In the context of the past, the impression Tacitus gives is that not only is the legacy of Agrippa Posthumus (as a potential emperor) being cultivated, so too is the acceptance of Tiberius' principate, suggesting that Tiberius could lose it.[13] In the context of constructing history, Tacitus is adding to the edifice of Tiberius' legacy, which Champlin has shown was rich and variegated.[14] It culminates in the encounter between the imposter and Tiberius himself: '*percunctanti Tiberio, quo modo Agrippa factus esset, respondisse fertur: 'quo modo tu Caesar.*'[15] The bold joke is similar to those discussed in Chapter 3.5, in that a person of lower status has the audacity to speak openly in front of an emperor. In that context, as in this one, the joke is used as a method of criticism, in this case to suggest that Tiberius himself was an impostor too.

Indeed, this joke is an element that is shared by both Tacitus and Dio's versions, to similar effect:

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[9] Ibid., 2.39.2.
[10] Tac. *Ann*. 2.39.3-40.1.
[11] Ibid., 2.40.1-3
[12] Ibid., 2.40.1.
[13] cf. discussion of similar issues in Chapter 4.3 with Tacitus' treatment of Germanicus and Tiberius.
[14] Champlin (2008); For more on the images of Tiberius and his tradition, see Chapter 3.4.
[15] Tac. *Ann*. 2.40.3.

> κἀν τῷ αὐτῷ ἔτει Κλήμης τις, δοῦλός τε τοῦ Ἀγρίππου γεγονὼς καί πῃ καὶ προσεοικὼς αὐτῷ, ἐπλάσατο αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος εἶναι, καὶ ἐς τὴν Γαλατίαν ἐλθὼν πολλοὺς μὲν ἐνταῦθα πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ ὕστερον προσεποιήσατο, καὶ τέλος καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Ῥώμην ὥρμησεν ὡς καὶ τὴν παππῴαν μοναρχίαν ἀπολῃψόμενος. ταραττομένων τε οὖν ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῶν ἐν τῷ ἄστει, καὶ συχνῶν αὐτῷ προστιθεμένων, ὁ Τιβέριος σοφίᾳ αὐτὸν διά τινων ὡς καὶ τὰ ἐκείνου φρονούντων ἐχειρώσατο, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο βασανίσας ἵνα τι περὶ τῶν συνεγνωκότων αὐτῷ μάθῃ, ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ μηδὲν ἐξελάλησεν, ἐπύθετο αὐτοῦ "πῶς Ἀγρίππας ἐγένου;" καὶ ὃς ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι "οὕτως ὡς καὶ σὺ Καῖσαρ."[16]

Both versions of the story, even if Dio's is much shorter, contain very similar elements, which suggests a similar source. The difference lies of course in the characterisation of Tiberius, as in Tacitus' account, the impression of that emperor is seemingly more negative.[17] However, this serves to bolster the point made about the contribution of historiography above in Chapter 4.2, and indeed any story such as this, to the formation of an emperor's memory and legacy. Here, we see the same story in different iterations, which ultimately give differing perspectives on Tiberius' conduct, which would ultimately affect the development of his legacy, which by the time of Dio was in its second century. For instance, Clemens' characterisation is less cunning, and Tiberius is the one who gets credit with his 'σοφίᾳ', whereas in Tacitus' version, it is Sallustius Crispus who was responsible for the arrest of Clemens.[18] Whichever was true, it suggests differing traditions on Tiberius' character. In comparison to the general themes of this thesis, this adds to the strong impression of a continual imperial discourse, in which an emperor's deeds and actions are scrutinised, and in this case, his legacy is discussed and reformed.

An enigmatic collection and source for such impressions of the Roman emperor comes in the form of the *Sibylline Oracles*, the prophetic hexameter poems with a deep and varied tradition.[19] As Potter has argued, they can be indispensable evidence for an

[16] Dio. 57.16.3-4.
[17] cf. Furthermore, the joke included at the end bears resemblance to the encounter of Papinian and Bulla Felix at Dio 77(76).10.7, cited above in Chapter 3.2.
[18] Tac. *Ann*. 2.40.2.
[19] Potter (1990) 95ff, on the dates and extant collections; cf. Potter (1994) 71-75 and Lightfoot (2007).

alternative view of imperial history, and a different perspective on the reception of the emperor.[20] A more complete appraisal of the appearance of both the empire and the emperor in the *Oracles* are discussed by Potter,[21] however, a couple of points prove their relevancy to both the section and this chapter. First, a more general point on the nature of historical reckoning and the division of time. At the beginning of the *Fifth Oracle*, Julius Caesar and the emperors are referred to not by name, but by number or letter, alongside descriptions that identify the specific emperor in question.[22] For example, Augustus is referred to by the first letter in the alphabet, and his victories, namely against Cleopatra, his statutes and long reign.[23] As argued by Potter, the appearance of these lists allowed for the provision of historical context, heightening the chance of trust and belief in the veracity of the prophetic visions, and also giving them a temporal framework.[24] This conceptualisation is thought of within the rubric of emperor history, in that the emperor was a vehicle in which one thought about time.[25]

Second, such temporal games continue with the idea of the return of Nero. For example, in the *Fourth Oracle*, Nero flees East (4.119-124), with the spectre of a later return bringing war to the West:

> ἐς δὲ δύσιν τότε νεῖκος ἐγειρομένου πολέμοιο ἥξει καὶ Ῥώμης ὁ φυγὰς, μέγα ἔγχος ἀείρας, Εὐφρήτην διαβὰς πολλαῖς ἅμα μυριάδεσσιν.[26]

Bowersock created a connection between this more general description of an eschatological return, and the idea of 'the 'False Neros' who return with Parthian aid to

[20] Potter (1994) 137.
[21] Potter (1994) 137-145, esp. 140-141 on the broad impressions about the emperor in the *Oracles*, and the argument for them not being as subversive as assumed.
[22] *Orac. Sib.* 5.12-51.
[23] Ibid., 5.14-20 (l. 15 is cited): 'στοιχείων ὅστις λάχε γράμματος ἀρχήν·'.
[24] Potter (1994) 138.
[25] See more on this argument above, in Chapters 1.1, 4.1-2.
[26] *Orac. Sib.* 4.137-139.

destabilise the empire, which litter the historical tradition.[27] This is mirrored in the *Fifth Oracle*:

> καὶ ἐπίκλοπος ἐν δολότητι ἥξει δ᾽ ἐν περάτων γαίης μητροκτόνος ἀνὴρ φεύγων ἠδὲ νόῳ ὀξυστομα μερμηρίζων, ὃς πᾶσαν γαῖαν καθελεῖ καὶ πάντα κρατήσει…[28]

Both temporal and geographical wavering are present here. The mention of the Euphrates and the 'ends of the earth' evoke the theme discussed in Chapter 3.4 about the emperor being the mediator between near and far, here evoked in a destructive and eschatological sense, associating Nero with the wondrous. Moreover, he is a trigger for a challenging of world order; a conceptualisation that the emperor is a key component in the differences between periods of time, and a testament to anxieties being mapped on both the rise and fall of emperors and their evolving legacies. With this in mind, it evokes the theme of timelessness that has been discussed throughout this chapter.

In the end, the appearance of false pretenders to the emperorship in ancient literature serves as an interesting example of thought-world concerning the Roman emperor. These stories contain many of the elements that were present in previous discussions of this thesis, most broadly a manifestation of the conversation of acceptance, in which an emperor was criticised. It shows the precariousness of his position, meaning that he had to contend with unfavourable opinion and the chance of usurpation. It also shows the nature of the critical discourse, which was complex and vibrant, with seemingly numerous contributors and participants, indicating the impact of the emperor on the *imaginaire*.

[27] Bowersock (1987) 308-311, citing Dio, Tacitus, and Suetonius, all of whom are cited above, 256, n. 6.
[28] *Orac. Sib.* 5.362-365.

Conclusion

> A single figure stood at the heart of the polity, governing as well as representing the realm as a mascot or totem. All kings, talented or inept, were subject to certain structural complications. The more the position of the ruler was elevated to omnipotence or sacrality, the more it tended to circumscribe the person on the throne. Hierarchical pre-eminence and ritual responsibilities severely limited the freedom of incumbent kings, complicated their personal relationships, and thwarted active political roles…[1]

In his recent monograph *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300-1800*, Jeroen Duindam states the above in comparison of different monarchic polities from across the world in the early modern period. His global comparative framework that includes East Asia, Africa, and the Americas, draws similarities between different and disparate contexts, fruitfully comparing how ruler and subject interacted in the successful running and maintenance of monarchic polities. Indeed, this passage evokes several themes and issues at the heart of this thesis. First, it reveals the utility in comparison across different contexts. As argued above, the Roman emperor was a figure open to scrutiny and comparison across time and space. The nature of his power, the different roles he was cast in, and how he was perceived all provide an indispensable example of autocracy, not only *in situ* between different emperors of Rome, but also different autocracies in world history. This is not to argue for complete similarity across different times and contexts, but to state that the emperor could be added to the dossier of comparison. Indeed, to the extent that the emperor could seem to become less Roman, wavering in context.

It is hoped that this thesis has constructed a rudimentary toolkit with which such comparisons can be appreciated. More tools need to be added that, unfortunately, could not be undertaken here, which would provide different aspects of Roman imperial history to further enrich the picture. This can include more specific studies, such as *proskynesis* and encounters with the emperor, *omina imperii*, and imperial *testamenta*, as well as more

[1] Duindam (2016) 4-5.

general enquires, such as the social history of the imperial cult, or comparisons to other ancient autocracies. It is hoped that these can be fulfilled in the future.

Second is the manner in which Duindam discusses the position of a single ruler within the framework of his world. He is circumscribed within its autocratic edifice by expectation and perception. As has been shown throughout this thesis, this allows for the idea of a subjective understanding of the role of emperor. In other words, it places an importance on how the emperor seemed in the conversation concerning his position in the world. This was seen in the different topics of conversation that discussed the emperor's acceptability at different points in his life and legacy; from the context of his succession and the beginning of the emperorship; through different episodes of his life that included both the real and the imagined, such as the dispensation of justice and the patronage of *mirabilia*, and hinged upon the expectations and fears on the fulfilment of these roles from the perspective of his subjects. This reveals a complex impression of the emperor, which is similar to the seemingly contradictory point made by Duindam that the more omnipotent a ruler was, the more restricted he was.[2] Such was the weight of expectation placed on the imperial position.

This brings us to a final point concerning the mentality of omnipotence and sacrality. The expectations on the position gave the emperor a liminality that placed him in contact with the divine. This could be thought of as Fustel de Coulanges did in that the emperor was god because he was emperor, rather than the other way around.[3] The roles he had to fulfil necessitated the perception of a preternatural person to occupy it. This is not to argue for a theological understanding of the emperor, but rather a *mentalité* that mapped a world in which the emperor was a crucial force in its functioning. However,

[2] See Chapter 1.2 on the Roman attempt to come to terms with this paradox.
[3] de Coulanges (1891) 191-192.

rather than making him more inviolable, it allowed for further scrutiny. As such, perhaps Gaius' words to the Jewish embassy should be taken more seriously:[4]

> "ὑμεῖς" εἶπεν "ἐστὲ οἱ θεομισεῖς, οἱ θεὸν μὴ νομίζοντες εἶναί με, τὸν ἤδη παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνωμολογημένον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀκατονόμαστον ὑμῖν."[5]

In the end, both the idea that Gaius was viewed as a god, and the countering perspective that he was not, were part of the conversation that discussed the nature of the emperor. It was a conceptualisation that was ever present, and had to be lived up to.

[4] cf. Tac. *Ann*. 3.36.2; cf. Philostr. *VA*. 1.15, for comparable passing mention of the godliness of the emperor.
[5] Philo, *Leg*. 353.

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