

A Man, a Book, and a Method:  
Sir Ronald Syme's *Roman Revolution*  
After Fifty Years

If history is to be seen, as it still often is today, essentially as the deeds of great men, the question naturally arises, What makes a particular individual "great"? What is it that elevates one man so far above his contemporaries?<sup>1</sup> To answer this question fully, a comparison of the great individual with his less-exalted coevals is necessary, for only an understanding of the achievements and expectations, the beliefs and ambitions, of these less-known "normal people" permits one to define the great man's peculiar attributes. In the case of the Romans the problem raised is even more urgent: What made certain persons rise so far above their peers that they achieved a "quantum leap" from "greater than" to simply "great"? No period of Roman history lends itself quite so well to such a personality-centered treatment as the fall of the Republic and the establishment of the Augustan monarchy. It was an age replete with great figures, from Marius and Sulla to Caesar, Augustus, and even

1. This paper was first given as a lecture in 1979. Dormant for many years, it was "rediscovered" by friends and largely rewritten for the present occasion. I should like to thank K. Raaflaub and J. Kennelly very much for improving the English translation and the editors for useful suggestions.

Cleopatra. Many aspired to imitating Alexander in word, image, and deed, and one of these great individuals quite programmatically assumed Alexander's title in his name: Pompeius Magnus.<sup>2</sup>

This paper, however, is not primarily about those great people but rather about a book centered upon arguably the greatest of them and about a method. Sir Ronald Syme's epochal study of Augustus' establishment of the principate, *The Roman Revolution*, is one of the few classics produced by an ancient historian in this century and has been recognized as such for a long time.<sup>3</sup> Prosopography, the methodology so closely associated with both the book and its author, is one of the few methods in the field of ancient history that is related to methods used in the social sciences and has been the subject of serious scholarly debate. If it seems unfair to subject a book to review after fifty years, it may be replied that a classic work is a classic precisely because of its lasting value and its ability to offer at least partial answers to questions that the author could not originally foresee.

On 7 September 1939, one week after the outbreak of World War II, Oxford University Press published the book of a scholar from New Zealand who had previously worked primarily in the field of Roman military history. The book was *The Roman Revolution*; the scholar, Ronald Syme. The timing was not auspicious. The war naturally precluded a wide dissemination of the book on the Continent; any impression it might have made there is not visible until the 1950s.<sup>4</sup> More importantly, even for the less discerning of his contemporaries, Syme's somber portrayal of the slow metamorphosis of Octavian, the gambler and terrorist, into the most exalted father of the fatherland, *Augustus pater pa-*

2. For the background, cf. E. Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals," *JRS* 65 (1975) 148–59; for the archaeological evidence, P. Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (Munich 1987).

3. See the important review by A. Momigliano, *JRS* 30 (1940) 75–80 (= id., *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* [Rome 1960] 407–16), and Momigliano's introduction to the Italian translation of Syme's *Roman Revolution* (Turin 1962) ix–xv (= id., *Terzo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* [Rome 1966] 729–37). See also G. Alföldy, *Sir Ronald Syme, "Die römische Revolution" und die deutsche Althistorie*, *SB Heid* 1983, no. 1; and the reviews of Syme's *Roman Papers*, vols. 1 and 2 (Oxford 1979) by G. Alföldy in *AJAH* 4 (1979 [1981]) 167–85 and by G. Bowersock in *The New York Review of Books*, 6 March 1980, 8–13. *The Roman Revolution* is the focus of most contributions to F. Millar and E. Segal, eds., *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects* (Oxford 1984), the "non-Festschrift" marking Syme's eightieth birthday.

4. With the exception of Momigliano's detailed discussion mentioned in the previous note, there appeared, to my knowledge, only short reviews, for example, on the Continent, A. Piganiol, *REL* 18 (1940) 221–24; P. Lambrechts, *AntCl* 11 (1942) 147–51.

*triae*, invoked comparisons with the dictatorships of Mussolini and Franco, Hitler and Stalin.<sup>5</sup> The book decidedly, if not overtly, took a position in the battles waged at Oxford during the Spanish civil war and up through 1939 about the proper policy to adopt toward the Continental dictators. Thus, inasmuch as the outbreak of war preceded the book's publication, the implicit warning it contained fell flat to some extent.<sup>6</sup>

What was new in *The Roman Revolution*? It may be useful at this point to look back at the explanations current in the 1930s (and even now considered valid by many) of the establishment of the principate. On the one side there was the juridical interpretation, receiving its inspiration from Mommsen's *Staatsrecht* and represented in contemporary England principally by H. Last.<sup>7</sup> This school focused on the explanation of the constitutional prerogatives of the *princeps* and tried to trace them back to republican precedents. Perhaps the most influential work written from this angle was Eduard Meyer's *Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompeius*, published in 1918. Meyer argued that Caesar had aimed at a divine kingship ("Gottkönigtum"), while Pompey's goal was rather, following Cicero's ideals, a *principatus* based on *auctoritas*. In this way Pompey became a direct ancestor of the Augustan principate.

Meyer's successor in the Berlin chair of ancient history, Wilhelm Weber, took a different approach. He emphasized the ideology and the "Geistesgeschichte" of the period. His Augustus, referred to as "Führer" in more than linguistic affinity to the ruling party, sometimes seems to disappear in a dense fog of imperial mysticism—which is in part also due to Weber's pathetic and emotional language, which was influenced by Stefan George.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the third school of interpretation was more political and sociological. Following in the wake of landmark studies by Matthias Gelzer and Friedrich Münzer on

5. The *Mostra Augustea* of 1937, staged with much ado by Fascist Italy to mark the bimillenary of Augustus' birth, had the effect of appropriating the Roman *princeps* completely for modern Italian aspirations.

6. Cf. Momigliano (1966: supra n. 3) 730.

7. Last was Syme's predecessor in the Camden Chair at Oxford. A history of Augustus as seen by the successive Camden Professors Last, Syme, Brunt, and Millar might be instructive.

8. W. Weber, *Princeps*, vol. 1, *Studien zur Geschichte des Augustus* (Stuttgart 1936); cf. W. Kunkel's remarks in *Kleine Schriften* (Weimar 1974) 588; and the review by W. Kolbe in GGA 1939, 152–69. Kolbe (1933) comments on the *communis opinio* of previous reviewers preferring the book of von Premerstein (mentioned *infra* in the text) to that of Weber.

the structure of the republican nobility,<sup>9</sup> Anton von Premerstein's posthumously published *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats* (1937) examined the methods employed by Octavian in founding and leading his "party." Premerstein, too, was clearly influenced by contemporary politics in his view of the principate's establishment.

Syme, for his part, in typically Anglo-Saxon fashion, seems to have disliked the plethora of abstract nouns endemic to Continental, and particularly German, scholarship.<sup>10</sup> In addition, he possessed a skepticism, not unusual among intellectuals of the time, toward politics and the specious pronouncements of the politicians who were held responsible for both the outbreak of war in 1914 and the disastrous policies pursued against the rise of Fascism in the 1930s; programs and slogans often were suspected of hiding selfish aims. Consequently, Syme eschewed the old methods of interpretation. Instead of starting with constitutions and ideologies he looked to the politicians themselves, and not exclusively to the top echelon. He took into account all of the senators and the most important of the *equites*, at least to the extent that something could be known about their careers and affiliations, with the goal of reconstructing and understanding Augustan politics; lists of officeholders were employed as the key to determining a particular political group's influence and changing fortunes.<sup>11</sup>

The same methodology had been used—obviously unknown to Syme—with immediate success some ten years earlier by a Jewish immigrant from Lemberg, Ludwig Bernstein Namierowsky, the later Sir Lewis Namier, in his book *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929). Namier explained that it was not so much political differences between the "parties" of Whigs and Tories that determined

9. M. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik* (Leipzig and Berlin 1912) (= id., *The Roman Nobility*, trans. R. Seager [Oxford 1969]); F. Münzer, *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* (Stuttgart 1920; reprint, Darmstadt 1963). Augustus as seen through the eyes of German scholars from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century is the subject of the study of I. Stahlmann, *Imperator Caesar Augustus: Studien zur Geschichte des Principatsverständnisses in der deutschen Altertumswissenschaft* (Darmstadt 1988), with 108–84 on the time of the Weimar Republic.

10. "To free Roman history from the domination of a faction of abstract nouns": F. Millar, dedication to Syme, *JRS* 63 (1973) XI. Syme himself generously comments about man, the world, and how humans, especially politicians, behave in this or that situation. But he is very reticent concerning his own person. Alföldy (1983: supra n. 3) as well as Momigliano (1966: supra n. 3) emphasize Syme's distaste for public self-reflection. Some further information is to be found in his preface to the recent Italian translation of *Colonial Elites* (Milan 1989).

11. One wonders whether Syme had read Proust, in whose works the same interest in families and groups found its literary expression.

politics in mid-eighteenth-century England, but rather matrimonial alliances and agreements between family groups. Namier's method, which was to obtain a kind of collective biography through the classification of groups of persons and their common characteristics, spread rapidly to the fields of medieval and modern history. Indeed, it was not farfetched to speak of a "Namierization" of history.<sup>12</sup> From the archbishops of Trier to the officer corps of the second French Empire, from the canons of Laon to students from Brabant, no group has been neglected. And with the proliferation of computers the pace of such research was accelerated.<sup>13</sup>

Already by this time the term *prosopography* had come to designate this type of historical research in the field of ancient history. When Mommsen applied it in 1897, in the preface to the first edition of the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, he still felt obliged to excuse himself for its use.<sup>14</sup> However, prosopography had its forerunners even in antiquity, although less so in Athens where most offices were allotted and hence not necessarily indicative of a man's status. Moreover, the Greek system of names made the reconstruction of family relationships more difficult than in Rome.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, industrious antiquarians produced catalogues of the persons mentioned in comedies, lists of famous courtesans, and so on. In Rome, however, descent was of great political importance: renowned ancestors aided an individual's chances of electoral success; the *imagines* of illustrious ancestors were to be seen in the reception rooms of the nobility, together with a brief account of each man's *cursus honorum*; and it was the *res gestae* of the deceased in conjunction with a recapitulation of his descent that formed the main part of a funeral oration. It is small wonder, then, that a type of prosopographic research was practiced in Rome, as is illustrated, for instance,

12. T. Rabb, *Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575–1630* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967) 8–9.

13. Cf. J.-P. Genet, "Die kollektive Biographie von Mikropopulationen," in F. Irsigler, ed., *Quantitative Methoden in der Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte der Frühneuzeit* (Stuttgart 1978) 69–100. In fact, many French and American dissertations were produced by "Namier, Inc.," as it was called by L. Stone, "Prosopography," *Daedalus* 100 (1971) 51 (= F. Gilbert and S. R. Graubart, eds., *Historical Studies Today* [New York 1972] 112).

14. Neither W. Drumann nor P. Groebe used the word in the prefaces to their curious *Geschichte Roms in seinem Übergang von der republikanischen zur monarchischen Verfassung . . . nach Geschlechtern und mit genealogischen Tabellen*, whose second edition (by P. Groebe) began to appear in 1899.

15. On the possibility of Roman-style prosopography with Greek material, cf. J. K. Davies, "La storia di Atene e il metodo di Münzer," *RivStorIt* 80 (1968) 209–21; contra: D. H. Kelly, "Lysias XII 72," *Historia* 28 (1979) 98–101.

by the histories of the Junii, Fabii, Marcelli, and other *gentes*, commissioned by these families from Pomponius Atticus. At least for historians, it seems, they provided good reading.<sup>16</sup>

Despite its long history and widespread use, prosopography itself does not seem to have been explicitly defined as a methodology. Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie* does not even contain the lemma. One of the most popular introductions to ancient history, that of Bengtson, tells us only—and quite rightly—that without inscriptions there can be no prosopography.<sup>17</sup> The *Grand Larousse* of 1963 refers to it as an ancillary discipline of both ancient history and epigraphy, devoted to the investigation of the family lineage and the *cursus* of great men. G. Alföldy's excellent introduction to Roman social history is silent on the topic, although the author himself is a leading prosopographer. Finally, as an indication of the general failure to define the methodology, of the three articles on prosopography in *Aufstieg und Niedergang*, those written by prosopographers themselves do not touch upon method; in fact, only the nonpractitioner seems marginally interested in the problem.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps this lack of interest in method is due to the rather irrational tension that sometimes seems to exist between those who practice prosopography and those who do not.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, "prosopographer" is not always meant as a compliment, while, for their part, those engaged in the art have the tendency to interpret any inquiry into their methodology as a sign of disparagement and ill will.<sup>20</sup> A discussion of the proper fields of application for prosopography at the FIEC congress in 1969 came to nothing.<sup>21</sup> In Syme's opinion,

16. Thus Nep. *Att.* 18.1–4: *quibus libris nihil potest esse dulcius*; cf. Syme, *Roman Papers*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1979) 339: "Families in their rise and duration are a theme that cannot fail to charm and detain."

17. H. Bengtson, *Introduction to Ancient History*, trans. R. I. Frank and F. D. Gilliard (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970).

18. *Le Grand Larousse* 8 (Paris 1963) 845; G. Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, trans. D. Braund and F. Pollock (Totowa, N. J. 1985); H.-G. Pflaum, "Les progrès des recherches prosopographiques concernant l'époque du Haut-Empire durant le dernier quart de siècle (1945–1970)," *ANRW* 2.1 (1974) 113–35; A. J. Graham, "The Limitations of Prosopography in Roman Imperial History," *ibid.*, 136–57; W. Eck, "Beförderungskriterien innerhalb der senatorischen Laufbahn, dargestellt an der Zeit von 69 bis 138 n. Chr.," *ibid.*, 158–228.

19. A comparable tension exists in medieval and modern history between those who work extensively with statistics and those who do not.

20. Cf. the remarks of A. Guarino, *La coerenza di Publio Mucio* (Naples 1981) 14.

21. Cf. W. den Boer, "Die prosopographische Methode in der modernen Historiographie der Kaiserzeit," *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969) 268–80; C. Nicolet, "Prosopographie et histoire sociale: Rome et l'Italie à l'époque républicaine," *Annales ESC* 25 (1970) 1209–28. To my knowledge, the provocative article by T. F. Carney, "Prosopography: Payoffs and Pitfalls," *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 156–79, did not elicit the expected reaction.

the science (or rather the art) of prosopography has been much in fashion in recent age, being adduced to reinforce historical studies in the most diverse of periods. Some deprecate. For various reasons. Among them (one surmises) distaste for erudition on a narrow front, to the neglect of broad aspects and "the higher things." Which may cheerfully be conceded. One uses what one has, and there is work to be done.<sup>22</sup>

However, there seems no need for a defensive mood. The written sources for social life in antiquity, as is well known, are anecdotal in the worst possible way; mostly we are informed about prominent and strange things, that is, the exceptions.<sup>23</sup> Thus we have notice (based on Roman census statistics or lists of curiosities) of persons who lived to an exceptionally old age, or of women who gave birth to extraordinary numbers of children; but, obviously, it is impossible from these notices to arrive at conclusions about average age or fertility rates. While in modern times we know as a fact that only 44 percent of the German people voted for Hitler in March of 1933, and can use this fact to refute Göring's claim that Hitler was supported by the overwhelming majority of Germans, we have no similar ability to disprove statistically Augustus' assertion that he was supported by a *consensus universorum* in his struggle against Antonius, however skeptical we might be of his boast.<sup>24</sup>

Given these circumstances, we can profit from inscriptions. In Rome the standing of each man, his *dignitas*, was dependent upon the *honor* he had acquired through the holding of magistracies. Unlike the situation prevalent in Greece, where honorary inscriptions explain in rather general terms that the person to be honored had deserved well of his king, city, or political group, Roman honorary, funerary, and even dedicatory inscriptions frequently enumerate all magistracies, priesthoods, and functions a particular man had ever held.<sup>25</sup> The material for "multiple career-line analysis," as it is called by modern sociologists, thus is at hand. Work along these lines began even prior to the nineteenth century and continues today under the impetus of newly discovered inscriptions that add precision to our knowledge or cause new doubts. We now

22. R. Syme, "People in Pliny," *JRS* 58 (1968) 145 (=id., *Roman Papers*, vol. 2 [1979] 711).

23. To use such information may be dangerous, as was shown by R. Saller, "Anecdotes as Historical Evidence for the Principate," *GaR* 27 (1980) 69–83.

24. Cf. J. C. Fest, *Hitler* (Berlin 1973) 550; for opposition to the *consensus universorum*, cf. G.-C. Susini, "Gratia coniurandi (Suet. Aug. 17, 2): a proposito del papiro di Gallo da Qasr Ibrim," in E. Bresciani, G. Geraci et al., eds., *Scritti in onore di O. Montevicchi* (Bologna 1981) 393–400.

25. These inscriptions were read attentively: in a letter to Atticus (6.1.17) Cicero comments disparagingly upon Metellus Scipio's committing historical errors when composing the inscriptions for a family monument on the Capitolium.

have at our disposal chronological lists, *fasti*, of magistrates, priests, and governors of provinces, of *equites* in the emperor's service, and of senators coming from the eastern parts of the empire, sometimes with all the data known about a given person.<sup>26</sup>

However, prosopography can be no better than the material on which it is based. Due particularly to the nature of epigraphical evidence, our knowledge is not evenly distributed. Since there is every reason to believe that the preserved inscriptions are representative of the total that once existed and since most honorary inscriptions deal with members of the upper classes, Roman prosopography necessarily is elite prosopography.<sup>27</sup> Of course, one could assemble lists of all known soldiers or artisans, but the result would scarcely be worth the effort. The prosopography of the masses, such as that done by Le Roy Ladurie on nineteenth-century French recruits, is quite simply impossible for antiquity.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, prosopographical research has provided numerous important insights into the administrative structure of the Roman Empire, indicating the patterns of career advancement and considerations on which to determine the relative importance of positions in the imperial administration.<sup>29</sup> The knowledge and experience gained by such work aids the specialist in filling out gaps in mutilated inscriptions and reconstructing entire careers on the basis of scarce and scattered hints.<sup>30</sup>

A difficult, but not impossible, task is to add temporal dimensions to the careers thus reconstructed. After all, a simple entry such as PR COS in an inscription does not reveal whether the individual in question became consul two or twenty years after being praetor. More importantly, statistics for average careers do nothing toward explaining the individual case. If a man was appointed governor of Syria or Lower Germany,

26. Cf. the conspectus of literature given by H.-G. Pflaum (supra n. 18) and by G. Alföldy (supra n. 18) 191, n. 129. For the eastern senators, cf. H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem östlichen Teil des Imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2. Jhdts.n. Chr.* (Göttingen 1979).

27. Cf. Eck (supra n. 18).

28. M. Demonet, P. Dumont, E. Le Roy Ladurie, "Anthropologie du conscrit: une cartographie cantonale (1819–1930)," *Annales ESC* 31 (1976) 700–60.

29. "To muster the principal allies of a ruler, to inspect their quality and performance": R. Syme, "Paullus the Censor," *Athenaeum* 65 (1987) 7.

30. Such experience can be usefully applied to other fields as well. E. Birley, a prosopographer himself, was employed in World War II by the British Secret Service to reconstruct careers of German officers and to infer impending strategic moves from sudden changes in the assignment of such officers; cf. Birley, *Überlegungen zur Geschichte des römischen Heeres: Vortrag anlässlich der Promotion zum Doctor honoris causa an der Universität Heidelberg am 12. Mai 1986* (Heidelberg 1987) 2. On the other hand, it seems to be one of the myths in our profession that Sir Ronald himself was working in this field of modern prosopography.



was it because of his own ability, because no one else was available, or because he had paid enough money to the emperor's valet?<sup>31</sup> Quinctilius Varus' ill-fated promotion to the German command is a good example. Was he sent there because of his connection through Agrippa to the Julian family or because Augustus anticipated a peaceful administrative assignment suited to Varus' proven talents? Was he incompetent, or did he simply succumb to bad luck?<sup>32</sup> These are questions that cannot be answered by inscriptions. Similarly in the case of promotions in equestrian careers inscriptional evidence can show only those rational criteria that were almost exclusively emphasized in the epoch-making work of Hans-Georg Pflaum, but fails to reveal other factors such as patronage that have been recognized more recently as possibly equally crucial for individual careers.<sup>33</sup> Or, to give a further example, there was a tendency, discernable already since Augustus, to exclude more and more the most prestigious group of senators, the patricians, from the military commands in the most important imperial provinces. Did the emperors consider it too dangerous to give such commands to patricians, or did the patricians themselves show little interest in these often bothersome assignments because, for instance, the honor to be gained in such positions could not add much to the prestige they already possessed by birth? The sources we have do not give us the information needed to answer such questions. Moreover, we have grown more skeptical about the rational nature of man, and we are far removed today from such optimism as prevailed in the nineteenth century, when Macauley wrote that "when we see the actions of a man we know with certainty what he thinks his interest to be."<sup>34</sup>

There are many aspects of the lives of senators about which we are still woefully uninformed. Property provides a good example. The minimal census for a senator was one million sesterces; if it is correct that on the average one could expect about sixty thousand sesterces of inter-

31. Trusted servants might be important enough to die suddenly a few days after their master; cf. the *lictor proximus* of Trajan in ILS 1792, and the comments of H. Dessau, "Die Vorgänge bei der Thronbesteigung Hadrians," *Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und Geographie: Festschrift H. Kiepert* (Berlin 1898) 85–91; and Graham (supra n. 18) 139, n. 10. Cf. also Dio 75 (74).6.1. on Pescennius Niger: he was neither too good nor too bad, so Commodus made him governor of Syria.

32. On Varus, cf. now R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (Oxford 1986) chap. 23. On methods of appointment to provincial posts under Augustus in general, cf. R. Szymkiewicz, *Les gouverneurs de province à l'époque augustéenne: Contribution à l'histoire administrative et sociale du principat*, 2 vols. (Paris 1976).

33. Cf. R. P. Saller, "Promotion and Patronage in Equestrian Careers," *JRS* 70 (1980) 44–63. Some thoughts on the shortcomings of prosopographical explanation were expressed already in 1940 by Momigliano (supra n. 3) 77–78.

34. Quoted by C. B. Namier, *Personalities and Power* (London 1955) 1.

est annually on that sum, it was not a very large total, given the costliness of a senator's life-style. Gavius Apicius, bon vivant, gourmet, and author of a well-known cookbook, probably knew what he was doing when he committed suicide after his fortune fell to a mere ten million sesterces. We know of some of the top fortunes, but we can only guess to what extent the average senator was drawn to the emperor's service not only by the promise of influence, power, and an increase in social standing, but also because he depended upon salaries to be obtained by such employment.<sup>35</sup>

What has been said thus far is relevant primarily to the prosopography of the principate, when inscriptions are our main source for the composition and careers of the governing class. But inscriptions were put up in large numbers only from the time of Augustus.<sup>36</sup> By contrast, the prosopography of the Roman Republic depends upon even more tenuous evidence: the lists of the annual magistrates and an occasional hint in the historical works about marriage alliances and political agreements among members of the aristocracy. While imperial prosopography thus is principally concerned with the investigation of officials and their careers, republican prosopography considers the politician and his political connections. Whereas, for example, we are ignorant of any magistracy held by one of the most important figures of the late Republic, Marcus Crassus the triumvir, before his proconsulship in Spain in 72/71 B.C., we are well informed about every position held by much less powerful senators, such as Iulius Severus and Lollius Urbicus in the second century A.D.—although admittedly we have no idea of their political aims and convictions.

Ever since Münzer one of the most important tasks in republican prosopography has been the search for well-defined parties or *factiones*. The starting point was the assumption—which, incidentally, guided Namier's analyses as well—that the political attitudes of a given person usually were not founded on strong convictions but on ties of family and friendship, and thus should be surmisable from that person's choice of *adfines* and *amici*. Thus, if a Fabius had married an Aemilia and was consul together with a Sempronius Gracchus, this should indicate an alliance among the Fabii, Aemilii, and Sempronii. Moreover, if, two generations later, a Fabius and a Sempronius Gracchus were once again colleagues, this would indicate that such an alliance had continued

35. Some information on these issues can be found in R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton 1984) chap. 2.

36. Which was due in part to the recent availability of high quality marble from Luni.

through all this time. Such rather mechanical interpretation (admittedly a bit overstated here) of data provided mostly by the lists of officeholders (*fasti*) made little allowance for the personal feelings and preferences of the individuals concerned. It has lost much of its appeal due to recent studies of the structure of politics in republican Rome conducted in the tradition of Matthias Gelzer by Christian Meier and several of his pupils. They have shown that through the end of the republic there were no enduring political groups; the vertical and horizontal links that are indicated by the terms *clientela* and *amicitia* were much too complex and contradictory to admit of the long-term political alliances that had been envisaged under the “factional theory.”<sup>37</sup> The dangers inherent in any undifferentiated application of this theory are well illustrated by the example of Julius Caesar. In every one of his magistracies, he was the colleague of Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus, and his wife was a Calpurnia. According to theory, then, the Julii and Calpurnii should have been in close political alliance throughout the seventies and sixties of the first century B.C. Instead, as is well known, nothing was as enduring as the bitter antagonism between the two men. Indeed, the model seems to have worked best for the illumination of those periods where not too many annoying details are known.<sup>38</sup> Another, slightly later, example concerns the *fasti consulares* of Augustus’ last decade. All the consuls are known, although in most cases they are to us nothing but names. Even so, no fewer than five attempts at prosopographical elucidation of these lists were made through 1971, endeavoring to assign the names to different court factions and interpreting them as indicators of the growing or decreasing influence of such factions. One theory went so far as to refer to two of these “parties” by the names of Agrippa and Maecenas, both of whom were by then long dead<sup>39</sup>—which is to show that long-term alliances are still considered plausible by some scholars.

Syme's *Roman Revolution* is located at the crossroads of republican

37. C. Meier, *Res publica amissa* (Wiesbaden 1966; reprint ed. with an important new introduction, Frankfurt 1980); R. Rilinger, *Der Einfluss des Wahlleiters bei den römischen Konsulwahlen von 366 bis 50 v. Chr.* (Munich 1976) 8 with n. 35; K. Raafaub, *Dignitatis contentio: Studien zur Motivation und politischen Taktik im Bürgerkrieg zwischen Caesar und Pompeius* (Munich 1974).

38. Which is decidedly not the case in the late Republic. Two books, simultaneously written, arrived at absolutely opposite conclusions about Crassus the triumvir, his political attitudes, and the political groups (*factiones*) he relied upon: B. A. Marshall, *Crassus: A Political Biography* (Amsterdam 1976), and A. M. Ward, *Marcus Crassus and the Late Roman Republic* (Columbia, Mo. 1977).

39. Cf. A. Ferrill, “Prosopography and the Last Years of Augustus,” *Historia* 20 (1971) 718–31, who reviews older theories, including Syme's (*The Roman Revolution* [Oxford 1939] 434–39).

and imperial prosopography with their specific sources and methods. "When histories fail, profit accrues from the study of senators and their careers, of kinship and alliances": thus did Syme restate his subject of 1939 in a later work.<sup>40</sup> The combination of both methods, the literary and the prosopographic, is necessary. Thus Syme's second great book, *Tacitus* (1958), deals with the first century A.C., the period of Roman history that is best represented by both epigraphical and literary evidence. But, on the other side, Syme never ventured to penetrate farther back into the Republic than the period analyzed in his *Sallust* (1964).

Taking all this into account, what did Syme understand under "Roman Revolution"? We need not concern ourselves with the fact that his use of the word *revolution* is entirely pragmatic—which elicited from Continental, and particularly from German, scholars much discussion as to whether the word had been accurately employed.<sup>41</sup> Whether there was a Roman revolution, and if so, when and how it took place: these were popular questions when each and every thing from sex to fashion had its revolution; they need not detain us here. What Syme had in mind when he used the word is shown by his synonymous phrase "transformation of state and society between 60 B.C. and A.D. 14."<sup>42</sup> Here "revolution" clearly means the change in the composition of the ruling oligarchy and, less overtly, a change in the way politics were conducted by the members of this new oligarchy. "Ever alert for the contrast of name and substance,"<sup>43</sup> Syme dissolved the so-called parties of *optimates* and *populares* into groups of politicians fighting with one another for positions of power: men solely interested in their own welfare. Syme also attempted to dispense with the differences, much emphasized by earlier

40. *The Crisis of 2 B.C.*, SB Münch 1974, no. 7, 6 (= *Roman Papers*, vol. 3 [Oxford 1984] 914).

41. Cf. H. J. Gehrke, "La rivoluzione romana: le angolazioni più recenti," *Labeo* 26 (1980) 191–98. On "revolution" as a concept in antiquity, cf. C. Meier, "'Revolution' in der Antike," in O. Brunner et al., eds., *Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*: vol. 5 (Stuttgart 1984) 656–70. From the Marxist point of view, of course, the loose use of *revolution* had to be condemned; cf., for example, B. Zuchold, "Die sogenannte römische Revolution und Alfred Heuss," *Klio* 62 (1980) 583–91.

42. Syme (supra n. 39) viii. Syme's starting point is 60 B.C., the last "free" year of the Republic. In this he followed Asinius Pollio ("a pessimistic Republican and a honest man, hating pomp and pretence" 166), but the date does not become more logical by repetition, as was stated early on by Momigliano (1940: supra n. 3) 78. Better to begin, like Sallust, with the death of Sulla, who for the last time tried to restore pre-Gracchan conditions in public life by eliminating the factors that caused the rise of the great military leaders. The abandonment of the "Sullan system" between 79 and 60 B.C. and Pompey's great commands are highly important prerequisites of Syme's "Roman Revolution."

43. So Syme (supra n. 39) 324 on Tacitus.

writers, between the programs pursued by Octavian and Antonius. In this battle of changing alliances there remained in the end, after decades of civil war and proscriptions, murder and suicides, one heir to power and to the riches of the empire: the future Augustus. The aristocracy that had ruled Rome previously nearly bled to death in these "years of tribulation"<sup>44</sup> and was revived only by a transfusion of new blood from among the *equites* and the flower of the Italian municipal aristocracies. Socially and economically these men did not differ greatly from the old nobility, but as *novi homines* they carried with them a different mentality and motivation. We shall return to this point later.

When reading *The Roman Revolution*, one immediately gains the impression that history is made within a narrow oligarchy and that the common run of people need not be taken into account: "In all ages, whatever the form and name of government . . . an oligarchy lurks behind the façade."<sup>45</sup> This view fits well with the prevalent notion that under the empire the masses were interested exclusively in "bread and circuses," having been excluded from politics since the time of Caesar. However, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the famous lines in Juvenal where he speaks of *panem et circenses* and to read them in their context (10.56–113, esp. 77–81). This passage concerns Seianus, who in A.D. 31 reconvened the *comitia centuriata* after a hiatus of seventeen years in order to have himself elected consul. This was done, of all places, on the Aventine, that is, in the section of the city with the strongest popular and plebeian traditions.<sup>46</sup> Even under Tiberius apparently the Roman electorate was not wholly unpolitical nor a totally reliable tool in the hands of the ruler. The same may be surmised from the reform of the *comitia* in A.D. 5, when the old *centuria praerogativa* (the *centuria* chosen by lot from the first class to vote first and set the trend for the others) was abolished and superseded by ten new voting units composed of senators and *equites*, from which, moreover, the two urban tribes, Esquilina and Suburana, were explicitly excluded.<sup>47</sup> The only

44. Syme (supra n. 32) 9.

45. Syme (supra n. 39) 7. This openly elitist view of history accounts for some of the doubts expressed in the seventies about *The Roman Revolution* and prosopography in general. Not uncharacteristically, such reactions have decreased markedly in the eighties.

46. ILS 6044; and M. Pani, *Comitia e senato: Sulla trasformazione della procedura elettorale a Roma nell'età di Tiberio* (Bari 1974) 114. In "Seianus on the Aventine," *Hermes* 84 (1956) 257–66 (= *Roman Papers*, vol. 1 [1979] 305–14), Syme himself duly underlined the importance of the inscription, but there is more to it than Seianus "parading his ambitions" (p. 266 and 314, respectively).

47. The discussion about the *Lex Valeria Cornelia*, known from the *tabula Hebana*, was revived recently after the publication of the *tabula Siarensis*; cf. the *Acta* of the collo-

plausible explanation of this change is that the old system using the *praerogativa* had not worked as smoothly and reliably as Augustus had hoped for; the people had not been so liable to manipulation as one might think.<sup>48</sup>

In 23 B.C. Augustus accepted the *tribunicia potestas*,<sup>49</sup> and we are reminded repeatedly, not least by Augustus himself in his *Res Gestae*, that the populace of Rome was one of his primary concerns. Indeed he boasts of the tremendous sums he spent to feed and entertain the masses and, in modern words, to improve their quality of life.<sup>50</sup> But there is another side to such novel use of the *tribunicia potestas*. The invisible but very noticeable presence of the *princeps* among the tribunes of the *plebs* represented, at long last, the complete integration of the tribunate into the organization of the state. No protest from the plebeians was now possible through traditional channels. Instead of relying on their tribunes,<sup>51</sup> the populace was now compelled to use more informal methods of protest: choruses in the theatre, at the circus, and in like places. For their part, the masses must have quickly understood the meaning of Phaedrus' line in the fable of the ass: *in principatu commutando saepius nil praeter domini nomen mutant pauperes* (1.1.1–2). Thus there may indeed have been political reasons to strip the people of their voting privileges.

Besides underestimating the urban population of Rome, Syme in his *Roman Revolution* also underrated the role of the army—which he had before and has since elucidated himself in a series of important articles.<sup>52</sup> In a brilliant paper of 1958 on the evolution of the emperor's

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quium held at Seville in 1986: J. Arce and J. González, eds., *Estudios sobre la Tabula Siarensis*, Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología 9 (Madrid 1988).

48. The actual background of this "reform" unfortunately is unknown; it has been connected with Tiberius' return to power or to the mysterious conspiracy of Cornelius Cinna. For discussion, see D. Kienast, *Augustus: Prinzeps und Monarch* (Darmstadt 1982) 136.

49. Some of the tribunician rights he had assumed already in the thirties; cf. Kienast (supra n. 48) 88–91.

50. RG 15–24 with the other sources cited in the commentary of P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, *Res Gestae divi Augusti* (Oxford 1967) 57–66. The stress laid by Augustus on his gifts to the *plebs urbana* convinced many scholars from Mommsen to Syme (supra n. 39) 523, n. 4 that the *plebs* was the principal addressee of the *Res Gestae*; contra: Z. Yavetz, "The *Res Gestae* and Augustus' Public Image," in Millar and Segal (supra n. 3) 1–36.

51. Thus it is not by chance that M. Egnatius Rufus in 19 B.C. staged his alleged coup by exploiting the popularity he had gained as an aedile (for sources and literature, see the contribution to this volume by K. A. Raaflaub and L. J. Samons).

52. They are mostly collected in Syme's *Danubian Papers* (Bucharest 1971); cf. on this subject now J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 B.C.–A.D. 235* (Oxford 1984), with the review by P. Le Roux, *REL* 63 (1985) 42–49.

nomenclature, he showed that the prominence afforded the title *imperator* ("generalissimo") as the *princeps*' new *praenomen* must be explained as a bow to the army, the most solid pillar of the new regime.<sup>53</sup> As in politics, so too in the military sphere the previous era of equilibrium and a loyalty divided among several *imperatores* was replaced by the unquestioned primacy of one individual. After 27 B.C. the army was stationed almost exclusively in the so-called imperial provinces, a fact as much in the interest of the soldiery as of the *princeps*; for the soldiers had not yet forgotten that in the final analysis it was their general who had to guarantee both their pay in the present and their settlement in the future, with his own funds if need be. In the new dispensation of the principate, this could only be the emperor.<sup>54</sup>

Syme also neglected, perhaps deliberately, the entire sphere of "creation of beliefs" or "ideology."<sup>55</sup> This causes surprise because of the important part their mastery of public opinion had played in the success of dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini. The emperor's full name after 27 B.C. was *Imperator Caesar divi filius Augustus*, while other Romans were simply called, for example, *Marcus Tullius Marci filius Cicero*.<sup>56</sup> Thus in his titlature—which had almost supplanted the personal name—Augustus was represented as son of a new god and as such "holy" and venerable himself. Even assuming the upper classes at Rome, enlightened skeptics (like Syme himself), did not take it seriously, there must have been a target group for this type of propaganda: presumably the mass of citizens and noncitizens throughout the empire. Unconcerned with the details of constitutional law and ignoring the differences between the *princeps*' direct rule in his own provinces, his indirect control over those administered by the senate, and his position as *princeps senatus* in Italy, these people looked to the emperor to solve their manifold problems and to secure for them law and order.<sup>57</sup> The

53. "Imperator Caesar: A Study in Nomenclature," *Historia* 7 (1958) 172–88 (= *Roman Papers*, vol. 1 [1979] 361–77).

54. This aspect was discussed by P. A. Brunt, especially in "The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution," *JRS* 52 (1962) 69–86; and recently by K. Raaflaub, "Die Militärreformen des Augustus und die politische Problematik des frühen Prinzipats," in G. Binder, ed., *Saeculum Augustum*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt 1987) 246–307.

55. The chapters "Political Catchwords" and "The Organization of Opinion" in Syme's *Roman Revolution* were complemented later on by, among others, *A Roman Post-Mortem: An Inquest on the Fall of the Roman Republic*, Todd Memorial Lecture 3 (1950) (= *Roman Papers*, vol. 1 [1979] 205–17). There are some very disparaging remarks on that field of study in Syme (supra n. 32) 441.

56. The magic of name and the equation new name = new man evidently were put to work in 27 B.C.

57. Cf. F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London 1977).

parable in Mark 12.17 on the emperor's picture on the *denarius* is a poignant illustration of the unity of empire and emperor in the view of the provincials. We are told repeatedly that Augustus was frequently offered nearly divine honors in the provinces already during his lifetime, particularly in the East.<sup>58</sup> This was a sign of deeply felt gratitude toward the man who had put an end to the ravages of civil war and had begun to remedy the worst abuses of provincial maladministration. Having thus been raised far above all other senators, Augustus was in a uniquely favorable position to realize all his plans: it was hard to quibble with a god about constitutional trifles.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, Syme, astonishingly, seems only marginally interested in the most revolutionary development of all: the profound changes wrought in the Roman senatorial elite itself, that is, the very class that occupies center stage in *The Roman Revolution*. For centuries politics had been the occupation of *all* senators, and the crisis of the Republic was largely caused by the powerful generals' determination and ability to flout senatorial consensus. As Ramsey MacMullen has pointed out, the "professional ethic" and political mentality of the senators were centered around achievement in the public arena and service to the *res publica*. In this fashion they acquired recognition (*honor*) and political influence (*auctoritas*) from their peers.<sup>60</sup> Under the principate a compromise was reached; for while the senatorial aristocracy was assured a role in the governance of the empire and a share of the traditional magistracies and thus a certain amount of *honor*, *auctoritas* was now the exclusive possession of the *princeps*.<sup>61</sup> Syme rightly noted that the victory of Augustus was also the victory of the nonpolitical classes of Italy,<sup>62</sup> but he offered no explanation of this phenomenon. Besides considering the state of general exhaustion after two decades of almost uninterrupted civil war, one must take into account the fact that even after

58. Cf. now S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) esp. 54–62.

59. The pictorial program of the Temple of Mars Ultor (finished evidently in some haste in 2 B.C. when Augustus became *pater patriae*) without any scruples places the emperor among the *divi* Aeneas, Romulus, and Caesar; cf. V. Kockel, "Augustusforum und Mars-Ulter-Tempel," in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik*, Exhibition Catalogue (Berlin 1988) 157. It is interesting to note that in chapter 30, "The Organization of Opinion," of *The Roman Revolution* with one irrelevant exception Syme omits to cite archaeological sources.

60. R. Macmullen, "Roman Elite Motivation: Three Questions," *P&P* 88 (1980) 3–16.

61. But cf. now P. A. Brunt, "The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime," *CQ* n. s. 34 (1984) 423–44.

62. Syme (*supra* n. 39) 513.



the Italians were given Roman citizenship following the Social War they were still not fully integrated into the political structure of the *res publica*. The old nobility and the *plebs urbana* continued to monopolize the traditional political conflicts between *libertas* and *dignitas*.<sup>63</sup> The indispensable prerequisite of a leading political role was the control over large *clientelae*. Despite their exalted status in their hometowns these municipal grandees remained the clients of the ancient Roman nobility rather than becoming *patroni* themselves. Even if through ties of marriage and *hospitia* certain of these men moved into the inner circle of Roman politics, they yet remained *homines novi* and *parvi senatores*.<sup>64</sup> When, by the *consensus universorum* mentioned above, Augustus created for himself a *patrocinium* and *clientela* superior to every other, the municipal aristocracy and those who became senators under his aegis had little difficulty in accepting his predominance, which, moreover, appeared under the disguise of *auctoritas*. In this they differed from the old nobility, the Fabii, Corneli, Aemilii, and their like, who could bear only with great difficulty their new status as inferiors.

Tacitus' somber view of the nature of the principate has sometimes been taken as representative of the senate at large or at least of its leading members. After all, it is reasoned, if a *novus homo* of probably Gallic extraction<sup>65</sup> was so imbued with republican ideals, this must have been a widespread phenomenon. However, we should not ignore the testimony of Velleius Paterculus, a new senator from Campania,<sup>66</sup> who wrote his history under Tiberius. His genuine enthusiasm for the new order usually is dismissed as naive flattery. But he had experienced the last years of Augustus and may well be a better witness than Tacitus for the spirit of the time and the thoughts of the new aristocracy. Indeed, that men like Velleius were able to gain high government offices may explain in part why Augustus succeeded where Caesar failed and why

63. C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome*, trans. P. S. Falla (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1980) esp. chap. 7, "Comitia: The Citizen and Politics"; id., "Augustus, Government, and the Propertied Classes," in Millar and Segal (supra n. 3) 89–128.

64. T. P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate, 139 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford 1971) esp. chap. 6, "Homo novus parvusque senator." But F. Millar, "Cornelius Nepos, 'Atticus' and the Roman Revolution," *Gar* 35 (1988) 46–47, draws attention to the fact that a considerable number of *homines novi* belonged to the same social stratum as their *generosi condiscipuli*.

65. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1958) 611–24.

66. At least in his mother's line, Velleius descended from Campanian aristocracy, the famous Magii of Capua and Aeclanum; cf. recently (with earlier literature) C. Kuntze, *Zur Darstellung des Kaisers Tiberius und seiner Zeit bei Velleius Paterculus* (Frankfurt 1985) 11 and 254–59.

thereafter the *res publica libera* never was a real alternative to even the worst of emperors.<sup>67</sup>

To Syme, the “Roman Revolution” meant the transformation of the ruling class of Rome. Insofar as this entailed the prosopographical study of the rise of new families and the concomitant eclipse of the old, Syme has elucidated the process in *The Roman Revolution*, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (1986), and numerous important articles published in between. But whoever thought to find in the long-awaited *Augustan Aristocracy* a synthesis of the innumerable single facets of this story or an account of the makeup of the new Augustan senate was disappointed (and did not really know Sir Ronald). Thus a comprehensive study of the Italian upper classes, comprising not only senators and *equites* but also their cousins in the *municipia* and *coloniae*, remains to be written.<sup>68</sup> These men, who had survived the upheavals and confiscations initiated by Sulla, Caesar, and Octavian, or had profited from them, were wary of future confiscations and proscriptions to be expected from a victory of Antonius. They were instrumental in the formation of the *consensus universorum* of all Italy; the revolutionaries of yesterday had become staunch supporters of the status quo.

Important aspects of the changing identity and mentality of the aristocracy are hardly touched upon in *The Roman Revolution*. For example, the importance of politics as the exclusive purpose and content of life decreased—which made it easier to decline a seat in the senate even when offered one by the *princeps*. The barrier between insiders and outsiders was lowered—which soon caused the social category of *homo novus* to disappear because few could now boast of a long series of *nobiles* among their ancestors. Attitudes toward the provincials, money, and morals, to name only a few issues, changed rapidly. Santo Mazzarino once spoke of a “bourgeois revolution” in Rome:<sup>69</sup> just as the “Biedermeier” style on the Continent or the Victorian way of life in England followed the French Revolution only after a considerable hiatus, so in Rome the late republican life-style continued to be observed

67. As was made abundantly clear to daydreaming senators in A.D. 41; cf. Jos., *AJ* 19.162–273, and A. Momigliano, *Claudius: The Emperor and His Achievement*, trans. W. Hogarth (Cambridge 1961; New York 1962) 20–22.

68. There are two useful recent collections of papers that deal with this subject: M. Cèbeillac-Gervasoni, ed., *Les “bourgeoisies” municipales italiennes au II<sup>e</sup> et I<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C.* (Paris and Naples 1983); S. Panciera, ed., *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio* (Rome 1984); cf. now also S. Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens*, Coll. École Franç. de Rome 108 (Rome 1988).

69. S. Mazzarino, *L'impero romano I* (Bari 1976) 211–38, speaking of the time of the apostle Paul.

by the members (both male and female) of the foremost senatorial families through the reign of the Julio-Claudians. Clodia's and Servilia's heiresses are to be found, both in political ambition and immoral conduct, among the two Julias, Messalina and Agrippina.<sup>70</sup> Only when the last heirs of the old republican nobility, together with large parts of the new aristocracy of the early principate, had been destroyed and had gone down with the first dynasty itself, did a new age of aristocratic respectability dawn, ushered in by the Flavians, who themselves originated in a small Italian town.<sup>71</sup>

One of the main assumptions of Syme's work is the unity of state and society at Rome. Due to his sources and the prosopographical method, but also to the profound political and social beliefs he formed in the thirties, his interests focus on descent, careers, offices, and marriages of the members of the senatorial aristocracy. Thus his remained, in a restrictive sense, the prosopography of one social class. He refused to aim at broader generalizations, at combining all the single observations on individuals and groups into a social history of the entire senatorial aristocracy with its changing identity and self-understanding. This is all the more remarkable since Syme was completely at home in the literature, both poetic and historical, of the Augustan Age.<sup>72</sup> Thus Syme would have been perfectly capable of producing one of those "histoires de mentalité" or "sensibilité collective" that are fashionable these days and run the gamut from the heretics of Montaillou to the poor of Byzantium.<sup>73</sup> If he chose not to follow this road, the reason might well be found in a typically English reluctance to pursue questions that are not explicitly dealt with and thus "legitimized" by our ancient sources.<sup>74</sup> Maybe, like his second successor in the Camden Chair, he decided, to the exclusion of modern concepts such as "mentalité", "not merely to

70. Cf. now R. Syme, "Princesses and Others in Tacitus," *GaR* 38 (1981) 40–51 (= id., *Roman Papers*, vol. 3 [1984] 1364–75).

71. Cf. the remarks of Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.55) on a similar development in an entirely different field, that of hospitality. For the connection between the change of political system and the replacement of the leading class, see now K. Raaflaub, "Grundzüge, Ziele und Ideen der Opposition gegen die Kaiser im 1. Jh. n. Chr.: Versuch einer Standortbestimmung," in O. Reverdin and B. Grange, eds., *Opposition et résistances à l'empire d'Auguste à Trajan*, Entretiens sur l'ant. class. 33 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva 1987) 37–45.

72. This will be evident from even a brief look at his *History in Ovid* (Oxford 1978).

73. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Village occitan de 1294–1324* (Paris 1975); E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, IV<sup>e</sup> à VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris 1977).

74. This was demonstrated impressively some years ago at a colloquium in London where English and German ancient historians met to examine, by discussing late republican and early imperial Roman history, the question of whether the proverbial "typically German" or "typically English" ways of thinking, arguing, and writing really exist.

attend to the penumbras of attitudes and expectations expressed in those ancient sources which provide our evidence, but, so far as is possible, to base our conceptions solely on those attitudes and expectations.”<sup>75</sup>

The preceding remarks are not intended to imitate those bad reviews that tell the author what kind of book he should have written.<sup>76</sup> We all know, and I want to restate it most emphatically, that *The Roman Revolution* is one of the most important (and stylistically most agreeable) books in ancient history written in this century. Nothing could prove this more impressively than the fact that fifty years after its publication classicists and historians feel obliged to pay homage to this work and its eminent author, the “Emperor of Roman History.”<sup>77</sup>

75. Millar (supra n. 57) xi.

76. There are many subjects not dealt with in the book, and their enumeration was started already in 1940 by Momigliano (supra n. 3): foreign policy, religion and belief, the lower classes, the economy, and many more. But—to recall once more what was said before—Syme simply did not want to write the comprehensive monograph on Augustus, the new “Gardthausen” now long overdue.

77. Bowersock (supra n. 3) 8.