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Publicity, Popularity and Patronage in the *Commentariolum Petitionis*

The *Commentariolum Petitionis* has long been a—perhaps *the*—central text for the theory that Republican politics were determined by private social relations, in particular by personal patronage, which in its manifold forms has been held to have “permeated” the entire population; a regrettable concomitant of the theory has been the tendency to overlook or dismiss all public appeals to the anonymous mass as mere “facade” cloaking the real mechanism of power. For M. Gelzer in his classic *Roman Nobility*, published in its German original in 1912, the *Commentariolum*, together with the *pro Murena* and *pro Plancio*, was vivid testimony to the “system of *personal* relationships of all kinds, reaching both upwards and downwards in society,” that “*determined* the distribution of political power” (my emphases) and formed the “social foundations of the predominance of the nobility”; “the most powerful man was he who by virtue of his clients and friends could mobilise the greatest number of voters.”¹ Influential studies of the Republican political system by L. R. Taylor and C. Meier interpreted the essay in much the same light even while they differed about the role of personal “factions.”² In E. S. Staveley’s crisp formulation, “Success at the polls . . . testified

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1. Gelzer 1969, quoted from pp. 62, 139, and the title of ch. 2. Cf. the German original in the recent reissue: Gelzer 1983.

2. Taylor 1949, ch. 3, with noteworthy reference to the essay at pp. 8, 58, 64. Meier 1966/1980:7–63, 162–200, esp. 7–23. Meier, of course, differs from Taylor especially in his insistence on the thorough fragmentation of personal interests and his persuasive rebuttal to the “Faktionsthese” (1966/1980:174–90; cf. now Brunt 1988:443–502), but follows Gelzer in regarding personal connections (what the *Commentariolum* calls *studia amicorum*, as distinct from the

not so much to the candidate's personal appeal or to the popularity of his policies as to the extent of his patronal influence and the size of his *clientela*.³ The broad consensus that obtained until recently on the primacy of patronage and other personal connections in Roman electoral politics is manifested in highly influential studies such as R. Syme's *Roman Revolution* and E. S. Gruen's *Last Generation of the Roman Republic*.⁴ But over the last two decades the work of P. Brunt, F. Millar and C. Nicolet in particular has brought about a reaction to the traditional emphasis on patronage, and views of the *Commentariolum* have become dichotomized.⁵ N. Rouland, J. Paterson and Brunt now cite it to show that patronage had little impact on elections:⁶ independent voters, not mobs of clients dominated by their hereditary patrons, were decisive, a conclusion in line with recent, fruitful work on the implications of electoral largesse.⁷ Yet at least one scholar, who, my experience suggests, speaks for many, continues to adduce the essay for self-evident vindication of Gelzer's view that a network of informal connections constituted the electoral advantage of the nobility.⁸ In all of these treatments the *Commentariolum* has been cited *carptim* to corroborate individual points in (as we have seen) diametrically opposed larger arguments. It is time to make the *Commentariolum* itself our focus of attention and to illuminate its meaning by reference to a wider background of texts in order to clarify the evidence it provides for the current debate about the role of patronage and popular participation in the Roman Republic.⁹

First, however, a word is in order about the vexed old question of the authenticity of the essay. The author of the fullest and best study of the controversy, D. Nardo, rightly complains that "the problem of authenticity appears to have overwhelmed every other interest, thus diverting from the work, which was

popularis voluntas) as largely decisive in elections (p. 9). Cf. Wiseman 1971:135: "the whole of his [sc. Quintus'] essay is a variation on this theme: offend nobody, make contacts everywhere, flatter, oblige, equivocate."

3. Staveley 1972:193. Cf. Taylor 1949:63, 71.

4. Syme 1939, esp. ch. 2, "The Roman Oligarchy," pp. 10–27. Gruen 1974:121–61, esp. 127–28 (with n. 26), 155, 161.

5. Brunt 1988, esp. ch. 8, "Clientela," pp. 382–442, a comprehensive attack on the exaggerated role attributed to patronage in Roman political and social life; Millar 1984:1–19 and 1986:1–11; Nicolet 1980. North 1990 and Jehne 1995b provide useful introductions to the current controversy.

6. Rouland 1979, esp. pp. 434, 482; cf. Rouland 1981:326–32; Paterson 1985:27–39, making use of the *Comm. Pet.* passim; Brunt 1988:428–29 (cf. 399, 424).

7. Yakobson 1992:32–52 and 1995:426–42; Jehne 1995c, with discussion of the *Comm. Pet.* at pp. 58–62. As will be seen, however, I do not share Jehne's assumption that in the absence of strong patronal ties there were no important criteria for voters to use in judging candidates other than the scale of their bribes. On bribery in general, see below, n. 15.

8. Burckhardt 1990:94.

9. On elections and electoral politics I have made more use than can be individually signaled of Meier's perceptive and thought-provoking discussions in Meier 1966/1980:7–23, 38–40, 174–80, 190–200. The recent work of Yakobson, to be discussed presently, is also highly stimulating. Wiseman 1971:95–142 is illuminating; Staveley 1972:191–206 and Urban 1983 provide useful surveys. See esp. Taylor 1966 for the technical details.

judged to be ‘admirable’ by such an historian as Syme, the closer and more detailed explication in depth that it deserves.”¹⁰ After Nardo’s own study and some important later contributions on points of detail by various scholars only two positions on the authenticity question now appear to be seriously tenable: that it is indeed, as it purports to be, an essay in epistolary form to Marcus Cicero written by his brother in early 64 ostensibly in order to advise him on his candidacy (although perhaps actually intended to influence power-brokers¹¹); or that it may be a later fabrication by someone else, but one so well informed that it remains a first-rate source for late-Republican electoral politics.¹² Nardo and others have made a strong case that authenticity is easily the more plausible hypothesis, and have shown to my satisfaction at least that dogged skepticism on this point has outlived its usefulness. But for my purposes there is no need to choose between the two equally agreeable alternatives.

One final preliminary is necessary before we turn to the *Commentariolum* itself. The assembly in which the higher magistrates were elected, the *comitia centuriata*, has traditionally been regarded as one in which the mass of common citizens, and particularly the urban plebs who were the immediate targets of popular politics, had no significant voice. In a brilliant, recent article, A. Jakobson presents strong arguments for concluding, contrary to one of the axioms of traditional thinking on the Republic, that “the urban plebs did exercise considerable influence on the outcome of elections in the centuriate assembly.”¹³ Pointing to the well-known practice followed by those aspiring to high political office of investing enormous sums in games, gladiators, banquets, cash handouts and so on, explicitly in order to curry favor with the *multitudo* and thus to secure their election in praetorian or consular contests,¹⁴ Jakobson reasonably concludes that “all this does not make sense unless it is accepted that the individual *nobilis* could not reach the highest honours without competing with his peers for the votes of the common people.”¹⁵ It seems necessary to conclude that “the urban plebs did exercise considerable direct influence on the outcome of elections in the centuriate assembly,”¹⁶ which, Jakobson argues, was not quite the oligarchic instrument it has regularly been thought to be: certainly in *elections*—the main

10. My translation of Nardo 1970:7. For authenticity, Balsdon 1963:242–50 remains fundamental, as does also Henderson 1950:8–21 on the contra side. The major contributions to the question since Nardo—all in favor of authenticity—are Richardson 1971; David et al. 1973; Ramsay 1980; Brugisser 1984.

11. So esp. Nardo 1970 and Brugisser 1984; cf. Richardson 1971:440–41.

12. So e.g. Syme 1947:200; Stockton 1971:53 n. 21; Gruen 1974:139 n. 76; Rawson 1975:57; Urban 1983:607; Brunt 1988:428; Bell 1997:9 n. 56.

13. Jakobson 1992:32–52, quoted at 43.

14. See now also Jakobson 1995:436–42.

15. Jakobson 1992:50, with apt response at p. 35 to the counter-argument of Aigner 1978. On electoral bribery in general, see further Linderski 1985:187–94; Lintott 1990:1–16 and Jakobson 1995.

16. Jakobson 1992:43.

function of the centuriate assembly, legislation having passed largely to the tribal assembly—voting must have reached below the first class quite frequently.¹⁷

If Yakobson is right—and I see no real flaws in the argument—voters below the senatorial and equestrian orders, and even below the first class, mattered even in a consular election. That is, of course, exactly what our major sources tell us—not simply Cicero’s famous *ambitus* speeches, the *pro Murena* and *pro Plancio*, where he had an interest in exaggerating the independence and even arbitrariness of the *Populus* in order to deflect the charge, but also passages in his letters where no such pretense is necessary. When Cicero writes in 53 to C. Curio about Milo’s splendid chances for election, he says that his candidate enjoys the favor of the *multitudo* as well as that of right-thinking men, the youth and “vote-brokers” (*boni, iuventus, gratiosi in suffragiis*).¹⁸ In 54, after the pact between the consuls and two other candidates was exposed, Cicero considered Messalla and Domitius Calvinus certain to be elected, since they “have been extremely generous with the People.”¹⁹ This is not to say that the voters in a consular election, certainly fewer than 100,000, were representative in any democratically respectable sense of the whole Roman citizenry throughout the Italian peninsula.²⁰ But it certainly puts paid to the notion that “politics was ordinarily a cozy business,” and that the typical election was fixed by the political élite as readily as a marriage contract.²¹

Let us now turn to the *Commentariolum*. After the introduction to the treatise, in which Quintus surveys his brother’s favorable chances in the upcoming election, the art of campaigning is analyzed as the application of effort toward two ends: enlisting *amicorum studia* and cultivating the *popularis voluntas*,²²

17. Yakobson 1992:44–50.

18. *Fam.* 2.6.3; Yakobson 1992:38. On “vote-brokers” see below.

19. *Att.* 4.17.3 *Messalla noster et eius competitor Domitius liberalis in populo valde fuit, nihil gratius; certi erant consules*. Cf. *Q.F.* 3.2.3, 6.3, 7.3. Earlier, *pecunia omnium dignitatem exaequat*, and Messalla had been hindered by the pact of the consuls and Pompey’s opposition (*Att.* 4.15.7). Scaurus tried to catch up by handing out cash to “the People” *tributum* at his house, but despite the greater scale of his “generosity” (*liberalitas*), Messalla and Domitius, who had anticipated him, were preferred (*Att.* 4.17.4). Cf. Brunt 1988:427.

20. MacMullen 1980:454–57 estimated on the basis of the size of the *Saepta Julia*, completed in 26 B.C. (some 55,000 [MacMullen] to 70,000 [Taylor 1966:54] could be accommodated in the structure shown on the Marble Plan, presumably, though not certainly, roughly the same size as the Agrippan original), that the total number of voters *never* surpassed 35–40,000, which he estimates at some 2% of the citizen population *at the time the [Augustan] Saepta were built*. But it may be illegitimate to assume that no more citizens voted in the last decades of the Republic than after Actium: the magnitude of Caesar’s original plan (*Cic. Att.* 4.16.8), much greater than what MacMullen takes to be that of the structure finally completed by his heir, may suggest a far greater number of voters in the 50s than that provided for by Augustus. (MacMullen’s assumption that there were at all times large empty spaces in the voting pens is unwarranted, particularly for major electoral assemblies: Yakobson 1995:434 n. 32.) It is certainly illegitimate to calculate voter “turnout” for the Republic on the basis of an Augustan-era census of citizens. Even so, it would be hard to imagine that more than 10% of the adult male citizenry voted in any consular election.

21. MacMullen 1980:457, citing E. Badian for the matrimonial comparison.

22. *Et petitio magistratuum divisa est in duarum rationum diligentiam, quarum altera in amicorum studiis, altera in populari voluntate ponenda est* (16). Essentially the same division

the latter being “those means by which you can win over the *multitudo*” (49). Thus Quintus certainly presumes that the candidate must not merely mobilize personal connections but win over the *populus* or *multitudo*, a mass of voters unconnected to him by social ties. It is true that he goes on to survey first, and at considerable length (16–40), the art of exploiting *amicorum studia*. This long section, containing much fascinating information about the political deal-making that is normally obscured to our vision, has long mesmerized scholars. But Quintus devotes the following thirteen chapters to the other essential of an electoral campaign, the *popularis ratio* (41). Although his treatment of this topic is not much more than half the length of the other, it would be a rather unsophisticated method of interpretation to judge the relative importance of the two parts merely on the basis of their length. Jakobson suggests, for example, that “there is less need to elaborate on how [‘the urban multitude’] should be canvassed,” since, as Quintus says, Cicero *already* enjoys the favor of the *urbana multitudo* because of his support for Pompey’s Mithridatic command two years before and his assistance (or promised assistance) to the tribunes Manilius and Cornelius (51) in the previous year.²³ The *multitudo* considers him friendly to its interests because “at least in your speeches in meetings and in court you have been *popularis*” (53). This is a plausible hypothesis, unprovable of course, but a salutary admonition that the length of the two parts of the essay cannot be taken as a simple reflection of their relative importance. To complicate the matter further, it will be shown later that pursuit of the *studia amicorum* and cultivation of the *popularis voluntas* are interrelated; nor, as we shall see, are the *amici* discussed in the first part of the essay for the most part in a patron-client relationship with Cicero. Thus the *divisio* of section 16, which is fully borne out by the remainder of the discussion, should be given its due weight: Quintus regards both pursuits, the cultivation of the People as well as that of “friends,” as necessary, neither as dispensable, parts of a campaign.

Probably a further cause of inattention to what the *Commentariolum* has to say about cultivating the People is the rather odd nature of what Quintus actually does say in this section.²⁴ While recommending various sorts of ingratiating behavior,

is evidently presumed by Cicero, discussing his expected competitors in the consular election: *qui* [sc. Thermus and Silanus] *sic inopes et ab amicis et existimatione sunt ut mihi videatur non esse ἀδύνατον Turium obducere* (*Att.* 1.1.2).

23. Jakobson 1992:34.

24. E.g. Wiseman 1971:132: “the perfunctory way in which the author . . . deals with the canvass of the urban *plebs*.” Meier, perceptive as usual, acknowledges that the candidate’s solicitude for the personal interests of individual citizens was understood in some way to be an essential sign of his worthiness for office (Meier 1966/1980:10–11; cf. 112), but misses the point when he dismisses these as “unpolitische Kriterien” (155 and 11–23 *passim*; cf. Rouland 1981:144). For E. Flaig, the concept of “Politik” requires “den Austrag von Interessengegensätzen zwischen Gruppen derselben politischen Gemeinschaft” (1995:97; cf. 99 n. 57), which leads him to the remarkable conclusion that the *loci* of Late-Republican politics are not the electoral and legislative *comitia* but the theater and gladiatorial contests. Nardo 1970:95 and Jehne 1995c:58–62 and esp. 76 assimilate canvassing

he urges Cicero to avoid any overt political stances during his candidacy.²⁵ Omission of what we would recognize as a political appeal to the general populace looks to us like the absence of any serious attempt to attract its support. But the advice against taking up high politics during a candidacy must not be read in isolation from what immediately precedes and follows it. As Quintus himself has just made clear, political considerations will in fact be crucial for Cicero's chances: it is of the highest importance that each of the major orders—Senate, equites and *multitudo*—have favorable expectations of Cicero's political stance (*maxime videndum est ut spes rei publicae bona de te sit et honesta opinio*, 53). However, this should be based on his *previous* record: "The Senate should believe that you will be a champion of its authority on the basis of your manner of life; the equites and sound, wealthy men should consider you devoted to peace and quiet from your past actions; and the masses, that you will be sympathetic to their interests because at least in your speeches in meetings and in court you have been *popularis*."²⁶ Although authentically political assumptions are indeed made by voters about a candidate, he must avoid political speechmaking during canvassing to avoid the risk of upsetting the delicate balance of support among senators, equites and *multitudo* that was advisable, and in most cases surely demanded, for electoral success.²⁷ In fact it was arguably Catiline's failure to maintain that balance that defeated him in 64 (and again in 63) and won the consulship for Cicero who, though a new man, was viewed as "safe."²⁸ In any case, it certainly does not follow that elections were unaffected by larger political issues.²⁹ Certainly, at times of crisis or particular tension it is clear that they might play a significant role: to take just a few examples, the *contiones* of

the People to the exercise of patronage; but this is a confused and unjustified extension of the concept of patronage ("public clientele") that leads inevitably to a muddle.

25. *Atque etiam in hac petitione maxime videndum est ut spes rei publicae bona de te sit et honesta opinio; nec tamen in petendo res publica capessenda est neque in senatu neque in contione* (53).

26. *Sed haec tibi sunt retinenda: ut senatus te existimet ex eo quod ita vixeris defensorem auctoritatis suae fore, equites R. et viri boni ac locupletes ex vita acta te studiosum otii ac rerum tranquillearum, multitudo ex eo quod dumtaxat oratione in contionibus ac iudicio popularis fuisti te a suis commodis non alienum futurum* (53).

27. Nardo 1970:106 among others. The delicacy of the situation is evident from the apologia Cicero is advised to present privately to nobles for his support of Pompey (5).

28. Sall. *Cat.* 23.5 attributes Cicero's success in 64 to fears, perhaps especially among the nobility, of Catiline's allegedly conspiratorial intentions. Gruen 1974:137–38 rightly refutes the claim in that form (cf. Mitchell 1979:170–76); but Quintus' comments on Catiline and Antonius (§§7–12) and Cicero's *In toga candida* imply a broad atmosphere of suspicion of the two among the political élite at a time of considerable social and economic tension in Italy (cf. Stockton 1971:71–72, 81–82; Rawson 1975:58; Habicht 1990:29; Plut. *Cic.* 10–11; App. *BC* 2.2). Catiline's campaign of 63, at least, is clear-cut: esp. Cic. *Mur.* 48–53.

29. So Meier 1966/1980:10–23: "eine Art von Schizophrenie" (p. 23) kept electoral politics largely insulated from "die politischen Gegensätze." (He lists some exceptions to his rule—the elections of 56 and 50—at p. 197.) Similarly, Gelzer 1969:62; Taylor 1949:64. A more balanced view in Rouland 1981:132–33, 332.

seditionis magistratus before Marius' election to the consulship in 108 agitated against noble mismanagement of the Numidian War;³⁰ before the elections for 70 Pompey had made noises about restoring the power of the tribunes, and may even have promised to do so;³¹ agrarian discontent and general indebtedness formed the larger backdrop to the elections of 63 and largely determined the nature of Catiline's final consular campaign.³²

Still, it remains incontrovertible that the "politics" of a Roman election manifested itself not primarily in a competition over ideological alternatives (as we are accustomed to think about modern elections) but over the *dignitas* or "worthiness" of individuals according to a traditional and unquestioned ideological standard. Thus, somewhat surprisingly to our mentality, when Quintus comes to discuss the key aspects of the *popularis ratio* in an election, "those means by which you can win over the *multitudo*" (49), they for the most part cast light on a candidate's personal, moral qualities rather than on his views on the *res publica*. According to Quintus, the six elements of the *popularis ratio* in an election are: remembering people's names (*nomenclatio*), an ingratiating manner (*blanditia*), persistence (*adsiduitas*), generosity (*benignitas*), "talk" (*rumor*) and an impressive political presence (*species in re publica*) (41–53).³³ Nothing is more *popularis* and pleasing, Quintus writes, than that a candidate show that he knows people (*nomenclatio*).³⁴ (Small-town pooh-bahs consider it a great sign of friendship if you manage to address them by name [31]!) Then, a candidate must solicit his fellow citizens in a friendly, courteous manner, adjusting his expression and talk to the views and wishes of whomever he meets (*blanditia*).³⁵ It is crucial

30. Sall. *Iug.* 73; Marius himself was brought on the rostra: Plut. *Mar.* 8.5.

31. Taylor 1949:209 n. 83. So Appian *BC* 1.121; cf. however Cic. *Verr.* 1.45.

32. Gruen 1974:422–28; Brunt 1988:251–53.

33. On this part of the essay, see now also Bell 1997:10. Melloni 1981:18–22, rejects Lambinus' emendation of the MSS. *spem in re publica* to *speciem in re publica*, which is adopted by all modern editors. But if the final element of the *popularis ratio* is introduced with *postremo* at §52, *speciem* is precisely apposite.

34. *Primum id quod facis, ut homines noris, significa ut appareat et auge ut cottidie melius fiat; nihil mihi tam populare neque tam gratum videtur* (42). According to Plutarch (Cic. 7.1–2) in a passage reminiscent of the *Comm. Pet.*, Cicero thought it essential for the πολιτικός, whose instruments are men, to know the names, residences, associates and neighbors of all of his friends. For the use of a *nomenclator* as an electoral device, see also Cic. *Mur.* 77 (Cato!); yet according to Plut. *Cato min.* 8.2, this was a violation of *ambitus* law already by 68. (The identity of the law remains obscure: Gruen 1974:216; Fascione 1984:51; Kolendo 1989:16–17.) For the vague disrepute in elite circles that attached to the practice of calling on a large mass of men by name, see Plut. *Mor.* 200C–D; Rutilius Rufus, F7 Peter. On *nomenclatores* in the late Republic, see Vogt 1978; Vanderbroeck 1987:57–58; Kolendo 1989:13–26. Kolendo notes that *nomenclatores* first appear in our evidence in the age of Sulla; perhaps a symptom of the new electoral significance of municipal *domi nobiles* after the enfranchisement of Italy?

35. *Frons et vultus et sermo ad eorum quoscumque convenerit sensum et voluntatem commutandus et accommodandus est* (42). Cf. Cic. *Planc.* 29, *facilis est illa occursatio et blanditia popularis*. *Blanditia* is virtually equivalent to *comitas* (cf. *Comm. Pet.* 50), on which see esp. Plin. *NH* 35.23: L. Hostilius Mancinus won the consular election in 146 by means of his *comitas*, demonstrated by standing beside pictures of Carthage and describing to the People the assault on the city, in which

not only to be on hand in Rome and in the Forum but to canvass constantly, to call upon the same people over and over again, and not to allow any to make the excuse that you did not ask urgently for whatever they could do (*adsiduitas*).³⁶ Generosity (*benignitas*) should be demonstrated in various forms. Liberality with one's own property cannot directly reach the *multitudo* as a whole but pleases it when they hear it praised by one's friends.³⁷ Banquets for individual tribes and the whole populace must be hosted by the candidate and his friends.³⁸ The candidate must be generous, too, with offers of favors and assistance; he should be readily accessible day and night, and his expression must be as welcoming as his threshold or his house will be deserted.³⁹ "Talk" (*rumor*) ensures that one's good qualities are known to the whole People, not merely those who have directly benefited from them. And one's canvass should be "full of show . . . impressive, brilliant and appealing to the People" (52). It is in the midst of these comments about *species in re publica* that Quintus delivers himself of his celebrated warning to avoid overt political stances in speeches either in the Senate or before the People during one's candidacy; and it is highly indicative of the one-sided way in which the *Commentariolum* has been read that this is the only part of Quintus' recommendations regarding the *popularis ratio* that is regularly cited and generally familiar.

It has been hard for modern commentators to recognize the kind of behavior Quintus is recommending here as "political" in any meaningful sense, while that

he had distinguished himself. On the other hand, it was believed that Cato's refusal to make such gestures cost him the consulship of 51 (Plut. *Cato min.* 50.2: ὁμιλίῃ φιλοκνηθρῶπι; Dio 40.58.2–3); his assault on traditions of electoral "generosity" had already provoked a riot in 54: below, n. 114.

36. *Prodest quidem vehementer . . . non solum esse Romae atque in foro sed adsidue petere, saepe eosdem appellare, non committere ut quisquam possit dicere, quod eius consequi possis, se abs te non esse rogatum et valde ac diligenter rogatum* (43). On the benefits of *adsiduitas* cf. Cic. *Planc.* 13, 63–67—directly contradicted, when the case demanded it, at *Mur.* 21.

37. *Benignitas . . . est in re familiari, quae quamquam ad multitudinem pervenire non potest tamen ab amicis <si> laudatur multitudini grata est* (44). According to Cicero (*Mur.* 75–76), the voters did not hesitate to judge Q. Aelius Tubero adversely for the paltriness of the funeral banquet he offered in memory of Scipio Aemilianus, denying him the praetorship for that reason. Cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.52–63 on the whole, somewhat uncomfortable subject of buying popularity.

38. [*Benignitas*] *est in conviviis, quae fac ut et abs te et ab amicis tuis concelebrentur et passim et tributim* (44). Lintott 1990:10 misunderstands: the banquets are not for his friends, nor does *concelebrare* here mean "talk about" but "host" (more commonly, *convivium celebrare*). Such banquets, unless offered to a candidate's own tribesmen, were banned formally in 63 (an s.c. mentioned at Cic. *Mur.* 67, 73 presumably was incorporated into the *lex Tullia* of the same year: Gruen 1974:223 n. 56; Fascione 1984:70–71). On the rationale for banning such benefactions outside the tribe, see Lintott p. 11 and Rouland 1981:224. On electoral banquets in general, see Lintott pp. 5–6 and Deniaux 1987:299–302.

39. [*Benignitas*] *est etiam in opera quam pervulga et communica, curaque ut aditus ad te diurni nocturnique pateant, neque solum foribus aedium tuarum sed etiam vultu ac fronte, quae est animi ianua; quae si significat voluntatem abditam esse ac retrusam, parvi refert patere ostium* (44). On generosity in conferring favors, see Cic. *Off.* 2.65–71; Cicero stresses in particular the value of knowledge of the law and of eloquence in increasing one's *opes* and *gratia* (§§65–68). The law is of course tendentiously depreciated relative to oratory at *Mur.* 24–29; but consider M'. Manilius (cos. 149), an expert in the civil law, who used to stroll the Forum as a way of inviting *civibus suis omnibus* to make use of his counsel (Cic. *De Or.* 3.133; the context is not explicitly electoral).

form of appealing to popular support that is most familiar to us—ideologically charged speech—is explicitly abjured. But rather than denying that Roman elections were “political” because they were devoid of the kind of overt ideological oppositions we seek in modern elections, we should recognize how such practices are expressions of a different, and somewhat unfamiliar, electoral ideology. Election was a *beneficium* conferred by the Roman People for one’s “worthiness,” conceived of essentially in personal and moral terms; and to gain this *beneficium* the candidate was expected to “supplicate” the People (*supplicare populo Romano*), a practice whose symbolism for both the élite and the multitude must be kept firmly in mind.⁴⁰ In this political ritual repeated several times annually at the various *comitia*, which filled some fifteen days or so of each year, even great nobles abased themselves before the People and acknowledged them as their masters.⁴¹ From the People’s side “supplication” by aspiring politicians, which followed directly from the popular *suffragium*, was evidently felt to be a foundation of their ancient *libertas*;⁴² for the élite it was a distasteful necessity, quite unlamented when in A.D. 14 the new princeps put an end to popular election and its attendant *largitiones ac preces sordidae*.⁴³

Perhaps the most striking expression of the spirit of the occasion was *pressatio*—“pressing the flesh,” a practice so characteristic of the candidate that, like *ambitio* (“walking around”), it became a metonym for canvassing.⁴⁴ A famous anecdote about the aedilician campaign of one P. Scipio Nasica is illustrative. One day, while “pressing the flesh” in the Forum, Scipio firmly grasped, *more candidatorum*, a peasant’s callused hand, hardened by manual labor. Amazed at the rustic claw, he ventured a joke, and asked him whether he had made his hands so hard by walking on them. The ill-judged or arrogant pleasantry “was picked up by those standing around,” we are told, “and leaked to the People, causing Scipio’s defeat.”⁴⁵ The anecdote nicely underscores

40. Cf. Deniaux 1987:279–304.

41. On *populo Romano supplicare* see esp. Cic. *Planc.* 11–14, esp. 11: *Est enim haec condicio liberorum populorum praecipueque huius principis populi et omnium gentium domini atque victoris, posse suffragiis vel dare vel detrahare quod velit cuique; nostrum est autem, nostrum qui in hac tempestate populi iactemur et fluctibus ferre modice populi voluntates, adlicere alienas, retinere partas, placare turbatas; honores si magni non putemus, non servire populo; sin eos expetamus, non defetigari supplicando.* Even nobles: 50 *Numquam enim fere nobilitas . . . a populo Romano supplex repudiata est.* Cf. Val. Max. 4.5.4, *consulatum petens L. Crassus, cum omnium candidatorum more circum Forum supplex populo ire cogeretur . . .* Flaig is strangely insensitive to the symbolic importance of this aspect of elections (1995:79). For the estimate of 15 days: Nicolet 1980:235.

42. Note, in addition to Cic. *Planc.* 11 (quoted above, n. 41), Cicero’s remarks to a *contio* (thus a fair reflection of the popular perception) at *Leg. agr.* 2.16–19.

43. Tac. *Ann.* 1.15.1. Cf. Vell. 2.126.2; Cic. *De Or.* 1.112 and Linderski 1985:87–89.

44. For *pressatio/pressare*, see esp. Cic. *Att.* 1.1.1, *De Or.* 1.112, and Liv. 4.6.9: *pressare homines et concursare toto foro candidati coepere.*

45. Val. Max. 7.5.2, *quod dictum a circumstantibus exceptum ad populum manavit causamque repulsae Scipioni attulit.* The identity of the candidate (cos. 138 or cos. 111?), and thus of the date, remains uncertain: Broughton 1991:40–41.

some key elements of Republican politics which have tended to be suppressed by a modern tradition of scholarship that has emphasized to the exclusion of much else the role of relations of personal dependence in determining the results of Roman elections. Even great nobles could not secure their election through their dependents, but were obliged to woo the unattached *populus* by ingratiating gestures such as the *prensatio*: nothing but electoral necessity could have induced Scipio to offer his hand to the peasant. But especially apposite to our current theme is the way in which the anecdote shows that canvassing was a public performance before the People as audience and judge, not just a series of conferences in “smoke-filled rooms,” and that popular opinion of the candidate’s personal, moral worth or *dignitas*, not merely the judgment of a clique of nobles or consulars, played a crucial role in determining an election’s results.

“Supplication” of the populace, played out under the popular gaze in a few, clearly defined focal places (the Forum, the Campus, perhaps the Circus Flaminius), can usefully be regarded as a performance before the audience of the Roman People, which observed its aspiring leaders go through their parts and delivered its verdict at the *comitia*.⁴⁶ But of course not all relevant moral qualities were openly on display during a “walkabout” in the Forum. Here is where Quintus’ element of “talk,” *rumor*, as one of the means of winning over the multitude, becomes relevant. “Talk,” he writes, is of special importance (*cui maxime serviendum est*, 50) because it ensures that all the good qualities he has recommended influence *the whole people*, not merely the direct beneficiaries or immediate observers of philanthropic behavior: “talk” by one’s “friends” brings it about that “the People does not just hear of you from these men but itself engages in these efforts on your behalf.”⁴⁷ For example, although a candidate’s personal generosity cannot directly reach the mass of citizens, “nevertheless the *multitudo* is pleased to hear it praised by your friends” (44); and the importance of generosity lies not in the attachment it forges with a relatively small circle of beneficiaries but in bringing it about “that the ears of as many people as possible be filled with the most favorable talk about you.”⁴⁸ “Talk,” then, is the medium through which judgments of the candidate’s moral qualities spread from the proportionately small circle of immediate associates to the People in general, and thus shape a public reputation.⁴⁹ “Talk” could, of course, cut two ways, as is shown by Scipio Nasica’s remark, which appeared to reveal aristocratic contempt

46. On the spectacle of Republican politics, see now Bell 1997, with discussion of the *Comm. Pet.* at 8–10.

47. *Domus ut multa nocte compleatur, omnium generum frequentia adsit, satisfiat oratione omnibus, re operaque multis, perficiatur id quod fieri potest labore et arte et diligentia, non ut ad populum ab his hominibus fama perveniat sed ut in his studiis populus ipse versetur* (50).

48. *Ut de nocte domus compleatur, ut multi spe tui praesidi teneantur, ut amiciores abs te discedant quam accesserint, ut quam plurimorum aures optimo sermone compleantur* (49).

49. Cf. Meier 1966/1980:10; Brunt 1988:428, 430.

for the common citizen—just the reverse of that attitude of supplication that was called for by the occasion.

One's closest associates here have a crucial role to play: Quintus insists that all who are intimately connected with his brother—members of his tribe, neighbors, clients, even his freedmen and slaves—all must be made to love him and wish for his supreme advancement, “for nearly all the talk that creates a reputation in the Forum comes forth from sources in the household.”⁵⁰ References to this kind of recommendation to the Roman People from those who know one best are not hard to find. For a young man developing a public reputation, Marcus Cicero advises his son in the *De Officiis*, “the first recommendation comes from his self-restraint, his devotion to his parents and goodwill toward his household”;⁵¹ after all, *pietas* is “the foundation of all the virtues.”⁵² Defending Cn. Plancius, Cicero finds that the aedilician candidate's behavior toward his father, his uncle, his relations by blood and marriage, and his friends, including himself, were all relevant to his success in the election, and stresses that the recommendation of relatives and close associates is far more reliable than the oft-illusory solicitude and compliance that candidates direct at the People in an election.⁵³ Plancius' father—and Cicero too—had “supplicated” the Roman People on young Plancius' behalf at the election.⁵⁴ The depth of Cicero's gratitude to the young man for his assistance in 58 will have helped to attest to his justice, trustworthiness and benevolence, all important qualities for a man in public office.⁵⁵ The circle of those who can authoritatively “certify” the *dignitas* of a candidate can in fact extend much more widely than family, dependents, neighbors, town- and tribesmen, and friends. For example, Cicero claims in 63 that the strong support for Murena's consular candidacy given by Lucullus' former army, present for

50. *Deinde ut quisque est intimus ac maxime domesticus, ut is amet <et> quam amplissimum esse te cupiat valde elaborandum est, tum ut tribules, ut vicini, ut clientes, ut denique liberti, postremo etiam servi tui; nam fere omnis sermo ad forensem famam a domesticis emanat auctoribus* (17). Cf. *Planc.* 29.

51. *Off.* 2.46.

52. *Planc.* 29. The context is explicitly electoral.

53. *Planc.* 29, *Atque haec sunt indicia, iudices, solida et expressa, haec signa probitatis non fucata forensi specie, sed domesticis inusta notis veritatis. Facilis est illa occursatio et blanditia popularis; aspicitur, non attrahatur; procul apparet, non excutitur, non in manus sumitur.* Cf. §22, *omnia, quae dico de Plancio, dico expertus in nobis. Sumus enim finitimi Atinatibus.* For the thought, see further *Cic. Caes.* 4–6.

54. *Planc.* 24. Cicero's *appellatio* and *supplicatio* of the Roman People *tributum* probably took place at the Saepta itself (Deniaux 1987:285, 288–89; cf. Verres and his son, pleading in 70 against Cicero's election as aedile [*Verr.* 1.25]), though the headquarters of the *tribus* in Rome nearby (perhaps located in the Circus Flaminius: Taylor 1966:69, noting *Planc.* 55; cf. Deniaux 1987:289–92) might provide further opportunities. Metellus Pius had “supplicated” the Roman People on behalf of Q. Calidius at the praetorian elections in 80: *Planc.* 69.

55. *Planc.* 24–26. Naturally, Plancius' accusers tried to undercut the argument by presenting Cicero's efforts as a demonstration of *potentia vix ferenda* (24) and questioning his motives (68–82, 95). Cf. *Cic. Fam.* 2.6.3 (regarding Cicero's support for Milo): *nostram suffragationem, si minus potentem, at probatam tamen et iustam et debitam et propterea fortasse enim gratiosam.*

their commander's triumph, had heavily influenced the People in the election: "This kind of talk has weight: 'He restored me from my wounds'; 'he gave me booty'; 'he led our charge as we captured the camp, closed for the fight'; 'he never imposed greater toil on a soldier than he took up for himself'; 'he was as successful as he was brave.'" ⁵⁶

A second noteworthy example of the use of "friends" to influence the audience of the Roman People concerns visual rather than oral communication. An audience sees as well as hears. Visual spectacle is an aspect of politics never to be underestimated, least of all in Rome, a city whose life was a series of public events and rituals for the urban spectator to look upon: *contiones*, trials, *ludi* and *munera*, funerals, triumphs—and, of course, the ostentatious activity of *candidati* in the runup to the various elections. We saw earlier that the last item in the list Quintus gives of the means of winning over the *multitudo* is "political splendor" (*species in re publica*): "Finally, see to it that the whole campaign is full of show, that it be impressive, brilliant and appealing to the People, that it possess the greatest splendor and *dignitas*."⁵⁷ These rather vague words very likely refer above all to the attendance of crowds upon the candidate. In the semiotics of Roman public life the crowds meeting senators returning from abroad, escorting them after noteworthy successes or even simply to the Forum in the morning, were a key sign of *dignitas*. No one can read Cicero's description of his return to Rome from exile, in which the applauding throngs of the *infima plebs* lining the streets from the Porta Capena to the Capitol receive special emphasis, or the insult he hurls at L. Piso that on his return from his province no one went out to greet him—a shameful return, "lonelier than that of the lowest trader," so furtive that no one knew in advance even by which gate he was going to enter the city—without being impressed by the special significance that crowds have in Roman political symbolism.⁵⁸ So, too, one of the most striking sights of an electoral campaign, and at the same time a significant mark of *dignitas* to voters, were the crowds

56. *Mur.* 38. Cf. (*ibid.*) *num tibi haec parva videntur adiumenta et subsidia consulatus, voluntas militum, quaeque cum per se valet multitudine, cum apud suos gratia, tum vero in consule declarando multum etiam apud universum populum Romanum auctoritatis habet, suffragatio militaris?* See Wiseman 1971:121–22. Murena had been Lucullus' legate in Pontus and Armenia, and had played an important role in the siege of Amisus (Broughton, *MRR* 2.119).

57. *Postremo tota petitio cura ut pompae plena sit, ut inlustris, ut popularis sit, ut habeat summam speciem ac dignitatem . . .* (52). I have translated *ut popularis sit* with a phrase that does not suggest partisan politics, in accordance with Quintus' advice that immediately follows against taking partisan stands. On the emendation *speciem*, see above, n. 33.

58. Cicero's return: *Att.* 4.1.5; Piso's return: *Pis.* 53–55. Cf. the *frequentia* that attended Cicero after the execution of the Catilinarians (Plut. *Cic.* 22.5), or the clash with Nepos (*Pis.* 7); Deniaux 1987:283 adduces the crowd of 20,000 which is said to have attended Cicero in his crisis of 58 (Plut. *Cic.* 31). Even in ordinary times descent to the Forum among a crowd of friends was part of the daily ritual for a prominent senator (*Cic. Att.* 1.18.1), and a crowded house signified political strength and civic prominence: *Pis.* 64; *Att.* 2.22.3; *QF* 2.15.2. Rouland speaks aptly of "l'ostentation politique" of the Romans (1979:483–90); "Nous sommes dans un pays méditerranéen, ne l'oublions pas: le théâtre compte beaucoup, et presque tout se passe dans la rue" (1981:328).

that attended the candidate at all times during his canvass.⁵⁹ Quintus advises his brother emphatically “always to be attended by a crowd.”⁶⁰ Cicero must “see to it that the great number and variety of your friends is apparent.”⁶¹

Mention of “variety” is interesting, since elsewhere it is explicit that the crowd must exhibit “every type, order and age” of men.⁶² In fact those who performed this service were divided into three classes, corresponding broadly with social status: *deductores*, who escort the candidate when he descends to the Forum or Campus, are significant people—evidently senators and equites—who must not be kept waiting;⁶³ but the *salutatores*, who come to the candidate’s house to pay their respects at dawn, or even before dawn, clearly belong in good part to a lower social order,⁶⁴ and the *adsectatores*, who are assigned to attend the candidate everywhere throughout the day, were mostly a relatively humble lot.⁶⁵ In a society as status-conscious as Rome’s it seems reasonable to conclude that the function of constant attendance by such lesser men was to provide visible testimony to the voting audience of a man’s benevolence toward his social inferiors—such as were the mass of voters. The seriousness with which the symbolism of lower-class attendance was taken is shown by the legal ban on offering payment for this service: to hire followers was to deceive the electorate about one’s true “worth.”⁶⁶ Of course, the testimony to one’s *dignitas* offered by a crowd of

59. Deniaux 1987:283–85; cf. Vanderbroeck 1987:83–85. Taylor 1949:68–69, with n. 104, is clearly mistaken to associate this practice with tactics of intimidation; the strictures contained in Augustan *vis* legislation are immaterial to our case.

60. *Valde ego te volo et ad rem pertinere arbitror semper cum multitudine esse* (37).

61. *Deinde* [sc. *cura*] *ut amicorum et multitudo et genera appareant* (3: Nardo’s text; Henderson’s addition of <*fac*> is unnecessary).

62. *Id quoque curandum est ut* [sc. *adsestatione*] *cottidiana cuiusque generis et ordinis et aetatis utare* (34).

63. Cf. Cic. *Mur.* 70. Not to be kept waiting: *quod eius fieri poterit, certis temporibus descendito* (*Comm. Pet.* 36), with Taylor 1949:43. See *Att.* 2.1.5 for the remarkable picture of Cicero and Clodius acting as *deductores* to a candidate in 60, sparring verbally all the while. The convenience of *deductores* appears to have motivated the well-known practice of moving to the area of the Forum to further one’s political career: Cic. *Cael.* 18; Plut. *Cic.* 8.6; *Mar.* 32.1; and Deniaux 1987:284–85.

64. See Rouland 1979:266–68, 484–85; some *salutatores* were, of course, of relatively high rank: Brunt 1988:420. On the pre-dawn hour, see Cic. *Att.* 6.2.5 *ante lucem inambulabam domi ut olim candidatus*, and §§49, 50 (*multa nocte*).

65. On *adsectatores*, see §37 and Cic. *Mur.* 70–71 (where they are called *sectatores*); Rouland 1979:485–87. Although the nature of the service suggests that those who performed it were mostly the *homines tenues* discussed in the *Pro Murena*, youths with senatorial aspirations did so as well (§33 *studia adulescentulorum . . . in adsectando*; Cic. *Cael.* 10–14). The use of (*ad*)*sectatores* was regulated by a *lex Fabia*, often dated, without strong justification, in 64 before the writing of the *Comm. Pet.* (Fascione 1984:68–71, following Niccolini [but cf. p. 51]; contra, Gruen 1974:216 n. 25), as well as *senatus consulta* of 64 (presumably that which banned new *collegia*) and 63 (presumably incorporated into the *lex Tullia*) (*Mur.* 67, 70–73). The origins of this categorization of “friends” into three groups with differing degrees of access to the central figure appear to lie with C. Gracchus and the younger Livius Drusus (*Sen. Ben.* 6.34.1–3), whose great crowd of attendants during his tribunate was long remembered (Vell. 2.14.1; *Sen. Brev. Vit.* 6.1).

66. See the laws and *senatus consulta* cited in n. 65 above: the ban may reach back at least to the *lex Fabia* (Fascione 1984:69–70). The element of deception is noted by Fascione p. 84 but missed by

high-status *deductores* was of particular importance, as Quintus repeatedly points out.⁶⁷ The presence of men Cicero has saved in the courts will bring praise and “the greatest *dignitas*” (38),⁶⁸ for “one who is thought worthy (*dignus*) of defending consulars in the courts cannot be thought unworthy (*indignus*) of the consulship.”⁶⁹ Prestigious “friends” lend *dignitas* to the candidate even if they do not join in the electoral horse-trading.⁷⁰ Nobles and consulars were especially useful as certifiers of *dignitas*, for “it is advantageous if the very men whose rank and company you wish to attain think you worthy (*dignus*) of it”;⁷¹ and even noble youths, much attracted to Cicero because of his oratorical ascendancy, can confer *multum dignitatis* (6).⁷² It was attendance that brought such friendships and their commendations to the voters’ attention.⁷³

Quintus’ emphasis on “talk” and visual demonstrations suggests that the judgment of people whose votes were not already determined by pre-existing social ties was crucial in an election, and deserves special emphasis in view of the traditional tendency to see the function of electoral “friends” strictly in terms of private string-pulling and lobbying. The electoral effect of *these* uses of the *studia amicorum* does not follow from the social relation itself (as when a patron “encourages” his client to vote in a certain way) but from a kind of symbolic rhetoric aimed at a citizenry that has electoral choice.⁷⁴ Small won-

Lintott 1990:11, who sees the matter simply in terms of the threat of erosion of traditional patronal ties. Apparently it was acceptable to allow substitutes to take the place of men who could not attend their candidates (§37): it was the spectacle, and numbers, that counted.

67. *Magnam adfert opinionem, magnam dignitatem cottidiana in deducendo frequentia* (36). Compare how a young man was judged by the company he kept: *Off.* 2.46.

68. Note that they, too, will be judged by observers: *nedum ii quibus saluti fuisti ... non intellegant, si hoc tuo tempore tibi non satisfecerint, se probatos nemini unquam fore* (21).

69. *Non potest qui dignus habetur patronus consularium indignus consulatu putari* (2).

70. *Deinde sunt instituendi cuiusque generis amici: ad speciem, homines inlustres honore ac nomine, qui, etiamsi suffragandi studia non navant, tamen adferunt petitori aliquid dignitatis ...* (18). Cf. Meier 1966/1980:177–78. The active involvement of senior senators in younger candidates’ campaigns seems, however, hardly to have been so unusual as Meier claims, given the number of exceptions he adduces at 177 n. 91. Cf. Cicero’s remarks on the *dignitas* lent to Plancius’ canvass by the *equites Romani* and *tribuni aerarii* (*Planc.* 21).

71. *Prodest, quorum in locum ac numerum pervenire velis, ab iis ipsis illo loco ac numero dignum putari* (4). Cicero was indeed quite worried about the attitude of the nobility toward his candidacy (*Att.* 1.1.2, 1.2.2). See Wiseman 1971:135.

72. Cf. §33, and on the extent of Cicero’s support among the youth, also §3.

73. Paterson’s assertion that the point of surrounding oneself with a crowd was “to give the impression that such men gathered because of the favours which the candidate could dispense” (Paterson 1985:33) is somewhat misleading. The conferral of *dignitas*—which is not the same thing as *gratia*—is what is repeatedly stressed in this connection. Cf., rightly, Fiore 1997:70: “The number of one’s friends was itself an indication of the quality of the candidate.” Such crowds were, of course, also a visible gauge of a candidate’s chances and confidence—a kind of ancient voters’ poll: *Ex ea ipsa copia coniectura fieri poterit quantum sis in ipso campo virium ac facultatis habiturus* (34); Rouland 1981:222; Paterson 1985:33. Cf. *Cic. Mur.* 44–45 on the danger of losing support in the midst of the campaign as a result of such conjectures, though the evidence mentioned here is the candidate’s demeanor, not the numbers in attendance.

74. Cf. Bell 1997:10.

der that Quintus himself can hardly draw a clean line between the twin pursuits of mobilizing “friends” and cultivating the populace.⁷⁵ Naturally: where the focus in an election is on a candidate’s moral qualities rather than what we recognize as political issues, the spheres of “personal” and “political” can hardly be kept distinct. Marcus Cicero himself comments in his ethical manual for his son, the *De Officiis*, that “the affection of the multitude is powerfully aroused by the very reputation for generosity, philanthropy, justice, trust and all those virtues that are associated with a mild and amenable character,” and he goes on to recommend in particular forensic pleading as a way of bringing these before the public.⁷⁶ The “popularity” of assisting friends in the courtroom is a theme one can trace over centuries, from Polybius’ discussion of Scipio Aemilianus’ preparation for public life to Tacitus’ sketch of the People’s view of the conspirator C. Piso in A.D. 65.⁷⁷ In a letter to Atticus from the terrible year 59, Cicero notes that despite his withdrawal from high politics he is maintaining his “popularity and resources” by forensic efforts on behalf of friends, “which I perceive to be a fine road to the favour not only of those who use my services but of the general public as well. My house is thronged with visitors, people come up to me, recalling my consulship and professing good will.”⁷⁸

It is true that as a consular candidate Cicero is in particular need of this kind of “certification” because, as Quintus acknowledges, the People are not predisposed to favor “new men.” On the contrary, Quintus knows that his brother is aware “how many among the people are envious [of new men], how many, following recent practice, are hostile to them.”⁷⁹ This statement may be surprising at first glance but fits in with numerous other references in our sources to “the conservatism and snobbery of an electorate that respected traditional values.”⁸⁰ In his oratory, Cicero repeatedly attributes the electoral advantage of those who could boast noble descent and atria full of *imagines* to voters’ preferences rather than a wide network of dependency; the *commendatio maiorum* that a noble like Iuventius Laterensis enjoyed was a kind of esteemed brand-name that a Cicero

75. §49; note also §17.

76. *Off.* 2.32; cf. 2.49–51.

77. *Pol.* 31.29.8. Tacitus’ description of Piso’s popularity would have been fully at home in a Republican context: *claro apud vulgum rumore erat per virtutem aut species virtutibus similes. namque facundiam tuendis civibus exercebat, largitionem adversum amicos, et ignotis quoque comi sermone et congressu; aderant etiam fortuita, corpus procerum, decora facies . . .* (*Ann.* 15.48.2–3). Cf. *Cic. Off.* 2.49–51, and *Leg. Man.2: meus labor in privatorum periculis caste integreque versatus ex vestro iudicio fructum est amplissimum consecutus*. See now David 1992: 407–654.

78. *Att.* 2.22.3 (Shackleton Bailey trans.).

79. *Iam in populo quam multi invidi sint, quam multi consuetudine horum annorum ab hominibus novis alienati venire tibi in mentem certe scio* (14). *Consuetudine horum annorum* seems to allude to the Sullan closing of ranks among the nobility: Meier 1966/1980:258 n. 338. On the ideology of *novitas* and resistance to it, see Wiseman 1971:107–13.

80. Nicolet 1980:311.

or a Marius could not tout.⁸¹ Even simple social prejudice was not unique to the élite: when Mark Antony made consul his great, but low-born general Ventidius Bassus, the *populus Romanus* took it so ill that a man they recalled as a muleteer had reached this pinnacle that verses of ridicule were posted through the streets.⁸² This ideological aspect of the power of the nobility to which Quintus alludes is generally noted, but its corollary is too little stressed; for in fact it shows that one does not need to resort to the Gelzerian hypothesis of a population “permeated” by patronage-relations to explain the power and exclusivity (always relative) of the nobility.⁸³ These the “conservatism and snobbery” of the Roman voter perpetuated quite nicely by the free exercise of the vote: thus a new man is well advised to parade noble friends before the People as a visible certification of his *dignitas* to his voting audience.

* * *

I have argued thus far that in the *Commentariolum Petitionis*, far from presenting a consular campaign as little more than an exercise in mobilizing personal connections leading from the candidate to the individual voter, Quintus Cicero presumes that it is indispensable for the candidate to win over a mass of voters unconnected with him, directly or indirectly, by binding social ties. He must do so by behaving in a respectful and solicitous manner in the public eye and by advertising his *dignitas* through word of mouth (especially the mouths of his “friends”) as well as a public display of his “friends.” Yet there is no doubt that Quintus has much to say also about cultivating electoral support through personal connections, especially with the nobility—indubitably important features of the essay that have *prima facie* appeared to substantiate the hypothesis that Republican

81. Cic. *Planc.* 67: *eadem igitur, Cassi, via munita Laterensi est, idem virtuti cursus ad gloriam, hoc facilius fortasse quod ego huc a me ortus et per me nixus ascendi, istius egregia virtus adiuvabitur commendatione maiorum.* Cicero’s argument in the *Pro Plancio* that in aedilician elections the People demand “supplication” even by noble candidates indicates through the qualification itself the importance of nobility in the voter’s mind (12–18, 50), while *Mur.* 16 expresses the assumption that nobility was a factor affecting voters’ choice. Other noteworthy passages include *Sest.* 21: *Alter [Piso, cos. 58] multos plane in omnis partis fefellit; erat enim hominum opinioni nobilitate ipsa, blanda conciliatricula, commendatus. Omnes boni semper nobilitati favemus, et quia utile est rei publicae nobilis homines esse dignos maioribus suis, et quia valet apud nos clarorum hominum et bene de re publica meritorum memoria, etiam mortuorum;* cf. *Pis.* 1–2. Note also *Fam.* 15.12.1: *mihi numquam fuit dubium quin te [sc. L. Aemilium Paulum] populus Romanus pro tuis summis in rem publicam meritis et pro amplissima familiae dignitate summo studio cunctis suffragiis consulem facturus esset.* On the guarantee ostensibly provided by an illustrious pedigree, cf. *Leg. agr.* 2.100; the popular notion is trenchantly criticized at *Sall. Jug.* 85.14–25, 37–38. On the *commendatio maiorum* see now Flower 1996, esp. 60–90. Develin 1985:100 observes that “Family name was not in fact a bad criterion.”

82. Gell. *NA* 15.4.3: “*concurrere, omnes augures, haruspices! Portentum inusitatum conflatum est recens: nam mulas qui fricabat, consul factus est.*”

83. Rightly Brunt 1988:425: “there was a general proclivity to prefer men whose ancestors had served the state well,” which was not the same thing as “submission to particular noble patrons” (441). Syme 1939:11; Wiseman 1971:105; and Gruen 1974:122 (e.g.) all note this popular inclination but do not comment on the tension between this idea and the view that an election was an exercise in mobilizing committed *clientelae*.

elections were determined by the deployment of great patronage-networks by nobles.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Brunt, in his recent rebuttal of the traditional model of patronage, notes in passing some aspects of the *Commentariolum*'s treatment of *amicorum studia* that seem to contradict that hypothesis. Brunt cites the instability of the relationships Quintus speaks of, the extremely wide diffusion of persons he must solicit (not just the nobility), and the near-absence of explicit reference to *clientela* in the essay.⁸⁵ His comments are suggestive, but—inevitably, given the brevity of his treatment of the tract in passing—somewhat superficial. The evidence the *Commentariolum* provides for the questions of the electoral power of the nobility and of the role of patronage in an election requires a more extended analysis.

One problem must be addressed in advance. Discussion of Roman patronage is often bedeviled by shifting definitions of the phenomenon. We must not insist on the appearance of the explicit terminology of patronage (e.g. *cliens*, *patronus*, *patrocinium*): *amicus* is a common euphemism for *cliens*, and many *amici* were “clients” indeed in the modern sociological sense even if no polite Roman would have dreamed of calling them *clientes*.⁸⁶ Our interpretation of social facts cannot be dependent on the varying terminological etiquette we find in our sources.⁸⁷ It means little therefore that the word *cliens*, for example, appears only once in the *Commentariolum*.⁸⁸ Nor are all political friendships examples of patronage, a name best reserved for a personal bond of some duration involving reciprocal exchange among social unequals; exchanges of services between socio-political equals, or simple and transient political deals, are not to be confused with patronage.⁸⁹ These distinctions are, it will be seen, crucial in interpreting the evidence of the *Commentariolum*.

84. Above, nn. 2–4.

85. Brunt 1988:428.

86. Esp. Saller 1982:7–22 and 1989; Deniaux 1993:3–6; cf. Rouland 1979:455–64. For a brief and accessible discussion of the definition of patronage as a social relation, see Johnson and Dandeker 1989, esp. 221–22. Paterson 1985:31, 34 does not clearly distinguish his notion of the senator as “broker” from that of patron; patrons, too, function as “brokers” (see Rouland’s interesting and entertaining survey of modern patronage at 1981:296–325). Useful introductions to modern theoretical and comparative work on patronage include: Schmidt et al. 1977; Gellner and Waterbury 1977; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984.

87. Contra Millar 1984:17, our use of a concept which is not exactly matched, without overlap, by any single Latin term is hardly “to say that curiosity about the exact nuances of ancient social and political relationships is superfluous.” Brunt’s chapter on *clientela* (1988: e.g., 417) and Rouland’s monograph are both at times vitiated by an over-emphasis on explicit use of the terminology of patronage.

88. §17: contra Brunt 1988:428. Note that Cicero never uses *cliens* to refer to a man for whom he writes a recommendation (Deniaux 1993:189–91).

89. Saller 1982:1: “To distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the market-place, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration.” It is worth noting, however, that patronage is not by definition hereditary. Paterson rightly stresses the transitory nature of electoral deals (1985:32–33, 35). Fiore 1997:69–73 and Konstan 1997:128–29 discuss *amicitia* in the *Commentariolum* against the background of Ciceronian theory of friendship.

Let us begin with the electoral role of the nobility, as it is seen in the *Commentariolum*. Early in the tract Quintus points out that the favor of nobles and especially consulars is of great help to a “new man.” But why? Because, as we have seen, their judgment of one’s worthiness carries special weight.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, he remarks that the consulship is an office that one cannot obtain solely through the favor of the urban masses and “those who control the *contiones*” but which demands the goodwill of *splendidi homines*, presumably the *nobiles*.⁹¹ Although we are not told precisely what mechanism brings about this benefit, it is striking that when Quintus writes of the benefits that nobles have to offer Cicero’s candidacy he never mentions their ostensible capacity to mobilize masses of “clients” and transfer their votes to a candidate. Instead, as we have already seen, nobles and consulars are represented as bringing *species* or *dignitas* to the campaign rather than for any concrete assistance as vote-brokers, while on the other hand it is a different category of men, of lesser rank, which is regularly brought up in that connection.

The division of the three major types of “friends” that Quintus proceeds to make confirms the point that the value of noble support does not rest on their purported ability to mobilize clients. “Then, you must set up friends of every sort: for show (*speciem*), men of illustrious career and name (who bring a candidate some prestige, even if they do not take an active interest in canvassing); to maintain your legal rights, magistrates (especially the consuls; next the tribunes of the People);⁹² for getting the votes of the centuries, persons of exceptional influence.”⁹³ These categories may not be rigidly exclusive of each other (perhaps most *homines inlustres honore ac nomine* could be counted on to “deliver” their century, for example), but it is implied that the *homines inlustres honore ac nomine* are not the people who possess “enormous influence” (*homines excellenti gratia*) and will attempt to “fix” the centuries. As Quintus goes on to speak of these *homines ambitiosi* who “have worked out how to get what they ask from their fellow tribe-members” (18) it becomes evident that he is talking not about the high nobility but those who seek to have influence among candidates and magistrates by their ability to deliver the vote of certain groups to which they belong (centuries, tribes, towns, *sodalitates* and so on).⁹⁴ So, for example, Quintus notes that his

90. §4, quoted above, n. 71. Cf. §§2 (quoted above, n. 69) and 6 (noble youths).

91. *Iam urbanam illam multitudinem et eorum studia qui contiones tenent adeptus es . . . ; excitanda nobis sunt quae adhuc habuit nemo quin idem splendorum hominum voluntates haberet* (51).

92. See Meier 1966/1980:192 n. 182. Taylor 1949:209 n. 86 mistakenly claims that Quintus describes the magistrates as *excellenti gratia ad conficiendas centurias* (text below, n. 93).

93. (Henderson trans.) *Deinde sunt instituendi cuiusque generis amici: ad speciem, homines inlustres honore ac nomine, qui, etiamsi suffragandi studia non navant, tamen adferunt petitori aliquid dignitatis; ad ius obtinendum, magistratus, ex quibus maxime consules, deinde tribuni pl.; ad conficiendas centurias, homines excellenti gratia* (18).

94. A sense of such trafficking in votes through *noti homines* of the tribes—and the potential for arousing popular *invidia* about it—is given at Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.21.

brother's defense of C. Fundanius, Q. Gallius, C. Cornelius and C. Orchivius won for him four *sodalitates* (19).⁹⁵ These men are labeled by Quintus *homines ad ambitionem gratiosissimi*, evidently just the kind of effective vote-brokers he has in mind; but none of them was noble, only two of them (Gallius and Orchivius) reached as high as the praetorship (and stopped there), and only one achieved very brief prominence on the political stage.⁹⁶

Some such vote-brokers were municipal men: Quintus speaks also of "certain men who are influential in their regions and towns" who, though unpracticed in the art of vote-brokering, nevertheless "can easily work it out on the spot for the sake of one to whom they are indebted or inclined."⁹⁷ They might also be of fairly low social status: Quintus stresses that there are "many diligent men of the city, many freedmen who are influential and effective in the Forum" whom Cicero must exert every effort to have on his side.⁹⁸ In Rome he must join to himself the chief men of the *collegia, montes, pagi* and *vicinitates* of the city, who will bring over the rest of their organizations.⁹⁹ "So, when those whose own electioneering ambition has gained them most influence with their tribesmen are busy for you in the centuries—and when you have established, as persons desirous of your interests, those others who carry weight with some of their tribesmen by reason of their home town, district or *Colleg*—then your hopes should be high."¹⁰⁰

Quintus is talking, then, about minor senators, the chiefs of plebeian urban organizations, municipal magnates and even freedmen: not the consulars and

95. On the electoral use of *sodalitates*, see Wiseman 1971:132–33.

96. A Fundanius was consul in 243, but even if the Ciceronian Fundanius was a descendent this was a distant claim to nobility. On the relevance of this passage for the question of authenticity, see David 1973; Ramsay 1980:406 points out that the text does not demand that the trials had already taken place (perhaps Orchivius was never tried: p. 407) and, pursuing a suggestion of Balsdon 1963:249, argues that Gallius' trial actually postdated the *Comm. Pet. Contra*: David 1992: 232 n. 11.

97. §24 (*homines in suis vicinitatibus et municipiis gratiosi*). Plancius and his father seem to have been just such local power-brokers: note the presence of so many of his *municipes* and *vicini* at his election and trial (19–23; cf. 46–47). Note that *homines honesti atque in suis vicinitatibus et municipiis gratiosi* were up in arms against Ser. Sulpicius Rufus' talk of tightening the *ambitus* law in 63 (Cic. *Mur.* 47). On local loyalties and municipal grandees, see Wiseman 1971:136–38.

98. *Multi homines urbani industrii, multi libertini in foro gratiosi navique versantur; quos per te, quos per communis amicos poteris, summa cura ut cupidi tui sint elaborato, appetito, adlegato, summo beneficio te adfici ostendito* (29).

99. *Deinde habeto rationem urbis totius, conlegiorum, montium* (Mommsen: *omnium* MS.), *pagorum, vicinitatum; ex his principes ad amicitiam tuam si adiunxeris, per eos reliquam multitudinem facile tenebis* (30). On these urban organizations, see Flambard 1981 (150–51 on the emendation, not accepted by Nardo or Henderson; *vicinitates* = *vici*: p. 151, n. 57). Since this statement is firmly set within the context of such urban organizations (note the qualified sense of *principes*), I understand *reliqua multitudo* in the same context (thus Flambard, and Lintott 1990:10): not, therefore, the urban masses in general, as later in the *popularis pars petitionis* (§§ 44, 49, 51 and 53; so Yakobson 1992:34).

100. (Henderson trans.) *Ita cum et hos ipsos, propter suam ambitionem qui apud tribulis suos plurimum gratia possunt, studiosos in centuriis habebis et ceteros qui apud aliquam partem tribulium propter municipi aut vicinitatis aut conlegi rationem valent cupidos tui constitueris, in optima spe esse debebis* (32).

great nobles but intermediary “vote-brokers” who normally worked well below what is for us the political horizon.¹⁰¹ This fits well with other information we possess about electoral *gratiosi*. Although nobles appear among those designated as such, it is noteworthy that they are as a rule young men at the beginning of their careers.¹⁰² Young C. Curio, at no more than quaestorian rank in 53, was particularly *gratiosus* among the tribes.¹⁰³ But Cicero’s client Plancius, a “new man” not yet aedile, was *gratiosus*, like his equestrian father, while even his noble competitor, Iuventius Laterensis, saw fit to make use of the “friendships” of *gratiosi* in his campaign.¹⁰⁴

The lack of a clear match between electioneering influence and nobility is also noteworthy in Quintus’ discussion of Cicero’s noble competitors early in the treatise (§§7–12). Great nobles such as P. Sulpicius Galba and L. Cassius Longinus, *summo loco nati* and *amplissimis ex familiis*, are dismissed as being without a prayer in the election (7), despite the inherited networks of dependency such men are normally presumed, even without explicit evidence, to have enjoyed. (Similarly, the year before, Cicero himself had judged two noble candidates for the consulship, Q. Minucius Thermus and D. Iunius Silanus, *inopes et ab amicis et existimatione*.¹⁰⁵) As for Cicero’s two more serious noble competitors, nowhere does Quintus equate their electoral strength with the size of their clientele. Indeed, he singles out Antonius’ and Catiline’s contemptible assemblage of “friends” for scornful comment.¹⁰⁶ But the main theme is their deficiency in *virtus*: they are “not nearly so illustrious in descent as notable (*nobiles*) for their immorality,” and “there is no citizen so depraved as to unsheathe two daggers

101. Contra Taylor 1949:63. Cf. Vanderbroeck 1987:56–57, who rightly identifies *gratiosi* and *noti homines*; Brunt 1988:428 n. 119.

102. Note esp. Cic. *Planc.* 45: *neque hoc liberis nostris interdicendum est, ne observent tribulis suos, ne diligant, ne conficere necessariis suis suam tribum possint, ne par ab eis munus in sua petitione respectent*. At *Fam.* 2.6.3, Cicero distinguishes between the *boni* and the *gratiosi in suffragiis*, whom he significantly associates with the *iuventus*. On the electioneering efforts of *adulescentes*, often nobles, see *Comm. Pet.* 6 (cf. 3, 33), with Meier 1966/1980:177; Wiseman 1971:135–36.

103. Cicero requests Curio to act as *dux* in Milo’s consular campaign (*Fam.* 2.6.3) and makes much of his electioneering in behalf of Antony in 50 (*Phil.* 2.4). On Cicero’s letters requesting assistance in electioneering, see Deniaux 1993:287–97. The tyrannicide Dec. Brutus, whom Cicero flatters as enjoying *regnum* in the equestrian centuries (*Fam.* 11.16.3), had at least reached the praetorship, but is of course an exceptional case (Brunt 1988:430). Also atypical is P. Cornelius Cethegus, without whose approval, it was said, no public measure could be passed in the 70s (Plut. *Luc.* 5.3–6.3; cf. Cic. *Paradox.* 40, *Brut.* 178; Ps.-Ascon. p. 259 St; Gruen 1974:39–40). No evidence explicitly refers to his *gratia* among the voting units, but it is a fair guess that this was how he dominated his superiors in rank: cf. Taylor 1949:70; Meier 1966/1980:180–81; Broughton, *MRR* 3.64. Yet he was not a member of the circle of consulars and may not even have reached the praetorship: the disjunction between electioneering influence and official rank remains.

104. Cic. *Planc.* 46.

105. Brunt 1988:427.

106. C. Antonius: *In praetura competitorem habuimus amico Sabidio et Panthera, quom ad tabulam quos poneret non haberet* . . . (8). On Sabidius and Panthera, see David and Nicolet 1973. *Nullis amicis*: §28. On Catiline’s friends (10), see Flambard, Nicolet, and David 1973.

against the state with his single vote” (12). The advantage of nobility is a matter of *splendor*, of illustrious descent—a view wholly consistent with that taken above on the *commendatio maiorum*—not of extensive social connections.¹⁰⁷ The great advantages enjoyed by the noble competitors of the new man C. Coelius in 95—their “great ability, great modesty, many services, and great electoral strategy and perseverance”—are regarded by Quintus as distinct from their nobility.¹⁰⁸ It is presumed in this whole discussion that nobles cannot rely on their inherited social network and political prestige and forgo the strategies of cultivating support that are the subject of the essay as a whole.¹⁰⁹ The noble C. Aurelius Cotta was obliged to engage in the same electoral solicitations as Quintus recommends to Cicero; this “electioneering artist” (*in ambitione artifex*) said that as a rule he promised favors to everybody—and fulfilled those that would pay off best (47).¹¹⁰

One part of the traditional model of Roman political organization that ill fits the picture provided by the *Commentariolum Petitionis*, then, is the assumption that patronage radiated downward (and outward) from the *nobiles* to the ordinary citizen: we should hardly suppose, for example, that the voters of the first class, whose importance was so great in the centuriate assembly, were “bound to the leading houses of Rome.”¹¹¹ This is not to say that personal connections were of little importance: “A man must have outstanding renown, prestige, and achievements to make strangers confer an honour upon him, if no one solicits them to do so.”¹¹² But where patronage is most conspicuous in our evidence, on the contrary, is at the level of the middle to low-rank *homines gratiosi*. The *gratiosi* had a variety of ways of “delivering” their tribes and centuries, not all of them, no doubt, open to view. Cold, hard cash must have had something to do with it; but officially of course it was all just fine old *studium*.¹¹³ “There have always been good men (*virii boni*) who wished to be influential among their fellow tribesmen,” Cicero pleads in defense of Plancius; generosity and kindness to the plebs, he cries, are honorable qualities hallowed by tradition,¹¹⁴ and doing one’s duty to friends is not to be tainted by opprobrious language. Plancius was generous to

107. *Splendor*: §9. Descent: §§7, 12.

108. *Ille cum duobus hominibus ita nobilissimis petebat ut tamen in iis omnia pluris essent quam ipsa nobilitas, summa ingenia, summus pudor, plurima beneficia, summa ratio ac diligentia petendi* (11).

109. Cf. Brunt 1988:390–91, 395–96.

110. Cf. Meier 1966/1980:175. On Cotta’s expertise in *ambitio* see also Sall. *H.* 2.42 M, as emended by Perl (cf. McGushin 1992:49, 206), and 3.48.8 M, *ex factione media consul*.

111. Taylor 1949:62.

112. (An adaptation of Henderson’s trans.) *Eximiam quandam gloriam et dignitatem ac rerum gestarum magnitudinem esse oportet in eo quem homines ignoti nullis suffragantibus honore adficiant* (28).

113. Cic. *Planc.* 44–48. On *divisores*, who perhaps in many cases were the same as the *gratiosi* in *tribu*, see Nicolet 1980:306–308; Vanderbroeck 1987:62–64; Lintott 1990:7–8; Deniaux 1987:290–97; Jehne 1995c:66–67.

114. Indeed, Cato was nearly killed by a mob that rioted in response to his proposal, as praetor in 54, to require candidates to submit accounts of their election (Plut. *Cat. min.* 44.2–4).

many in his tribe, stood surety for many and secured work for many more through the authority and influence of his father; such services, along with those of his father and ancestors, won him almost the entire prefecture of Atina.¹¹⁵ Getting seats at major festivals and games for the members of one's tribe and offering them banquets were further services that yielded influence and were fully legal.¹¹⁶ However, *gratiosi homines* hardly held their clients in thrall. Certainly at the crucial electoral level of the tribes and centuries, their power to deliver the vote can hardly have been absolute, given the geographical fragmentation of the tribes and the pluralism of influence that must have obtained in most of them (Julius Caesar, his frequent adversary L. Domitius Ahenobarbus and Q. Metellus Scipio all belonged to the same tribe).¹¹⁷ L. Luceius' attempt to deliver his tribe for Favonius' quaestorian election in 60 failed.¹¹⁸

This is patronage at ground level (so to speak), over much smaller groups, from the individual tribe down to *collegium* and *vicus*, than was ultimately needed for election. Consequently, the portion of the *Commentariolum* concerned with "friendships" is dominated by the problem of assembling a coalition of such low- and middle-level patrons in the city and around the peninsula that will ultimately deliver a majority of the centuries.¹¹⁹ What role, in turn, does patronage play in this effort to cultivate the support of influential "friends"? Here it is necessary to be precise about our terms: as noted above, the concept cannot be broadened to extend to all exchanges of political favors, no matter how transient, or how symmetrical the relationship. With this distinction in mind, let us examine some of the significant hints about the character of the relationships Quintus discusses.

In his review of the techniques of cultivating the support of "friends," Quintus is not very specific about the precise nature of the exchange of services that constitute the relationship. But where he is, the indications point to electoral deals between approximate status-equals based on potentially short-term mutual interest rather than to an underlying social hierarchy. Of those in Cicero's debt, the

115. Cic. *Planc.* 47. The letters of recommendation preserved in the Ciceronian corpus include one for a *tribulis et municeps et familiaris* (*Fam.* 13.58) and one for the freedman of a *tribulis* (*Fam.* 13.23). See Deniaux 1993:165–66, 485–87, 492.

116. On obtaining seats at gladiatorial *munera*, see Cic. *Mur.* 67, 72–73; *Att.* 2.1.5; *Q F* 3.1.1 (see Shackleton Bailey's commentary) suggests that the same might be done at the *ludi*. Ville 1981:430–31; cf. Vanderbroeck 1987:79–80. According to K. Welch's attractive hypothesis, the temporary wooden stands for gladiatorial events in the Forum will have accommodated some 10,000 spectators (Welch 1994:76)—clearly not enough room for everyone who wanted to see them well, as the anecdote in Plut. *C. Gracch.* 12.3–4 shows. On banquets, see above, n. 38.

117. Taylor 1949:62–63 and 1960:198, 211, 221. Cf. Staveley 1972:196–97. In addition, it is commonly supposed that each voter cast a plurality of votes, equal to the number of spots to be filled: thus a pledge of one vote for a local patron did not remove the client's freedom of action with the other (Meier 1966/1980:39–40). But this is not quite certain, and certainly seems unwieldy in the elections for the 10 tribunes, 20 quaestors or 24 military tribunes (Nicolet 1980:274).

118. Below, n. 125.

119. See esp. §§29–31.

most important group is that of people whom he has defended in the courts.¹²⁰ Men who are thus under obligation to Cicero are obviously not necessarily “clients” even in the sociological sense: some of them are of equal status, others are indeed of *higher* social status and can thus shed *dignitas* on Cicero.¹²¹ It is consistent with this fact that the discussion of appeals to such men implies that their debt to Cicero might be repaid and the account balanced (so to speak): for example, Cicero is advised to stress to those obligated to him that, although he has never called on them before, he has reserved their entire debt for this one occasion, and no later one will do.¹²² At one point indeed Quintus seems to allude to quasi-formal agreements arranged by himself with four *sodalitates* whose members Cicero had recently defended, or promised to defend; he is to stress repeatedly to them that they will have no other time to repay him, and they will surely respond both to his recent services and to the hope of further returns.¹²³ While there is some expectation of continued benefit from the relationship in the future, the formalized nature of the exchange of specific services between status-equals is inconsistent with the patron-client relationship.¹²⁴ Finally, Cicero can offer other services as well as legal defense: Quintus writes that Cicero should “recruit and retain” those who “have received from you, or hope to receive, a tribe or century or other service.”¹²⁵ On the other hand, Cicero can also attract key supporters by offering them the incomparable opportunity *to put him in their debt* by means of their timely electoral assistance in the campaign.¹²⁶ But these are manifestly

120. *Quoniam eo genere amicitiarum petitio tua maxime munita est quod ex causarum defensionibus adeptus es . . .* (20); *nedum ii quibus saluti fuisti, quos tu habes plurimos* (21). Cf. §38, *alii rem, alii honestatem, alii salutem ac fortunas omnis obtinuerunt*.

121. Equal: *Etiam novos homines praetorios existimo, nisi qui tuo beneficio vincti sunt, nolle abs te se honore superari* (13). Higher: above, n. 69. Cf. §3, *multos abs te defensos homines cuiusque ordinis*. On forensic patronage, see now David 1992, esp. pp. 49–275.

122. *Quemadmodum nemini illorum molestus nulla in re umquam fuisti, sic cura ut intellegant omnia te quae ab illis tibi deberi putaris ad hoc tempus reservesse* (20); *quoniam . . . nec aliud ullum tempus futurumst ubi tibi referre gratiam possint* (38; the same sentiment at §4). Cf. Rouland 1979:474.

123. *Horum in causis ad te deferendis quid tibi eorum sodales receperint et confirmarint scio, nam interfui; quare hoc tibi faciendum est, hoc tempore ut ab his quod debent exigas saepe commonendo, rogando, confirmando, curando ut intellegant nullum se umquam aliud tempus habituros referendae gratiae; profecto homines et spe reliquorum tuorum officiorum et [iam] recentibus beneficiis ad studium navandum excitabuntur* (19).

124. Cf. Rouland 1979:474. A different view, however, in David 1992: 145–64, 232–33.

125. *Qui abs te tribum aut centuriam aut aliquod beneficium aut habeant aut ut habeant sperent, eos prorsus magnopere et compara et confirma* (18). Taylor 1949:53 curiously takes this to be a reference to arranging to change a man’s tribe rather than, as it must be, to the practice of “delivering” the vote of a tribe or century for a candidate. For an example, see *Cic. Att.* 2.1.9: Cicero and Lucceius evidently had arranged to “deliver” their tribes to Favonius in the quaestorian elections of 60; Cicero did his work well, for Favonius won his tribe more decisively than his own, and lost Lucceius’. For a deal, apparently legal, among competitors, see *Planc.* 54; a *coitio* differed from this in being a strict two-way alliance. See Meier 1966/1980:178–80; Wiseman 1971:134; and above on the exertion of influence in the tribes.

126. *Commonendo et rogando et omni ratione efficiendo ut intellegant qui debent tua causa, referendae gratiae, qui volunt, obligandi tui tempus sibi aliud nullum fore* (4).

exchanges of finite favors, at least in part certainly between status-equals. Nothing in all this suggests that patronage underlay these deals rather than typical political bargaining.

By contrast, Cicero's actual "clients"—whose number even at this stage of his career is not to be belittled¹²⁷—are only vaguely perceived in the tract. The one explicit mention of *clientes* (along with freedmen and slaves) appears in the section devoted to the *popularis voluntas*, where Quintus asserts that a public reputation depends on the "talk" emanating from one's closest associates,¹²⁸ while other *amici* in the essay who would probably merit being called in the modern sense "clients"—the *tenues homines* among the *salutatores* and *adsectatores*—similarly appear to be valued solely for their contribution to the spectacle of canvassing.¹²⁹ The inconspicuousness of personal clients in the essay is evidently due not to the insignificance of patronage but to the fact that, as noted already, the electoral problem Quintus poses is one of assembling a wide coalition across the centuries; one's personal clients are unlikely to have had significant electoral weight in more than a very few centuries.¹³⁰

There can be little doubt that the consulship itself will offer the chance to extend one's network of patronage. Clearly the executive power of the consulship offered many chances to distribute benefits, and promising candidates can use this fact to draw supporters, who will flock to them to improve their own prospects in the manner of modern political lobbyists.¹³¹ Those who hope for something from Cicero are, Quintus comments dryly, an "even more persistent and dutiful category of men" (*genus hominum multo etiamst diligentius atque officiosius*) than those who are already indebted to him (22). But here again we must not presume that all exchanges of favors are a manifestation of the patron-client relationship. Men thus drawn to Cicero were looking for a good investment.¹³² The main attraction of Cicero's "friendship" at that moment will have been the prospect of having one of the chief executive officers of the state for the following year in their debt; after that year, another consul will take his place and become the new focus of attention. Some will have had the ex-consul's tenure of a province in view: Murena's consular competitor Ser. Sulpicius Rufus had let it be known that he would not take a province after his consulship; but, Cicero delicately

127. Brunt 1988:397 with n. 39; see now the detailed study by Deniaux 1993 of the men and communities in Cicero's letters of recommendation.

128. Brunt 1988:428.

129. §§34–37; see above.

130. This is likely to be the explanation of Cicero's comment (*Mur.* 71) that *si nihil erit praeter ipsorum suffragium, tenues, etsi suffragantur, nil valent gratia*, which is often understood to mean that the electoral weight of the poor in the *comitia centuriata* was entirely negligible. Cf. Yakobson 1992:37–38 for another explanation, stressing that "individual *tenues*" would have been swamped in their relatively large centuries.

131. Cf. above, nn. 125 and 126.

132. §26, esp. *modo ut intellegat te magni se aestimare, ex animo agere, bene se ponere, fore ex eo non brevem et suffragatoriam sed firmam et perpetuam amicitiam*.

suggests, “consider how the support of some friends often weakens toward those they perceive to be uninterested in taking a province.”¹³³ Obviously, these are “friends” who seek some specific return on their investment in the near term from someone holding an official position; whether they will establish a client-patron relationship that will outlast a man’s consulship is completely unclear. But in any case it does not seem likely that even tenure of the consulship regularly resulted in the creation of a electorally significant network of patronage, since *consulares* as such do not feature prominently among the “vote-brokers” that occupy Quintus’ attention.¹³⁴

Of the “friends” whose help Cicero is pressed to solicit, it is striking, and important, that Quintus treats nearly all as independent agents, competent to make their own deals and not bound to any major figures (and thus available for Cicero to win over); yet they range in status down to the level of *liberti*. Brunt rightly comments that “the magnates could not even rely on the obedience of their own freedmen.”¹³⁵ The *Commentariolum*, then, suggests that a relatively “free market” of political deal-making existed between candidates and vote-brokers, not a structure of exchange largely determined by pre-existing ties of patronage.¹³⁶

The importance of this point needs to be underscored. Patronage was indeed pervasive in a Roman election; a fair portion of votes must have been cast in accordance with the wishes of the sort of men Quintus advised his brother to court so assiduously, and given the structure of group voting this must have yielded agreeable results. Yet so far as electoral success depended on personal connections at all, it depended not on the candidate’s own place in the nexus of patron-client relationships but on his ability to orchestrate, through the deft exploitation of political favors past or promised, the support of a host of mid- to low-level vote-brokers who disposed of relatively small and localized clienteles. They cut their electoral deals with competing candidates on the basis of often-transitory mutual interest, not pre-existing and durable social bonds. Nobles enjoyed a considerable advantage, but it lay more in their inherited and accumulated *dignitas* than in some power to deploy a decisive mass of “clients.” Given the particularity of interests and the fragmentation of influence in the electorate, it is no surprise that elections were not readily predictable.¹³⁷

* * *

133. *Mur.* 42. Meier 1966/1980:192 n. 185; Paterson 1985:33.

134. On the importance of the goodwill of *consulares* (§4), see above.

135. Brunt 1988:430. In a similar vein, note that Quintus points out that *salutatores* often visit more than one candidate, though they might be brought around to exclusive loyalty if one shows that their small service is highly valued (35); evidently, even they are not tightly or exclusively bound by patronal ties and are open to seduction by a better bargain (contra Vanderbroeck 1987:83–85). “Client choice” is, of course, normal in patronage, even essential according to Johnson and Dandeker; but the more unrestricted it becomes, the emptier the conceptual content of patronage.

136. Brunt 1988:428, 429–30.

137. Meier 1966/1980:39–40; Brunt 1988:399, 428–30; Paterson 1985:28.

This re-examination of the *Commentariolum Petitionis* joins other recent work in pointing toward a new model of Roman elections, and Republican politics in general, which assigns a much greater role to symbolic appeals to a voting citizenry, and a less dominant one to personal patronage, than have been fashionable through the middle decades of the century. The exploitation of existing “friendships” and the forging of new personal ties are therefore indeed crucial for the consular candidate. But patronage is only a part of the story, and noble patronage a small part indeed. The patronage networks in play were far more fragmented, and limited in scale, than is generally assumed, a circumstance which accords greater importance to electoral deal-making at the upper echelons of the political hierarchy than to the patronal relationships that connected vote-brokers with many voters. Nor were such political exchanges enough. In the pages of the *Commentariolum* a consular electoral campaign is to a significant extent treated as a public performance before the *populus* in which the candidate seeks to demonstrate to those who do not know him personally that he is *dignus consulatu*. The political theater of the *res publica* implies the existence of an observing, listening and voting audience whose decisions were not determined in advance by ties of dependency.

Before we conclude, a proviso: this paper is a study of the evidence of *Commentariolum Petitionis*; it is not a comprehensive examination of the nature of Roman elections, which would, among other things, have to give full attention to the ways in which one brought oneself to the notice of the Roman People well in advance of canvassing—aedilician games, military activities, oratory and the bar, even road-building¹³⁸—and attend directly to matters that are touched on only peripherally by the *Commentariolum*, such as canvassing around the peninsula or bribery.¹³⁹ That these themes are not stressed here only reflects the relatively small attention given them in the essay and does not, of course, imply a judgment as to their insignificance. Furthermore, it is well to keep in mind that the essay is not a manual of commonplaces for all men seeking the consulate but (ostensibly) for the *homo novus* Marcus Cicero only, in 64 B.C.¹⁴⁰ Yet I doubt that the particularity of the essay significantly misleads us. For example, one might justifiably wonder whether the picture the *Commentariolum* presents of patronage in a consular election is distorted by the fact that Cicero is a “new man,” without an impressive network of “clients.” Yet if wide networks of patronage controlled by nobles were the crucial mechanism of mobilizing votes, as is often thought, then Quintus should not have played down the significance of such a central theme but on the contrary emphasized it: Cicero would have had much to do to draw these lines of power toward himself. A further complexity is the possibility, even likelihood

138. Wiseman 1971:116–22; p. 139 n. 3 for road-building.

139. Canvassing in Italy: Wiseman 1971:139–42. Bribery: see above, n. 15.

140. §58. See Nardo 1970:56–64. But see Jehne 1995c:58 n. 42: it was probably intended for wider circulation (§58), thus its application was presumably not unique.

given its ostensible origin, that the work presents a tendentious view of Cicero's candidacy, explaining away earlier *popularis* or pro-Pompeian efforts, casting his moral qualities in the best light, indulging in invective against his competitors and so on.¹⁴¹ But even if this be granted, there is no evident reason why it should it misrepresent something as uncontroversial as the workings of the system itself.

In part, the current controversy over the nature of Republican politics revolves around the question of what political activity we are to regard as paradigmatic: the candidate seeking his election or the magistrate seeking to pass a law.¹⁴² Whether the practices that dominated a Roman election were also characteristic of legislative votes is a question that will require further study. Too often the distinction is simply elided, and the manifestly "personal" nature of an election treated as characteristic of Republican politics as a whole;¹⁴³ but in fact electoral politics may be regarded as a special case, if a prominent one that was fundamental for the self-definition of both the senatorial élite and the voting citizenry. If even in electoral politics, where the vote was by definition "personal," appeals to an anonymous mass were of great importance, and patronage was far from the determining factor, then there is less reason than ever to maintain the Gelzerian theory according to which "the distribution of political power" in Republican Rome was "determined" by personal hierarchical relationships.

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141. So Nardo 1970:76, 78–113. See above, n. 11.

142. It has been the great contribution of Millar to restore due emphasis to the politics of legislation: see in particular Millar 1986:1–11 and his forthcoming Jerome lectures, *The Crowd in Rome*. (I thank Prof. Millar for making them available to me in advance of publication.)

143. Millar 1986:4, on Gelzer. The failure to distinguish adequately between electoral and legislative politics and to give sufficient weight to the latter likewise distorts Meier's in many ways brilliant analysis in *Res publica amissa*, leading him to designate the working of *necessitudines* as the "norm" and *partium sensus* the "exception."

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