

HELLENISTIC MONARCHY AND ROMAN POLITICAL INVECTIVE

iis enim regiis quadraginta annis et ducentis paulo cum interregnis fere amplius praeteritis, pulsoque Tarquinio, tantum odium populum Romanum regalis nominis tenuit, quantum tenerat post obitum vel potius excessum Romuli desiderium. Itaque ut tum carere rege, sic pulso Tarquinio nomen regis audire non poterat.

The origins of the well-known hatred for the *nomen regis* at Rome are in this way explained by Cicero in the *De Republica*,¹ written in the late 50s B.C. Tarquinius Superbus, Rome's last king, so traumatised the Roman people that the term *rex* still had a potent effect almost five hundred years after his downfall. Many modern scholars would accept that the Roman hatred of kings was deep-rooted and intense, and it is often called upon to explain Roman behaviour. This approach finds clear expression in the latest edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, where one scholar in his discussion of the overthrow of Tarquinius writes: 'Forever after the Romans hated the very idea of a king'.² Yet an examination of Latin writings from the Republican period, rather than confirming this, reveals much that is at odds with this interpretation of the Roman attitude towards kings and the concept of kingship.³ Surprisingly, even their own kings are generally treated favourably. While there is no doubt that there was hostility to kings in the first century B.C., it is necessary to reconsider its origins and nature. I wish to argue that it was neither as long-standing nor as intense as is traditionally assumed. Its origins should be sought not in the distant obscurity of the last years of the regal period, but in Rome's encounters with the hellenistic kings of the East in the second century B.C.

Cicero is not the only writer to discuss Rome's animosity towards kings and to link it with the regal period, although he is our earliest extant source for this. For Livy, too, Tarquinius' behaviour is responsible for *taedium regum* (1.46.3). Indeed L. Iunius Brutus even makes the Romans swear an oath not to allow anyone to rule as king (*regnare*) in Rome again (2.19, cf. 2.2.5, 2.8.2). When Porsenna of Clusium besieges Rome to try to restore Tarquinius, horror at the *regium nomen* affected the Roman

¹ Cic. *De Rep.* 2.52, cf. 1.62, 2.47.

² T. J. Cornell in *CAH*² vii.2 (1989), p. 262, cf. also A. Drummond in the same volume pp. 178–9, 190. Others include M. Cary and H. H. Scullard, *A History of Rome* (London, 1975³), p. 56: '... the odium which for many centuries to come [after 509 B.C.] attached to the very name of *rex* in Rome is clear proof that the monarchy ended by becoming deeply unpopular'; Ch. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 87–8: *regnum* as a term of political invective 'no doubt had its roots in the aversion to kingship that prevailed in Republican Rome ever since the expulsion of the last Tarquin'; cf. also P. A. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* (London, 1971), pp. 44–5. The assumption of long-standing hostility underlies E. Rawson, 'Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and their Roman Equals', *JRS* 65 (1975), 148–59, esp. 150–1.

³ Their ambiguous attitude is discussed by J.-L. Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et Impérialisme: aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique* (Rome, 1988), pp. 167–70; P. Grimal, 'Les éléments philosophiques dans l'idée de monarchie à Rome à la fin de la République', in H. Flashar and O. Gigon (ed.), *Aspects de la philosophie hellénistique*, Entretiens Hardt XXXII (Geneva, 1986), pp. 233–73; Rawson, op. cit. (n. 2); M. Guia, 'La valutazione della monarchia a Roma in età Repubblicana', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 16 (1967), 308–29; J. C. Classen, 'Die Königszeit im Spiegel der Literatur der römischen Republik', *Historia* 14 (1965), 385–403.

masses as much as it affected the upper classes (2.9.7). The Roman delegation to Porsenna tells him that they would rather allow an enemy entrance to their city than a king (2.15.3). But the work of Livy, like that of others writing after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., is coloured by that murder and the subsequent justificatory propaganda. It was claimed that Caesar aspired to be king or that he was in effect king.⁴ In particular the participation of M. Iunius Brutus in the assassination helped to lead to a reinterpretation of the expulsion of Tarquinius and the story of L. Iunius Brutus in the light of the events of 44 B.C.⁵ So Caesar's death made monarchy an important political issue in the period that followed. Consequently later evidence is likely to be influenced by it and therefore has to be treated cautiously so that it is not allowed to distort our conception of earlier Roman attitudes to kingship. For example, when Livy describes how Scipio Africanus in 209 was saluted by the Spaniards as king, he puts into Scipio's mouth the words, 'regium nomen alibi magnum, Romae intolerabile' (27.19.3–6, cf. Polyb. 10.38.3, 40). This must be understood not in the context of the late third century B.C. but in that of the aftermath of Caesar's dictatorship and assassination. Indeed there is nothing in Polybius' version to match the retort which is found in Livy.

There are two aspects to the traditional view as presented by Cicero. First, the Roman hatred for kings was a result of their experiences under Tarquinius. The second aspect is a consequence of this. If they began hating kings as early as the end of the sixth century B.C. and continued to do so until Caesar's day, then their hatred of kings must have become an integral part of the Roman psyche by the first century B.C. Both contentions need to be challenged. To reject the first would not necessarily require rejection of the second, which could be maintained independently. In other words we could reject Cicero's explanation, but still accept that the Roman attitude was deep-rooted. First I will examine the validity of Cicero's explanation and then I will turn to the second contention.

A major obstacle to accepting Roman beliefs about the origin of their hostility to kingship is provided by their own accounts of the regal period. An examination of these accounts produces the surprising result that with the exception of Tarquinius all the Roman kings are treated quite well.⁶ They are not without faults but they are not stereotypes of good or bad kings. Servius Tullius may have been a just ruler, but his acquisition of the throne was not entirely above reproach (Livy 1.48.8, 41–2). Tullus Hostilius neglected religion, but he was successful in war (Livy 1.31). More importantly the kings are seen as benefiting the state, whether it is by founding institutions or by expanding its territory. Romulus is credited with founding the state, Pompilius Numa with establishing certain religious practices and priesthoods, and Servius Tullius with political and military reorganisation. Numa, Hostilius and Ancus Marcius are all said by different authorities to have established the fetial procedure for declaring war.⁷ Military success is attributed, for instance, to Hostilius, Ancus and Tarquinius Priscus. Even Tarquinius Superbus contributed much to the city, for example with his building projects, such as the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline

⁴ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 12.1.1 (to Cassius), 11.3.4 (from Brutus and Cassius to Antonius), *Ad Brut.* 1.16 (from Brutus to Cicero), Suet. *Iul.* 79–80.

⁵ R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1–5* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 219, 236.

⁶ Some held Romulus to have ended his life as tyrant (cf. D.H. *A.R.* 2.56), but this is probably a post-Sullan interpretation of Romulus' career and death, C. J. Classen, 'Romulus in der römischen Republik', *Philologus* 106 (1962), 174–204, esp. 183–6, cf. Rawson, op. cit. (n. 2), p. 157.

⁷ Numa: Plut. *Numa* 12.4–9; Hostilius: Cic. *De Rep.* 2.31; Ancus: Livy 1.32, cf. R. J. Penella, 'War, Peace and the *Ius Fetiale* in Livy I', *CP* 82 (1987), 233–7.

(Cic. *De Rep.* 2.44, Livy 1.53, 55–6). The kings of Rome are fundamental to Cicero's account of the development of the Roman state in book two of the *De Republica*. As he discusses each king, the *respublica*, he says, moves closer to the ideal condition, *optimus status* (*De Rep.* 2.30, cf. 2.22, Livy 2.1).

Furthermore the importance attached to the regal period is not a development of the late Republic. This conception goes back as far as Rome's earliest known writers on its past.⁸ Fabius Pictor, working around the end of the third century B.C., was held to be Rome's first historian. None of his writings is extant, but the citations of his work in later writers indicate that he gave an account of the regal period.⁹ None of the kings is treated unfavourably in these citations. Fabius must have discussed Servius Tullius' division of citizens into tribes and his institution of the census (*FGrHist* 809 F 8, 9), which suggests that he too saw some Roman institutions as being the responsibility of the kings. The evidence for Fabius is limited, but the fragments of Ennius' *Annales* are more useful. Here a positive view of certain kings is found.¹⁰ Ennius described the people lamenting the death of Romulus:

simul inter
sese sic memorant: 'o Romule, Romule die,
qualem te patriae custodem di genuerunt.
o pater, o genitor, o sanguen dis oriundum'.

Ancus Marcius can be called 'bonus Ancus', possibly an established sobriquet,¹¹ if so an odd one for a Roman to give a king. The tendency to attribute institutions to the kings is apparent in the way Ennius assigns the origins of many religious practices to Numa. The first book of Cato's *Origines* appears to have gone from before the foundation of Rome to 458 B.C. There is not enough evidence to determine his attitude to the Roman kings, but it is significant that he too noted Servius' administrative reforms.¹²

Thus, on the one hand there is a Roman tradition that kings are bad, a tradition that is supposed to have begun in reaction to the kings of Rome, on the other hand Roman kings are seen as the founders of institutions of which the Romans are proud. This is a strange and contradictory set of attitudes. The problem did not escape the notice of ancient writers. After commenting on the merits of Tarquinius' predecessors, Livy says that if Brutus had expelled one of them instead of Tarquinius he would have done it to the greatest public detriment, 'pessimo publico' (Livy 2.1.2–3). So we are forced to wonder how the last king of Rome could inspire so much hatred against kings in general, while individual Roman kings remained immune. This is particularly significant because of the way in which the Roman writing of history developed.

No Roman wrote an account of Roman history until the very end of the third century B.C.¹³ Over the course of the several centuries which intervened between then

⁸ Discussed with examples in Classen, *op. cit.* (n. 3), esp. pp. 385–91.

⁹ On the foundation of Rome and the regal period, *FGrHist* 809 F 1–12.

¹⁰ In Vahlen's edition of Ennius, Romulus: 110–13; Ancus: 149; Numa: 120–4. In O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), they are lines 105–8, 137, 114–18 respectively.

¹¹ Skutsch, *op. cit.* (n. 10), p. 294.

¹² Cato, *Orig.* 1.24, ed. M. Chassignet (Paris, 1986).

¹³ Earlier in the third century B.C. Greeks such as Hieronymus of Cardia and Timaeus of Tauromenion wrote on early Roman history, D.H. *A.R.* 1.5.4–6.1 = *FGrHist* 154 F 13 and *FGrHist* 566 T 9, but little is known of their subject matter, J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 138–44, T. S. Brown, *Timaeus of Tauromenion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1958), pp. 33–6. A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins* (Ann Arbor, 1964), pp. 171–2, suggests Greek writers were interested in the foundation of Rome, but not the history of the kings; Timaeus may not even have mentioned any kings apart from Romulus. On early Roman

and the time when Rome was supposed to have been ruled by kings the story of Rome's past would have been preserved by a mainly oral tradition. Such an oral tradition would be subject to people's tendency to understand the past in the light of the present and so it would be moulded in accordance with contemporary attitudes. This would be particularly pronounced in the case of a society which had a predominantly oral culture as Rome did in this period. There would be no earlier account of the regal past against which contemporary beliefs about the past could be checked. The past would be assimilated to the present. Indeed it is clear that Rome's past continued to change and develop in the accounts of subsequent history even when those accounts came to be written down. Livy's account of the early Republic, for instance, is coloured throughout by his knowledge of the political struggles of the late Republic.¹⁴ Yet we are expected to believe that the Romans continued to pass on from generation to generation stories of the great achievements of the kings without their obsessive aversion to kings having any noticeable impact on the oral tradition. In an oral culture where the past exists only in so far as it is repeated stories favourable to the kings could after all drop out of the tradition or they could be reinterpreted as a result of a more hostile attitude to kings.¹⁵

Furthermore, the doubtful historicity of much of the material preserved about the regal period suggests that far from material favourable to the kings being omitted it was actually added. So a mythology about the kings was gradually built up over the centuries, but it was a mythology which was inexplicably created in opposition to the prevailing anti-monarchic ideology. That such a mythology should flourish becomes more intelligible if it is assumed that the anti-monarchic ideology did not exist at the time when the mythological past was being developed. This provides an important reason for believing that the origin of the Roman hatred of kings is far later than is often supposed.

The view that the tyrannical rule and expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus provided the impetus for the Roman hostility to kings should therefore be rejected, but it is nevertheless still useful to discuss Tarquinius himself. Some have argued that there was no overthrow of monarchic rule; instead there was a gradual evolution into republican government. This, as de Sanctis realised, makes the ancient explanation for Rome's *odium regalis nominis* much less plausible and so he rejected their explanation.¹⁶ The events in Rome in the sixth century B.C. are indeed obscure, but rather than speculating on what happened I am concerned to examine the historiographical tradition. Certainly accounts of what Tarquinius did are not as unrelentingly bad as might be expected. The rape of Lucretia which is supposed to have brought him down was not perpetrated by Tarquinius himself, but by his son, Sextus. Livy notes that although Tarquinius was unjust in time of peace, in war he was a good leader. He also comments approvingly on his construction projects, in particular the temple of Jupiter and the Cloaca Maxima (1.53.1–3, 55–6). A hostile

writers, E. Badian, 'The Early Historians', in T. A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Historians* (London, 1966), pp. 1–38, but see also T. J. Cornell, 'The Historical Tradition of Early Rome', in I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart, A. J. Woodman, *Past Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 67–86.

¹⁴ As Ogilvie, op. cit. (n. 5), pp. 19–20 and *passim*, cf. Cornell, op. cit. (n. 13), pp. 83–4.

¹⁵ On the nature of oral tradition, see in particular J. Goody and I. Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963), 304–45 (= J. Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 27–69), W. J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London, 1982), esp. pp. 31–77. R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989) has examined oral tradition in Athenian history but there is a lack of any such study in the case of Roman history.

¹⁶ G. De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani*, i (Turin, 1907), pp. 399–400.

interpretation of these projects is to be found in Livy 1.59.9, but this occurs in the context of a speech by Brutus in which the tyrannical nature of the regime that has just been overthrown is detailed. Ancient writers were clearly uncertain how to resolve the problem that Tarquinius presented: he was a tyrant, but he was known to have benefited Rome. Thus Cicero writes: 'illi iniusto domino atque acerbo aliquamdiu in rebus gerundis prospere fortuna comitata est'. This explains what follows, the conquest of Latium, the capture of Suessa Pometia, the construction of the temple of Jupiter, the colonies he founded and his magnificent gifts to Apollo at Delphi (Cic. *De Rep.* 2.44). The temple of Jupiter and his military campaigns appear also in Fabius Pictor (*FGrHist* 809 F 10, 12).

In spite of these mitigating features Tarquinius is a bad king in our sources, a picture which is not simply the product of Roman tradition. He is very much a tyrant on the Greek model, accounts of whose reign are moulded by Greek history and political thought.¹⁷ According to at least one school of Greek political thought logically Tarquinius had to be a tyrant if he was the last king, because a cyclical theory of constitutions holds that the good king is followed by a tyrant, then is overthrown by an aristocracy (cf. the theory in Polyb. 6.3–10). In Cicero's *De Republica* this application of Greek theory to Roman history is made explicitly (2.47–9). When and how Tarquinius became merged with the Greek tyrant is uncertain; the earliest reference to Tarquinius' behaviour which can be construed as tyrannical is by Cassius Hemina sometime in the mid second century B.C.¹⁸ But the writing of Roman history was from its beginnings heavily under Greek influence. The first to write on the foundation of Rome were Greek (see n. 13) and Fabius, although he was a Roman, chose to write his history in the Greek language. Roman hostility to kings began, it is said, because of the dreadful experiences the Romans suffered under Tarquinius, but it would appear that many of the bad elements of his rule were later accretions as he turned into Tarquinius the Greek tyrant. Latin does not have the distinction between kings and tyrants; consequently when Tarquinius came to be perceived as a *tyrannus*, the Greek influence was particularly pronounced. Similarly the role of L. Iunius Brutus in Tarquinius' demise was considered as analogous to the Greek tyrannicides, a development which may not have occurred until the latter half of the second century B.C.¹⁹ Brutus as a 'tyrannicide' can hardly have preceded Tarquinius' conversion into a Greek tyrant.

In the second and first centuries there were occasions when some of the kings of early Rome were used to provide political justifications. In 148 B.C. by popular demand the legal restrictions were suspended in order to allow Scipio Aemilianus to stand for the consulship, although he was still too young and had not yet held the praetorship. The justification for this which is reported by Appian is that 'according to the laws of Tullius and Romulus the people have control over the election of

¹⁷ Ogilvie, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 194–6.

¹⁸ Cassius Hemina, Peter *HRR*² F 15. Possibly the assimilation is not properly effected until the *archaeologia* in Polybius book 6, cf. P. S. Derow, 'Polybius', in T. J. Luce (ed.), *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome* (New York, 1982), pp. 534–6, F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1972), pp. 147–9.

¹⁹ It was then that Accius' *Brutus* (Ribbeck, *TRF*³ pp. 328–31) was written and probably at the same time Brutus' statue was added to those on the Capitol, so argues S. Weinstock, *Divus Iulius* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 145–7. The anti-tyranny theme in Accius' writing may have been influenced by the fact that his patron was D. Iunius Brutus Callaicus (cos. 138, *PW* 57), opponent of those latterday tyrants, the Gracchi, on which see B. Bilinski, *Accio ed i Gracchi* (Rome, 1958). For comparison between L. Iunius Brutus and the Greek tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Pliny, *HN* 34.17.

magistrates and they can confirm or set aside whichever laws about elections that they wish to' (*Lib.* 112). In 88 B.C. after his first march on Rome Sulla decided that voting should be by centuries instead of by tribes; the arrangements of King Servius Tullius were used as a precedent and justification (*App. B.C.* 1.59). Since a justification should be based on assumptions that its audience will accept, the use of kings in both instances implies that the audience had an approving attitude to the kings.

The existence of so many good kings who benefited the state shows that the history of the regal period was already substantially formulated before the Roman hostility to kings developed. Consequently it should be concluded that it was not Rome's kings, or more particularly Tarquinius Superbus, that led to the supposed anti-monarchic ideology of the Romans. Since this hostility has no appreciable effect on the history of the regal period by the time of the third century B.C. when Roman history begins to be written down, any hostility that there is cannot by that point be significant. When and for what reason it comes to be significant will be considered later, but the above argument suggests that their animosity towards kings was a fairly late development and unrelated to the kings of Rome.²⁰

So far this discussion has concentrated on Roman attitudes to the regal period in Rome, but now it is necessary to turn to their attitude to kings and kingship in general. In particular it is important to examine the uses and meanings of the term *rex* and its cognates. Such an examination gives support to the contention that the Roman hatred of kings was more limited than is often suggested. If it were longstanding and deep-rooted, then it would be hard to explain how the term can so frequently have a neutral or favourable sense. Yet, just as anti-monarchist sentiments fail to affect accounts of the Roman kings, so they fail to make much impact on the term *rex* and allied terms such as *regius*. In what follows I have tried to restrict examples to the centuries B.C., because meanings and uses can change over time and in the case of *rex* this is all the more likely once an emperor becomes an established feature of Roman government. Some examples come from poetry, a form of writing which often tends to diverge from standard uses, but even so it will still reflect people's attitudes to kings. First the examination will be concerned with the neutral and favourable senses of these terms and then it will cover more pejorative uses.

Normally terms such as *rex*, *regnare*, *regnum* and *regius* are used neutrally with neither favourable nor hostile overtones. Moreover, their context suggests that the speaker or writer is not anticipating either an approving or disapproving reaction from his audience. Most common is the use of *rex* in a straightforward way to refer to or describe a ruler of a people or state who is recognised by others and by himself as a king, e.g. 'Artuades, rex Armenius', 'Ancum Marcium regem populus creavit', 'legati ab Ptolemaeo et Cleopatra regibus Aegypti' (*Cic. De Fam.* 15.2.2, *Livy* 1.32.1, 37.3.9). Its cognates too are normally used in a similar way; *regnum*, for example, can refer to a king's reign or kingdom, or to monarchy as a constitution (e.g. *Caes. B. Civ.*

²⁰ It could be objected that this argument does not take into account the way in which the institutions of the Roman republic are believed to have been built around the avoidance of concentration of power. Yet such an objection would be dangerously circular. Any constitution which is not a monarchy has to have some form of division of power. But in the case of Rome it is suggested that there was not only a division of power but something more positive, a deliberate avoidance of concentration of power. In order to justify this assumption Rome's hostility to kings is invoked, as most recently A. Drummond, *CAH*² vii.2.172–212, esp. 179–90. Consequently the view that Rome hated kings can hardly be supported by an argument that is itself only an inference from this very premise, i.e. that Rome hated kings. If my denial of an early anti-monarchical tradition seems to raise new difficulties, then that is precisely the point of it. They need to be addressed but they are beyond the scope of this paper.

3.110, Cic. *Sest.* 57), while the cavalry of a king would be *regii equites* (Sall. *Iug.* 54.4, cf. Cic. *Planc.* 59). Also *rex* can be used in the Roman institution of the *rex sacrorum* or *rex sacrificorum*, a priest who is supposed to have taken over some of the religious powers of the Roman kings (Cic. *Dom.* 38, Ovid, *Fast.* 1.333, Livy 9.34.12).

Most other uses of the term tend to be as a result of comparison. The features which are selected for comparison help to reveal something of the Roman perception of kings; often they suggest not that kings were the objects of hostility, but that they were perceived as the embodiments of wealth, luxury and fortune. This, of course, could lead to envy, which might have much in common with hostility, but that is an indirect route. It is not the same as picking out cruelty as a noteworthy feature of a *rex* for comparison.

Some of the earliest evidence comes from the comedies of Plautus, who was writing in the late third and early second centuries B.C. Kings are seen as powerful; if a king gets in one's way that is the ultimate obstacle (*Stich.* 287). A man is compared to a king because he is difficult to get access to; a king is only addressed by letter or messenger and so he is both aloof and impressive (*Mil.* 1225, cf. *Poen.* 272 on impressiveness). He is the exemplar of the wealthy man; for a slave to imagine having a house, land, his own slaves, ships and being a merchant is to imagine being *rex apud reges* (*Rud.* 931, cf. *Bacch.* 647). There is nothing a king does not have; he even has fortune on his side and good looks (*Poen.* 671, *Mil.* 10). It is the peak of men's aspirations (cf. *Capt.* 825). Is it surprising that there was a children's game in which the winner was called *rex* (Hor. *Epist.* 1.1.59)?

Although Plautus used Greek models for his plays, the presentation here should be considered to represent the Roman standpoint.²¹ Plautus was an experienced and successful playwright who would have been unlikely to have persisted in presenting to his audience a view of kings with which they had no sympathy and which was alien to them. In the examples given above the king is used to illuminate by means of comparison and therefore for the comparison to work effectively it should be dependent on the audience's preconceptions about kings. If the only preconceptions that a Roman audience had about kings were that they were cruel, arrogant and hateful, then Plautus would have failed badly. Indeed these aspects of kings do not seem to be a feature of Plautus' king at all. The image of the king found in Plautus probably reflects Roman perceptions of Hellenistic kings, both in the East and nearer to Italy, such as Hiero in Sicily. Thus a character in the *Poenulus* talks of being treated more gently than the eyes of King Antiochus (*Poen.* 692–3, cf. *Aul.* 704). Sometimes, too, Romans and Greeks would have similar attitudes to kings.

The themes found in Plautus continue in later Roman literature. A wealthy man might be compared to a king (Hor. *Sat.* 2.2.101, cf. Verg. *Georg.* 4.132); to live like a king is the height of luxury (Petr. 38.15). A moralising writer like Sallust might make the comparison somewhat less favourably (*Cat.* 37.6). In a poem by Martial a free man is one who can want nothing or who has everything. It is the Parthian king who represents the man who has everything; here again the influence of the East is apparent (Mart. 2.53). When Cicero asks what is 'tam regium, tam liberale, tam munificum' as to bring assistance to suppliants, his image of a king will be similar to that found in Plautus (Cic. *De Orat.* 1.32). The use of *regius* in this way implies that there is a kingly ideal to which someone can aspire, the opposite in fact of the tyrannical king which is supposed to swamp Roman tradition. *Regius* can be used of

²¹ On Plautus' use of *rex*, see E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Florence, 1960), pp. 178–87, in the earlier German edition, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 188–97, cf. Classen, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 391–2.

kings who can in some way be said to have lived up to this ideal in their demeanour or their actions. Thus Cicero in his defence of King Deiotarus describes the king as being 'regio animo et more' (*Deiot.* 19); Massinissa entertains Scipio Aemilianus 'apparatu regio' (*De Rep.* 6.10).

By analogy with the king *rex* and its allied terms can also be used to describe leadership or supremacy in other spheres. Thus Jupiter is frequently termed *rex* (Cic. *De Rep.* 1.50, Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.42, Verg. *Aen.* 10.112, Plaut. *Ps.* 13). Bees also have kings (Varro 3.61.8, Col. 9.9.1), unlike wasps and hornets (Pliny, *HN* 11.74). Cicero can jokingly call his supremacy in the lawcourts his *regnum forense* (*Ad Fam.* 9.18.1, cf. *Ad Att.* 1.1.1, *De Orat.* 1.41, 1.71). In the poetry of the *Georgics* Vergil asserts the superiority of the Eridanus among rivers by calling it *fluviorum rex* (*Georg.* 1.482, cf. 2.98). *Rex* is also found describing wealthy, powerful men, especially in relation to a client (Plaut. *Stich.* 455, Hor. *Epist.* 1.17.43, Col. 1. Pr.9, Juv. 7.45). In the relationship between client and patron the term *rex* was clearly understood to be complimentary. Thus Horace could say that he addressed his patron Maecenas as *rex* and *pater* (*Epist.* 1.7.37–8).

From the above discussion it should be apparent that the term *rex* would not have automatically produced a hostile response, sometimes that response would have been favourable, most often it would have been neutral. The nature of the response would have been related to the context of the utterance and to the intentions of the speaker or writer, but the fact that there was such a wide range of uses and responses emphasises that there was not a deep-rooted and intense hatred of kings. The context in which a hostility to kings does appear is in the political arena where *rex* can sometimes be a form of political invective,²² although even here it will most often be used in a neutral descriptive sense of a foreign king. The political arena is, of course, where we might expect to find such hostility, but what is significant is that it is largely limited to politics. The unfavourable sense of the term has not, as we have seen, permeated other areas.

Political invective is a feature of public political life and thus it appears in the courts, the Senate and the assemblies. It is primarily in this context that *rex*, *regnum* and allied terms occur in an unfavourable sense; here it is invariably used of politicians. Consequently it is not surprising to find that a large number of the examples of its use occur in the speeches of Cicero, the only extant speeches which we have from the late Republic.²³ In 70 B.C. Cicero accuses Gaius Verres, the erstwhile governor of Sicily, of calling himself the king of the Sicilians, *rex Siculorum*, and adopting the customs of eastern kings.²⁴ In Cicero's second speech against the agrarian law of Publius Rullus, delivered in 63 B.C., an important element of Cicero's attack was the power that Rullus' law would give to the commission of ten which it established. In this speech to the people the charge is repeatedly made that this will set up ten kings in Rome.²⁵ Again in 63 in the speeches against Catiline P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura is alleged to have aspired to *regnum* after a Sibylline oracle indicated that three Cornelii would rule in Rome. The other two, Cicero pointedly says, were Cinna and Sulla (*Cat.* 3.9, 4.12, cf. Sall. *Cat.* 47.2). It was not only Cicero who accused

²² J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et partis politiques sous la République* (Paris, 1963), pp. 560–1.

²³ In addition to the examples cited below, see also Cic. *Vat.* 19, *Sul.* 48, *Mil.* 43, 72, *Cat.* 2.19, *Clu.* 123.

²⁴ *Ver.* ii.3.71, 76–7, 4.122, cf. also 3.200 on *regna* of Apronius and temple slaves, and 5.175 on the *regia dominatio* of the Sullan aristocracy over the lawcourts.

²⁵ See esp. *De Leg. Ag.* 2.32–5, cf. also 1.24, 2.8, 15, 20, 24, 32, 33, 43, 57, 75, 93.

his opponents of behaving like kings or of aspiring to kingship, although his evidence is virtually the sole evidence surviving from the Late Republic. Such accusations could come from all sides in Roman politics. At least two people, L. Manlius Torquatus and P. Clodius, made this accusation against Cicero himself for his handling of the Catilinarian affair during his consulship in 63 (Cic. *Sul.* 21–5, *Ad Att.* 1.16.10).

With the exception of the *De Lege Agraria* the examples of this charge being used in Cicero's speeches are in fact less frequent than we might expect (or indeed than is often suggested). There seem to be two explanations for this. First the majority of Cicero's extant speeches are speeches in defence, where polemic is usually not so appropriate (though n.b. *Mil.* 43, 72 on Clodius). It is when Cicero is speaking against something or someone that the charge arises, as in the Verrine speeches, the *De Lege Agraria* and the *Philippics*. Secondly it is Caesar's dictatorship and assassination that really give kingship its polemical vitality. Hostility to kingship then begins to figure more prominently in Cicero's writings, whether letters, treatises or speeches, although necessarily only for a short space of time. It plays a significant part in the *Philippics*, where it is used against both Caesar and Antonius; these speeches too are often used to provide examples of Roman hostility to *rex* and *regnum*, although in the circumstances it is hardly surprising that such a subject should be to the fore.²⁶

In Cicero's letters the terms rarely appear in this unfavourable sense until the outbreak of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey,²⁷ after which there are numerous occurrences.²⁸ Again the importance of Caesar's dictatorship and assassination for the use of the terms is significant. Their absence before that point can be explained in part at least by the nature of private correspondence, which has a different purpose from and follows different conventions to public oratory. But when the situation became extreme and the opportunity for open public debates and abuse came to an end, such emotions had to be channelled into the medium of private correspondence. In other words once the wars began the normal context for the practice of such political invective had ceased to exist. After Caesar's death kingship became an even more prominent issue as the need to justify the assassination in the face of opposition arose.

The charge of being *rex* or aspiring to *regnum* is used not only to attack contemporary opponents. Such charges can also be made against political figures of the past, such as Tiberius Gracchus and Sulla. In this form they appear equally in speeches or in other types of writing such as history, but they continue to be against politicians. One of the terms may be used in a simple case of reporting as when Sallust writes, 'occiso Ti. Graccho, quem regnum parare aiebant' (*Jug.* 31.7). Or contemporary accusations such as this may be echoed, so that they are treated as fact; so Cicero could write, 'Ti. Gracchus regnum occupare conatus est, vel regnavit is quidem paucos menses' (*Laelius* 41). A speaker or writer's political position in the present could often be established by abuse of those in the past. Moreover, the political language of the late Republic could be used to interpret the actions of those in the distant past about whom little was actually known. The trio of Spurius Cassius, Spurius Maelius and Marcus Manlius, who were active at different times in the fifth

²⁶ For instance, Caesar: *Phil.* 2.34–5, 80, 87, 3.12; Antonius: 2.34–5, 3.9–11, 5.17; use in treatises: *De Off.* 3.83; letters: see below.

²⁷ Cic. *Ad Att.* 2.12.1, 13.2 on the first triumvirate and a line from Lucilius is quoted twice, *Ad Att.* 2.8.1, 6.3.7.

²⁸ E.g. *rex*: *Ad Att.* 10.7.1, *Ad Fam.* 11.8.1; *regnum*: *Ad Att.* 10.8.2, *Ad Fam.* 11.5.1; *regius*: *Ad Fam.* 12.1.1, 6.19.2; *regnare*: *Ad Att.* 9.10.7, 10.7.1.

and early fourth centuries B.C., became the standard examples of men reported to have sought to establish *regna*.²⁹ Such accounts of the early Republic betray the influence of the post-Gracchan period; the episodes recounted are often developed by analogy with later politicians such as Tiberius Gracchus and Sulla.³⁰ In the use of *rex* and *regnum* writers such as Livy will be affected also by the career and demise of Caesar.

The circumstances in which the charge of seeking *regnum* can be levelled are not clear. Cicero writes, 'nostri quidem omnes reges vocitaverunt qui soli in populos perpetuam potestatem habent' (*De Rep.* 2.49). Elsewhere he stresses not only the perpetual nature of such power but also that it is virtually unlimited in scope (*De Leg. Ag.* 2.32–5). It might therefore seem that for someone to seek to hold office several years in succession, as Tiberius Gracchus tried to do with the tribunate, could justify the charge. Yet, even a Roman politician with indisputably unlimited power need not be called a *rex*; such a name will only be used by a political opponent, given the intrinsically hostile import of such a word in the context of Roman politics. Often the term *regnum* is opposed to *libertas* and a threat to *libertas* may be seen as the essence of the charge of seeking *regnum*.³¹ But the *libertas* of the Senate and the *libertas* of the People did not necessarily coincide. While Cicero accused Tiberius Gracchus of seeking *regnum*, Sallust could claim that the two brothers tried to 'vindicare plebem in libertatem'. Different political perspectives are clearly in evidence here.³² It would be wrong to seek specific criteria which justified the charge; polemic is not normally so precise. Essentially anything that was politically untoward or which could be construed by an opponent as such could engender the charge of aspiring to *regnum*.

This discussion has so far sought to show that the use of *rex* and allied terms in this hostile sense was limited to a particular context beyond which it does not appear to have spread. In other contexts these terms can have a neutral or favourable sense quite unaffected by the more aggressive use of the term in Roman politics where it could be used as a form of political invective. Even in Roman politics to be called *rex* need not be damning. The family of the Marcii Reges managed successful careers in politics in the second and first centuries B.C. in spite of their name, one holding a praetorship in 144 and others reaching the consulship in 118 and 68.³³ This all suggests that Roman hostility to kings was not as deep-rooted or intense as is often supposed, beginning in the obscurity of the sixth century. It was not the case that the Roman Republic began as hostile to kings and then became more tolerant. But if this hostility did not originate with the fall of the kings, when and how did it originate?

The first contact which Rome had with significant kings was with those in the eastern Mediterranean and these were to make a significant impact on the Roman conception of kings and kingship. During much of the first half of the second century B.C. relations between Rome and the kings of the East were far from friendly. A series of wars were fought with Macedon under the kings Philip V and Perseus, then another war was fought against the Seleucid king, Antiochus III. It was these kings

²⁹ Cic. *De Rep.* 2.49, *Dom.* 101, *Phil.* 87, 114, *Mil.* 72, Livy 2.41–2, 4.12–16, 6.14–20.

³⁰ Cf. Ogilvie, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 337–45, 551, E. Gabba, 'Studi su Dionigi d'Alicarnasso III: La proposta di legge agraria di Spurio Cassio', *Athenaeum* 42 (1964), 29–41, A. W. Lintott, 'The Tradition of Violence in the Annals of the Early Roman Republic', *Historia* 19 (1970), 12–24.

³¹ Wirszubski, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 5.

³² Cic. *Laelius* 41, Sall. *Iug.* 42.1. An almost complete opposite of Sallust is found in Cic. *Brut.* 212, where it is said that Scipio Nasica 'ex dominatu Ti. Gracchi privatus in libertatem republicam vindicavit', a contrast pointed out by Guida, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 329.

³³ All three were called Q. Marcius Rex, *RE* 90, 91, 92, Broughton *MRR* ii.589; the name did not go unnoticed, cf. *Ad Att.* 1.16.10.

that rivalled Rome for influence in the East. Other lesser kingdoms also became caught up in these struggles, such as Nabis of Sparta and the kings of Bithynia and Pergamum.

Rome had, of course, been aware of these kingdoms for quite a long time. The first military clash had occurred in 280, when the Epirot king, Pyrrhus, invaded Italy to assist the Greek cities in the south. Subsequent wars took place on the other side of the Adriatic. Although Rome had fought a king such as Pyrrhus, there is no indication that they had developed any hostility to or suspicion of foreign kings or of kings in general as a result of the experience. Indeed Ennius, writing in the early second century B.C., presented a favourable picture of the Epirot king.³⁴ Significant in assessing Roman attitudes to foreign kings is the visit of Amynder, king of the Athamanes, in 198/7 during the Second Macedonian War. According to Polybius Flamininus sent Amynder to participate in negotiations at Rome, because he knew that the name of king (τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ὄνομα) would impress Romans (Polyb. 18.10.6–7, cf. Livy 32.36). Polybius may have been mistaken in saying that this was Flamininus' intention, but even so for Polybius to say this Amynder's visit must have made a big impact in Rome. The passage demonstrates two important points, first that the Romans could be impressed by the arrival of a relatively unimportant king, secondly that simply the title of king captured their imagination, a peculiar thing if the *nomen regis* was so hated in Rome. It is the glamour of the eastern kings, their wealth, luxury and power that is so present in Plautus' contemporary references to kings.

But the Roman attitude to foreign kings was not to remain unchanged. As the conflict with the East persisted, Roman propaganda began to embody an antagonism towards such kings. A recurring theme in the sources is the fact that foreign kings fear that Rome is seeking to depose them all. Thus in 190 Publius and Lucius Scipio have to write to Prusias of Bithynia to reassure him that his kingdom is not at risk from the Romans, pointing out to him all the kings that the Romans have helped or even created (Polyb. 21.11, cf. Livy 37.25, App. *Syr.* 23). In 168 Perseus is said to have sought to persuade Eumenes and Antiochus IV that they should support him against Rome, arguing that a free state and a king were by nature hostile to each other, 'natura inimica inter se esse liberam civitatem et regem';³⁵ at another time he is reported to have claimed that Rome was determined to remove all kings near their empire.³⁶ In his own case he was correct. There is also a Sibylline oracle from the late second century which claimed that Rome put fear into all kings (*Orac. Sib.* 3.175–9).

The reason for the alarm attributed to these kings in our sources was not simply that Rome was at war with some of the eastern kings and therefore could easily turn against the rest. Rather it was because of the nature of Roman propaganda at this time. In 196 at the Isthmian Games in Corinth the Romans had proclaimed that Greece would be free. The enemies of this freedom were kings, such as Philip, Antiochus and Nabis. Rome was the free state fighting on behalf of the Greek cities to keep them free from the kings, the opposite of this freedom. Rome may have been

³⁴ Ennius, *Ann.* 194–201 (Vahlen), 183–90 (Skutsch).

³⁵ Polyb. 29.4.9, Livy 44.24.1–6; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, iii (Oxford, 1979), p. 365, argues that this passage of Livy is based on Polybius, but Walbank allows that Polybius may have been elaborated. Fundamental to the passage is the opposition between the free state and monarchy, which is very likely to have been in Polybius; for a similar theme, Polyb. 21.22.8, 36.17.13, both quoted below, also 36.9.9–11.

³⁶ Livy 42.52.16, for similar sentiments, cf. Jugurtha in Sallust, *Jug.* 81.1, Mithridates in Sall. *Hist.* 4.69 and Justin 38.7, Demetrius of Illyria in Justin 29.2.1.

adopting traditional hellenistic liberation propaganda,³⁷ but because Rome was a constitutional state and not a monarchy this propaganda acquired a new perspective.³⁸

Rome put an end to monarchy in Macedon in 167 after Perseus' defeat at the battle of Pydna. Polybius described it as follows. 'The Macedonians had received many important benefits from Rome; they had all been released from the commands and taxes of monarchs and, as is generally agreed (*ὁμολογουμένως*), exchanged slavery for freedom'. So here monarchy is slavery, which is opposed to freedom and this view, as F. W. Walbank comments, represents 'the official Roman interpretation of Roman policy'.³⁹ The same theme occurs in Livy's account of the aftermath of Pydna. At a point where he is probably following an annalistic source, he writes that the Senate decided that the Macedonians and Illyrians should be freed, because Rome does not bring slavery to the free but freedom to the enslaved.⁴⁰ This perception of monarchy was a natural corollary of the use of liberation propaganda by a state such as Rome which could be differentiated from its enemies by the fact that it was not a monarchy. Awareness of the Roman stance is apparent when Polybius makes the Rhodians say to the Roman Senate in 189 B.C.: 'Every monarchy by nature detests equality and tries to make everybody, or at least as many as possible, subject and obedient to it' (Polyb. 21.22.8). Similarly the remarks attributed to Perseus on the hostility which exists by nature between the free state and the king also reflect the Roman point of view. It is this opposition between the king and the free state that underlies Cato the Elder's statement that none of the kings who are counted as prosperous was worthy of comparison with Epaminondas, Pericles, Themistocles, Manius Curius or Hamilcar Barca (Plut. *Cato Mai.* 8.14). The inclusion of Hamilcar, a past enemy of Rome, suggests that Cato had in mind a contrast with the kings who were Rome's present enemies. So, on the one side slavery is seen in combination with kings while on the other freedom is linked with constitutional states such as Rome.⁴¹

Thus after being glamorous objects of attention in Rome, kings in general came to be increasingly regarded as suspect in some way. A visit to Rome by Eumenes of Pergamum elicited a remark from Cato that a king was by nature a carnivorous animal, *ζῶον σαρκοφάγον* (Plut. *Cato Mai.* 8.12–13). A similar sentiment is found in Ennius' lines, 'nulla sancta societas nec fides regni est'. The context is not known but it is likely to reflect contemporary perceptions of the eastern kings.⁴² After the conclusion of the war with Perseus, in 167/6 all kings were banned from presenting themselves before the Senate. Polybius interprets this as a ploy to avoid having to allow Eumenes to appear before the Senate.⁴³ Whether or not Polybius is correct in his interpretation, the decision of the Senate provides an interesting insight into their attitude to foreign kings at this period. For they clearly considered kings to be a group distinct from other types of state and they saw no harm in demonstrating their

³⁷ E. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), pp. 132–57.

³⁸ For a discussion of monarchy and Roman propaganda, Ferrary, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 158–70.

³⁹ Polyb. 36.17.13, Walbank, op. cit. (n. 35), pp. 681–2.

⁴⁰ Livy 45.17.6–18.2, annalistic source according to Walbank, op. cit. (n. 35), p. 681.

⁴¹ Wariness on the part of Greeks in their dealings with kings, even those kings favoured by Rome, can be seen in *SIG*³ 630, esp. lines 7–10, a decree of the pro-Roman Amphictyonic council in honour of Eumenes II in 182.

⁴² Ennius, *Scenica* 404–5 (Vahlen) = 320 (Jocelyn); a familiar theme in Greek writers, cf. Dem. *Ol.* 1.5, 2.5–10. Polyb. 36.9.9–11.

⁴³ Polyb. 30.19, supposedly this visit by Eumenes was different from the one which brought about Cato's comment, but it might not be; the context given by Plutarch for the remark could have been developed to accommodate it.

hostility to the group as a whole. Shortly before this occurred Prusias of Bithynia successfully presented himself before the Senate, in what Polybius considered to be a most unkingly fashion. His grovelling display before the Senate reached such heights of unmanliness, womanishness and general fawning that it could not be surpassed (30.18). Livy was fully aware of Polybius' account but he preferred to give that of Roman writers, who reported that the Senate looked very favourably upon Prusias (Livy 45.44). Clearly this was how Romans expected kings to behave after Pydna.

So I would suggest that in the second century B.C. Romans developed a hostility to kings, which was focused on foreign kings. This was partly because of the exigencies of the international political situation, but also because of the propaganda stance Rome was taking. This was not, however, that deep-seated hatred of the *nomen regis* described by Cicero. For the hostility to the foreign king to become transferred to the invective of the Roman political arena would take time. Polybius, writing in the second century, may provide evidence for Roman hostility to foreign kings both individually and as a group but he shows no awareness of a more general Roman hostility to kings and kingship and certainly not of a deep-rooted hatred. Indeed an examination of his text suggests that he was either very insensitive or an animosity to kingship was not yet a noticeable feature of Roman domestic politics. Not only does Polybius see the Roman constitution as being a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, but he claims that even a Roman could not tell which it was. This is no doubt an exaggeration, but a perverse one if he knew the Romans hated monarchy (6.11). In spite of a long stay in Rome and discussion with leading Romans, in particular Scipio Aemilianus, Polybius shows no sign that there might be anything offensive about calling a Roman a king. In fact he even writes that Scipio Aemilianus virtually considered himself to be a king while in Macedon after Pydna (31.29.6). Polybius is impressed when Scipio Africanus declines to allow the Spaniards to call him king, but Livy writing on this same episode after the death of Caesar suggests that Scipio is restrained by political considerations, as the title was so hated at Rome (Polyb. 10.38, 40, Livy 27.19.3–6). Such a view would not have occurred to Polybius, who believed that the Romans were impressed by the title of king, even if it was attached to someone as insignificant as Amyntander. It is more likely that the reason why Polybius is so negligent on these matters is that Roman attitudes to kings were still in the process of developing. For Polybius any hostility the Romans had towards kings was limited to foreign affairs.

The use of *rex* in political invective arose out of an analogy with the eastern king.⁴⁴ Not only were such kings seen as a threat to the Roman state, but they exercised an arbitrary and absolute power incompatible with the kind of constitutional government which existed in Rome. As the wealthy came increasingly to emulate the Greek way of life and to fill their houses with plundered riches from the East, the charge that some members of the aristocracy had regal aspirations would not have seemed absurd.⁴⁵ For the Romans had a very ambivalent attitude to the Greeks and Greek culture;⁴⁶ consequently their antagonism to things Greek could be exploited politically.

The influence of the Greek world is often apparent when *rex* is used in its pejorative sense. Thus Verres who, as we have seen above, was accused of making himself king of the Sicilians, is also portrayed as having adopted a very exaggerated version of the Greek way of life.⁴⁷ But the connection with oriental kings is even closer, because he

⁴⁴ Cf. De Sanctis, loc. cit. (n. 16).

⁴⁵ Rawson, op. cit. (n. 2), esp. pp. 152–6, on Roman regal aspirations.

⁴⁶ N. Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks* (Athens, 1974).

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 76.

is said to have followed some of the customs of the Persian and Syrian kings (Cic. *Ver.* 3.76). Generally he is presented as the Greek king or tyrant whose use of power is totally unrestrained. Tiberius Gracchus is one of the earliest known victims of the charge of aspiring to *regnum*, a charge which is attested by various sources.⁴⁸ When Attalus III of Pergamum died and made the Roman people his heirs, Tiberius had the matter dealt with in the popular assembly rather than the Senate. When he was being denounced in the Senate, Q. Pompeius, one of his neighbours, claimed that Eudemus of Pergamum, the envoy who had brought the will to Rome, had presented Tiberius with a royal diadem and purple robe, thinking that Tiberius was going to be the next king in Rome (Plut. *TG* 14.3). Here the link between a Roman politician and eastern monarchy is put clearly; for Tiberius actually gets the emblems of royalty from the envoy of Attalus. The charge may have derived from the perception that Tiberius had assumed responsibility for Attalus' kingdom. It is interesting too that in Cicero's attack on Rullus the control of land in the East is something which is emphasised; Cicero even suggests for a moment that Rullus might want to be king of Alexandria (*De Leg. Ag.* 2.43).

The first reliably recorded use of the term *rex* in a polemical sense in Roman domestic politics was by the elder Cato.⁴⁹ In his *De Falsis Pugnis*, a vigorous attack on M. Minucius Thermus, probably delivered in 190, Cato says that no *rex* has dared to act as Minucius did in scourging and humiliating allied officials.⁵⁰ This is not the same as calling someone a king or accusing him of aspiring to royal power, but it clearly reflects an unfavourable view of kings. Cato, whose remarks on kings have already been noted, displayed hostility to many aspects of Greek culture.⁵¹ The kings of the East would have been very much in the mind of Cato's audience; until recently Rome had been at war with Philip V of Macedon, whose arbitrary use of power Polybius emphasised (Polyb. 8.8.4, 10.26, 23.10) and at the time of the speech in 190 the Romans were fighting Antiochus III. The picture of the king in Plautus was of somebody all powerful who had everything. Cato's king is equally powerful but his hostile presentation assumes that not even morality is a restriction on the king's power. Both in their different ways betray the influence of the east. It is in Cicero's *De Lege Agraria* that the charge of kingship is most pronounced; here the image of the hellenistic king is apparent (2.32–5, 2.43). It is no coincidence that this speech was made in 63 while Rome was at war with Mithridates, the Pontic king. Mithridates may have been one king the Roman public were concerned about but some would also have been anxious about how much influence the East would have had on their own commander, Pompey.

When Cicero uses terms such as *rex* in an unfavourable sense in his letters, it is frequently in conjunction with Greek words or ideas or references to kings in the East. Here the subject he is discussing is almost always Caesar. Thus in *Ad Att.* 7.11.1, written in January 49, Cicero refers to Caesar's goal as *regnum*, but the context is very Greek, containing a line from Euripides about tyranny, quoted in Greek, and a reference to the Stoic moral good, τὸ καλόν. Greek terms are also used in conjunction

⁴⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 31.6, Cic. *Laelius* 41, Plut. *TG* 3, cf. 19.3. A similar phrase, 'regnum petunt', occurs in a rather obscure fragment of Ennius, *Ann.* 268–74 (Vahlen), 247–53 (Skutsch), from the first half of the second century B.C., but its poetic use there is unconnected with the later political invective, see the interpretation of Skutsch, op. cit. (n. 10), pp. 429–37.

⁴⁹ Classen, op. cit. (n. 3), p. 393.

⁵⁰ 'Nemo hoc rex ausus est facere', *ORF*³ Cato F 58, A. E. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 59, 326–8.

⁵¹ Petrochilos, op. cit. (n. 46), pp. 166–71, Astin, op. cit. (n. 50), pp. 157–81, Cato's hostility was not indiscriminate.

with kingship in *Ad Att.* 9.7.3, 9.10.7, 13.37.2. If Caesar wins, his *regnum* will be worse than a Persian could bear, Cicero tells Atticus in 49 (*Ad Att.* 10.8.2). Elsewhere Caesar is compared unfavourably with Alexander the Great (*Ad Att.* 13.28.3). In coping with Caesar's dictatorship Cicero seeks to draw inspiration from those other wise men who have endured *regnum*, such as at Athens and Syracuse (*Ad Fam.* 9.16.6). Brutus too in a letter to Cicero associates *rex* and *regnum* with a Greek context when he draws an analogy between Caesar and Greek tyrants (*Ad Brut.* 1.16.6).

Tarquinius Superbus too will have contributed indirectly to Roman views on kingship, but it will have been Tarquinius the 'Greek tyrant', not Tarquinius the sixth-century Roman *rex*. Tarquinius the 'Greek tyrant' developed comparatively late, the product of a merging of the Roman past with Greek ideas. This process whereby Tarquinius was converted into a tyrant would have been assisted by the burgeoning hostility to monarchy which became increasingly pronounced in second-century Rome, an antagonism which has been documented in this article. In the Greek world hostility tended to concentrate on the tyrant rather than the king, but Latin does not have the distinction between tyrants and kings. Consequently because there is no Latin word for tyrant,⁵² it becomes easier for *rex* to absorb some of the bad connotations of the Greek *τύραννος*, something which Tarquinius' dual role as *rex* and *τύραννος* will have helped to promote.

The kings of the hellenistic world were fundamental in forming the conception of kingship held by Romans in the late Republic. Indeed they even affected Roman perceptions of their own kings, who contrary to the impression created by writers such as Livy would have had more in common with Gallic tribal leaders than with one of the Ptolemies. For the Romans of the late Republic kings were the epitome of wealth, power and prosperity, but they were also the holders of absolute power and the enemies of a free constitutional state. The charge of behaving like a king or of seeking to become king was a useful piece of political invective which had developed out of Rome's confrontation with the hellenistic world. It was one of many forms of political abuse, but Caesar's supremacy and assassination transformed its significance.⁵³

University College Dublin

ANDREW ERSKINE

⁵² Latin of course does have the word *tyrannus* but as this is simply *τύραννος* latinised it only serves to emphasise the inadequacy of Latin in this area. Early examples of its use include Ennius, *Ann.* 109 (Vahlen), 104 (Skutsch), of Tattius, and Pacuvius in Ribbeck *TRF*³, p. 108.

⁵³ I am grateful to Peter Derow, Theresa Urbainczyk and the *CQ* Editors together with their anonymous referee for help and comments. This article was written with the help of a University of Wales Fellowship at University College Swansea.