

A Late-Republican Recipe for Divinity: Making a God at Rome

Timeline of Events (all dates BCE)

80/81: Pompey celebrates his first triumph, attempts to parade in an elephant drawn chariot

71: Pompey celebrates a triumph for his victories in Spain

-Pompey issues an aureus in Rome linking himself with Alexander and divine honors

66: Cicero in *Pro Lege Manilia* affirms Pompey's divine qualities

63: Cicero saves the Republic from the Catilinarian Conspiracy

- Pompey granted honor by Senate of wearing triumphal garb at all Circus games

63-62: Cicero publically uses *divinus* to describe Scipio Aemilianus after his death

61: Pompey celebrates his third triumph

58: Cicero exiled for actions during Catilinarian Conspiracy

57: Cicero returns from exile

54: Cicero in *Pro Plancio* outlines divine status as a posthumous reward for saving Republic

- Julia, wife of Pompey and daughter of Caesar dies

54-51: Cicero in *De Re Publica* creates a Roman traditional authority for mythic divinity

51-50: Cicero accepts proconsulship in Cilicia

50: Cicero refuses divine honors of a temple and statue in Cilicia

49: Caesar in letter to Atticus compares Pompey and Caesar

- Civil War break outs, Cicero leaves Italy to join Pompey in Greece

48: Caesar's victory at Pharsalus; Pompey assassinated

47: Cicero pardoned by Caesar

46: Cicero delivers *Pro Marcello*; later the *Pro Ligario*

- April: Caesar celebrates quadruple triumph

45: Caesar celebrates triumph over Pompey's sons

44: Coin issued depicting temple of the Clementia Caesaris

- March: Caesar assassinated

- December: Cicero assassinated

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1.

A. *Pro Murena* 75

Atque ille, homo eruditissimus ac Stoicus, stravit pelliculis haedinis lectulos Punicanos et exposuit vasa Samia, quasi vero esset Diogenes Cynicus mortuus et non **divini hominis** Africani mors honestaretur...

And he, a very educated man and Stoic, covered the Carthaginian couches with the skins of kids, and exhibited Samian vases, as if the Diogenes the Cynic had been dead and as if the death of the **divine man** Africanus was not being honored¹

B. *Pro Archia* 16

Ex hoc esse hunc numero quem patres nostri viderunt, **divinum hominem**, Africanum...

He was from this number, whom our fathers saw, the **divine man** Africanus...

2.

A. *Pro Lege Manilia* 10.3

Sed tamen alterius partis periculum, Sertorianae atque Hispaniensis, quae multo plus firmamenti ac roboris habebat, Cn. Pompei **divino consilio** ac singulari virtute depulsum est

But nevertheless the danger of the other part, that of Sertorius and Hispania, which had a great deal more support and strength, was expelled by the **divine counsel** and the remarkable courage of Gnaeus Pompeius.

B. *Pro Lege Manilia* 33.14

Pro di immortales! Tantamne unius hominis incredibilis ac **divina virtus** tam brevi tempore lucem adferre rei publicae potuit ut vos, qui modo ante ostium Tiberinum classem hostium videbatis, nunc nullam intra Oceani ostium praedonum navem esse audiatis?

By the immortal gods! Was the incredible and **divine courage** of one man able to bring such great light in so short a time to the Republic, that you, who saw the enemy fleet nearly before the mouth of the Tiber, now hear that there is no pirate's ship within the mouth of Ocean?

C. *Pro Lege Manilia* 36.1

Ita tantum bellum, tam diuturnum, tam longe lateque dispersum, quo bello omnes gentes ac nationes premebantur, Cn. Pompeius extrema hieme apparavit, ineunte vere suscepit, media aestate confecit. Est haec **divina** atque incredibilis **virtus** imperatoris.

Thus Gnaeus Pompeius prepared at the end of winter, he undertook at the beginning of spring, and by the middle of summer ended such a great war, lasting for so long, spread far and wide, by which war all nations and people were being oppressed. This is the **divine** and incredible **courage** of the general.

D. *Pro Lege Manilia* 42.10

Et quisquam dubitabit quin huic hoc tantum bellum permittendum sit qui ad omnia nostrae memoriae bella conficienda **divino** quodam **consilio** natus esse videatur?

And will anyone doubt that this war, which is so great, should be handed over to him, who seems to have been produced by some **divine counsel** so as to complete all wars in our memory?

¹ All translations are my own

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3.



Gold aureus issued by Cn. Pompeius Magnus, 71 BCE in Rome.
Obverse: MAGNVS
Reverse: Victoria with a wreath above Pompey in a triumphal quadriga

4.

A. *Pro Marcello* 2.1

Tantum enim mansuetudinem, tam inusitatam inauditamque clementiam, tantum in summa potestate rerum omnium modum, tam denique incredibilem **sapientiam ac paene divinam** tacitus praeterire nullo modo possum.

For I am in no way able to pass over in silence such mildness, such extraordinary and unheard-of clemency, such moderation in one with supreme power over everything, and finally such incredible and **almost divine wisdom**.

B. *Pro Marcello* 26.7

Quod si rerum tuarum immortalium, C. Caesar, hic exitus futurus fuit ut devictis adversariis rem publicam in eo statu relinqueres in quo nunc est, vide, quaeso, ne tua **divina virtus** admirationis plus sit habitura quam gloriae;

What if, Gaius Caesar, this was the result of your immortal achievements, that after conquering your enemies, you would leave the Republic in the state in which it is now, be aware, I beseech you, lest **your divine** courage should earn admiration rather than solid glory;

5.

Pro Ligario 6.1

O **clementiam** admirabilem atque omnium laude, praedicatione, litteris monumentisque decorandam!

Clemency, wonderful and deserving to be honored with all possible praise and publicity, in both literature and monuments!

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6.



Denarius issued by P. Sepullius Macer, 44 BCE in Rome, obverse depicting the temple of the Clementia Caesaris

7.

Pro Plancio 90

Mortem me timuisse dicis. Ego vero ne immortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam accipiendam putarem, nedum emori cum pernicio rei publicae vellem. Nam, qui pro re publica vitam ediderunt—licet me desipere dicatis—numquam me hercule eos mortem potius quam immortalitatem adsecutos putavi.

You say that I fear death. But I truly would not even consider accepting immortality at the cost of the Republic, even less would I choose to die bringing disaster to the Republic. For I have thought—although you might call me foolish—that those who have sacrificed their life on behalf of the Republic have not, by Hercules, died so much as achieved immortality.

8.

Att. 8.16.1-2

Municipia vero deum, nec simulant, ut cum de illo aegroto vota faciebant. Sed plane quicquid mali hic Pisistratus non fecerit tam gratum erit quam si alium facere prohibuerit. Hunc propitium sperant, illum iratum putant. Quas fieri censes ἀπαντήσεις ex oppidis, quos honores? “Metuunt” inquires. Credo, sed me hercule illum magis; huius **insidiosa clementia** delectantur, illius iracundiam formidant.

Truly the towns (make) a god (of Caesar), nor do they pretend, as when they made vows for him (Pompey) when he was ill. But clearly whatever evils this Pisistratus (Caesar) has not done earn him no less gratitude than if he were stopping someone else from doing it. They hope for a gracious leader in him (Caesar), but they think that he (Pompey) is an angry one. Can you believe the delegations from the cities, the honors? They are afraid, you say. I agree, but, by Hercules, more afraid of Pompey; they are delighted by Caesar’s **deceitful clemency** and dread Pompey’s wrath.

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