

**Carlos F. NOREÑA**

**The Representation of the Emperor's Civic Virtues: Continuity, Change, Structure**

Recent scholarship on the Roman emperor has emphasized the 'symbolics of power' and the 'power of images' in the configuration of imperial power and authority. This paper extends this line of investigation through analysis of a particular set of imperial ideals and images which advertised the emperor's 'civic ideology.' The method employed departs from that of previous studies in two ways: first, by applying a new type of quantitative analysis to the production of imperial images, and second, by focusing not on the visual program of a single emperor, but rather on the long-term rhythms in the visual programs of all emperors from Vespasian to Severus Alexander (A.D. 69-235). The results of this approach reveal previously unrecognized patterns in the imagery of civic virtue and illuminate a key element in the long-term structure of imperial ideology.

The examination of long-term rhythms in the representation of the emperor's civic virtues draws on a large sample of imperial coins. From this sample it is possible to determine the relative frequency with which different types were minted and the degree to which specific ideals were emphasized under successive imperial regimes. The paper begins with a survey of the corpus of civic virtues (e.g. *Iustitia*, *Liberalitas*, *Pietas*, etc.) that demonstrates a broad continuity in the representation of these virtues and belies the so-called 'militarization' of the emperor's public image. From this survey I turn to an analysis of the individual virtues, showing that while the degree of emphasis on the civic virtues as a whole remained roughly constant throughout the period 69-235, there were sharp contrasts in the specific civic virtues highlighted under different emperors. Finally, I consider systematic differences between the precious-metal and base-metal coins in the selection and iconography of the civic virtues, and I will address the possibility that this dichotomy reflects an intentional targeting of image and audience.

Drawing on other media of imperial publicity, especially monumental relief sculpture, and on the vocabulary of praise in contemporary authors, I will argue that the patterns revealed by the quantitative and long-term approach used in this paper are not random but belong to part of a wider discursive context in which the emperor's civic role remained fundamental to the ideology of the Principate.