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**The Greek Vocabulary  
Of the Roman Imperial Cult  
And  
The New Testament  
Del I**

**Dissertatio ad lauream  
In Facultate S. Theologiae  
Apud pontificiam Universitatem  
S. Thomae de Urbe**

**THIS WORK I HUMBLY DEDICATE  
TO THE MEMORY OF MY UNCLE  
RAGNAR PAULSEN  
WHO INTRODUCED ME  
TO THE STUDY OF  
CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY IN GENERAL  
AND TO THE LOVE OF ROMAN HISTORY  
IN PARTICULAR**



## FOREWORD

The present work is the result of a sustained effort of study during the years 1986-91, a period which coincided with five years of teaching at the PUST.

What started as a small concept - the question of the relationship between the Christological vocabulary of the gospel of John and the Greek vocabulary of the Roman Imperial Cult - rapidly grew, took possession of me, and developed into what appears to be a grossly overgrown attempt to say something about the interaction between the New Testament writings and the Roman Imperial Cult in its Greek form.

In the course of studying this matter I have visited as many archeological sites in Turkey and Greece as possible. The most significant of these are: Antioch, Seleucia, Daphne, Adana, Tarsus, Seleucia in Cilicia, Aspendus, Sillyum, Side, Perge, Seleucia in Pamphylia, ~~Attaleia~~ Attaleia, Iconium, Ancyra, Aphrodisias, Hierapolis, Laodicea, Nysa, Tralles, Alinda, Alabanda, Halicarnassus, Didyma, Miletus, Priene, ~~Miletus~~ <sup>Magnesia</sup> ad Meandrum, Ephesus, Notium, Claros, Colophon, Teos, Metropolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis, Ilium, Nicomedia, Nicaea, Constantinopolis (Istanbul), Thasos, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Pella, Vergina, Dion, Athens, Eleusis, Corinth, Argos, Sparta, Gytheum, Olympia, Delphi, and many islands, of which Thera, Samos and Patmos are the most important ones. -

Sites in Italy are not included in this study.

It should be understood that visiting historical sites is an important aspect of the study of antiquity, for several reasons. Local museums, for example, have often a wealth of material on display that is looked in vain for in the great museums. A case of this is described in chapter 2: at the archeological museum at Adana I finally came across the kind of small imperial portrait for private use that is missing from the catalogues and studies consulted. Dr. Price actually admitted that he had looked in vain for such items. Another pleasant discovery was - during my third visit to Ephesus in 1991 - to find that the preserved parts of the cult statue of Domitian from his temple in the upper city finally had been transferred from Izmir to the museum at Selçuk, where they now stand facing the restored altar belonging to the same temple, until now not on display.

The author would like to thank the following persons who made this dissertation possible.

Professor dr.theol. Halvor Moxnes (University of Oslo) suggested the topic of the imperial cult to me. My brother Tor Hauken (Misjons høyskolen, Stavanger), supplied me with up to date literature in this field; it is thanks to him that the studies of Fishwick and Price came into my hands right at the beginning. Dr. S.R.F. Price himself should receive thanks for giving me the opportunity - during a stay at Oxford in February 1990 - to discuss some of the topics related to the Roman Imperial Cult with

him. **Dr. M.J.Price** did me the favour - during a visit to **Oslo** - to identify some **Greek Imperials** relating to the cult in **Asia Minor**.

Special thanks go to **Rev.Prof. Albert Paretsky O.P.** whose patience and unfailing encouragement was decisive for the coming into being of this study.

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My last thanks go to **Mrs. Frances Kristensen** who read the entire typescript and helped me to correct many errors of spelling and grammar.

**St.Dominikus Kloster, Oslo**

**Lent 1992**

*Age Hauken*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

This list comprises abbreviations of **Monographs**, **Periodicals**, **Reference Works** and **Serials**. Abbreviations of the names of **Biblical books** are taken from the **RSV**. Abbreviations of the names of intertestamental literature are taken from **Charlesworth, J.H.: The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha**.

<b>AB</b>	<b>Analecta Biblica</b>
<b>AC</b>	<b>L'Antiquité Classique</b>
<b>AE</b>	<b>L'Année Epigraphique</b>
<b>AJA</b>	<b>American Journal of Archeology</b>
<b>AJP</b>	<b>American Journal of Philology</b>
<b>AJT</b>	<b>American Journal of Theology</b>
<b>ANRW</b>	<b>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</b> , ed. <b>H. Temporini</b> and <b>Haase</b> , <b>1972-</b>
<b>Ant. Jud.</b>	<b>Josephus: Antiquitates Judaeorum</b>
<b>APOT</b>	<b>R.H. Charles (ed.): Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</b>
<b>AS</b>	<b>Anatolian Studies</b>
<b>BA</b>	<b>Biblical Archeologist</b>
<b>BAG</b>	<b>Bauer, W., Arndt, W., Gingrich, F.W.: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Forth Revised and augmented ed., 1952</b>
<b>BDF</b>	<b>Blass, F., Debrunner, A.: A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, ET by R.W. Funk, Cambridge 1961</b>
<b>BE</b>	<b>Bulletin épigraphique</b>
<b>BGU</b>	<b>Aegyptische Urkunden in Griechische Sprache aus den Königl. Museen zu Berlin</b>
<b>Bib</b>	<b>Biblica</b>
<b>BJ</b>	<b>Josephus: Bellum Judaicum</b>
<b>BJRL</b>	<b>Bulletin of John Rylands Library</b>
<b>BMCRE</b>	<b>Catalogue of Roman Coins in the</b>

**British Museum: Roman Empire**

**BMCG** Catalogue of Greek Coins in the  
**British Museum**

**BR** Biblical Research

**BS** Biblical Studies

**BZ** Biblische Zeitschrift

**BZNW** Beihefte zur ZNW

**CAH** Cambridge Ancient History

**CBQ** Catholic Biblical Quarterly

**CIG** Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum

**CIL** Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

**CJ** Classical Journal

**CPh** Classical Philology

**CPSP** Cambridge Philological Society  
**Proceedings**

**CQ** Classical Quarterly

**CQR** Church Quarterly Review

**CR** Classical Review

**CCSL** Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

**Ditt. Syll.** Dittenberger, W: Sylloge inscriptionum  
**graecorum**

**EHR** English Historical Review

**EJ** Encyclopedia Judaica

**Exp. Tm.** Expository Times

**EQ** Evangelical Quarterly

**ET** English Translation

**ETH** Evangelische Theologie

**FGH** Die Fragmente der griechischen  
**Historiker**, ed. F. Jacoby

**Forsch. Eph.** Forschungen in Ephesos

<b>GIFC</b>	<b>Giornale Italiana di Filologia Classica</b>
<b>HE</b>	<b>Eusebius: Historia Ecclesiastica</b>
<b>HJ</b>	<b>Heythrop Journal</b>
<b>HSCP</b> <b>Philology</b>	<b>Harvard Studies in Classical</b>
<b>HTHR</b>	<b>Harvard Theological Review</b>
<b>HTS</b>	<b>Harvard Theological Studies</b>
<b>IBM</b> <b>British Museum</b>	<b>Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the</b>
<b>ICC</b>	<b>International Critical Commentary</b>
<b>IG</b>	<b>Inscriptiones Graecae</b>
<b>IGR</b> <b>Pertinentes</b>	<b>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas</b>
<b>IGUR</b>	<b>Inscriptiones Graecas Urbis Romeae</b>
<b>ILS</b> <b>Dessau</b>	<b>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed.</b>
<b>Int.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>JB</b> <b>1985<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>The Jerusalem Bible, ET London</b>
<b>JBC</b> <b>Comm.</b> <b>Biblical Commentary,</b>	<b>R.E. Brown et al. (eds.), The Jerome</b> <b>London 1989<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>JBL</b>	<b>Journal of Biblical Literature</b>
<b>JBC</b>	<b>Jewish Biblical Quarterly</b>
<b>JBLM</b> <b>Ser</b> <b>Monograph Series</b>	<b>Journal of Biblical Literature</b>
<b>JBS</b>	<b>Journal of Biblical Studies</b>
<b>JE</b>	<b>The Jewish Encyclopedia</b>
<b>JEH</b>	<b>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</b>
<b>JHS</b>	<b>Journal of Hellenic Studies</b>
<b>JS</b>	<b>Journal of Jewish Studies</b>
<b>JNG</b> <b>Geldgeschichte</b>	<b>Jahrbuch für Numismatik und</b>

<b>JRS</b>	<b>Journal of Roman Studies</b>
<b>JRlSt.</b>	<b>Journal of Religious Studies</b>
<b>JSNT</b> Testament	<b>Journal for the Study of the New</b>
<b>JTS</b>	<b>Journal of Theological Studies</b>
<b>JSNTSS</b> Testament Study Series	<b>Journal of the Society of New</b>
<b>LAE</b> East	<b>Deissmann: Light from the Anient</b>
<b>LCL</b>	<b>Loeb Classical Library</b>
<b>Liddell and Scott</b> <b>Greek-English Lexicon</b> <b>R.McKenzie)</b>	<b>Liddell, H.G. and Scott, R.:</b> <b>(revised ed. H.S.Jones and</b> <b>Oxford 1969</b>
<b>LTK</b> 1957 <sup>2</sup>	<b>Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche,</b>
<b>LXX</b> 1962	<b>The Septuaginta, ed. A.Rahlfs,</b>
<b>MHT</b> Turner, N:	<b>Moulton, J.H., Howard, W.F.,</b> <b>Grammar of New Testament Greek: Edinburgh</b> <b>1906-76</b>
<b>Moulton-Milligan</b> The Vocabulary of the	<b>Moulton, J.H., Milligan, G:</b> <b>Greek New Testament</b>
<b>NAB</b>	<b>New American Bible</b>
<b>NIDNTT</b> Dictionary of 1975-78	<b>C.Brown (ed.): The New International</b> <b>New Testament Theology, Exeter</b>
<b>NovT</b>	<b>Novum Testamentum</b>
<b>NT</b> 1985 <sup>2</sup>	<b>Novum Testamentum, Nestle-Aland</b>
<b>NTA</b>	<b>New Testament Abstracts</b>
<b>NTG</b> Bible Societies,	<b>The Greek New Testament, United</b> <b>London 1983<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>NTS</b>	<b>New Testament Studies</b>
<b>OCD</b> Classical Dictionary,	<b>Cary, M. (et al.): The Oxford</b> <b>1970<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>OCT</b>	<b>Oxford Classical Texts</b>

**OGIS** **O**rientis **G**raecae **I**nscriptiones  
**S**electae, ed. **D**ittenberger

**ODCH** **T**he **O**xford **D**ictionary of the  
**C**hristian **C**hurch, 1974<sup>2</sup>

**PComm.** **B**lack, **M.** (ed.): **P**eake's  
**C**ommentary on the **B**ible, **E**dinburgh 1962

**PBSR** **P**ublications of the **S**wedish **I**nstitut  
in **R**ome

**PEQ** **P**alestine **E**xploration **Q**uarterly

**PG** **J.**Migne: **P**atrologia **G**raeca

**PL** **J.**Migne: **P**atrologia **L**atina

**PTR** **P**rincceton **T**heological **R**evue

**RAC** **R**éallexikon für **A**ntike und  
**C**hristentum

**RB** **R**evue **B**ibliq ue

**RE** **P**auly-Wissowa-Croll:  
**R**éalencyclopédie der **k**lassischen **W**elt

**RFIC** **R**ivista di **F**ilologia e d'**I**struzione  
**C**lassica

**RH** **R**evue **H**istorique

**RHPR** **R**evue d'**H**istoire et de **P**hilosophie  
**R**eligieuse

**RICBM** **R**oman **I**mperial **C**oins *British Museum*

**RIN** **R**ivista **I**taliana di **N**umismatica

**RN** **R**evue **N**umismatique

**RPh** **R**evue **P**hilologique

**RSCI** **R**ivista della **S**toria di **C**hiesa in  
**I**talia

**RSPhTh** **R**evue des **S**ciences **P**hilosophiques  
et **T**héologiques

**RSR** **R**echerches des **S**ciences **R**eligieuses

**RSV** **R**evised **S**tandard **V**ersion, **O**xford  
1973



<b>RtBl</b>	<b>Rivista Biblica</b>
<b>RTR</b>	<b>Reformed Theological Review</b>
<b>SC</b>	<b>Sources Chrétiennes</b>
<b>SE</b>	<b>Studia Evangelica</b>
<b>SEG</b>	<b>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</b>
<b>SH</b>	<b>Studia Hellenistica</b>
<b>SHA</b>	<b>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</b>
<b>SJT</b>	<b>Scottish Journal of Theology</b>
<b>SO</b>	<b>Symbolae Osloenses</b>
<b>ST</b>	<b>Studia Theologica</b>
<b>Syll. Nummorum Graecorum = Sammlung von Aulock</b>	
<b>TAPA</b>	<b>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</b>
<b>TDNT</b>	<b>G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.): Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ET G. W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids 1964-76</b>
<b>TLZ</b>	<b>Theologische Literaturzeitung</b>
<b>TR</b>	<b>Theologische Rundschau</b>
<b>TS</b>	<b>Theological Studies</b>
<b>TZ</b>	<b>Theologische Zeitschrift</b>
<b>VChr</b>	<b>Vigiliae Christianae</b>
<b>VT</b>	<b>Vetus Testamentum</b>
<b>ZNW</b> Wissenschaft	<b>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche</b>
<b>ZPE</b> Epigraphique	<b>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und</b>
<b>ZTK</b> Kirche	<b>Zeitschrift für Theologie und</b>
<b>YCS</b>	<b>Yale Classical Studies</b>



## CHRONOLOGY

This chronology of principal events related to our topic is taken from the following four sources: **E. Bickerman: Chronology of the Ancient World** (London 1980<sup>2</sup>) **W.H.C. Frend: The Rise of Christianity** (London 1984); **M. Cary and H.H. Scullard: A History of Rome** (London 1975); **K. Christolm and J. Ferguson: The Augustan Age** (Oxford 1981). The chronology seeks to combine dates relating to general history and dates relating to the development of the imperial cult, as well as to the history of the expansion of Christianity. Special emphasis is laid on the city of Ephesus.

**336**                      Assassination of Philip and accession of Alexander

**334**                      Alexander's Persian campaign started; sieges of Miletus and Halicarnassus

**334-3**                  Alexander's conquest of Lycia, Pamphylia and western Pisidia

**333**                      Conquest of Cilicia; battle of Issus; rout of Darius

**332**                      Siege and capture of Tyre; conquest of Egypt

**331**                      Foundation of Alexandria; Alexander occupies Babylon, Susa and Persepolis

**330**                      Alexander at Ecbatana; death of Darius

**324,**                      Alexander reaches Susa; death of Hephaestion

**323**                      Death of Alexander at Babylon; Ptolemy I Soter; Demetrius I Poliorcetes

**301**                      Battle of Ipsus; Antigonos defeated and killed - partition of Antigonos' kingdom by Seleucus and Lysimachus; Mithridates I Ktistes founds the kingdom of Pontus; Ephesus taken by Antigonos Monophthalmos

**294**                      Ephesus delivered by Lysimachus, renamed Arsinoeia - transferred to new site, planned according to the "hippodamic" system, new city walls of 22 km.

**295**                      Foundation of Museum and Library at Alexandria

**294**                      Demetrius Poliorcetes takes Athens and becomes king of Macedonia

**283-246**              Ptolemy II Philadelphus

281	Lysimachus defeated and killed by Seleucus; death of Seleucus; Ephesus under Seleucid kings; Antiochus I soter
281-261	Antiochus I Soter
263-241	Eumenes I at Pergamum; throws off Seleucids suzerainty
261-246	Antiochus II Theos; marries Berenike II
247	Ephesus given to the Ptolemies, as gift to Berenike II
246-221	Ptolemy III Euergetes
241-197	Attalus I at Pergamum
c. 235-200	Euthydemus I Theos king of Bactria
228	Carthago Nova founded
223-187	Antiochus III the Great
221-205	Ptolemy IV Philopator
205-180	Ptolemy V Epiphanes
196	Antiochus III takes Ephesus
188 kingdom	Treaty of Apamea: Ephesus to Pergamene kingdom
180-145	Ptolemy V Philometor
177-160/59	Eumenes II Soter king of Pergamum
175-164	Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria
167-142	Maccabean revolt in Judaea
ca. 165	The Book of Daniel
164	Rededication of the temple in Jerusalem
164-163, 145-132, 127-116	Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II
160	Defeat and death of Judas Maccabeus
160/59-138	Attalus II Philadelphus at Pergamum
150, 146, 138	Cleopatra Thea marries successive Seleucid kings
149-146	Third Punic War
146	Sack and destruction of Carthage; sack

of Corinth

- 134** Death of Simon: John Hyrcanus High Priest
- 133** Attalus III Philometor Euergetes leaves Pergamum to Rome; Tiberius Gracchus proposes "lex agraria", murdered; Ephesus starts its calendar
- 131** Cleopatra II sole ruler
- 130, 123, 122** Reforms by Gracchi at Rome
- 129** Romans establish the Asian Province
- 120-63** Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysus the Great; the Roman wars end in annexation
- 107-89/8** Ptolemy X in Egypt
- 103-76** Alexander Jannaios king of Judaea
- 102/100** Birth of Julius Caesar
- 94-74** Nicomedes IV Philopator leaves Bithynia to Rome
- 88-84** Mithridates of Pontos waging war against Rome; "Ephesian Vespers": 80.000 Romans massacred in Asia; Ephesus sides with Rome later
- 83-66** Tigranes I the Great loses Syria to Rome
- 82-80** Sulla dictator in Rome
- 82** Birth of Mark Anthony
- 63** Birth of Augustus; Pompey in Jerusalem; Judaea becomes a province; Caesar becomes pontifex maximus
- 58-51** Caesar's Gallic wars
- 53** Parthians defeat Crassus at Carrae
- 51-30** Cleopatra VII Philopator Philadelphus Philopatris; Egypt annexed to Rome
- 49** Caesar crosses Rubicon, declaring war on the Republic; civil war between Pompey and Caesar
- 48** Battle of Pharsalus, Pompey defeated; Caesar's statue erected on Capitol with the inscription "hemitheos"; Caesar begins the erection of a temple to Venus Victrix in Rome; goes to Egypt; the Alexandrian war; Caesar meets Cleopatra VII

47 Caesar and Cleopatra go up the Nile; Caesar settles the Roman affairs in the East generally; returns to Italy

46 Caesar's victory at Thapsus; he returns to Rome where triumph is granted him by the Senate; reform of the calendar

45 Forum of Caesar; Caesar dictator III, consul IV; Ludi Victoriae Caesaris; his elevated golden seat in the Senate; Cleopatra in Rome in advanced state of pregnancy

44 Caesar "dictator perpetuus"; coins with his image, of an Alexandrian type; Cleopatra having to leave Rome; Caesar receiving new honours from the Senate: the title "Parens patriae", granted a flamen Iulialis; killed on 15. March; Octavian returns from Greece; he gives games for Julius who is unofficially already divus; Brutus and Cassius on flight, seek asylum at Artemisium

43 Octavian acclaimed Imperator for the first time; the second Triumvirate: Anthony, Octavian, Lepidus; proscriptions; murder of Cicero

42 Birth of Tiberius; the battle of Philippi, the defeat of Cassius and Brutus

42-30 Anthony rules Rome's eastern provinces

42 Caesar's consecration in Rome, becomes divus in an official manner

41 Anthony marries Cleopatra at Tarsus; both goe. to Alexandria; Anthony arrives at Ephesus as "new Dionysos", returns to Rome later

40 Partians invade Syria; Herod proclaimed king of Judaea; Vergil writes his 4th Eclogue

39 Anthony in Athens, planning divine monarchy; brings Cleopatra to Ephesus; Egyptian religions gain foothold at Ephesus

38 Octavian marries Livia

37 Herod captures Jerusalem; Anthony marries Cleopatra at Anthioch

34 Anthony holds triumphs in Alexandria

33/34 Anthony and Cleopatra spend the winter at Ephesus

32 Octavian publishes Anthony's will in Rome

**32/31** Anthony and Cleopatra in Greece; the supporters of Anthony gather at Ephesus to prepare for battle against Octavian

**31** Battle of Actium; Octavian winters in Asia

**30** Suicide of Anthony; Octavian enters Alexandria; suicide of Cleopatra; Octavian granted tribunician powers

**29** From Republic to Empire: Year of triumph; Octavian reorganizes the province of Asia with Pergamum as capital, the city ceases to function as independant entity and becomes part of the Empire; Octavian establishes his cult in the East, a temple to Dea Roma and Julius at Ephesus in the upper Agora; returns to Italy; closes temple of Janus for the third time since the days of Romulus; holds triumph; dedication of the temple to Divus Julius

**28** Octavian and Agrippa consuls; clearing up the Senate; Dedication of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine; Octavian starts constructing his mausoleum

**27** Octavian receives the title "Augustus": the Senate decrees that an oak-leaf garland be placed above the door of the house of Imperator Caesar Augustus on the Palatine, because he restored the Republic to the people of Rome; he is voted a golden shield; Agrippa builds the first Pantheon; Augustus receives imperium for ten years

**27-24** Romanizing of Spain

**23** Constitutional settlement of Augustus

**20** Roman standards returned by Parthians; Herod begins rebuilding the second temple; birth of Gaius, son of Julia and Agrippa

**19** Temple of Mars dedicated; games of Mars in the Circus; arch of Augustus constructed in Rome

**18** Augustus' imperium renewed for five more years

**17** Birth of Lucius; Augustus adopts his grandsons Gaius and Lucius; ludi saeculares

**16-13** Subjection of Germania and Pannonia

**15** Monetary reform of Augustus

**13** Augustus' imperium renewed for five years; dedication of the theatre of Marcellus



**12** Augustus becomes **Pontifex Maximus**; the dedication of a chapel and altar with statue of **Vesta** in the **Palatine** house of **Augustus**; the altar at **Lugdunum** dedicated by **Drusus**, with a **Gallic** nobleman as priest; death of **Agrippa**

**10** The temple of **Concordia** dedicated in the **Forum**

**9** Dedication of the **Ara Pacis**; death of **Drusus**

**8** Augustus' imperium renewed for **10** years; death of **Maecenas**

**4** Birth of **Jesus** of **Nasareth**; death of **Herod I the Great**

**2** Exile of **Julia**; dedication of the temple of **Mars Ultor**; dedication of the **Forum** of **Augustus**; the title of **Pater Patriae** awarded to **Augustus**

**1 BC** **Gaius** dies in the **East**

**2 AD** **Lucius** dies; **Tiberius** returns from **Rhodes**

**3** Augustus' imperium renewed for **10** years

**5** Augustus adopts **Tiberius**; death of **C. Caesar** in **Lycia**; **Tiberius** adopts **Germanicus**

**6** Dedication of temple of **Castor** and **Pollux**; **Judaea** becomes an imperial province; the census; **Judas the Galilean**

**9** **Varus'** defeat

**12** Triumph of **Tiberius**

**13** Augustus' imperium renewed for ten years

**14** Augustus dies at **Nola**; **Tiberius'** succession; Augustus' consecration; **Livia** granted the title **Augusta**; a flamen augustalis instituted; mutiny in **Pannonia** - suppressed by **Germanicus** and **Drusus**

**17** Triumph of **Germanicus** avenging **Varus**, lost standards recaptured; earthquake in **Asia Minor**

**18-37** **Calaphas** High Priest

**19** **Tiberius** expels the **Jews** from **Rome**; death of **Germanicus** in the **East**

**20** Trial of **Piso**

**21-22** **Castra Praetoria** built in **Rome**

23	Death of <b>Drusus</b> , murdered by <b>Sejanus</b>
26-36	<b>Pontius Pilate</b> procurator in <b>Judea</b>
27/28	Ministry of <b>John the Baptist</b>
27-30 (?)	Ministry of <b>Jesus</b>
27	<b>Tiberius</b> withdraws to <b>Capri</b>
29 by <b>Tiberius</b>	Death of <b>Livia Augusta</b> ; not consecrated
35 (?) <b>Paul</b>	Martyrdom of <b>Stephen</b> ; conversion of
36 maladministration	<b>Pilate</b> recalled, charged of
37 <b>Josephus</b> is born	<b>Tiberius</b> dies; <b>Caligula</b> succeeds him;
38	Anti-Jewish riots in <b>Alexandria</b> ; death and consecration of <b>Drusilla</b>
39 <b>Judea</b> and <b>Samaria</b>	Embassy to <b>Gaius</b> ; <b>Agrippa I</b> king of
41	<b>Caligula</b> murdered; <b>Claudius</b> emperor
42	Martyrdom of <b>James "the just"</b>
43	<b>Claudius</b> invades <b>Britain</b>
44	<b>Agrippa I</b> dies; <b>Judea</b> a province
48 <b>Agrippina</b>	<b>Messalina</b> put to death; <b>Claudius</b> marries
49 tutor of <b>Nero</b>	<b>Jews</b> expelled from <b>Roma</b> ; <b>Seneca</b> made
50	<b>Nero</b> adopted by <b>Claudius</b>
51	Consulship of <b>Vespasian</b>
51-52 <b>Corinth</b> , moves on	<b>Gallio</b> proconsul of <b>Achaia</b> ; <b>Paul</b> in to <b>Ephesus</b>
54 consecrated	<b>Claudius</b> dies; <b>Nero</b> emperor; <b>Claudius</b>
54-59	Quinquennium <b>Neronis</b>
55	<b>Britannicus</b> poisoned; <b>Pallas</b> dismissed
55-59	First <b>Parthian War</b>

- 59** Agrippina murdered
- 60** Nero introduces Greek games: the  
Neroniana
- 60-62** Paul in Rome
- 61-63** Second Parthian War
- 62** Death of Burrus; Tigellinus made  
Praetorian Prefect; Seneca disgraced; Nero marries  
Poppaea; Octavia murdered; James of Jerusalem  
murdered
- 64** Nero's debut as artist on the theatre at  
Naples; Fire of Rome; the Neronian persecution; Domus  
Aurea begun;
- 65** Conspiracy of Piso; suicides of Seneca  
and Lucas; death of Poppaea; altar of Lyons burns; plague  
in Rome
- 66** Nero crowns Tiridates in Rome; goes to  
Greece on artistic tour; temple of Janus closed; outbreak  
of Jewish revolt; Vespasian to Palestine; death of  
Petronius
- 67** Nero at Corinth; Corbulo ordered to  
kill himself; Josephus surrenders to Vespasian
- 68** Return of Nero from Greece; defeat of  
Vindex; Vespasian begins attack on Jerusalem  
Nero commits suicide
- 68-69** Year of the four emperors: Galba,  
Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian
- 70** Jerusalem falls to Titus; Vespasian  
arrives in Rome; restoration of Capitoline temple to  
Jupiter started
- 71** Titus returns from Judaea; astrologers  
and philosophers expelled from Rome
- 73** Birth of Flavius Caesar
- 74** Masada falls
- 75** Agrippa II and Berenice in Rome;  
imposition of "fiscus iudaicus"; Josephus publishes Bellum  
Judaicum
- 76** Birth of Hadrian
- 78** Agricola governor of Britain
- 79** Eruption of Vesuvius; death of Pliny



the **Elder** while investigating the eruption; **Vespasian** dies; **Titus** emperor; **Vespasian** consecrated

**80** Dedication of **Colosseum**; fire at **Rome**; **Capitoline** temple destroyed

**81** **Titus** dies; **Domitian** emperor; consecration of **Titus**

**82** **Domitian** restores the **Capitoline** temple

**82/83** (?) Temple of **Domitian** at **Ephesus**: the city holds a neocorate for the first time

**83** Triumph of **Domitian**; takes cognomen "**Germanicus**"

**85** Recall of **Agricola**; **Domitian** censor perpetuus; campaigns on the **Rhine** and in **Dacia**

**86** Inauguration of the **Capitoline Games**

**86-92** **Domitian's Dacian wars**

**88** **Ludi saeculares**

**89** Triumph of **Domitian**; edict against astrologers and philosophers; **Saturninus** hailed as emperor at **Moguntiacum**

**91** Expulsion of mathematicians and philosophers from **Rome**

**92** **Rabirius'** palace - the **Domus Augustana** - on the **Palatine** finished

**93 ca.** **Josephus** publishes **Antiquitates Iudaearum**; death of **Agricola**; year of the beginning terror in **Rome**; break of confidence from the **Senate**; death of **Helvidius Priscus** o.a.

**95** Expulsion of philosophers from Italy; so-called "persecution of **Domitian**": **Flavius Clemens** and **Acilius Glabius** executed; **Flavia Domitilla** exiled; 1 **Clement**; **Didache** ?

**90-100 ca.?** **Johannine Writings**; **John** is buried at a hilltop outside the city walls (**Ayasoluk**)

**96** Murder of **Domitian**; **Nerva** emperor; "**fisci iudaici calumnia sublata**"; dedication of **Forum Nervae**

**97** Rising of **Praetorians**; **Nerva** adopts **Trajan**; **Tacitus** consul

- 98 Nerva dies ; Trajan succeeds him
- 100 Josephus dies? ; 1 Clement ? ;  
Panegyricus of Pliny the Younger
- 100-111 Tacitus writes Histories and Annals
- 101-106 Trajan conquers Dacia
- 108 Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians
- 110/12 Letters of Ignatius? Pliny sent to  
Bithynia; correspondence with Trajan
- 112 Dedication of Trajan's Forum and  
Column of Trajan
- 114-17 War against Parthia; maximum extent of  
Roman Empire; Armenia and Mesopotamia annexed
- 115-17 Jewish uprising in Cyprus, Egypt,  
Cyrenaica and Mesopotamia
- 117 Trajan dies; Hadrian emperor; Trajan  
consecrated
- 120 Suetonius writes of Neronian persecution  
? Shepherd of Hermas?
- 121 Birth of Marcus Aurelius
- 122 Hadrian in Britain; orders building of  
the wall
- 124 Hadrian in Asia Minor; Hadrian's  
rescript to Minucius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia,  
concerning Christians
- 125 Quadratus, earliest of the apologists
- 126/127 Second neocatechism at Ephesus, to  
Hadrian, who visits Ephesus twice
- 129 Hadrian at Athens
- 130 Death of Antinous; Hadrian founds  
Antinoopolis; Justin Martyr converted?  
Barnabas? Papias?
- 132-5 Second Jewish revolt
- 135 Aelia Capitolina founded; dedication  
of the temple of Venus and Roma
- 136 Hadrian adopts L. Aelius as Caesar
- 138 Death of Aelius Caesar; Antoninus  
adopted; death of Hadrian; Succession of Antoninus;

onsecration of **Hadrian**, against the will of the **Senate**

**139** Dedication of **Hadrian's** mausoleum

**140** Rescripts concerning **Christians** to: **Athens**, **Thessalonica**, etc.

**144** **Marcion** expelled from the **Roman** community; **Marcus Aurelius** visits **Ephesus**

**145** **Aristides**, apologist, floruit

**148** 900th anniversary of founding of **Rome**

**150** Letter to **Diognetus**?

**154-55** **Polycarp** in **Rome**; discussion with **Pope Anicetus**

**155** **Justin** martyr writes his **First** **Apology**

**156** **Polycarp**s martyred

**160** **Justin** **Martyr** writes <sup>his</sup> **Second** **Apology**

**160-80** **Melito**, bishop of **Sardis**

**161-65** **Lucius Verus** at **Ephesus** preparing for war against **Parthians**

**161** **Antoninus Pius** dies; **Marcus Aurelius** emperor; **Antoninus** consecrated; **Commodus** born

**165** Plague spreads from the **East** to **Italy**; **Justin** martyred in **Rome**; plague in **Rome**

**165-70** Sporadic persecution in the province of **Asia**

**165-66** **Lucian** writes "On the death of **Peregrinus**"

**166** **Polycarp** martyred at **Smyrna**?

**167** Plague in **Rome**

**168-75** German wars of **Marcus**

**170** **Apuleius** writes "The **Golden Ass**"

**171-80** **Marcus Aurelius** writes **Meditations**

**177** Program at **Lyon**

- 177-80**                    **A**thenagoras writes his " **S**upplication  
for the **C**hristians"
- 178**                        **I**reneus, bishop of **L**yons
- 178**                        **C**elsus writes " **T**ru**e** **R**ea**s**on" against  
the **C**hriatians
- 180**                        **S**cillitan martyrs, near **C**arthage;  
**T**heophilus of **A**nthioch writes " **T**o **A**utolycus";  
**M**arcus **A**urelius dies; **C**ommodus emperor; **M**arcus  
consecrated
- 180-200**                **C**lement of **A**lexandria
- 182**                        **C**onspiracy of **L**ucilla; her execution
- 185**                        **M**arcia, **C**hristian mistress of  
**C**ommodus; **I**reneus writes against heresies; **O**rigines born
- 189-99**                **V**ictor, first latin-speaking **P**ope
- 192**                        **A**sassination of **C**ommodus
- 211/212**                **T**hird neocorate at **E**phesus: to **G**eta  
and **C**aracalla
- 219/20**                **F**ourth neocorate at **E**phesus: to  
**E**lagabal
- before **260**:            **F**ourth neocorate at **E**phesus  
transferred to **V**alerian and **G**allienus
- 262**                        **T**he **G**oths sack the **A**rtemisium
- 358,365,368** **E**arthquakes at **E**phesus
- 413**                        **T**he third ecumenical council meets at  
the church of **M**ary at **E**phesus
- 449**                        " **S**ynod of **R**obbers" at **E**phesus
- ca. **550**                **T**he church of **S**t. John at **E**phesus  
begun

## **INTRODUCTION**

The **Graeco-Roman** background of the **New Testament** writings has always been a field of study where classical and biblical scholarship intersected. Even at times when the **Jewish** matrix of early **Christianity** was in the forefront of attention among theologians the classical background was never lost from view.

Today there is among theologians a renewed interest in this **Graeco-Roman** context thanks to the socio-historical approach which, as an academic tool, is employed by theologians and classicists alike. A type of **New Testament** study is emerging which reminds one of the days when **NT** scholars were classicists or had a classical background (1).

This is not to say that the **Jewish** matrix is in danger of being neglected. But it is a fact that the **NT** writings as we have them come not from **Palestine**, but from the far more peaceful and prosperous world of the **Diaspora**. And the life of the **Graeco-Roman** cities remains the immediate context of the **NT** writings however much they come from a synagogue environment (2).

The present work is an attempt to focus on one aspect of pagan life in the first and second century which the first urban **Christians** had to face: the roman imperial cult (hereafter referred to as **RIC**), particularly in the form it took in the **Greek** cities in the **Eastern** part of the empire.

Before we start this investigation it will be necessary to give an outline of the history and nature of the **Roman Imperial Cult** itself. - This is the subject of Chapter 1 - the divinity of the **Roman** emperor.

Such an outline is necessary because I depend on certain recent findings in classical scholarship for my understanding of the nature and function of the **RIC**. Anyhow, references to the imperial cult should not be made without clearly defining what is understood by this rather comprehensive term. A historical outline seemed to be the best way of doing so, instead of making an attempt to systematize the evidence or construct a theology of the cult. - As the story unfolds it will hopefully become clear why such an approach is the preferable one.

The antecedents of this cult are, of course, to be found in the **Hellenistic Greek East**, from **Alexander** onwards, and before him in the monarchies of the ancient **Near East**, though the latter ones fall outside the scope of this study. This development, as well as the **Greek** form of the imperial cult, is the topic of our Chapter 2.

To return to Chapter 1: the cult of the **Roman** emperor begins with **Augustus** and ends with **Constantine**, as shown by the lists of divi and divae (**Appendix 3**). Its beginning marks the end of **500** years of republican rule in **Rome** - while the end of the **RIC** marks the beginning of the **Great Church**.

The natural point of departure for our survey is the



assassination of Julius Caesar in the theatre of Pompey on the Ides of March 44 B.C. But the deification of Julius (or consecration, as it is called in the ancient sources) was in many ways prepared by himself, and the cult developed along the main lines that he had established while alive. The question of whether Julius received divine honours during the last years of his reign will be discussed in detail, for the sake of clarification. For our present purposes it must suffice to say that the young Octavian certainly had some kind of antecedent to the establishing of his own cult in Rome, but it remains unclear what exactly the cult of Julius consisted in.

Almost forty years of continuous rule guaranteed Octavian - soon to become Augustus - supreme success in respect to establishing a divine monarchy in Rome, and it was an easy task for his successors to follow up the already established tradition. Monarchy had entered Rome, though not the old form of monarchy - like the kings of Rome's legendary past - but the more recent form of divine kingship, known from the Hellenistic East.

Though initially camouflaged as "princiate", nobody was in any doubt of what this change in government involved, and the third century historian Dio Cassius simply refers to the principate as "monarchy" from the outset (3). By the word "monarchy" he clearly has in mind the orientalized and Hellenistic form for divine kingship and not the old Roman one.

This change in form of government had recommended

itself as a result of the growth of the empire, and the new monarchy was based on the army from the outset, not just, as it were, in the third century crisis. "Provinces and armies created the monarchy", says Ronald Syme (4), and this holds true already in the case of Julius, with clear premonitions in the previous cases of Marius and Sulla. When Caesar was born - 102/100 BC - the Republic was already condemned, because the growth of Rome was rapidly putting an end to the old rule.

The new rule needed new religious foundations, and such rose the need to consecrate the new rulers. In this way the state religion became centered on the person of the princeps - always called "augustus" - in a way unimaginable in the good old republican days.

This innovation is as new as the monarchy itself and the two belong intrinsically together - you cannot have the one without the other. The lists of divi and divae show clearly that this institution lasted until Christianity demythologized the emperor and Christ took his place. The Byzantine emperor, in his turn, nevertheless succeeded in recapturing some of the attributes that Christ had taken from the Roman emperor - but that development lies outside the scope of this study.

The divinity of the Roman emperor has been described in various ways, but P.R. Charlesworth is representing a main line of scholarly opinion when he states: "To put it a little ludicrously the Divi enter as it were a celestial super-Senate of merit, in which Jupiter and the older gods



are original members and to which the **Divi** are elected by the **Senate** in **Rome**" (5). In the same article he quotes **Herodian** (**Book IV,2:1**) saying that "the **Romans** have a custom of deifying those emperors who die with sons to succeed them" (6).

This is more or less the case in a nutshell.

On the one hand, the **Senate** must approve the consecration of a deceased emperor or member of the imperial family (father, wife, brother, sister, children, adoptive children, etc.). On the other hand, such an approval presupposes that the deceased actually has an heir to consecrate them. In this way emperors like **Tiberius**, **Caligula**, **Nero**, **Galba**, **Vitellius**, **Domitian** and many others are excluded from the heavenly super-**Senate**. The ancients themselves would, generally speaking, have preferred to make a different distinction - that between good and bad emperors.

But this is not a sufficient explanation for how the **RIC** actually worked, of two principal reasons.

Firstly , this view - the distinction between good and bad emperors - is heavily biased, something which the rehabilitation, in the eyes of modern historians, of emperors like **Tiberius** and **Domitian** amply proves. That is to say, if they had had sons to succeed them they would also have been consecrated.

Secondly , the view of the ancients as we find it in our literary sources are necessarily biased because these sources mainly come to us from the senatorial class which

was strongly opposed to the new monarchy (Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, et al.), often clashed with the emperors - and frequently was victimized by them.

Needless to say, the history of the **RIC** cannot be reconstructed from literary sources alone. In order to achieve a balanced picture numismatic, epigraphic, monumental and artistic sources are of greatest importance, even if they also are biased, representing an official and therefore propagandistic view of the monarchy, that of the state and the emperor himself. The most successful propagandist for his own cause was, of course, Augustus, who, so to speak, wrote his own history throughout his long years of reign, and wrote it so successfully that the man behind the reign often tends to elude us.

Perhaps the Greeks understood this more clearly than the Romans themselves did. The statement of Herodian is certainly very apt from a critical point of view, because it is so realistic. But the statement also contains an amount of theoretical cynicism untypical of the Roman man in the street - because the **RIC** actually functioned as foreseen and was directly popular, as we shall see later. The enterprise that Julius and Augustus embarked upon outlived them by 300 years of success.

Now, here has been a shift in the understanding of the **RIC** by some modern scholars.

What will be described as the "classical solution" sees the **RIC** mainly as a state-affair, the business of high officials alone, remote from the plain citizen and

unable to meet his religious needs. This is the view of the great historians of Graeco-Roman religion like Nilsson, Nock, Festugière and others.

In so far as one centers one's study on Rome itself and bases it on the sentiments of the senatorial class together with criticism from the intellectuals, such an interpretation is logical enough. But the moment one moves to the provinces - especially the Greek East - or dwells on numismatic, epigraphic and archeological evidence, everything looks different. The clearest example of this shift is the seminal work by S.R.F. Price (7). Here, as we move around in Asia Minor, the whole cult of the emperor takes on a different dimension.

For our purposes the distinction between the Latin West and the Greek East is of the greatest importance, as the New Testament comes to us from this Greek context. The Romans only granted divine honours to deceased emperors - or members of the imperial family - while the Greeks concentrated their cult on the living emperor, something which our literary sources refer to as "adulatio graeca". Studies like that of Price's have amply demonstrated that for the Greeks there is more at stake than mere "adulatio".

It is, therefore, necessary to move outside Rome and its senatorial world in order to understand the RIC. But we must not forget that this class had its way of taking revenge on deceased emperors which to them had been particularly hateful: by not granting them "consecratio" -

that is when there was no son to see the succession through - and letting them suffer that opposite fate which modern scholarship refers to as "damnatio memoriae" (the expression itself not being ancient). The senatorial view - which is traditional and moral - had its say when occasion allowed for it: a famous example is the difficulties **Antoninus Pius** had in obtaining the consent of the **Senate** to consecrate **Hadrian**.

The **Julio-Claudian** dynasty that initiates the **RIC** is rather generous on deification of its deceased members, while the **Flavians** are less so and their new "heaven" is rather thinly populated, but then their rule is shorter. There is an increase in consecrations in the second century, while the third century shows a gradual decline owing to the turbulence of the times.

One particular feature of this development should be stated clearly from the outset: The entire history of the **Roman imperial period** is marred by an inability on the part of the emperors to secure a safe line of succession. From **Julius** to **Justinian** this is the greatest weakness of their ruling system (a weakness which both the **Byzantines** and the **Ottoman Turks** found ways of avoiding). Civil wars and rival claims to the throne are typical features of **Roman imperial history**. The dynasties are rather few and far between considering the number of persons who wore the imperial purple.

**Diocletian** represents a break in this whole development and the dominatus restructures the cult

(8). But now the religious role of the Roman emperor is speeding towards its end. Constantine suppressed the RIC in all its forms (9), though he himself was to be the last deified emperor, thanks to his pagan subjects.

In Chapter 3 we are going to look for echoes of a polemic against the RIC in the New Testament writings, from the Julio-Claudian as well as the Flavian stages of the cult.

It is my thesis that the NT writings contain both an explicit and implicit polemic against the cult of the Roman emperor, especially in its Greek form. We shall look at three examples where an explicit or implicit criticism of the cult of the emperor is to be found:

- i) the Book of Revelation
- ii) the Thessalonian correspondence
- iii) the gospel of John

In the case of Rev. such a polemic has for a long time been recognized by scholars, which a first glance at the classical commentary by Charles can affirm. In the Johannine writings at large we get the impression that the Christians live in opposition to certain aspects of the life of the state, or the city-state, which suddenly appear to be diabolical. This happens at the turn of a century when the Christians, generally speaking, lived in peace with their pagan neighbours. - In Rev. the polemic is explicit.

A less known instance of such a polemic is the Thessalonian correspondence. Here St. Paul seems to have



become acutely aware of the sinister aspects of the **R**oman state, i.e. its religious dimensions. - **A**gain the polemic is explicit. **S**omething similar seems to take place in **Mk 13** as well.

It is my belief that also the gospel of **J**ohn (hereafter referred to as **G<sup>j</sup>hn**) contains a polemic against the **RIC** in its **C**hristological vocabulary, by means of a polemical parallelism. - **T**his is the implicit polemic referred to above.

**T**he expression "polemic parallelism" was coined by **A. Deissmann** and is taken from the **E**nglish translation of **LEA** (**L**ondon **1923**). **H**e used it with particular reference to **P**aul. **B**ut it is highly relevant for the study of the **B**ook of **R**evelation as well as the **G<sup>j</sup>hn**, as this study hopes to show. **I**ndeed, it is in the **J**ohannine literature that such a polemic is most obvious.

**T**he immediate reason for this change in attitude to the state among the early **C**hristians towards the turn of the first century is usually explained by the increased emphasis on the **RIC** in the years of the **F**lavian dynasty (**69-96**), especially during the rule of the very competent but despotic **D**omitian (**10**).

**T**his change has also, of course, much to do with the break between the church and the synagogue. **T**he **J**ohannine literature is full of echoes of this tragic event. **A**nd the tragedy is primarily this: the moment the **C**hristians cease to be part of a "religio licita", they represent a "new and dangerous superstition" - in the words of **S**uetonius - and



Christianity becomes a "religio illicita". The question of their loyalty to the state can from now on easily be focused (11). The moment they no longer are protected by the privileges which the synagogue enjoyed, the danger rises that the state may see them as representatives of a new and seditious movement, as we find it in our literary sources. The second century evidence is a confirmation of our reading of the late first century evidence, that is the Johannine writings. Concerning date and place of the Johannine corpus I follow the traditional assignation to Asia Minor - the region of Ephesus - under Domitian, c. 85-95. Both external and internal evidence seem to favor such a dating (12).

The Julio-Claudian stage of this search - exemplified by the writings of St. Paul - is not so unrewarding as usually presumed. First one should be aware of the differences between our primary and secondary sources.

The letters of Paul show a great degree of ambivalence towards the state, especially as it comes across in 2 Thess. (which we in the following will be regarding as genuinely Pauline), but also elsewhere (Ephesians, Colossians). The ambivalence in question is most likely to have something to do with the eventful life of the apostel.

Luke-Acts, on the other hand, is more positive in its attitude towards the state and quite optimistic concerning the possibilities of a rapid spread of

Christianity within the **Mediterranean** world (13). **Acts** deals with the same period as we find in the letters of **Paul**, but the author is generally not worried about possible interventions from the authorities as such - all ends well whenever **Paul** has fallen into the hands of the authorities. Most intriguing are the questions related to the abrupt ending of **Acts** and how this relates to the **Neronian** persecution.

Writings following the **Pauline** letters have on the whole a similar outlook to that of **Luke**, with a notorious exception as concerns **Mark**. He has an apocalyptic urgency about his message that to many scholars indicate a date of composition connected with the war in **Palestine** and the contemporary civil war of the long year **68/69** (14). **Matthew** does not seem to suspect the state of having sinister purposes in its dealings with **Christians**, and he is primarily occupied with theological problems of a different kind.

But under the later stage of the **Flavian** rule a change seems to take place in the **NT** attitude to the **Roman** power in the **Greek East**. This is - as stated above - what we find in the **Johannine** writings.

**Rev.** sees emperor-worship as directly **Satanic**, and **GJhn** is fighting on two frontiers - against the synagoge as well as the state - in a way which gives this gospel a defensive character. In **GJhn** we shall see that the **Greek** vocabulary of the **RIC** can be turned into a **Christological** tool, with clear polemical aims. This is not surprising

considering the amount of emperor-worship in Ephesus at the time (see: **Appendix 4, Catalogue, no.24**). But its presence does not necessarily support the so-called "persecution" of Domitian which Eusebius refers to and seems to have taken over from the previous ecclesiastical tradition without reserve, and which unfortunately has become a commonplace in textbooks and commentaries. Whatever happened under Domitian - and this is very far from clear - there was certainly a worsening of condition for Jews, and therefore also for Christians if they, by then, were excommunicated from the synagogue. Because then their situation vis à vis the Roman authorities would have been far more difficult than at the periods when Paul and Luke wrote.

Two things seem to emerge from a critical reading of the so-called "persecution of Domitian": There was an increase in emphasis on the RIC - of obvious reasons seen from the point of view of the new dynasty - and there was also a worsening of conditions for the Jews, with sad consequences for the Christians. Both taken together could explain why the Christians in Asia Minor at this time were going through an experience of the RIC and the Roman administration in general which was of a sinister kind. Rev. makes this explicitly clear - the G'hn implicitly.

A confirmation of the dilemma of the Christians towards the turn of the first century can easily be found if we move our attention some few years ahead: to the situation

we find in **Bithynia** under **Pliny** (c.110-15), the letters of **Ignatius** (c.112-15), the case of **Justin**, the martyrdom of **Polycarp** of **Smyrna**, and others.

It is clear from these texts that there is a ban on being a **Christian**, a ban of a kind which leads to capital punishment in case the accusations prove true. - But we do not know from exactly when this was the case. Since **Trajan** is a great continuator of the administration of **Domitian** it is reasonable to suppose that this change has something to do with the situation which rose under the last of the **Flavians** and which occasioned the strong reactions that we find in the **Johannine** literature.

**Pliny** knows that the confession of the name of **Christ** is unlawful - we do not know from where he knows this, or for what reasons. He himself does not seem to know of any specific legislation against the **Christians**, which is the reason why he asks. **Trajan** probably knew more, but he does not say so explicitly in his answer to **Pliny's** letter. Accordingly here is a topic where scholarship has excelled in searching for answers, and often has done so with considerable acumen. The situation is not much clearer towards the end of the second century, as we can see from the martyrdoms at **Lyons** and **Scillum**. But the principal questions concerning **Roman Criminal law** are still with us up to the time of the systematic persecutions. What we find is that the **RIC** is instrumental in the sporadic martyrdoms. In what way it also can be said to be a cause of the sporadic martyrdoms depends on an analysis of the

impact of the new cults locally and the question of the social pressures it must have created, especially in Asia.

The RIC is certainly involved in a way which made it perpetually hateful to the early Church. The fact that a change seems to have occurred under Domitian accounts for the fact that the ecclesial tradition postulates a persecution under this emperor. He suffered "damnatio memoriae", was judged a "bad emperor" by the Senatorial class - but never by the army - and Eusebius seems to follow this tradition uncritically. This view has been accepted unanimously through the Christian centuries until Theodor Mommsen started the process of rehabilitating him.

In short, we will concentrate on the Johannine evidence and the new situation towards the turn of the first century, while allowing for excursions into the apostolic age (king Agrippa II, St. Paul, texts relating to the fire of Rome, Mk.13). References to the situation we know from the second century will be made all through the work.



## CHAPTER 1:

### **THE DIVINITY OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR**

The purpose of this chapter will be to establish in what sense it is legitimate to speak about "the divinity of the Roman emperor" at all, i.e. in what sense he could be called a "god". Such an investigation is a necessary background for the description of the Greek version of the cult as follows in chapter 2. Textbooks and systematic studies naturally follow the opposite procedure, but for our purpose it is necessary to start with the emperor himself.

The divine monarchy in Rome was an innovation.

In order to understand how it came about it is necessary to say something about its beginnings in Roman history, that is, the transition from the imperatorial to the imperial age - from Caesar to Augustus. The successors of Augustus will on the whole be dealt with briefly, while the transition to the new dynasty of the Flavians will have to be looked at in some detail, since, in the first place, it is of importance for understanding vital aspects of the cult, and , secondly, because the New Testament, generally speaking, is written during their dynasty.

An important turn of events in the development of monarchy takes place under the last of the Flavians - Domitian - and must be dealt with in greater detail than



the foregoing rulers. There are two reasons for this. In the first place he turned the so-called "principate" of his predecessors into a monarchy proper, and is a crucial figure for understanding the further history of the cult. In the second place his newly established cult at Ephesus may be the direct occasion for the writing of the book of Revelation. And what is more: he is possibly hinted at in the fourth Gospel.

But in order to understand the consequences of the reign of this last ruler of the Flavian dynasty it is important to look further ahead, to his immediate successors, in order to see how they dealt with the situation he had created. Therefore we will continue our survey through the reign of Trajan, continuity being essential for any attempt made to come to terms with the imperial cult.

A brief concluding section ends this chapter.

## 1) SCHOLARSHIP AND THE RIC

We start our investigation with a brief section on how recent study has changed our understanding of the Roman imperial cult. This new turn in scholarship is the direct occasion for the chapters that follow and for a renewed interest in the question of how the New Testament writings may be seen to reflect a polemic against the cult.

The study of the RIC has a long record both among classicists and theologians. Church historians have always shown interest for the question, as it looms so large in the traditions from the primitive and early Church. Roman historians have increasingly occupied themselves with the problem, often in dialogue with Church historians, and often in dispute and disagreement.

These two branches of scholarship approach the problem from two different points of view: one is in sympathy with the first Christians, sharing their reserves about the Roman imperial system, especially the cult of the emperor (the last great device of paganism, with tragic consequences for the early Church, e.g. Frend et al.) - the other in sympathy with the Roman state and its skilled bureaucracy, especially the emperors of the 2d.c.- that period which Gibbon described as the happiest period of mankind on earth (e.g. Mommsen et al.).

Here different sympathies have led to different views in the debate: Church historians tend to defend -

and repeat - the views of the ecclesiastical tradition, especially as found in Tertullian and Eusebius, while Roman historians tend to defend - and rehabilitate - rulers that by tradition, sacred and secular alike, have been condemned by posterity as "bad emperors", because they were incompetent or despotic as well as being persecutors of the Church.

This concerns certain imperial figures of the 1st c. AD, Domitian in particular. Nobody would claim that the adoptive emperors of the 2d.c. could be judged "bad rulers" - and yet they were persecutors of the Christians (e.g. Trajan, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius). This ancient ecclesiastical solution to the problem - that of linking "bad" emperors and "persecuting" emperors together - has come under attack from modern Roman historians (e.g. Salmon, Garzetti, Grant et al.). Such conflicting views ought to be given some attention at the beginning of our investigation.

Church historians cannot easily abandon the fact that the early Christians at certain times and at certain places experienced the state as Satanic in some of its aspects, especially in its deification of the emperor, dead or alive. Still, it is my belief that Church historians and exegetes would do well to attend to the established and ongoing discussion among Roman historians. Those Church historians and exegetes who do so seem to be the most interesting writers on the topic of the RIC in the NT and 2d.c. Christian literature (e.g. Charles, Cerfaux,

Freund, Hemer et al.). Any student of the cult will anyway have to consult both scholarly traditions.

Listed below are the works by classical scholars or Church historians that I have found most useful for the present study. For the sake of convenience I have arranged them in chronological order:

1891 - E. Beurlier: Le culte Imperiale, son histoire et son organisation, Paris.

1931 - L. R. Taylor: The Divinity of the Roman Emperor, Middletown, Connecticut.

1936 - K. Scott: The Imperial Cult under the Flavians, Stuttgart.

1947 - H. P. L'Orange: Apotheosis in ancient Portraiture, Oslo.

1956 - L. Cerfaux, J. Tondriau: Le culte des souverains - un concurrent du christianisme dans la civilisation gréco-romaine, Paris.

1965 - W. H. C. Freund: Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church, Oxford

1971 - S. Weinstock: Divus Julius, Oxford.

1972 - A. D. Nock: Essays on religion in the Ancient World, Oxford

1973 - W. den Boer (ed.): Le culte des souverains dans l'empire romaine, Leuven.

1978 - A. Wlosok (ed.): Römische Kaiserkult, Darmstadt.

1978 - D. Fishwick: The Imperial Cult in the

Latin West, Leiden

1984 - S.R.F. Price: **Rituals and Power**, Oxford

It is strange to find that almost a century after its appearance the work of **Beurlier (1891)** is still the most comprehensive study of the worship of the **Roman emperor**. **L.R. Taylor** made such a statement about the work of **Beurlier** in **1931 (1)**, and **L'Orange** did the same in **1947 (2)**. - It is still the case.

The work of **Taylor** herself is admirable for establishing how **Augustus** organised the cult, and **Scott (1936)** follows up with the only exhaustive account of the cult under the **Flavians**. The weakness of **Taylor** is perhaps her concentration on **Rome** itself and the tendency to take this form of the cult as normative for the whole empire. Here the work of **Scott** is more balanced, using much epigraphic evidence from the provinces. **Taylor** is admirable in her use of the numismatic evidence, which - though being of the nature of official propaganda - is one of the principal sources for this kind of study.

The most capable handling of the different sources - literary, epigraphic, numismatic, monumental, artistic - in one single work is the study of **L'Orange**, "**Apotheosis**" (**1947**), and it enjoys rightly a high priority in all serious bibliographies on the topic.

**Weinstock (1971)** does for **Julius** much the same as **Taylor** and **Scott** did for the **Julio-Claudians** and the **Flavians** respectively. The works edited by **den Boer**

(1973) and Wlosok (1978) are typical of their period in being collections of articles rather than contributions of a larger scope.

Fishwick (1978) is just the first two volumes of a magnum opus dealing with the cult in the West, so far unique in its detailed information. But the emphasis is on the Latin version of the cult, and as such it is not exhaustive for our purposes, in spite of its excellent introductory chapter dealing with the Greek antecedents of the cult. The work is impressive, but not of a revolutionary nature insofar as concerns our understanding of the cult.

A new era can, however, be said to begin with the work of S.R.F. Price (1984). He not only changes the emphasis from Rome to the Greek provinces - the areas most relevant to NT and early Church history - but also comes up with a new interpretation of the significance of the RIC in a provincial context - that is for most of the Roman empire. For exegetes and theologians this study has the most obvious and far-reaching consequences for their work. Reviews (3) and later works in this field (4) do not hesitate to acknowledge the importance of his study. The indebtedness to Price ~~for this study~~ will be seen in every chapter. I am also grateful to him personally for giving me time to discuss some of the aspects of his findings during a visit to Oxford in 1990.

A brief outline of this discussion must now follow, and I proceed to do it in two stages: A) The classical



solution - **B) A new approach.**

### **A) THE CLASSICAL SOLUTION**

The ecclesial and secular scholarly traditions are in disagreement on the most vital issue concerning the **RIC**: The classicists tend not to side with the **Christian** tradition when it comes to a religious evaluation of the **RIC**, a fact which often passes unnoticed or unmentioned. **Knowingly** or **unknowingly** they do not at all agree with **Tertullian**, **Athanasius**, **Eusebius** and the others. They tend instead to think of the **RIC** as "adulatio graeca" - thereby siding with the criticism of the intellectual tradition in antiquity - or as an empty state-ritual which only involved the upper classes, that is: seeing it as a merely political or diplomatic matter.

The two positions can be outlined as follows.

**Athanasius** speaks on behalf of more than his own generation when he talks of the emperors as: "these most impious of men...then raised to divine status, even men and images of men, some while still alive and others after their death" (5). This statement comes as a comment on **Wisd. 14, 12-21**, which is a clear reference to the divine cult of **Greek** kings, but is also relevant under the empire.

The question modern scholars have tried to answer is whether this kind of cult, which the **Romans** inherited from the **Greeks**, is religious belief or mere institution. The traditional view is summarised by **Price** at the outset of

his work (6), and re-echoes the views of the most notable historians of Greek and Roman religion. And some of these ought to be quoted.

**M.P. Nilsson** writes: "Like all religious constructions of politicians, the imperial cult had a weakness - for it lacked all genuine religious content" (7). For **Nilsson** it is a mere question of an "adulatio graeca". **R.E. Dodds** sees the imperial cult as a case of boundaries between gods and men being eliminated, for the "devaluation of gods is a necessary part of the elevation of men" (8). The great numismatist **H. Mattingly** calls the **RIC** a "substitute for religion" (9). **E. Bickerman** and **G.W. Bowersock** are equally dismissive, the latter seeing the whole cult as a game of diplomacy (10). **D. Winslow** states that the **RIC** "was never really a religion" (11).

**A.D. Nock** is perhaps the one among all these students of ancient religion who devoted the most time and energy to the ruler-cult. And the studies of **A.D. Nock** mark an advance on those of many of his predecessors, e.g. **M.P. Nilsson**. But when it comes to his personal evaluation of the religious worth of the ruler-cult he follows closely the old view of the **RIC** as "an outward sign of loyalty which involved little sentiment" (12), "it is perhaps remarkable that there is so little indication of the ascription of any supernatural efficacy to good rulers when dead" (13). He agrees with those ancient critics who see apotheosis as a mere reward bestowed upon good rulers, or - in the case of Greek cult of living rulers - an

expression of homage and loyalty. The origin of it all was an expression of gratitude to benefactors, and the deification of great individual benefactors to mankind became simply applied to rulers (14). "Countless as are dedications and acts of devotion to deified rulers, it is yet clear that they all are of the nature of homage and not of worship in the full sense - for worship implies the expectation of blessing...in a supernatural way" (15). Classical historians like Taylor, Scott, Weinstock and den Boer do not frequently trespass on the domain of study of religion and it is not clear what their view of the RIC as a religious phenomenon is like. An art historian like L'Orange does not commit himself on this topic either. Theologians are more courageous, as may be expected, and Cerfaux and Tondriau, continuing the seminal work of Beurlier, seem to be fully aware of the RIC being more than a mere state-affair, something the subtitle of their important work clearly indicates: "un concurrent du christianisme". - This is their way of representing the tradition from the early Church, they seem to be aware of the popular dimension of this cult.

But the question of one being a classical historian or a historian of religion may not be the decisive point in this discussion. Both camps seem actually to share the same presuppositions - by Price so frequently referred to as "Christianizing" - when it comes to evaluating the religious value of the RIC. And it is the great merit of Price's work that he raises this question already at the

outset of his study .

Time and again Price stresses that these authors with their statements on the **RIC** as religion- or rather: as a non-religion - argue from what he calls a **Christian** background. It would perhaps be more correct to put it like this: they argue from a modern **Christian** tradition, and a fairly rationalistic one as such, i.e. that of modern scholarship, often against a **Protestant** background.

Nock is "insisting in a **Christianizing** manner on emotion as a criterion for religion, and strengthening the conventional distinction between politics and religion" (16). One could indeed add the name of another distinguished student of **Greek** religion, **M.J. Festugière**, who also sees the **RIC** as a non-religion, thanks to his distinction between "personal" versus "communal" religious sentiments, besides the more useful distinction between "popular" and "reflective" piety.

This is not the place to argue with authorities on **Greek** and **Roman** religion such as these, but Price is clearly scoring a point by drawing attention to this fact. It seems, however, appropriate to criticize Price for his use of the expression "**Christianizing** presuppositions": it is not the ancient **Christian** tradition he finds himself arguing against, but the modern - subjective and emotional, and basically **Protestant**. The tradition of the **Fathers** saw the **RIC** as an expression of genuine idolatry and knew that it had been condemned by **Holy Writ**, as stated above.

The puzzling fact remains that while classicists like

these play down the religious significance of the **RIC** in general they thereby render it difficult to understand the **Christian** protest, which they seem to share. Why should an apologist like **Tertullian** give us such violent invectives against this particular cult if it was not of a religious nature? And why should modern **Churchmen** do the same?

### B) A NEW APPROACH

The point where **Price** breaks away from the view of **Nock** and **Festugière** is precisely the ever-recurring argument of emotion (17). He thereby clears the air and makes it possible to approach the **RIC** from a totally different point of view. His thesis is that the **RIC** in fact is a living religious concern and not just politics. He thereby criticizes the **Christian** scholars of modern times for having misunderstood the cult. But in doing so he brings down criticism upon himself by not distinguishing between ancient and modern **Christian** points of view: some of the older **Fathers** (not to speak of the martyrs and the apologists) had actually experienced the cult functioning - and they did not minimize its significance.

For a student of the **New Testament** a treatment of the **RIC** as a living religion has obvious and immediate advantages.

In **Paul** there are <sup>14</sup>hits at the cult in strongly



eschatological passages. **Mark 13** and **Acts 12** also seem to touch upon this theme. In the Johannine literature, however, the polemic against the **RIC** is so violent, whether it be implicit (as in the **Gospel**) or explicit (as in **Revelation**), that an explanation of a new kind seems to be warranted. And it is indeed my belief that the work of **Price** on the "how" of the imperial cult among the **Greeks** can contribute to throw a new light, so badly needed, on this field of study, i.e. the issue of the polemic against the **Greek** version of the cult in the **New Testament** as such. The more popular the **RIC** was, the more likely it was to be an operating force in the persecution of the early **Christians**, as we will see in **Chapter 3**. Once one avoids the modern religious emphasis in religion on the private, emotional and personal and shifts one's attention to the public, popular and communal dimension, the persecutions are easier to understand. But that involves parting with modern **Christian** presuppositions when studying this topic.

But moving simply from private to public, from personal to communal, from emotional to official would be a new way of misinterpreting the **RIC**. It would indeed be a new departure of understanding ancient religiosity, but it would be equally one-sided. What **Price** aims at is a third kind of approach, a theory of "symbolic evocation", where "people can mean what they say without their statements being fully determined" (18). This approach is neither literalist (saying that **Augustus** is a god) or



metaphorical (saying that **Augustus** is like a god), but ritualist - interpreting the **RIC** as based on divine cult, as a system whose structure defines the position of the emperor, and interpreting ritual as a cognitive system, a way of conceptualizing the world (19).

Recapturing the pagan sentiments of the ancients is something the **Christian** - and especially the modern **Christian** - finds impossible to do, even if he tries. But by approaching the question from the point of view of cultic structures - and this is ultimately what **Price** is doing - we approach it from an angle of "praxis" rather than that of "theoria" - "ritual is all that there was" (20). Somewhat oversimplified this statement is of value as a contrast to the old approach.

This line of argumentation is fascinating for the theologically minded. But before we continue this exploration it may prove useful to dwell further on some of the objections to the traditional scholarly understanding of this cult and leave religious theories behind for the moment.

Intellectuals and writers are usually regarded as taking the whole **RIC** lightly, ridiculing it or simply ignoring it. Famous examples of this kind of attitude are **Pliny** the **Elder** and the **Younger**, **Seneca**, and **Tacitus**. They are often contrasted with the court flattery of **Ovid**, **Horace**, **Catullus**, **Vergil** - to name writers of the **Augustan** age - or **Martial**, **Juvenal**, **Statius** and **Silius** from the **Flavian** age. Once we come to **Dio Cassius** and

the **Historia Augusta** the **RIC** has become a long accepted and established tradition and is treated differently. **Pliny** the **Elder** represents somehow the main line of thought among intellectuals concerning the consecration of rulers: "deus est mortali iuvare mortalem" (21). To enrol benefactors among the gods is the older mode of returning thanks to them, and this is his view on the **Roman** monarchy. By serving mankind **Vespasian** and his sons are winning the way to heaven. This opens the way for the distinction between good and bad rulers so typical of the age, and his famous nephew **Pliny** the **Younger** expressed himself extensively on this topic, basically following the line of thought of his uncle, which, of course, is that of the **Greeks** before them. The earliest panegyric preserved comes from his hand and is delivered to **Trajan** in the year 100.

As far as flattery goes it is as bad as anything under **Domitian** (**Statius** and **Martial**). Be that as it may, his view of apotheosis is identical with that of his uncle: it is acceptable for good emperors, but not for bad ones. As such **Titus** deserves his consecratio while **Domitian** does not (22). **Nerva** is already deified, and **Trajan** himself will be consecrated in his turn, here there is no doubt in the panegyrist's mind (23). **Tiberius** and **Nero** rank among the "bad" emperors, sharing the fate of **Domitian** (24).

**Tacitus** never expressed himself in the same manner as **Pliny**, but there can be no doubt that if he had he would

have shared the views of his friend and colleague.

Going back in time to Seneca, we find another example of an intellectual who is often taken to represent an intellectual critique of the RIC, which in his day was a more recent institution in Rome than at the time of the two Plinys. Seneca's "Apocolocyntosis" - "pumpkinfication" - is mocking the institution of consecration of emperors, it appears. But it is not the institution as such that is under attack, only and specifically the consecration of Claudius. For he is very much in favour of this practise in the case of Augustus - and, of course, in the case of Nero himself, something which shines through in his other writings (25). (We must assume that he had probably changed his mind on this particular topic before committing suicide.)

So here we find ourselves in the same situation as that of the Plinys some decades later - the RIC is acceptable when they like the emperor. In any case the intellectuals and the writers were fairly impotent when it came to deciding such matters, and the view of Herodian (that those emperors were deified who had sons to succeed them; see: Introduction) was closer to historical reality. But the argument from moral and public qualities remained the most popular. A fascinating story told by Philostratus expresses well the spirit of the times as regards deification. Here Domitian asks Apollonius of Tyana why men call him (Apollonius) a god. The sage replies : "because every man that is thought to be good is

honoured by the title of god" (26).

The Senatorial view is of course that of the intellectual critics. But what was the view of the emperors themselves? This question will be dealt with later in a less theoretical and more practical way. The joke of **V**espasian when dying - "vae puto deus fio" (27) - is famous for its ironic overtones, and typical for his particular kind of humor. But it is hardly typical of the attitude of later rulers. Consecration was then an essential part of the whole imperial enterprise. And **V**espasian was, after all, not of noble ancestry, which accounts for some of the overtones in this remark. In an article on "Humor at the Expense of the Ruler-cult" **K. S**cott (28) seems to share the views of **N**ilsson and **N**ock, but - as **P**rice actually remarks - a preferable theory is that jokes are made precisely about those things that matter most (29).

If we accept **F**estugière's distinction between "popular" and "reflective" piety among the ancients - particularly the **G**reeks (30) - it could prove useful to note certain features of the **RIC** which definitely are in favour of it being a popular kind of religious institution.

**N**ock complained that there was so little indication of the ascription of any supernatural efficacy to good rulers when dead (31). But as **P**rice constantly points out, it is the living **E**mperor who is the important object of the ruler-cult in a **G**reek context, not the dead, and this changes many things since the emperor did bestow blessings

of all kinds: peace, felicity, virtue, etc. - a look at the coinage confirms such a view. An amusing story to the effect that dead emperors are not quite dead - and this reads almost like a ghost-story - is found in the life of **Divus Augustus** in **Suetonius** (32), where a "supernatural" event (to use the language of **Nock**) takes place in the very room where **Augustus** was nursed in the country mansion near **Velitrae**: later occupants of the room were frightened away by some kind of powerful presence, usually at night. **Nock** states that this story is "exceptional", but other exceptions to his rule might easily be found.

More to the point are the stories relating to **Vespasian**, that is to his miraculous cures worked at **Alexandria** (33). This occurs at the time of his accession to the throne, a fact which makes scholars - ancient and modern - sceptical about its factual truth, because it can so easily look like propaganda for the new imperial house. But the student of the **NT** immediately calls to mind the episode in **Acts 14**, where **Paul** and **Barnabas** are associated with **Hermes** and **Zeus** for having worked a miraculous cure at **Lystra**. This is entirely in line with **Hellenistic** thinking, and the **Roman** emperor would naturally fall into this category of thought. The point in question is not the above mentioned notion of deification as reward for good works, which is also operative in this case, but the popular nature of such a faith. In the "**Metamorphoses**" of **Apuleius** we find the



famous incident where the hero of the story, **Lucius**, actually invokes the name of the emperor for help when in great distress (34). **Charlesworth**, in his article on the ruler-cult, does not find it difficult to name examples of such popular belief in the power of the **RIC**.

Another aspect is equally important, though often neglected.

Statuettes and busts of the emperors were a very normal part of the "lares", or household-gods, as we find it in our sources. They were all the more common, since - according to **Scott** - they belonged to the domain of private religion and were ignored by the government. As such the Roman emperor was deified while alive even at **Rome**, as the episode of **Tiberius** and **Lucius Ennius** proves (35). **Pliny** himself gives important evidence on this issue, since he was a collector of imperial statues, which he ultimately wanted to display in a temple; until he did so they were housed in a special room in his villa (36). He also mentions a house in **Prusa** having a temple to **Claudius** built into its courtyard (37).

Examples of the **RIC** not being limited to the public sphere abound as one starts to look for this kind of evidence. Some more well known examples may justifiably be cited here in support of the view that the ruler-cult was more than just the business of the élite.

**Suetonius** himself once possessed a bronze statuette of **Augustus**, showing him as a boy. This he showed to the emperor **Hadrian** - whose secretary he was until his



dismissal - "who has placed it among the household-gods in his bedroom" (38). - This, of course, happened long after the death of Augustus and is not direct evidence for private or popular cult of the living emperor in the West, but the point is that the statuette is old and probably comes from the time when Augustus was alive.

Suetonius also tells the story of how L. Vitellius, the future emperor, "placed golden images of Claudius' secretaries Narcissus and Pallas among his Household-gods" at a time when both were at the peak of their influence (39). Private consecrations were therefore a totally private affair and nobody's business. Tacitus tells how the image (imago) of Sejanus was placed among the lares (40), and Suetonius of how Tiberius rewarded the legions of Syria for "their refusal to set consecrated statues of Sejanus among their standards" (41).

Earlier we find that Ovid in exile had images of Julius, Augustus and Livia in his lararium at Pontus (42). According to Scott there must have been busts or statuettes for cultic purposes (43). Fronto, more than a hundred years later, writes to the young Marcus Aurelius of imperial images, painted and sculptured, being on display in almost every shop, and these must have been there for the purpose of private use. Actually, Price insists that the private cult of domestic shrines has been confirmed by archeology both from Rome, Pompeii and Ephesus (44) - for further evidence, see the catalogue in Appendix 4.

In other words: where we find an acceptance of the **RIC** among intellectuals and writers in the case of emperors they approve of, it is equally evident that it was accepted on the private and popular level. And it is particularly in this latter context that the old scholarly view becomes hard to defend.

It would perhaps have been natural to leave the preceding discussion till after our survey of the history of the **RIC** which is to follow. The reason this has been done beforehand is simply to make it possible to discuss this same history with the modern - and classical - views in mind, which should give the discussion more intellectual scope.

For 20th. century students none of this will cause any surprise whatever. Our own times have seen the ruler-cult in its most sinister aspects at such close range that the ancient precursors of this phenomenon appear relatively innocent and clean. The consequences of the **RIC** for the persecutions and martyrdoms of the early Church is a well known history and appalling enough in its consequences for the early Christians. But, numerically speaking, the numbers of Christians - and Jews for that matter - killed in the ancient persecutions are infinitesimal in comparison to what we have witnessed in our own century (45). Facts as these should remind us that our topic is far from being merely an academic pursuit.

The new view of the **RIC** as precisely a popular phenomenon explain many features of the cult that previously

was explained away, or not explained at all. Besides, it makes it possible - perhaps for the first time - for the ecclesial and secular traditions to meet and work together. Indeed, this work is a feeble attempt to benefit from such a new situation in scholarship.

## **2) OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE RIC IN THE FIRST AND EARLY SECOND CENTURY AD**

### **I) THE FOUNDING OF THE DIVINE MONARCHY IN ROME**

This section will deal with the problem of the founding of ruler cult in Rome. We have to start with Julius Caesar, because it is at this point that every discussion of this important topic begins. We will proceed by highlighting the discussion of the following themes: i) Caesar's final aims - ii) the divine honours given Caesar in his final two years - iii) Caesar's divine descent - iv) Caesar's dynastic plans - v) the numismatic evidence - vi) the argument from the East.

#### **1) Caesar's final aims.**

"The period of Caesar and Augustus has the same interest for the Roman imperial cult that the time of Alexander and his first successors has for the Hellenistic ruler worship, for Caesar was the first divine ruler at Rome and Augustus gave to the divinity of the ruler the form under which it was destined to endure for three centuries." (1)

"As for the period of his dictatorship at Rome the myth that he wanted to make himself a king, or even a hellenistic-type king worshipped with divine honors, was

first put about by his enemies at the time; it has been taken up by historians and others in later generations who have shown themselves ready to accept the gossip put about by his detractors and their representation of his actions and remarks". (2)

"It is not necessary to believe that Caesar planned to establish at Rome a Hellenistic Monarchy... The question of ultimate intentions becomes irrelevant... It might appear that subsequent accounts have been guilty of attributing a part at least of the cult of Divus Julius to that very different person, Caesar the Dictator... The ingenious - and among them the erudite - are prone to discover design where chance or accident operates". (3)

As the quotations above suggest the discussion of Caesar's "final aims" is one of strong disagreement among scholars. There are basically three solutions that have been put forward in modern research:

a) Caesar wanted to introduce a kind of permanent dictatorship at Rome - this is the view of Syme, Adcock, Gardner, et al.

b) Caesar wanted to introduce a type of monarchy in Rome which was that of Rome's legendary past - this is basically the view of Alföldi.

c) Caesar wanted to introduce the divine kingship of the Hellenistic monarchies - this is the view of Taylor, L'Orange, Grant, Weinstock et al.

Variations of these positions may be found as well:

Ehrenberg thinks that Caesar wanted monarchy, not in the old form (Alföldi) nor in the Hellenistic (Taylor), but that of his own. The view expressed in c) is by far the easiest to document. And because of its very close affinities with the religious sentiments of the Greek world - which ultimately is our concern - it will be spelled out in some detail.

According to this line of interpretation (c), Caesar succeeded, before his assassination on 15. March 44 BC, in preparing the ground for something - that is, a new kind of rule in Rome - which followed after his death. The action of Cassius, Brutus and Casca was abortive, and directly counterproductive - it became the final blow to the Republic and not just to Julius.

Whether this interpretation is correct, and the actual founder of the divine monarchy in Rome was Julius, is a matter which can only be settled when we have examined what the "final aims" of Caesar looked like. Even if it turns out that Augustus is the founder, the spirit of the consecrated Julius may still be seen behind his designs, if divine monarchy was his motive, an intention that became realized in a different way - if not in a different form - from what he had foreseen.

The question here is: who created the pattern for the next 300 years - Julius or his adopted son? Was there divine cult before March 15th 44 BC or only afterwards, as a result of his death and not of his planning? - This is what is meant by the phrase "Caesar's



final aims", used by Ehrenberg.

When Syme assures us that it hardly "can be proved that Caesar devised a comprehensive policy of ruler-worship" (4), Ehrenberg retorts that "that is begging the question" (5). And the subsequent study of Weinstock moves much further than Ehrenberg in the direction of seeing an actual pattern of divine kingship in the last years of Caesar's rule. With Weinstock we are somehow back to the position of Taylor, but in a much more elaborated form.

The easiest way of understanding Caesar's behaviour in his last years is, as Taylor points out, to look towards Alexander the Great for a possible political model and inspiration. Both Taylor, L'Orange, Grant and Weinstock look in this direction, and find it rewarding, while Green does not.

That Caesar should become orientalised in a similar manner to that of Alexander is not really surprising. Both were looking for new types of rule for an increasingly expanding political unity - and both found it in the East, that is to say, after a visit to Egypt. Caesar actually married the last successor of Alexander - Cleopatra VII - and recognized their son, Caesarion, as legitimate. He put up her statue next to that of Venus Genitrix in her temple at Caesar's forum (6), preparing for the great orientalizing of Rome. This latter fact was certainly one of the strongest factors working against him. For soon after her departure from the city he was murdered by

republicans led by Junius Brutus, whose namesake 450 years earlier had expelled the kings from Rome. The murder of Caesar was on this view primarily an attack on monarchy.

The question of how far Caesar was a realist or a romantic has vexed the brains of those scholars who see this design as the most likely interpretation of the facts. In other words: did Caesar really believe in his own divinity, that is, his divine descent? (The ancient aristocratic tradition of claiming divine descent for a whole family - a gens - is no explanation of this question, and will be dealt with shortly.)

Such psychological questions are naturally of a modern date and bring to mind Price's warning against "Christianizing presuppositions", i.e. assuming from the outset that such a belief cannot be true. And that is probably why Weinstock finds it necessary to insist on this point, that Caesar actually did believe in his divine descent, that his policy was a matter of religious conviction (7).

While it has been customary to see Caesar as irreligious and scheming, Weinstock opens his study by stressing that in all likelihood he was a normal Roman in this way, that is superstitious. And here he comes very close to Price's position: "his piety was the piety of the citizen, not of the individual" (8). Such a view opens up possibilities of interpretation that can help to highlight this thorny question of Caesar's final aims. The safest path to choose seems on the whole to be by considering the

actual course of events leading up to his deification - the various stages of the long and winding road towards consecration.

ii) The divine honours bestowed upon Caesar in the two last years of his reign are the points where the scholarly debate is most divided. Are they:

- a) flattery from the point of view of the Senate
- b) part of his own scheme
- c) anachronistic honours - i.e. those of Divus Julius?

The main source here is Suetonius and deserves to be quoted:

"Yet other deeds and sayings of Caesar's may be set to the debit account, and justify the conclusion that he deserved assassination. Not only did he accept excessive honors, such as a life-consulship, a life-dictatorship, a perpetual Censorship, the title "Imperator" put before his name, and the title "Father of his country" appended to it, also a statue standing among those of the ancient kings, and a raised couch placed in the orchestra at the Theatre, but took other honors which, as a mere mortal, he should certainly have refused. These included a golden throne in the Senate House, and another on the tribunal; a ceremonial chariot and litter for carrying his statue in religious procession around the Circus; temples, altars, and divine images; a priest of his own cult; a new college of Lupercals to celebrate his divinity; and the renaming of

the seventh month as "July". Few, in fact, were the honors which he was not pleased to accept or assume" (9). - In fact, this quotation only poses the vital question of whether all this refers to pre- or post-mortem honours.

If the parallel with Alexander (solution c) is as important as most scholars tend to think, the honours listed by Suetonius should be interpreted along the line of b) (i.e. part of his own scheme) rather than a) (i.e. flattery). For after having defeated Pompey at Pharsalus he went to Egypt where he came to know the last descendant of the Ptolemies, the continuators of both Alexander's and the pharaonic form of divine kingship - Cleopatra. After the Alexandrian war he married her, she bore him a son and came to Rome in 45.

But he had encountered the Greek ruler-cult already before he reached Egypt, during his visit to Greece and Asia Minor. The honours Suetonius refers to were voted to him after his return to Rome. And these honours - as well as some others - are worth looking at again if there should be anything to the assumption that this pattern marks the beginning of divine monarchy in Rome.

a) The temple to Venus was originally meant to be a temple to Venus Victrix, as an act of thanksgiving for the victory at Pharsalus, but it became a temple to the mother of the Julian house - Venus Genitrix. Before this temple stood an equestrian statue of Caesar himself - obviously recalling Alexander and Bucephalus - and next to the cult statue of Venus the image (that is: statue) of

Cleopatra, being of divine descent herself (10). The equestrian statue is usually dated to 44 BC (11). Of Cleopatra's image Scott says that "if this was not a form of Hellenistic cult the difference must have been theoretical, not practical" (12).

b) The war chariot which Caesar had dedicated in the Capitolium in front of the cult statue of Jupiter is discussed by Weinstock, who finds that it is taken from the model of divine cult, that is: it is the chariot of gods and kings, and not just that of the "imperator perpetuus" (13).

c) The Senate voted him - according to Dio Cassius - the title semigod ("hemitheos") on a statue in the Capitolium voted to him after the battle of Thapsus. Weinstock discusses the very interesting question of whether Caesar here was mounted on a globe or standing on his feet (14), the globe being a symbol of cosmic, divine kingship.

d) In the temple of Quirinus (the deified Romulus) there was erected a statue of Caesar, whereby the dictator becomes the coinhabitant - temple-sharer - with the only deified king from Rome's legendary past (15). Ehrenberg, who does not follow Taylor, L'Orange and Weinstock on the Hellenistic model of his kingship, nevertheless admits that "Caesar's statue in the temple may not have implied divinity for him, nor Cleopatra's for her in the temple of Venus Genetrix, but both were certainly raised above human level" (16). Dio, however, records that this statue had the inscription "to the unconquered god" (17).



e) At the beginning of 44 the Senate gave him the title "parens patriae", which again is a royal title, used of deities like Romulus and Alexander.

f) According to Dio Caesar's image was borne with the images of the gods in solemn processions (18), and it became customary to swear by Caesar's genius (19).

g) Suetonius says: "What made the Romans hate him so bitterly was that when, one day, the entire Senate, armed with an imposing list of honors that they had just voted to him, came to where he sat in front of the Temple of Mother Venus, he did not rise to greet them" (20).

h) The ascendancy of Julius is often linked to his religious "career", if one may call it so, which, according to Weinstock (21) is extraordinary and therefore indicative of his real ambitions: he became a Flamen Dialis in 87/86, a pontifex in 73 (as member of a college), pontifex maximus in 63 and finally augur in 47.

i) However much Caesar accepted these honours, and whether they were signs of old monarchy or new, Hellenistic or just Caesarian - though the parallelism with Alexander and the whole Alexandria-pattern of thought and behaviour is very striking - there seems to have been a natural limit to all of it: the question of actually accepting the very title of "rex" itself. Suetonius records that he refused the royal diadem offered him several times by Mark Anthony (22) and had it instead hung in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (23). The popular acclamation of "long live



the King", he also refused to acknowledge (24). This seems to have been a limit to his honours, at least up to the time of his death. What the story of his further life would have revealed, had it been longer, is impossible to say. But it is certainly not too much to assume that it would have settled the thorny question of Caesar's "final aims". Before going on to consider some further evidence, it may be worthwhile to remember that Suetonius also records that on his last night "Caesar dreamed that he was soaring above the clouds, and then shaking hand with Jupiter" (25). Suetonius seems to be inclined to grant Caesar divine honours - but probably understood as "flattery" - already in 45-44, and Dio even more so. But Plutarch seems to keep them in store for the future, and this divergence is the entire problem in a nutshell: honours before or after his death.

We have now considered the list of honours bestowed on the living Julius, according to Suetonius and modern scholars, and should now continue by considering his apotheosis.

Julius was first deified spontaneously by the populace who wanted to cremate his body in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, but the priests refused them access and they took him to the forum and raised the funeral pyre there. This was an outburst of popular feelings: "For a long time afterwards they used to offer sacrifices at the foot of this column (raised on the spot), make vows there and settle dispute by oath taken in Caesar's name" (26).

But the official consecration had to wait until 42 and only came about thanks to his adopted son Octavian. Mark Anthony was against it. The Senate declared him a god and commanded the erection of a temple to him and his Clementia, instituting a priesthood in his honour (27). The month Quinctilis was renamed Julius and games - ludi Victoriae Caesaris - were held. The Flamen Divo Iulio that Dio mentions is perhaps the same as Suetonius listed among the honours bestowed upon him while alive (28).

That these honours were divine honours - modeled upon the cult of the gods and not just hero-cult - is beyond question.

To most scholars the honours given to Julius after his death only confirm their interpretation of the honours bestowed upon him while alive. Of the former honours Ehrenberg says: "The decisive point in my view is that the facts - though not the constitutional forms and names - gave Caesar a status far above a mere dictatorship even for life" (29).

Syme is not willing to share Taylor's interpretation, as we saw at the beginning, and before leaving this short discussion of Caesar's "final aims" and the question of the honours, his words are worth recalling, because there are - and probably always will be - scholars who are not willing to follow what we have called the "Alexander-Alexandria-pattern" referred to above: "Yet speculation cannot be debarred from playing round the high and momentous theme of the last designs of Caesar the

Dictator. It has been supposed and contended that Caesar either desired to establish or had actually inaugurated an institution unheard of in Rome and unimagined there - monarchic rule, despotic and absolute, based on the worship of the ruler, after the pattern of the monarchies of the Hellenistic East. Thus may Caesar be represented as the heir in all things of Alexander the Macedonian and as the anticipator of Caracalla, a king and a god incarnate, levelling class and nation, ruling a subject, united and uniform world by right divine" (30). His conclusion is that "the question of ultimate intentions becomes irrelevant. Caesar was slain for what he was, not for what he might become" (31).

Still, scholarship after Syme seems to have moved in the opposite direction, and some of the reasons why will have to be considered below.

Perhaps - by way of concluding this section - it is relevant to our discussion to see what happened to Mark Anthony after the death of Julius. For here we have again a great Roman who falls victim to the spells of the Greek East, and of Cleopatra in particular. In some ways his later years resemble those of Julius.

Dio leaves us in little doubt that Mark Anthony came under the spell of the East and adopted for himself the title of Osiris or Dionysus (32). This happened after the battle of Philippi - in 42 BC - when he triumphantly travelled through Asia Minor, being venerated as a god, as the Greeks had been doing with Roman rulers

and benefactors for a long time already. At Tarsus he married Cleopatra, which became interpreted as a sacred marriage (33). Inscriptions show private dedications to him as a god (theos) and benefactor (euergetes) (34). At an earlier stage, at Athens in 39 BC, he started this identification of himself with Dionysus, which to many scholars indicates that he wanted to see himself as divine king of the new Roman empire. During his triumph in Alexandria, after the defeat of the Armenians, Anthony appeared as divine monarch of a Graeco-Egyptian kind: Dionysos-Osiris. The orgiastic Dionysus seems to have been the obvious link with the divine cult in his case. Back in Athens, in 32, statues were dedicated to Anthony and Cleopatra as Dionysus and Isis on the Acropolis (35) - "Cleopatra having bereft him of his wits" Dio adds (36).

The next year - 31 - saw the end of it all, the battle of Actium, and the divine highnesses withdrew to Alexandria to seek death there. Plutarch mentions a story that is very revealing of how the ruler-cult worked among the Greeks: when it was known that Anthony was dead this was taken to mean that Dionysus was leaving their city - people hearing the sound of Bacchic revelry passing through one of the city gates (37).

Again, Syme is sceptical about an interpretation of the "ultimate design" of Anthony and all argumentation from "intentions" (38).

But the parallel between Caesar and Anthony, as the

earlier parallel between **Caesar** and **Alexander**, is a striking one for the newcomer to this question. In his own way **Anthony** carries on where **Julius** left off, but with more disastrous results for his later fate - he had no adopted son to consecrate him.

iii) Caesar's divine descent is a facet of this discussion that seems to intrigue scholars in more than one way.

The relation between the **Gens Julia** and the gods appears to be an intimate one. And this is typical of the entire history of the **RIC** - a dynasty needs some kind of roots in the divine sphere, a need which is very important at the moment of the founding of the dynasty. This need was not at all impossible to meet for ancient and venerable families like the **Julii** and the **Claudii** - once we come to the **Flavii** it is not so easy to demonstrate such a connection, but then other options are available.

The **Gens Julia** was particularly linked to **Jupiter**, **Venus**, **Mars** and **Apollo**. The latter god was just emerging from obscurity in **Caesar's** time, due to **Sulla**, a fact which explains **Augustus'** devotion to the sun-god (39).

The chapters in **Suetonius** and **Plutarch** dealing with the birth, and therefore the divine descent of **Julius**, are lost (40), but about the divine ancestry of the **Gens** there is no doubt, according to the family-record: **Julus** was the son of **Aeneas**, son of **Anchises**, and was actually worshipped as **Jupiter** after his death (41). **Weinstock**



discusses this link between **Vediovis** and **Julus** (42), but admits that the alleged birth-omens are part of a biography compiled in the last years of his life (43).

It is important to note that this is a family tradition and no innovation on the part of **Caesar**. Such family traditions belong to the **Roman** nobility on a large scale. The reason we dwell on this point here is the simple fact that the traditions of the **Gens Julia** became important for **Caesar's** manner of celebrating his own cause, they are not in the nature of being a cause in themselves.

In the case of **Venus** there is more than a claim of divine ancestry, **Caesar** is the favoured son of the goddess, a belief he made more than manifest when he erected the temple to **Venus Genitrix** close to the forum. The cult of **Venus** is the principal ancestral cult of the **Julii** (44).

The other line of his ancestry is emphasized by the god **Mars**. **Caesar** planned a temple to **Mars** as well (45), but this was left for **Augustus** to realize.

Again, the modern student should beware of reading all this through glasses tainted by rationalist presuppositions. It is a crucial point in the work by **Weinstock** that such claims as these are to be taken seriously - because **Julius** believed them himself. As in case of the work by **Price**, **Weinstock** has managed to distance himself from many of the hindrances that usually alienate the modern student from the ancient sources.

iv) **Caesar's** dynastic plans . If **Caesar** was thinking in



terms of divine monarchy the question of his succession becomes all important, for without a successor the thought of monarchy cannot be realized.

Caesar was in fact father of a divine son, Caesarion. He was the father of a god according to Hellenistic ways of thinking. Nevertheless, he adopted Octavian as his heir and not the divine child in Alexandria. This happened according to Caesar's own will and was not the fabrication of Octavian (46).

Cleopatra was already pregnant with Caesar's second child during her visit in Rome in 45-44. Why did he not make Caesarion his heir? Because it was not realistic in a Roman context - his grand-nephew Octavian was the only choice. And this does not rule out the possibility that Caesar did plan a dynastic succession. Weinstock argues along such lines (47). The fact that it was Octavian who actually did succeed him, consecrate him and construct the monarchy in the way it was to last, does not rule out the possibility that this all happened according to the wish of Julius himself.

The actual adoption of Octavian is therefore not contrary to the possibility of hereditary monarchy being Caesar's final aims. If Egypt had indeed inspired him to think along such lines he was bound to do so within the framework of the possibilities in Rome, and not in Egypt. And that is why the adoption of Octavian follows.

v) The evidence from coins is an important part of this

discussion, because it tends to strengthen the case for Caesar's monarchic plans, even to the point of indicating a Hellenistic model.

L'Orange, the art historian, closely follows Taylor on the question of the founding of the divine monarchy in Rome: "With the apotheosis of the emperor the divine-ruler type of the East finds its way into the Roman representation...In the course of the imperial age the specifically Roman conception of the emperor as the realm's highest functionary is increasingly influenced by the monarchical thought of the East" (48).

The denarii of Caesar in 44 represent an innovation which L'Orange takes to indicate a third and final innovation in the transition from republic to monarchy : to him it is the Hellenistic saviour-type that invades Rome. The late Republic showed a change in the representation of their leaders, but the "state leaders of the republic are citizens and officials, elevated above the masses by means of insignia of office, not by divine attributes ", showing "a matter-of-fact attitude to reality" (49).

He examines in particular the portrait of Scipio Africanus, and finds a marked difference from the coins of Caesar himself. But what makes Scipio so interesting is that he represents a kind of "bridging-figure" between republic and monarchy, being upward-gazing and having long hair (50). Coming to Pompeius Magnus L'Orange finds a similar - perhaps even stronger - Hellenized iconography, the coins portraits depicting him as Neptune, with trident

and dolphins (51). "The portraits of **Scipio** and **Pompey** furnish, in their historical context, a particularly clear expression of the religious ruler-idea of **Hellenism** which was so prominently to the fore in **Rome** during the last centuries of the republic" (52).

Coming finally to the coins of **Caesar** himself we find<sup>1</sup> an innovation of striking importance for our topic - **Caesar** was the first to mint coins with his own portrait. Past rulers had been honoured in this way after their death or in alternative ways, as stated above. January 1st 44 sees the first coin with the bust of **Caesar**, of an **Alexandrian** type. It is the **Alexander**-pattern in portraiture that we find here, the **Hellenistic** saviour-type portrait (53).

A Julian moneyer - **Sextus Julius Caesar** - did strike coins with the bust of **Venus**, ca. 130-125 BC (54), thereby indicating the divine descent of the **Gens Julia**. But **Caesar** went much further after having taken control of the mint himself (55). And what follows is the series of denarii where the obverse - which in republican coinage normally showed the busts of gods, in classical **Greek** fashion - now show the **Hellenistic** type of divine kings, as in **Egypt** and **Syria**. In this way **Caesar** was doing in **Rome** the same as **Alexander's** followers had been doing before him (56).

Many details of these denarii have been discussed by scholars: the globe (a symbol of cosmic kingship, probably also found on the base for **Caesar's** statue on the **Capitol** (57)), the diadem (a wreath of a very peculiar kind

(58)), the lituus, etc. According to L'Orange the star-crowned statue of Caesar in the temple of Venus Genetrix is the first divinely transfigured monumental portrait of any ruler in Rome, and dates from 44 BC (59). Dio expressly states that this symbolism was derived from Alexander (60). In both cases the association with Apollo is evident.

Turning to the coins of Brutus it is striking to find that the reverse of a denarius - with the obverse legend "Brutus imp" - has the figure of Victoria tearing up a diadem and treading on a broken scepter. This, together with the evidence from Caesars coins, supports the view that the assassination was an assault on monarchy.

v1) The argument from the East. What I here call "the argument from the East" is in short the Greek cult of Roman rulers, to be considered at length in chapter 2.

The RIC looks different once we move towards the Greek world. Actually it starts to look different as soon as we leave Rome. For in the provinces the cult of the ruler was much more popular and important than in Rome itself with its age old republican tradition and the presence of a republican-minded Senate. In fact, one does not need to move further away from the capital than to the Campagna and we are somehow in Greek territory, to say nothing of Calabria and Sicily. And in the provinces the cult of the ruler takes on a different significance from what it has in Rome. Generally speaking one could allow

things to happen in the provinces which were unthinkable in Rome. The cult of Tiberius in Spain and on the Pelopponesus are famous examples of this, as will be shown later.

But in the provinces the Greek cities are of particular interest for our purposes, because we shall mainly be dealing with the RIC in Asia Minor. And the cities in the East, once the monarchy was introduced in Rome, needed the emperor to replace the cult of their own Hellenistic rulers - that is: they modelled the cult of the ruling Roman monarch on the cult of their kings of old, or, as in the case of Egypt, on the cult of the pharaohs as well. In the provinces the new monarchy in Rome gave more space for ruler cult than the old provincial administration had allowed for, though the cult of individual Roman governors and benefactors may easily be found (see Appendix 2).

But the RIC in a Greek context looks different from the one we found in Rome.

Firstly it is primarily the ruling and living emperor who is deified and the object of the cult, not the deceased one.

Secondly the living emperor is worshipped along the lines of the divine cult, as had been the case with the Hellenistic kings earlier. We find that divine vocabulary is applied to the rulers directly (theos, hyios theou, soter, euergetes, etc.) (61).

While Price lets the Greek world start its history



of Roman Imperial Cult under Augustus (62), as does Taylor, Weinstock starts with Caesar (63). To Syme, however, it is all a question of flattery, and not of religious acts (64). Caesar was called "soter" and "euergetes" by the Greeks - like they had done to their kings - (65), as a long lists of inscriptions can witness, from: Athens (66), Thespieae (67), Olympia (68), Carthea (69). He is called "theos" at: Carthea (70), Mytilene (71), Ephesus (72). - The list could be considerably extended.

It is important to note that all these honours come from the years 48-46 BC, i.e. well before his consecration by Octavian. Whether they are to be seen as real contributions to the question of the founding of divine monarchy in Rome or not depends largely on how Caesar accepted them. And on this point we are, unfortunately, left in the dark - the Greeks behaved much as they pleased and were accustomed to do, whether the Romans approved or not. This situation began to change under the empire, when Augustus firmly regulated it all.

The six points considered above present the question in a nutshell. We have done so by referring to the classical discussion by the most noted scholars. But before leaving these themes it may be useful to have a last look at them in light of another and recent contribution.

After Weinstock the most important discussion of Caesar's role in the establishing of a divine monarchy in



Rome is probably that of Fishwick (1978) in his introductory chapter. His views represent yet another attempt to come to terms with the evidence, difficult as it is.

In the first place he considers Caesar's final aims to be monarchy, like Taylor, Weinstock and L'orange (74). This must be understood as being a radically different procedure from that of Octavian, who began by restoring the Republic but in fact became the real founder of the divine monarchy in Rome (75). Fishwick sees Caesar's religious career as a clear indication of his aims, especially his tenure of the office of pontifex maximus for life, which paved the way for divine honours, but also the piling up of other religious functions (76).

In the second place he considers the divine, or semi-divine, honours of the year 48 (after Pharsalus), 46 (after Thapsus), 45 (after Munda) and 44 to be the result of the force of circumstances (77). In other words: they are difficult to interpret, for the reasons mentioned above. The honours after Thapsus (i.e. the chariot on the Capitol and the bronze statue with globe and inscribed titles discussed above) he interprets in the tradition of Alexander, and draws the well known parallel with the picture of Demetrius Poliorcetes at Athens (78). But the preceding honours from the Greeks after Pharsalus belong to the order of Hellenistic ruler cult (theos, euergetes, soter, ktistes and are among the most pronounced in Asia (79)). The honours belonging to the

period before **Pharsalus** belong to the category of popular and spontaneous outbursts (80). The honours of 46 and 45 are discussed at length, especially the question of **Julius** being "synnaos" with **Quirinus** and the inscription "deo invicto" and "**Caesari Romulo**" (81). He takes the evidence from **Cicero** (82) to be decisive for the thesis that legislation had been passed by which **Caesar** was officially deified in his life-time, and thereby disassociates himself from the view that it is a question of anachronistic honours (83). The case of the two occasions where **Caesar** was called "rex" is interpreted as Hellenistic coronation rites, in agreement with **Weinstock** (84). But **Fishwick** underlines the important fact that all these honours voted by the **Senate** were not carried out, reminding us of the future **Caligula** (85).

In the third place **Fishwick** does not assign any causative role to the traditions of the divine descent of the **Julii** (86).

In the fourth place he, like most scholars, finds himself in disagreement with **Alföldi** over the question of the evidence from coins, regarding his views as unproven and speculative, offering a brief discussion of the evidence in question (87). But he believes that the image of **Caesaron** on coins stems from **February 44** and not **January** as commonly assumed (88).

On the whole **Fishwick** stands in the tradition of **Taylor** and **Weinstock**, strengthening the case for the thesis that **Caesar** actually wanted to introduce a

Hellenistic type of monarchy in Rome.

vii) Conclusions. This brief mentioning of certain aspects of the discussion of Caesar's monarchy among classical scholars should at least have shown that it is still possible to argue for Caesar being the founder of divine monarchy in Rome. Recent studies seem to have moved in this direction.

When a theologian is trespassing on the territory of the classicists he should not be too bold in his statements, but it does not seem too hard to argue for divine monarchy in the case of Caesar, that is, the "Alexander-Alexandria-pattern". The "argument from the East" cannot settle this question, to be sure, but is important additional evidence. - But the final working out of the argument must be left to the classicists, and it seems still to be controversial.

What is not controversial, however, is the fact that Octavian became the one who actually saw this pattern through, pace the above mentioned discussion. He saved the case of Julius whatever this case was like.

## II) AUGUSTUS

The next stage to be considered is of greater importance for our purposes than the preceding one, and will be dealt with in the following sections: i) **Divus Julius** - **divi filius** - ii) **Restoring the Republic** - iii) **Principatus** or "veiled monarchy" - iv) **The cult of the "genius"** - v) **Founder or organizer** - vi) **East and West** - vii) **Conclusions.**

"He showed no clemency to his beaten enemies, but sent **Brutus'** head to **Rome** for throwing at the feet of **Caesar's** divine image". (1)

"He had the elder of **Anthony's** sons by **Fulvia** dragged from the image of the **God Julius**, to which he had fled with vain pleas for mercy, and executed". (2)

"Besides, critics continued, **Augustus** seemed to have superseded the worship of the gods when he wanted to have himself venerated in temples, with god-like images, by priests and ministers... After an appropriate funeral **Augustus** was declared a god and decreed a temple". (3)

"This same god, who was raised to heaven - I am at a loss to say whether deservedly or not - died, leaving the son of his own enemy his heir". (4)

"The problems the charismatic authority of **Augustus** created for his successors were solved brilliantly by the **Roman Imperial Cult**... The importance of rituals is that they can objectify and institutionalize this unstable form

of charisma". (5)

1) Divus Julius - divi filius (the years 44-31).

The apotheosis of Augustus takes place in two stages, one indirect and the other direct: his status as "divi filius" while alive and as "divus" while dead. The first is a case of divine monarchy in a "veiled" form, the other of public deification (6). The young Octavian is "divi filius" from 44 to 29, when he additionally becomes "imperator". The title "augustus" is granted him in 27, and in 2 BC he receives the title "pater patriae". Finally he becomes "divus" in 14 AD (7).

It may be worthwhile looking at this development in more detail.

In 44, after the Ides of March, Julius was already being counted among the gods, not just on the popular level, but also on the official one. Mark Anthony actually became his first flamen (priest), a new temple was decreed to be erected in the forum, where an altar already had been set up on the spot where he was cremated (it may still be seen today - covered by flowers on the 15th of March every year), no Senate meeting was to be held on the anniversary of his death, and no likeness of him might be carried in the funeral of his relatives (8).

But this consecration was only to come on January 1. 42, as mentioned above, when Octavian enacted most of the decrees which the Senate had bestowed on Caesar in 44 but had never put into practice. This he did as member of

the second triumvirate which had been constituted the year before, a kind of legal tyranny of three. The temple was started the same year. After the battle of Philippi - also in 42 - Caius Caesar, Octavian, gradually had to face the threat from Mark Anthony.

When Anthony divorced Octavia (Octavian's sister) in 32, in order to marry Cleopatra, the young heir of Caesar found his will, made it a "casus belli", and had the Senate declare war on Cleopatra, who according to the will was Mark Anthony's heir and wife. At the same moment Mark Anthony prepared for war in Ephesus, where he also was acting divine king, as already mentioned. The battle of Actium - in 31 - settled this strife in favour of Octavian, and the divine couple withdrew to Alexandria to seek death there. - Octavian searched out Caesarion and had him killed.

Back in Rome Octavian - now emperor - was going about the business of establishing the new and divine monarchy. But he had to do it carefully. He had publicly been ridiculing Anthony for posing as a New Dionysus and "could later hardly reverse his policy in his own case" (9). Additionally he knew only too well why Julius had been murdered. No wonder his motto came to be known as "festina lente". - He therefore broke with the pattern established by Julius - whatever that pattern really was like - and started by moving in the opposite direction.



ii) Restoring the Republic (31-27)

"After this they began again with what was, strictly speaking, a monarchy" (10).

On his return to Rome Octavian set about "restoring the Republic", as he called it (11). This proved to be a very prudent pattern of behaviour, and is forever associated with Octavian the politician. The lessons learned from Julius and Mark Anthony had proved that the time was more than ripe for constitutional changes - but they would have to be brought about carefully, something which neither Julius or Mark Anthony succeeded in doing. Octavian understood why, and solved the problem in his own way. The fact that he succeeded, is not least a result of his having had almost forty years at his disposal. The Rome he left at his death looked different from the one he entered at his birth, it was a different empire in some important ways.

"The development of Augustus' constitutional position was a topic beloved of historians of the later 19th and earlier 20th century who believed that it held the key to his power. We, who have learnt that power comes out of the barrel of a gun, see things differently" (12). Augustus' position totally depended on the loyalty of the army, something everybody knew; he was dictator thanks to his soldiers.

Dio gives us a whole discussion between Augustus, Maecenas and Agrippa on the topic of monarchy. They go

through the pros and the cons and settle finally on the solution which was adopted by Augustus. The difficulty of interpreting the rule of Augustus is precisely the fact that he became his own interpreter, due to the length of his rule and the supreme success of his constitutional designs. The *Res Gestae* - *Monumentum Ancyranum* - deals with this constitutional problem, but deification is nevertheless the desired outcome of it all. The "republican veil" of Octavian's constitutional construction is not so thick that it succeeds in covering his final and ulterior motive: divine kingship.

The year 29 was the year of his triumphs in Rome. His arch - the first - was erected in the forum next to the temple of Divus Julius, now completed and inaugurated. Octavian was now "imperator", but on an even stronger basis than Caesar had been. In 29 and 28 Octavian and Agrippa were consuls together. From these years onward Augustus maintained the role of an official leadership, defined by the words "princeps" and "augustus". His so-called "restored republic" consisted in his act of handing power back to the Senate, who in return continually prolonged his privileges.

### iii) Principatus or "veiled monarchy"? (27- 2)

What emerged from the constitutional designs of Octavian was the "princeps", or "the first citizen". In this role he guided the empire through his long years of reign.

"The Romans hate the actual name of monarchy so

vehemently that they did not refer to their emperors either as dictators or kings or anything similar. But since the final decision in the governing process is referred to them, it is impossible that they should be anything other than kings" (13).

In other words: "principatus" is a soft term for "monarchy". Everybody could see through this camouflage for himself, but nobody seemed prepared to condemn it. Taylor describes the new situation by the expression "veiled monarchy" - Dio does the same in almost the same terms - and sums up the innovation with "the new idea that the princeps was on earth the foremost citizen, who after his death would be transferred into heaven as a god" (14), this being a republican transformation of the doctrine of the divinity of kings.

The turning point, constitutionally speaking, is the year 27 when Octavian received the title "augustus", a term which gave him a semi-divine, or near-divine, status. This term represented a sharp contrast to the titles bestowed on previous leaders like Sulla and Pompey, who were called Felix and Magnus respectively. Dio states that "augustus" means "more than human" (15). The term was in fact not used as a title, but adopted as a name, the title chosen being "princeps" through all his rule - the first among citizens. But the word "augustus" is precisely the best way of expressing this sort of "veiled monarchy" according to Taylor.

It is rewarding for our purposes to see how this august

"princeps" established individual status vis à vis the gods.

Of greatest importance is his association with Apollo. He preferred to live in a patrician villa at the Palatine, building no palace for himself - unlike his successors. But next to his house he erected the temple of Apollo of the Palatine (16), dedicated in 28, where he deposited the Sibylline books. The statue of the god had his own features, and the association between the two was intimate. Apollo was, it has to be admitted, a more sober god to associate oneself with than the orgiastic Dionysus of Mark Anthony.

The temple to Mars in his new forum had been planned by Caesar, but was finally realized by Augustus, commemorating the "victory" over Parthia - the last large military project of Caesar's - that is, the restoring of the standards lost by Crassus and Anthony. This happened in 20. The temple to Mars is important from the perspective of a "veiled monarchy", since he was considered co-founder of the Gens Julia together with Venus. Actually, this temple was designed as a national shrine, housing many of the national heroes besides the founders of the Gens Julia, and usurped some of the privileges of the temple of Jupiter - just like the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. The temple to Mars housed, as principal deities, Mars, Venus, Divus Julius, as well as having an altar to the "genius" of Augustus within the precincts.

The year 17 saw the ludi saeculares in Rome,

inaugurating the new age, a very important propagandistic device for the new rule of the "augustus". Horace's "carmen saeculare" was written for the occasion, dealing with the mythological past of the Gens Julia.

But the official policy of Augustus concerning temples dedicated to himself was very restrictive: he admitted no temples in his own name, except when joined with that of Roma (17). This is an important point in the history of the RIC in *the East* and we will come back to it later. He actually melted down all the silver statuettes of himself - there were about 80 of them in the city of Rome - and dedicated from these tripods to Apollo of the Palatine (18). Dio says that the silver was coined into money used for roads (19). Statues in precious metal were considered divine honours - reserved for the gods - and regarded as excessive in his own case (20). This ban on statues in precious metal was not completely effective, however official, partly because it touched the realm of private devotion and the cult of the homes, partly because the situation outside Rome was always less restrictive (21). That the question of statues in silver and gold is of some importance to Augustus in his attempt to act as princeps and not as dominus, we can see from the words Dio puts into the mouth of Maecenas during the famous discussion of Augustus' "final aims" - he definitely advises against such a cult (22).

On the whole Augustus succeeded in finding ways of establishing the monarchy under the pretext of republican



forms - and this is perhaps his greatest diplomatic achievement. The examples listed above can easily be added to.

When Marcus Agrippa wanted to erect a statue of Augustus in his newly constructed Pantheon, Augustus refused permission and the statue of Julius Caesar was chosen instead - placed with Venus and Mars - with Augustus himself put in the ante-chambers. In 13 BC Augustus was elected pontifex maximus after the death of Lepidus but continued to live at the Palatine, giving the domus publica to the Vestal virgins. The dedication of the Ara Pacis in 9 BC was another monument inspired by the new imperial designs of Augustus. Together with the Monumentum Ancyranum this is one of the most important propaganda pieces of the new rule, but the divine allusions are here, as always, discrete, of a "veiled" kind, to use Taylor's expression.

In such ways Augustus transformed the Roman republic, using indirect and elusive ways of doing it, not claiming direct divine honour, but associating himself and his gens intimately with Venus, Mars and Apollo. It all left no doubt about the final destination of the augustus. But he also devised a new form of indirect worship which must be mentioned next, since it remains a standard feature of the RIC. Here we see Augustus at work in an exceptionally clever way - and one that directly touches upon the theme of the RIC in the New Testament.



iv) The cult of the "genius".

Augustus did not make claims to divine honours for himself - but he nevertheless did so, in an indirect way: by instituting the cult of his "genius" or his "numen", the immortal part of his own person, a sort of spiritual counterpart, which he in this way gives divine or semi-divine status.

The new cult of the princeps consisted in religious acts centered on his "genius": sacrifices, shrines, oaths, various offices. And we must comment on these forms. Here we are in the fortunate position that scholars have occupied themselves with the cult itself for some time (like Taylor and recently Fishwick), unlike the case in the Greek East until the work by Price. Still, a single and comprehensive study of the Latin version of the cult as such is missing, though the work of Fishwick will to some extent remedy this loss. - In other words, the student still has to consult many sources.

"The Genius was but a thin veil for the emperor himself" (23), and "the worship of the Genius was in veiled form a worship of the emperor himself" (24). As pontifex maximus Augustus was in fact high priest for his own cult. In other words: the genius of the emperor was already consecrated. Any modern attempt to give a precise definition of what is the correct connotation of this word "genius", seems to fail - there is no modern equivalent. But what can easily be stated is that this phenomenon is a kind of heavenly double of the human person here below.

The main sacrifice to the genius was a bull, as in the case of **Mars** (the ox being sacrificed for **Jupiter** and, later, for deified emperors).

The oath taken to the genius is really an extension of the traditional **Roman** oath taken to the master of the house, now extended to the master of the state.

This new worship became a symbol of the state, and the observance of it became an expression of loyalty to the state: "it provided for the **Roman** emperor under veiled form a worship which was no less a ruler cult than was the more declared worship of the **Hellenistic** king as a revealed god on earth" (25).

Sacrifices took place in household shrines as well as in public places, something which is of paramount importance for our understanding of the cult - its being popular, not just in the **Greek East** but in the **Latin West** as well. Actually, part of **Augustus'** house on the **Palatine** - where he lived next to not only **Apollo**, but also the relics of **Romulus'** early city (i.e. the archaic huts, the remains of whose foundations may still be seen in situ) became public domain: the shrine to the "lares augusti", centered on this cult. "By making a part of his house public domain, **Augustus** was making his private household worship an official cult of the **Roman state**" (26). "And by this cult the **Senate** and the people had accepted **Augustus** as the descendant of gods who would one day attain divinity himself" (27). This act on the part of **Augustus** did of course not inaugurate a private cult,

but gave it the highest sanction, so to speak.

The private sacrificial act was the libation of wine - as witnessed in the acts of the early martyrs. Such a libation was to be poured to his genius at every banquet, public as well as private (28). This is, of course, very reminiscent of the toast to Alexander, known from the Hellenistic sources.

Under the guise of genius worship Augustus thus constructed the divine monarchy in Rome: "After 12 BC the spirit (genius) and household gods of Augustus were not only worshipped empire-wide by all, but shared shrines in the legionary camps with talismanic objects of military reverence" (29).

The oath to his genius became as important as the sacrifices, if not more. Swearing before the statue was becoming a supreme symbol of loyalty - those who swore falsely by it could be charged with treason, and those who refused to swear were liable to persecution.

New priesthoods institutionalized this cult: The "augustales" were half-priestly officials of an administrative kind, distributed all over the Western part of the empire - the East had a different arrangement, as will be seen later. All this is, of course, a deliberate contrast to Anthony's identification with Dionysus, which had nothing "veiled" *about it*. Thus Dio's statement that Augustus and the later emperors were not worshipped in Italy until after they had died is shown to be in a sense true - for the cult was offered not to the emperor in

person, but to his shadowy attendant spirit" (30).

Other honours followed.

The month Sextilis was renamed Augustus long before the emperor himself actually recognized the change.

The title "pater patriae" was offered him several times, but only accepted in 2 BC (31).

A sacred fire - a candelabrum - was borne before him in processions, this being an oriental, Persian custom, but could easily be associated with the cult of Vesta.

The celebration of the emperor's birthday became increasingly important, having been a public holiday since 31. From 8 BC onwards it was a day with games (32), when animals were sacrificed to his genius.

A festival was also held on the 1st of August, that being the date of his entry into Alexandria, that is, the beginning of his rule.

The "sodales augustales" were a priesthood supervising the games and sacrifices (33).

Removing his statue was considered a serious crime (34). The first known monumental celebration of the emperor and his house - the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta - is a cuirassed statue for private use, probably that of Livia herself, where "the divine aspects of the statue are merely hints of his divinity - and do not come into direct conflict with official policy" (35). With this statement Price sides with Taylor's understanding of Augustus' form of divine monarchy. But the term "dominus" was forbidden under Augustus - it does not appear in

official nomenclature before Domitian.

The portraiture of the princeps is a rich source for establishing the monarchical representation in the case of Augustus.

H.P.L'Orange has studied this transitional period from the point of view of the arts - including, of course, numismatics - and has many useful insights relevant to our study. As stated above, Caesar was the first ruler in Rome to issue coins with his own bust - replacing that of gods and heroes in the Hellenistic numismatic tradition - and the triumvirs followed this precedent. Augustus himself follows the "Alexander-Alexandria-pattern" in his own coinage: "Along with a constitutional representation of the statesman founded on the republican tradition, an "inspired", "transfigured" representation of the autocrat emerges as an expression of the emperor's new basis of power: his divine election and right of sovereignty" (36). The new Roman iconography contains "elements of the holy royal type of the East..." (37).

L'Orange's study of the inspired ruler in the conception of ancient art starts naturally with Alexander. On this background the portraiture of Caesar and his successors to the throne falls nicely into place, in a way which makes art history a necessary source for the study of our topic. After all, the "veiled" monarchy had to be propagated to the masses, and a principal tool in this respect was necessarily found in the coinage and the artistic monuments. Here the official propaganda reaches



"the man in the **R**oman street", especially when we consider the bronze series, which had the largest series, numerically speaking, and was the most useful purveyor of official ideology. **A** student of **R**oman imperial coins will immediately feel at home once he visits a collection of ancient art, say at the museums of **R**ome. **H**e finds in busts, statues and reliefs the same portraits which are known from the coins and the cameos, expressing an identical message. - **T**hese same legends will be known to any student of epigraphy.

**T**he bust of **A**ugustus belongs to the category of the "inspired ruler", according to **L'**Orange, and is "often merely a mask assumed for the purpose of hypnotising and controlling the masses" (38). **A**s in the coinage with representations of **A**lexander where "we have to do not with the real **A**lexander, but with his representation in art" (39), so also in the case of **A**ugustus. **H**is image does not change during his long rule, but remains idealised, youthful and "inspired" to his death, not to speak of the coins issued after his apotheosis by **T**iberius (the "divus augustus pater" series). **T**he look of the princeps is slightly upward-gazing, his hair is long, as is **A**pollo's - and **A**lexander's. **A**ugustus' portraiture in the coinage comes close to a "helios-type" of iconography, the nimbus being represented by the hair of the ruler (40). (**T**his helois-type becomes prominent with **N**ero, as will be seen later.) **T**he second kind of "helios-type" iconography is, of course, the radiated busts of **A**ugustus, but they belong



to the stage after his consecration. In these representations the semi-divine status of the consecrated emperor is expressed by the symbols of the star (used for the first time for the consecration of Julius), the globe (ancient symbol for cosmic kingship) (41), and the wreath (42).

However unequivocal the official portrait of Augustus appears to be, the portrait of the literary sources are of a more varied kind.

Broadly speaking they fall into two categories: the flattery of the poets and historians (often referred to as court-flatterers) - and the critique of the senatorial class. While writers like Ovid, Vergil, Horace and Livy (and later Velleius Paterculus) are in their own fashion vehicles for the official propaganda, the senatorial class is more sceptical - which does not come as a surprise: it was the clashes between the new and the old ruling organs, emperor and Senate, that soured the reigns of many rulers in Rome, say Tiberius and Domitian.

The first writer to be considered is of course Vergil.

"He will live as god and observe the heroes of ancient times walking among the gods; they will behold him in amazement. Peace he will bring to the world, governing with the Father's power" (43).

"Now, offspring of Jupiter, dear child divine. Already comes thy time; assume thy dignity sublime! See the heavy burden of the world convulse and heave, Lands and

seas' breadth alike, and the depths of heaven, See how they all rejoice at the golden age that now appears" (44).

"Deus haec otia fecit" (45).

Taylor takes this last quotation to be the first expression of worship of Augustus (46). The Aeneid is a long propaganda piece for the new dynasty, with the legendary heroes of the Gens Julia as principal characters, Aeneas in particular. The work was left unfinished at the death of the poet, but was not burned - against the wish of Vergil himself - but was published by Augustus. - "Sic itur ad astra" (47).

Horace takes the same view as Vergil on the whole, the emperor is a man on earth, but destined one day to become a god.

Ovid, appears to have been just as much a court-flatterer: "Ovid's verses - especially those written in exile - seem to me too full of flattery to have served as a potent vehicle of publicity for spreading throughout the empire belief in the deification of the monarch" (48).

Livy tries in prose to achieve the same serious divine allusions as Vergil did in poetry: he makes Hercules and Romulus parallels to the princeps, calling both Augustus, and refers to Augustus' house on the Palatine as the "domus Jovis" (49).

The senatorial critique, on the other hand, is less prominent in the case of Augustus than with many of his successors. It has been said by one of the leading Roman historians and numismatists that the case of Augustus is

the best example where "posterity is convinced" (50). Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio give us on the whole a favourable portrait, compared to what they write about his successors.

This is especially true in the case of Tacitus and his view of Tiberius and - as may be read between the lines - Domitian. Still, Tacitus' remark on the RIC under Augustus is full of sarcasm (51): "Augustus seemed to have superseded the worship of the gods when he wanted to have himself venerated in temples, with god-like images, by priests and ministers" (52).

This "veiled" enterprise was just as much a result of his dependence on the goodwill of the Senate as of the people, probably much more. "He always felt horrified and insulted when called "my lord" ("dominus") (53). Here, it seems, the limit was reached where the divine monarchy no longer appear as "veiled". This nomenclature is only too obviously dependent on Hellenistic forms of ruler cult (the title "dominus" being a corresponding term to the Greek "kyrios"). Suetonius records one famous incident when Augustus - then the young Octavian - seems to have overstepped the boundaries of good taste according to Roman standards: his private banquet known as the "Feast of the divine twelve", which caused public scandal. The guests came dressed as gods or goddesses - Octavian himself representing Apollo (Suet. Aug. 40).

The case of Augustus is, however, on the whole a case where "posterity is convinced" - of his achievements - to

talk with **M. Grant**. This is, of course, mainly due to his respecting the sensitivities of the **Senate** and the **Roman** people.

**Augustus** finally joined his grand uncle at his death: "So it (his body) was consumed and an eagle released from it flew aloft to bear the emperor's spirit to heaven" (54). The eagle was to become the standard symbol of the monarchy, as it had been in **Hellenistic** times. **Roman** art consistently depicts the **divus** or **diva** on the wings of the eagle, the bird of **Jupiter**. His golden "imago" was placed on a coach in the temple of **Mars** until it later could dwell in a temple to **Augustus** proper (55). On **September 17**, **Divus Augustus** was enrolled in the state cult, a temple was decreed (later to be built by **Tiberius** and **Livia**, but first dedicated under **Caligula**), a priest was decreed (56), **Germanicus** becoming his first flamen, with **Livia** a flaminica, and a sacred college of the noblest senators constituted as "sodales augustales" (57). A number of birth-legends sprang up, just as in the previous case of **Julius**, linking him to **Apollo** (said to be his real father), **Jupiter** and **Alexander the great** (58). **Suetonius** is here rich in material, and gives us, among others, the story of how **Augustus'** birthplace became a sacred room where nobody dared to enter - one who did so without knowing the sacredness of the place underwent the experience of being "hurled out of bed by a supernatural agency and found lying half-dead against the door, bedclothes and all" (59).

The cult of **Augustus** lasted as long as the **RIC** was

practiced, as is seen in **Appendix 3** (lists of divi and divae). The little 2d. century story from **Suetonius** is a witness in itself. (60).

#### v. Founder or Organizer?

This question is frequently discussed in works on **Augustus**, and the majority of scholars tend to credit him with the actual founding of the divine monarchy in **Rome**. But, as seen above, this depends on the discussion of **Caesar's** "final aims". While both **Taylor** (61) and **Price** (62) make **Augustus** the actual founder, **Weinstock** gives this credit to **Julius**. Certainly the imperial cult is one continuous story from **Augustus** to **Constantine**. There is no doubt in the minds of these scholars that **Augustus** carried out this task, the ground having been prepared by **Caesar**. The question where opinions differ is the significance of the work of **Caesar**. **Dio** seems to think of **Augustus** as the institutor of the **RIC**: "The practice began with **Octavian** and it has been carried on under other emperors, not only with regard to the **Hellenistic** peoples, but to all others in so far as they acknowledge **Roman rule**" (63).

#### vi. East and West.

The way the **RIC** was practiced varied enormously within the empire.

"**Augustus**' position was different in different places; in dealing with his vast empire he adopted the sound principle that in any country people should regard him as



they had regarded their previous rulers" (64).

This statement expresses the situation as we find it in our sources. The Greeks went about the cult of the ruler in much the same way as they were accustomed to do from Hellenistic times - that is: they deified them while alive - while the Western part of the empire followed the Roman practise, i.e. the indirect way - the cult of the "genius" - as illustrated above. New colonies, founded for his veterans, worshipped Augustus as "genius coloniae", i.e. he was worshipped as city-founder according to old Roman customs. Fishwick gives a modern major contribution to the cult of Augustus in the Western provinces, notably Gaul and Spain.

But the dividing lines between East and West were not always so clearly cut. The best known example of this is perhaps Neapolis where a temple to Augustus was erected and games instituted (Italica Romaia Sebastia Isolympia) after he had restored the city, "its inhabitants alone of the campanians tried in a manner to imitate the customs of the Greeks" (65). Pompeii also knew a templum genii Augusti with a sacerdos Augusti after 2 BC. Both Nola and Terracina had temples to Rome and Augustus, which was the normal way in the East, but not in the West.

The case of Neapolis is easily explained because of the Greek character of the city and is the best known exception in the West.

This is the solution that we find most frequently in the Greek world:



"Divine providence has brought the highest fulfilment to human, life...in that it gave us Augustus, whom it filled with power for the well-being of men, when it sent him to us and our descendants as saviour (66).

"Because mankind address him thus (as "sebastos" - the Greek translation of "augustus"), they revere him with temples and sacrifices over islands and continents, organized in cities and provinces, matching the greatness of his virtue and repaying his benefactions toward them" (67).

This last quotation is, in fact, one of the few accurate descriptions of the RIC among Greeks that have come down to us from antiquity, short as it is (68). The RIC among the Greeks differs from the Western practice when it focuses on the living emperor, for reasons we shall see later. Octavian organized the provincial cults of Asia and Bithynia shortly after Actium, in 29 BC. He organised the cult of Julius, that is, by allowing cities to erect temples to Julius and Roma. Later, when he had become Augustus, he allowed temples erected to himself and to Dea Roma (69).

A brilliant paragraph from Syme's masterly work on "the Roman revolution" - as he calls the transition from republic to monarchy - sums up the situation as viewed by a scholar of republican sympathies:

"In regions where submission to kings was an ingrained habit and inevitable fashion, it was natural that the ruler should be an object of veneration, with honours like the

honours due to gods. In Egypt, indeed, Augustus succeeded Ptolemy as Ptolemy had succeeded Pharaoh - a god and lord of the land. Elsewhere in the East Augustus inherited from the dynasts Pompey, Anthony and Caesar, along with their clientela, the homage they enjoyed. Caesar accepted honours from whosoever invited, no doubt in the spirit in which they were granted: policy and system cannot be discovered. Once again Augustus stands revealed as the deliberate founder of monarchy, the conscious creator of a system. For himself and for the dynasty he monopolized every form and sign of allegiance; no proconsul of Rome ever again is honoured in the traditional fashion of eastern lands. The language of that "graeca adulatio" so loathsome to republican sentiment becomes more and more lavish and ornate. Not only is Augustus, like his predecessors, a god and saviour; not only does he take from Pompey the title of "warden of land and sea"; not only do cities compete, pouring their cascades of dithyrambic prose, as Sardis, in inordinate effusions honouring the princes Gaius and Lucius. The assemblies of whole provinces are now organized to display gratitude and homage. Galatia builds a temple for the joint worship of Augustus and the goddess Rome...Asia surpasses decency in the thanks it renders to divine providence. If such was the demeanor of citizens of free men, the fervent zeal may be imagined with which kings, tetrarchs and petty tyrants promoted the cult of their patron, friend and master. They gave cities his name, they erected temples in his honour. One of the

earliest and most zealous to propagate the new faith was Herod the king of Judaea" (70).

The first temples were devoted to Roma and Julius, in Ephesus, the provincial capital of Asia, and Nicaea in Bithynia (71). This goes back to 29 BC. Pergamum and Nicomedia, of the same provinces, later saw temples to Roma and Augustus (72). Ephesus later saw a temple to Augustus both at the Artemision and in the city itself, dedicated in 27 BC as witnessed from an inscription (73). Miletus had a naos to Augustus in the portico by the council house (74), as well as a temple in the city. Priene shared her Athena temple with Augustus (75), Sardis had a temple to Augustus (76), as did Tralles (77), when Mylasa had a temple to Rome and Augustus, as did Ancyra (78), Mytilene having temple and priest with games (games was also part of the cult at Pergamum) (79). Cyzicus had temple to Augustus (80) and Samos to Augustus and Rome (81). Lesbos had a temple to Augustus as well as to his sons, Caius and Lucius (82). Antioch had a temple to Augustus and Men (83), and Herod the king of the Jews set up temples at Paneas, Sebaste and Caesarea Maritima - refraining in Judaea, owing to Jewish religious sensitivities (84). In Egypt Augustus became the successor of the Pharaoh<sup>h</sup> and the Ptolemies, ruling as a divine king in absentia (85).

As this little survey of imperial temples and shrines will have shown, the East witnessed a sudden outburst of cults of Augustus following the years 29 and 27 BC.

This cult helped to ensure the perpetuation of his personal authority, the phenomenon which Price calls "the routinization of charisma through the development of cults" (86). But it was firmly regulated by Augustus from the very beginning. The nomenclature applied to Augustus in the East will be discussed in the next chapter.

vii. Conclusions. The question of whether Augustus is founder or organizer is ultimately one of academic interest - it was Augustus who saw the divine monarchy through in Rome, and in such a convincing way that it stayed with the Romans for 300 years to come. During these years it saw further developments and modifications, notably under Domitian and Diocletian. Domitian became "dominus" and Diocletian "dominus et deus" in a way foreign to this initial stage of the cult. But Augustus did what he could under circumstances that were favourable to a constitutional change, but not of a too radical nature. His "veiled" monarchy met this need in its own way, and his achievement is a case where posterity remained convinced. This however was not the case with some of his successors. Augustus clearly intended to found a dynasty - the necessary precondition for divine monarchy, that it be hereditary. But the Julio-Claudian house did not outlive him by much more than fifty years, and a new dynasty took over, lasting only for forty years. Then came an adoptive system, then chaos until a new dynasty was founded, but it lasted only a few decades.

The point of mentioning these facts is that from the outset - the time of Caesar and Augustus - the principal weakness of the new monarchy in Rome is the question of succession. It became one of the main problems of the Roman imperial age, and indeed one of its most characteristic features, contrasting sharply with Byzantine and Ottoman rule.

Augustus had no end of problems over the question of succession. He had one daughter, Julia, who bore three sons: Marcellus, Caius, Lucius - who all died young. He finally had to adopt the son of Livia - Tiberius. And this becomes the pattern for the rest of this dynastic period. "Those emperors became deified who had sons to succeed them", said Herodian (87). But in very few cases are these sons anything but adopted nephews, step-sons, etc. And this weakness in the Roman monarchy may be seen from the outset: Caesar adopts his grand-nephew Octavian, who later adopts his wife's only surviving son by her first husband, Tiberius, who adopts a nephew, Gaius, who is succeeded by an uncle, Claudius, who adopts a nephew, Nero. Still it is possible to regard this as a dynasty, because all the adoptions come from one of the few families involved.



### III) TIBERIUS

"He had appointed Tiberius and Livia heirs to the bulk of his estate, directing that Tiberius should take two-thirds and adopt the name "augustus", while Livia who took the remaining third and adopted the name "Augusta" (1).

"He had of course nothing of the struggle that Augustus had in securing Julius' apotheosis, for he could count on a tradition of deification that Augustus had had to establish" (2).

#### 1) Divus Augustus - divi filius .

The task of Tiberius was infinitely easier than that of Augustus had been, as the quotation from Taylor makes clear. As divi filius he was making his way to heaven and did not need to emphasize his divinity (3).

Typical of Tiberius is rather his reserve in this respect - that is: his apparent distance from the whole idea of divine monarchy - something which is easy to misunderstand. In the first place he did insist on the divine cult of Augustus, in the second place he insisted on his own identity as divi filius (4).

Tiberius saw the consecration of Augustus through and the establishing of his honours: temples and festivals, priests, priestesses (which had so far been the prerogative of Jupiter alone), a priestly college, the sodales Augustales (modelled on the sodales Titii, established by Romulus for Titus Tatius).



"People could now be executed for beating a slave, or changing their own clothes close to an image of Augustus, or for carrying a ring or a coin, bearing Augustus' head, into a lavatory or a brothel...One man was accused of decapitating an image of Augustus with a view to substituting another head" (5) .

The dedication of the temple to divus Augustus was the most important single event in all this. He also dedicated the altar to the numen Augusti on the Capitol, which in reality was an altar to the Gens Julia. This was, of course, a legitimization of his own power - as Venus Genitrix and Divus Julius had served for Caesar and Augustus.

In the West altars to Augustus were replaced by temples, as in the case of Terraco in Spain. Suetonius also reports of a temple to Augustus at Nola (6).

In the East he watched over the cult of his father, as is witnessed from many places, for example Gythium on the Pelopponesus (7), and Cyzicus - where they had not completed the shrine begun for Augustus and were deprived of the liberty which they had won in the wars with Mithradates (8).

But he was more restrictive towards his mother, the Augusta: "His opposition to distinctions for her and his unwillingness to deify her after her death were due rather to his personal relations with her than to any opposition to divinity " (9).

ii) The Refusal of honours.

This is the second point to be considered in the case of Tiberius, because it too often is taken to mean that he was dismissive of the imperial cult as such - something which is not compatible with the honours lavished on Augustus, honours that indirectly Tiberius thereby lavished on himself, as divi filius (10).

Tiberius expressly "forbade the decreeing to himself of temples (templa), flamines and priests (sacerdotes), and even of statues (statuas) and representations (imagines) without his permission, and he permitted them only on the condition that they should be set, not among the images of the gods, but among the decoration of the temples" (11). The statues mentioned would have been statues in precious metals, which were considered suitable to religious cults (12). He also rebuked those calling him "lord" (dominus) or "divine" (deus) (13).

In 15/16 AD the city of Gythium showed divine honours to Tiberius and Livia by erecting a temple to both - in addition to the cult of Augustus - and were rebuked by the emperor (actually this had no effect, the temple was realised nevertheless) (14). From Asia he accepted a temple to himself, Livia and the Senate at Smyrna (15), while he declined the same offer from Spain. The practice seems to vary somewhat. But on the whole he appears very restrictive - something he could allow himself to be all the time Augustus had done most of the work for him in this field.

He was certainly forgiving towards those sinning against the new cult, as the story of **Lucius Ennius** shows: he was charged with the crime of maiestas for converting to common use as silver a silver image of **Tiberius**, but the emperor did not take action (16). But then, as we have seen before, he was stricter on the issue of the cult of **Augustus** (cfr. the case of **Cyzicus**). "He was even refraining from using the title "**Augustus**", though his by right of inheritance, in any letters except those addressed to foreign monarchs and princes" (17).

But he did use the title "**divi filius**", which would ~~most likely~~ have been part of the legend on the denarius of the coin referred to in **Mk 12,13-17** (cfr. **Matt 22,15-22; Luke 20,20-26**) - unless this was a denarius of **Augustus**; they were more frequent in **Palestine** in **Tiberius'** days, the new ones not yet having come properly into circulation (but then this coin would also have the "**divi filius**" legend) (18).

**Tiberius** in reality accepted the cult of his genius.

Initially he did refuse special celebrations for his birthday, oaths taken by his genius, statues, the naming of a month **Tiberius** - but eventually he accepted them all (19). The case of **Sejanus** is an illuminating, even if tragic, episode in the life of this ruler. **Tiberius** had allowed the images of **Sejanus** - the prefect of the **Praetorian guard**, and as such the next most powerful man in **Rome** - to be worshipped (coli) in the theatres, the fora, and the principia legionum (20). The oaths taken to the

name of **Sejanus** show that his genius was associated with that of **Tiberius** (21), the sacrifices mentioned show that he was actually sharing in the honours to **Tiberius** himself (22). - After his fall all this ceased immediately, his statues being torn down, sacrifices and oaths being forbidden: "After this the senate passed a decree forbidding oaths by the genius of any man except the emperor" (23).

In the case of **Tiberius** scholars seem to distinguish between theory and practice. **Taylor** says "the refusals were not final and perhaps were not always expected to be obeyed" (24). As an example she again refers to the case of the **Gythians**, where the title "pater patriae" was refused them - but nevertheless used (25). **Price** also holds that these refusals are much misunderstood: "imperial refusals are very rarely found at the level of provincial cults - the **Senate** allowed the **Emperor** to evade the burdens of decision" (26). In reality it is not-refusals we have to do with in many of these cases, perhaps most of them.

### 111) East and West.

"In the **East** he had the same cult as an incarnate god that **Augustus** had enjoyed" (27).

"**Tiberius** did not hold to his refusal of statues - and the many statue bases that have been found both in the **East** and in the west provide proof thereof" (28).

In **Asia** **Tiberius** was particularly popular, due to his

great restoration work after the earthquake in 17. On this occasion he actually received 11 priesthoods (29). The case of Smyrna is well known, the occasion in A.D. 26 when deputies from 11 cities in Asia Minor pleaded with Tiberius for permission to build a temple in honour of himself, Livia and the Senate (30). But this same permission had been declined to a Spanish province the very year before, when the emperor answered: "I am a mortal, and divine honours belong only to Augustus, the real saviour of mankind" (for the meaning of "saviour": see chapter 2). Taylor thinks these may be the ipsissima verba of Tiberius, since it is likely that Tacitus had access to the speeches of Tiberius (31).

It is reasonable to suppose that this difference in treatment has much to do with the different practices followed in East and West.

More instances of this kind could be listed.

Claros had a cult place to Tiberius, as part of the famous sanctuary of Apollo (32). Tiberiopolis had an alleged temple of Tiberius (33). In the case of Gythium his answer to their petition sounds like this: "I think it fitting that all men in general and your city in particular should reserve honours that befit the gods for the greatness of my father's benefit toward the whole world...for myself I am satisfied with more moderate honours such as belonging to men - my mother will answer for herself..." (34). The date of this letter is March 10. AD 15. But as the temple to Augustus, Tiberius and Livia was realized



nevertheless, this refusal belongs to the kind mentioned in the preceding paragraph: a formal refusal - acceptance in practice. The famous inscription from Gytheum of the "sacred law" regulating the imperial festivals has been given much attention by scholars (35), and we will return to it in chapter 2.

In an edict to the Alexandrians the emperor again refused divine honours, but the refusal was probably not taken to be more than a way of speaking (36).

The vocabulary of the RIC in the Greek East does certainly testify to Tiberius being honoured in exactly the same way as Augustus had been. "Such expressions of his desire as we find in the letter to the Gythians can have been of slight avail" (37).

He was referred to as "theos" or "hyios theou" in inscriptions and on coins, a vocabulary that will be discussed in chapter 2. Inscriptions of this kind are not difficult to come across, and examples from Thera (38) and Gerasa (39) are frequently quoted by our historians, as well as the decree of the Asian assembly (40). These are all examples of the use of "theos". Here numismatics comes in as a valuable source not to be overlooked. "Theos" on coins from the Greek East - the so-called Greek Imperials - are numerous (41). "Hyios theou" - being the usual Greek translation for "divi filius" - is not difficult to come across either, though there is a preference for the simple "theos" in our sources (42).

In the West Taylor records two Italian towns with

priests (flamines or sacerdotēs) with the name of Tiberius in their titles (43). The provincial altars in the Three Gauls, the Two Germanies and in Terraco in Spain are altars to his Genius, and not from temples.

iv) Failure of apotheosis.

Tiberius was destined to be consecrated - an event that did not take place.

"Tiberius' failure...is probably responsible at least in part for the fact that his refusals - of which we have a new example in the letter to Gytheum - loom so large in the account of his divine honours" (44). This connection is, of course a possible one. But it does not alter the fact that it was due to Gaius Caligula that Tiberius was not consecrated. "With a different successor he would very likely have secured it (the apotheosis that had come to Augustus), but Caligula, after suggesting it, failed to press it before the Senate" (45). Tiberius worked entirely within the tradition laid down by Augustus, as seen above: he assumed the divine position of Augustus and expected his own apotheosis. He was never consecrated - but neither did he suffer "damnatio memoriae". The first was directly due to Caligula himself - and he, in his turn, became the one to suffer "damnatio memoriae".

"The character of Tiberius presents one of those curious psychological problems which has never been satisfactorily explained" (46) - "he is less worthy of condemnation than pity" (47).

Actually, the imperial mint at Lugdunum did strike coins with the bust of Tiberius accompanied by a star, as sign of consecration. This must have happened immediately on receiving the news of his death. But since public consecration did not follow, the series in question was not reissued (48).

#### IV) GAIUS CALIGULA

The case of **Gaius** is of particular interest to the student of the **New Testament** and will form an important part of the discussion in chapter 3. It should be noted that the recent study of **A.R.Barrett** ("**Caligula - The Corruption of Power**", London 1989) reached me too late to be incorporated into this study in any substantial way; ch.9. deals with divine honours, but does not throw new light on this question, and the following brief discussion should still be fairly accurate.

"**Gaius** was a megalomaniac with an inferiority complex" (1).

"**He** claimed divinity for himself by announcing himself god-ruler, a veritable **Hellenistic** monarch. Perhaps he planned to convert the **Principate** into an oriental monarchy. His intimate adviser, the oriental prince **Herod Agrippa I**, may have given him these notions" (2).

"**Gaius** was, in fact, sick both physically and mentally" (3).

"**He** no longer consented to remain within the bounds of human nature, but began to stretch beyond them in his aspiration to be thought a god" (4).

"In his personal life he simply displayed in exaggerated form those weaknesses which were characteristic of the age in which he lived: he was prodigal, immoral, pleasure-loving and cruel" (5).

i) Gaius and Tiberius. Gaius Caligula was son of the immensely popular Germanicus and his accession to the throne was from the outset greeted with great expectations. This is - for the third time - an example of how the Roman monarchy was to work: by adoption. Tiberius' own son, Drusus minor, had died in AD 29, and he had no other candidate at the moment of his death than his grand-nephew Gaius, nicknamed Caligula ("Bootikins") (6), the son of his brother Drusus' son Germanicus.

The rumours that Gaius poisoned Tiberius at the end (7), or had him suffocated (8), need not be trusted. The grand-nephew had the Senate declare him a god - but there his interest in the case of Tiberius ceased. Accordingly, Tiberius was never consecrated.

Gaius had, in fact, other ways of demonstrating his divinity than through the now established channels of the "divi filius" and the cult of the "genius". - His approach was of a much more direct nature.

ii) The divinity of Gaius.

Gaius seems to have followed the example of Anthony more than of Julius and his successors. He was to become the first of those unbalanced Roman emperors that claimed direct divinity, who were assassinated and never granted consecration: Gaius associated himself with Jupiter, Nero with Apollo, Commodus with Hercules. They all died young: Gaius at 29, Nero at 30 and Commodus at 31.

L'Orange calls him "the first god-emperor", and goes



back to the Egyptian model of divine kingship to look for a likely source of inspiration (9). The pattern which I earlier have called the "Alexander-Alexandria-pattern" seems to reappear once more. Augustus and Tiberius resisted this temptation, but Gaius succumbed to it.

Some well-known examples of this tendency ought to be mentioned at the outset.

Dio criticizes Gaius first of all for his undue haste in accepting all the honours of Augustus: "In all other matters too the same deterioration was generally the case. At first he had seemed the most democratic of men, to the extent, indeed, that he would send nothing in writing either to the people or to the Senate, and would assume none of the imperial titles. Then he became very royal, and in one day accepted all the honours which, voted over a long reign, Augustus had accepted one by one, and reluctantly. Some of these, indeed, Tiberius had altogether refused. But Gaius deferred none of them except the title Pater (Patriae), and he acquired even that before long" (10). After this he seems to promote his own cult "from above", and Price joins the other scholars in ascribing this to "eccentricity" or "madness" (11).

Suetonius gives us a long list of these eccentricities, which to him are clear signs of madness, as stated in the quotation above: he extended the palace as far as the forum; he exhibited himself for public adoration in the vestibule of his palace ("adorandum se adeuntibus exhibeat"); he was addressed by passersby as "Jupiter

latiarius"; he established a shrine to himself as god, with priests, the costliest possible victims, and a life-sized golden image, dressed every day in clothes identical with those he happened to be wearing; he announced that Jupiter had persuaded him to share his home, and therefore connected the palace with the Capitol by throwing a bridge across the Temple of the God Augustus (12).

According to another source he insisted on being called "dominus" - the designation that previously had marked a kind of border-line in the new cult at Rome, a word that comes into use again under similar and unhappy circumstances later in the century (13). He transformed the vestibule of the temple of Castor and Pollux in the forum, placing his own statue between the twin gods (14).

Dio actually gives us the interesting information that he annulled a decree providing sacrifices to his genius (15). In case this is correct it should be understood not as an attack on the RIC as such, but that his new ways of establishing his own cult did not need such indirect procedures. But he did not totally neglect the tradition of the RIC, even if he did not consecrate Tiberius: he dedicated - in 37, immediately after his accession - the temple to Divus Augustus. But he later forbade the erection of statues to any living person without his own consent (16). He also put an end to the Senate's exclusive right of coinage in Rome, by himself issuing coins there, transferring the mint from Lugdunum (17).

As mentioned above the consecration of Tiberius does

appear on some early coins, struck at **L**ugdunum - the mint traditionally employed for coins in precious metals - shortly after the emperor's death: "the **L**ugdunum mint could well have assumed that **T**iberius' death would be followed automatically by his deification. Equally possible, **G**aius' first intention to deify could have been instantly sent off by official messengers...and not immediately countermanded" (18). The coins referred to - from the years 37-38 - show the radiated bust of **T**iberius on the reverse between two stars, but without legend (19). He also issued commemorative coins of **A**ugustus, with the legend "divus **A**ugustus pater", just as **T**iberius had done (20).

The loss of **T**acitus' **A**nnals books 7-10 deprives us of what would have been a detailed account of the events following the death of **T**iberius, and would have shown how **G**aius turned his attention from the cult of his ancestors to that of himself. But a combined use of **S**uetonius and **D**io with additional information from later sources as well as the contemporary numismatic evidence remedies the situation somewhat, and for special episodes there is the additional evidence from **J**osephus and **P**hilo.

He may not have been concerned about the consecration of **T**iberius, but he consecrated his own sister **D**rusilla in 38. "Just like an oriental monarch, **G**aius is said to have committed incest with his sister, and the charge may be true" (21). The hierogamos between brother and sister of the **E**gyptian **P**haraohs and their successors the **P**tolemies

is not a far fetched analogy in the case of **Gaius**. He certainly swore by **Drusilla's** divinity (22), and her statue was set up in the temple of **Venus** (23). His grief on the occasion of her death was actually commented on by **Seneca** later, it was a form of sorrow he did not want to recommend to anybody (24). His two other sisters, **Agrippina** and **Julia**, were exiled in 39 on suspicion of treason. **Drusilla** was commemorated on coins from 38 onwards (25).

Certain other features of the ruler cult surfaced under **Gaius**. **Suetonius** gives us the valuable information that the father of the future emperor **Vitellius** - a **Lucius Vitellius** - worshipped **Gaius** in Hellenistic ways: by appearing with a veiled head - and by doing proskynesis (26). This last act, it should be remembered, was the way the divine cult of **Alexander the Great** started (27). This is the first time it is recorded in connection with ruler worship in **Rome**. **Seneca** also tells us of how the emperor offered his left shoe to **Pompeius Pennus** to be kissed (28).

"The use of divine attributes was unacceptable for the emperor in person. The only emperor to make extensive use of divine attributes was **Gaius**, whom our sources unite in condemning... The power of the attributes is clear. Their evocation of the gods was too strong and too unsubtle when the emperor was involved in person. In the case of a "bad" emperor, such as **Gaius**, the use of attributes emphasized the discrepancy between him and the gods, and went against

the principle that the emperor should not lay claim to divinity in his lifetime. But even with a "good" emperor, it was difficult for a man of flesh and blood to be successful with such claims (29).

Gaius attempted to obtain the statue of Olympian Zeus and remake it in his own likeness for his own temple, but the attempt was abortive and he had another fashioned instead (30). According to Josephus it was as "brother of Jupiter" he wanted to be worshipped, not as Jupiter himself (31), and Philo asserts that he actually began with identifying himself with the deified heroes like Hercules, Mercury and Apollo (32), the model of Jupiter belonging to a later and mad stage of his development. Philo states that Gaius called himself "Gaius the new Zeus made manifest" (33).

Balsdon has given us what is perhaps the most sober account of the emperor *Gaius*, highly critical of much of the traditional stories that grew up around this figure in later years, as reflected in Suetonius, for example. In his book he does not hesitate to write off much of the most extravagant information in Suetonius and Dio as slander, gossip and mere entertainment. The picture of Gaius that emerges from his investigation is, of course, far from being an attractive or, say, acceptable one, but some features fall into place that otherwise become difficult to explain. In a way it is the "man behind the myth" Balsdon tries to evoke (34).

In the first place he did forward the cult of the Gens



Julia, the temple to Divus Augustus just being ready for consecration (35). In the second place the excessive honours granted him by the Senate are easy to misunderstand. And here the study by Balsdon is of great help for our purposes. The temples voted him on the Palatine and the Capitol ought to be understood as a "trick" from his enemies: "having exposed his weak spot, the Senate proceeded to attack it with such great success that the Emperor was dead before he had time to formulate his plans" (36). The Senate, according to this reading, was mischievous, wanting his downfall. Neither of the temples in question were ever constructed (37). The bridge from the Palatine to the Capitol was actually constructed and later demolished.

Here, of course, the parallel with Julius easily comes to mind: he was also offered excessive honours by the Senate and by other influential politicians of his day. But he was wise enough to refuse royal insignia and titles. - Nevertheless it was too late.

Josephus and Philo show what impression he made on contemporary Jews, and reading them we have the occasion to contemplate the imperial cult - in a mad form - from the sideline, so to speak.

The embassy to Gaius was an act of emergency at a moment when the divinity of Gaius became a threat to the privileges the Jews normally enjoyed under Roman rule. Gaius had ordered the Greeks in Alexandria to set up images in the synagogues. The Jews had refused, the

Greeks had robbed them, and so on. This had happened before, the friction between Jews and Greeks not being of recent date, but for the first time it was provoked by an initiative "from above", whereas it usually had come from the Greeks themselves.

But a more serious issue had emerged as well.

Gaius had ordered the legate of Syria, Petronius, to set up a colossal bronze statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple (38). The delegation headed by Philo was received by Gaius in a garden in Rome and the account he gives of their reception is frightening and amusing at the same time (39). Gaius is not satisfied that the Jews sacrifice "on his behalf", but wants them to sacrifice "to" himself as well, wanting to be regarded as a god by all his subjects (40). The purpose of the embassy failed, but Petronius saw to it that the making of the statue was put off until the issue was irrelevant, that is, because Gaius already was dead (41). But nothing less than a national uprising was at stake; we will revert to this point in detail in chapter 3. Actually, in 66, the year of the revolt, the sacrifices on behalf of the emperor ceased as soon as the temple had been taken over by the revolutionaries (42).

There can be no doubt that Petronius knew the danger he was in by not obeying immediately, just as Regulus, the governor of Achaia, when he resisted the transfer of the statue of Zeus from Olympia. A full account of these two incidents is given by Balsdon (43).

Gaius actively promoted his own cult also in other places. He accepted a temple for himself at Miletus - the only one in Asia Minor - a temple that does in fact appear on coins (44), and Dio adds the reported rumor that Gaius also wanted the temple at Didyma to be made over to him, something which few scholars seem prepared to believe (45). Suetonius simply reports that he completed the temple (46). But there is evidence that Drusilla was worshipped in the East during her lifetime (47). The Greeks at Jamnia set up an altar to Gaius in the city, but the Jews tore it down (48).

iii) Damnatio memoriae.

"When a tyrant is cut down, his images too and his statues are laid aside; and only changing the face and removing the head, the visage of the victor is placed on top, so that with the body remaining and the heads being cut off the head can be changed" (49).

After the murder of Gaius Caligula on the Palatine there was never question of his deification. He had made claim to divine honours in a way which rendered any further claims superfluous. Actually, his uncle Claudius, proclaimed emperor immediately after his death, had all his images removed by night. The name of Gaius was removed from all official records and his acts annulled (50). In the case of Gaius consecration was unthinkable - and posterity remains unconvinced of his claims in the extreme.

## V) CLAUDIUS

"I do not wish to be offensive to my contemporaries, and my opinion is that temples and such forms of honour have by all ages been granted as a prerogative of the gods alone" (1).

"Claudius did not presume to accept excessive honours, even refusing the forename "Imperator", and let the betrothal of his daughter, and the birthday of his grandson be celebrated quietly, with private ceremonies only" (2).

"He always used "by Augustus" as the most sacred and frequent of his oaths...His mother was posthumously given the title "Augusta" " (3).

### 1) The refusal of honours.

With Galus' uncle Claudius, the brother of Germanicus, we are in a way back to the religious policy of Tiberius: he refused divine honours while alive - and at the same time insisted on the cult of the deceased members of the imperial family.

In the letter to the Alexandrians quoted above he refused them the permission to build a temple to himself, but allowed them the privilege of erecting a statue (4). But again, we find that in his case there are no clear-cut rules, and the practices we observe in literary and epigraphic documents vary from place to place and from person to person: the Greeks went their own way and private devotion was partly outside the reach of imperial regulation. Price quotes as a source a papyrus from

Oxyrinchus revealing that he happily gave permission to the professional actors to offer cult to his images (5), and Suetonius tells of the father of the future emperor Vitellius - Lucius Vitellius, the one who worshipped Gaius - that he as a courtier worshipped the golden images of Pallas and Narcissus among his lares (6).

Dio goes further than Suetonius in stating that Claudius did forbid any form of cult of his own person, accepting only one silver image and two statues of bronze and marble (7).

11) The Greeks and Claudius.

The letter to the Alexandrians is discussed by Taylor, who draws much the same conclusions from this occasion as she does from the case of Tiberius: the refusal is formal and not final - Claudius is called "our god" ("theos hemon") by the prefect who published the letter (8). Even Nock admits that this preamble to the letter of Claudius shows how little it meant (9).

From the East we hear of a refusal to Thasos to have an imperial cult for Claudius, but they nevertheless had a priest (10). Cos knew a temple to Claudius (11). At Priene a head of Claudius was found in the temple to Athena and Augustus (12). At Prusa we know of a private temple in a house (13). Tacitus records that Zorsines - chief of the Siraci - made proskynesis before the effigies of Claudius at the standards, an oriental act of submission to Rome (14). Price records a temple to



the "imperial race" ("genei sebaston") at Hierapolis represented on Claudian coins (15). Cibyra Minor had a Claudian Kaisareion ( a hall, shrine or portico sacred to the emperors) (16).

In other words, the situation under Claudius is much the same as under Tiberius. The Greeks continued their cult of the Roman ruler, whatever his attitude to the matter may have been like. In the next chapter we will look closer at some of the reasons for this. In the West it is interesting to find that Britain saw the erection of a temple to Claudius alone, and not Claudius and Roma as expected.

#### 111) The "pumpkinfication" of Claudius.

According to our sources Claudius was officially deified by the Senate, an honour which Nero later neglected and then cancelled, but which Vespasian restored (17). Actually he became the first emperor to receive such honours since Augustus.

Part of the reason for Nero's neglect of the senatorial decree was, of course, the fact that Claudius had been something of a comical figure - his consecration was laughed at in Rome. Seneca wrote a satire on the topic: "Apotheosis Divi Claudii" or "Apocolocyntosis" (ET: "Pumpkinfication") - the full title being "Divi Claudii incipit apotheosis Annei Senecae per satiram" (18). Price stresses that the jokes in Seneca are against the implausible figure of Claudius, not against the

**RIC** as such (19). **T**acitus uses the prefix "divus" twice, but both references are to the temple of **D**ivi **C**laudii, which was finally realized by the **F**lavians (20).

**A**s seen in the previous section the **G**reeks were not interested in this side of the matter, they needed the cult of **C**laudius for their own reasons. **T**he ironic thing is that when **C**laudius was finally deified in **R**ome - that is after his death - the **G**reeks had no use for him any more: their cult is concentrated on the living emperor, not the dead one. **O**nce the emperor is dead his cult is silently dropped: "In fact, neither the emperor nor his individual cults endured in perpetuity. **T**he imperial cult was far from being a static, monolithic structure, erected once and for all. **C**ults were constantly being invented and revised. **W**hen the focus was on the rule of the living emperor, changes were necessary. **T**hus cults of individual emperors did not long endure the death of that emperor... **T**o some extent the imperial cult, which was a creation of **A**ugustus, preserved his privileged position, but in general there is a noticeably silent suppression of old cults. **E**ven with the priesthoods of **A**ugustus, which one might have expected to endure, only two are known from later reigns. **T**he position is similar with the priests of **C**laudius; although dating is not always certain, none need be placed much (if any) later than his reign. **T**he process by which these cults disappeared is lost to us. **I**t would surely have been imprudent to pass an official decree abolishing a cult; if such were passed, it would not be inscribed for public

contemplation. The whole complex process of negotiation between the ideology of the cult, the demands of political tact and the pull of practicality was carried out successfully in silence " (21).

As was the case with the previous section, a substantial study on the principate of Claudius has appeared since this section was written (B. Levick: Claudius, London 1990). The issue of the RIC is not given much attention, something which is in harmony with the reign of this emperor, and thereby indirectly supports the view expressed above.

## VI) NERO

With **Nero** we come to the second of our emperors that have a direct bearing on the study of the **New Testament**. The case of **Nero** is also important for the development of the imperial cult as such. Scholarship is very rich when it comes to the rule of **Nero**, and only those authorities are referred to below that directly occupy themselves with the **RIC**. The recent significant study of **M. Griffin (1984)** is masterly as far as an interpretation of his reign as a whole is concerned, but not altogether satisfactory on the **RIC**. The older authorities are still the most rewarding ones.

"He professed admiration for his uncle **Gaius**, merely because he had run through the vast fortune which **Tiberius** had left him" (1).

"Gold went to **Nero's** head, if ever it did to any man's" (2).

"**Nero** dedicated it (the **Golden House**), and condescended to remark: 'Good, now **I** can at last begin to live like a human being!' " (3).

"Twenty years later, when **I** was a young man, a mysterious individual came forward claiming to be **Nero**; and so magical was the sound of his name in the **Parthians'** ears that they supported him to the best of their abilities" (4).

i) Quinquennium Neronis (54 - 59) .

The first five years of **Neronian** rule were a period of great popularity and promise. **Nero** ruled under the influence of **Seneca** and **Burrus**, an influence that counteracted the despotism of his mother **Agrippina the Younger**.

The imperial cult went on as established by **Augustus**, and practiced by **Tiberius** and **Claudius**. **Nero** showed no signs of any extravagant behaviour so far. **Tacitus** records in passing - and he is far more interested in displaying **Nero's** vices than his virtues - that he did forbid statues of solid silver and gold (5). **Scott** believes this to be due to the influence of the philosopher **Seneca** (6). Later, **Nero** went for precious metals in an unprecedented way, as his **Golden House** and the **Colossus** (the golden colossal statue of **Nero** in the vestibule of the palace - after which the **Colosseum** is named) witness to.

But **Nero** introduced an innovation in the late fifties, the **Augustiani** - a corps of 500 upper class soldiers to lead the applause when **Nero** appeared in the theatre: "These powerful young men, impudent by nature or ambition, maintained a din of applause day and night, showering divine epithets on **Nero's** beauty and voice. They were grand and respected as if they had done great things" (7). **Cuss** discusses these acclamations and find that they are inspired by the **Hellenistic** cult of divine rulers, organised outbursts of a popular kind (8). **Jones** also sees the **Augustiani** as an important pointer towards



the development of the later **Nero** (9).

**Seneca**, the philosopher at **Nero's** court, was also full of flattery of a **Greek** kind. In his article on "**Ruler-cult in Seneca**" **Altman** lists examples from the writings of the famous stoic thinker, especially from works like "**Consolatio ad Polybium**" and "**De Clementia**" (10). He states that this was "apparently flattery, but in most respects it seems to be dictated by a fervent desire that the young ruler might merit such blanditiae" (11). Especially is this the case with "**De Clementia**", according to **Altman**, where the real intention is not flattery, but to give advice to the prince; he was then - in 55 - 18 years old. A comparison with the court flatterers in the time of **Augustus** is appropriate in the case of **Seneca**. He calls **Nero** "pater patriae" (12), and in his "**Apocolocyntosis**" - referred to above - he writes that with thread of gold a life beyond all normal bounds is woven for **Nero** by the **Fates** (13). He compares the prince with **Apollo** (14). But nothing of this is out of the ordinary. The later **Nero** seems to have forgotten all that **Seneca** taught him, and went his own ways, ways that led to his own destruction

#### ii) A "Tyranny of Art".

Our sources tend to see a clear line of deterioration in the life of this young emperor: the murder of his mother (in 59) - the fire of **Rome** (in 64) - the murder of **Seneca** (in 65) - the murder of **Poppaea** (in 66).

After the murder of Agrippina the Younger a golden image of Minerva (a "simulacrum") was set up in the Senate, and next to it a likeness of the emperor (15).

AD 64 is often seen as the year of division: one speaks of the pre-64 and the post-64 Nero. By now he was independent of his mother and advisors (Seneca and Burrus) and followed his own will. His new wife, Poppaea Sabina, was not exactly a beneficial influence in his young life. It is customary to see this year as the departure point for the attitudes associated with the "later" Nero, though he was still in his twenties. But from now on there is a markedly increased emphasis on absolute monarchy, both in art, in forms and in attitudes. We find a different portraiture - that of the absolute Hellenistic monarchy.

L'Orange is the one to describe this transition most clearly. The oriental influence is seen in various ways: his new palace, following the fire of Rome - the "domus aurea"; the increased Hellenization in portraiture; his association with Helios and with Apollo - to mention some obvious examples.

Poppaea, after having been kicked to death by Nero himself, was "embalmed like an Egyptian queen" (16); this happened in 66. The previous years saw a significant change in his portraiture: "it undergoes a transformation in the course of his reign, reflecting...the great change in the emperor's policy as his reign draws to a close" (17).

AD 64 was the year of a great crisis, politically

and iconographically, it marks the final break with the Senate, a change-over to a more monarchical policy, a break with the constitutional type of portrait taken over from the previous rulers of the Julio-Claudian house (18). Nero is from now on choosing his own emblems, emphasising his apotheosis: the crown of rays and the aegis (19).

The as coinage (the dupondii, to be precise) shows the living emperor "radiated" (crowned with rays) for the first time in Roman imperial history (20). This concerns especially the very beautiful series of dupondii to emerge from 64 onwards. This crown of rays "brings Nero and his portrait into the great tradition of Alexander and the Diadochi" (21). In the tradition of the rulers of the East he appears as divine king with the radiated crown, an honour that Rome until then had bestowed only on consecrated emperors (for example the "Divus Augustus Pater" series are all struck by Tiberius or later rulers), but granted to Hellenistic rulers while alive, for example Ptolemy III and Antiochus IV. In addition to the radiated crown, so different from the "corona civica" of his predecessors, Nero also wears long hair: the big wreath of locks around his face and the long hair in the neck, visible on coins and on statues (22). This new style is commented on in our literary sources as well, linking him to Apollo (23). Seneca goes furthest in this direction (24).

Likewise his new palace was an imitation of the Oriental palaces, in particular the rotating throne hall

with its cosmic ruler-symbolism in particular (25). His association with **Apollo Helios** was also manifest in the colossal radiated statue - over 100 feet high - erected in the vestibule of his domus aurea (26), possibly on the request of the **Augustiani** (27). But **Nero** is at the same time reported to have refused a proposal of a temple to **Nero Divus** (28) - perhaps mindful of what happened to his uncle **Galus**?

The close association with **Apollo** is manifested not only in the external iconography of **Nero** but also in his passion for singing in public - it is **Apollo Citharoedus** that is acting before the **Roman Senate** and people: at **Naples** (in 64), in **Rome** (in 65), in **Greece** (in 66). The latter concert tour won him all the prizes of the **Greek** contests - indeed under his return to **Rome** in 67 the procession was headed by 1018 laurel wreaths, one for each competition he had won (29). On this occasion the **Augustiani** were very direct in their reference to the gods in their acclamations: "Our **Apollo**, our **Augustus**, another **Pythian**; by thyself we swear, O **Caesar**, none surpasses thee" - "Hail, **Olympian Victor**! Hail, **Pythian Victor**! **Augustus**! **Augustus**! Hail to **Nero**, our **Hercules**! Hail to **Nero**, our **Apollo**...the only one from the beginning of time! O voice divine!" (30).

Though these kinds of popular outbursts are on the periphery of the imperial cult, **Suetonius** explicitly states that the previous rulers had been very strict about such acclamations (31).

Seneca makes many allusions to the parallel between Nero and Apollo: "ille mihi (Apolloni) similis vultu similisque decore nec cantu nec voce minor" (32).

In spite of the "damnatio memoriae" that was to follow, the succeeding emperors continued to build on the tradition inherited from Nero in one important way: the radiated crown was used on coinage by all succeeding emperors up to Constantine, just as in some important respects, for examples that of nomenclature, they followed the pattern of Domitian. In other words: The tradition of the imperial cult continued to grow in spite of its innovators being "bad" emperors. Indeed, it built on their foundations as well as that of the "good" ones, however surprising this may seem. A fact such as this indicates how the RIC steadily was moving towards the absolute and divine monarchy to culminate with Diocletian, in spite of eccentricities and madness on the part of rulers like Gaius and Nero.

### iii) Nero and the East.

The Greeks celebrated the divinity of Nero as they had done that of his predecessors - to them it made little difference what views the emperor himself held on the topic. In the case of Nero it is clear that their divine cult was not offensive to his sensitivities.

The different sources reveal the same pattern as before.

The coins bear the traditional titles of "theos" and "hyios theou", additional ones being "soter" and "euergetes"



(33). There are also references to him as "Zeus Eleutherios" (34). An interesting epigraphic reference to cosmic kingship is the title "kosmou kyrios" (35) which links up with central themes from the pattern in Rome. The island of Cos had the "Sebastoi Theoi" dedicated together in the sanctuary of Asclepius, and the niche dedicated to Nero Asclepius is certain (36). - The East does not see any great innovations in the case of Nero, the pattern having been established already.

Literary sources witness to the oriental homage rendered to Nero. Tiridates on his visit to Rome made sacrifice and prayer before an "imago" of Nero among the standards and "simulacra" of the gods (37). Scott comments on this information: "This likeness was, I believe, of gold or silver" (38). The same Tiridates - Parthian king - greets Nero as Mithra ("master" - "dominus") and "god" according to Dio (39).

#### iv) A public enemy.

Nero was declared a public enemy while still alive. There are indications in Suetonius and Dio that he perhaps wished to establish an Egyptian kingdom and move to Alexandria in case he had to flee from Rome (40).

After his suicide something extraordinary happened: an impersonating pretender appeared in the East claiming to be Nero (41). This happened in 69. The pretender was captured and punished (42). Later, in 87/88, a second pretender appeared, the one Suetonius refers to in the

quotation at the beginning. The theme of the return of **Nero** has been much discussed in connection with the book of **Revelation** and will be dealt with in chapter 3. For our present purposes it is interesting to note that the impostor of 69 did imitate **Nero's** hair, its "royal profusion of locks" (43).

This divine hairstyle of **Nero's** seems to have inspired his immediate successors: **Otho** is reported to have waved his hair artificially, but since he was bald this seems to mean that he was wearing a wig (44); besides, he did also live in **Nero's Golden House**, and tried to rehabilitate **Nero** - something which proved impossible (45). **Domitian** also wore a wig, being bald.

The causes of his downfall were by older generations of scholars taken to be political ones, i.e. unrest of the armies in the provinces. But later studies do not hesitate to find a real cause in **Nero's** private behaviour, causes that are intimately linked to our topic (46).

## VII) VESPASIAN

The establishing of a new dynasty in Rome is most interesting from the point of view of the study of the RIC: here we can observe how ruler cult works when a new and unprecedented situation arises. The three emperors of the civil war - Galba, Otho, Vitellius - are left out of consideration, their respective reigns were too short to have relevance for the development of the cult.

"The secrets of Fate and the fact that the throne was predestined for Vespasian and his children by signs and oracles we believed after his success" (1).

"Tacitus, a contemporary, was convinced of the existence of divine manifestations of future greatness for the Flavians" (2).

"The evidence of our sources is that Vespasian believed in portents, omens and prophecies, in supernatural indications of the future... There is no strong reason to discredit such remarks... his contemporaries were equally credulous" (3).

"Vespasian adopts on the whole the policy of Augustus: at home he is civilis, a man; in the province he received, and apparently made no attempt to check, divine honours" (4).

"Circumstances forbade his ever claiming divine descent" (5).

1) The founding of a new dynasty.

Nero represented the end of a dynasty, the Julio-Claudian. What followed was a year of civil war - 68/69 - and the outcome was not a restored Republic but a renewed monarchy.

The Flavian dynasty was perhaps just what the Roman world needed after the scandalous life of Nero and the turmoils of civil war. The three emperors of the interlude - Galba, Otho, Vitellius - did in their various ways continue the traditions of the empire. A turning away from the pattern laid down by Augustus did not come.

The same holds true for the imperial cult.

One of the first tasks of the new ruler, Vespasian - the fourth to succeed Nero in one year - was to establish a religious legitimization for his new rule, since it had come to last. The emperor had to be closely linked to the gods, and this had to be manifested to all. It could happen either by lineage or by special divine favours. Vespasian and his family fell into this second category.

The new ruler was descended neither from gods or Roman kings, but from peasant stock at Reate in Etruria. He never tried to obscure this fact and actually ridiculed attempts to trace his ancestry back to the founders of Reate and a companion of Hercules (6). The family was bourgeois - respectable, but not distinguished.

Vespasian was consul in 51, but at the time when he was chosen by Nero to suppress the revolt in Judaea (in 66) he was living in obscurity. On 1/7 69 he was hailed emperor in Alexandria, and on 3/7 by the Judaeans

troops (7). His dynasty reigned from 69 to 96 and came to a speedy end because of the childlessness of Domitian. His wife Flavia Domitilla died before 69 and during his time as emperor he lived with a concubine, Caenis (8).

The military takeover was not the most difficult aspect of establishing the new rule. The accession was planned and staged by Mucianus - legate of Syria - and Titus Julius Alexander in Egypt. Mucianus arrived in Rome before Vespasian, in December 69, killing the sons of Vitellius (9). Vespasian himself arrived in 70, and one of his first acts was to close the temple of Janus, thereby showing that the "pax augusta" had been reestablished. His first coinage bears the legends Victoria Augusta, Pax Augusta, Aeternitas, etc. (10). He dedicated the recently burned and restored temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on 21/6 the same year.

His two sons guaranteed the realism of his undertaking: "In fact, the possession of two sons was of influence in making Vespasian's choice as emperor acceptable" (11). Tacitus also underscores the fact that the name of Vespasian meant a dynastic possibility (12). The elder son Titus became his heir designate, colleague and guardian of the Emperor, sharing in censorship and tribunician power (13).

The religious propaganda for the new dynasty was by then already established. It started in Judaea. Vespasian was first hailed imperator by the troops in



Syria, but he was reluctant to accept the title at this stage, waiting to see what happened in Alexandria. Before leaving Palestine he sacrificed at the oracle of the god of Carmel in the presence of a certain Basilides who seems to have played an important role in these events: "In Judaea, Vespasian consulted the oracle of the God of Carmel and was given a promise that he would never be disappointed in what he planned or desired, however lofty his ambitions. Also, a distinguished Jewish prisoner of Vespasian's, Josephus by name, insisted that he would soon be released by the very man who had now put him in fetters, and who would then be Emperor" (14).

In Alexandria - after the proclamation from the troops there - there was no doubt about his accession to the throne. He could boast of no divinity, no royalty, no nobility: "The want of it (viz. an ancient and honourable lineage) shows that some, at least, such as a family tree, seemed requisite for an emperor" (15). The only solution possible was that he somehow was chosen by the gods - "electus a diis" (16) - and that is precisely what followed.

Vespasian's stay at Alexandria was surrounded by many religiously portentous events. His working of cures there became a standard piece of propaganda for the new family (17). Signs and portents followed the new emperor: he was a commoner elected by the gods to save the empire (18). This inauguration of the new rule was underscored by all our literary sources: The Nile flooded, and Vespasian was

reckoned as one of the gods of Egypt; he consulted Serapis in his temple where he shut himself up alone and consulted the god concerning the destiny of the empire, whereafter he manifestly had healing powers (19).

According to Josephus Vespasian did not take the prophecies (of Josephus himself) and portents seriously (20), and Scott interprets this to mean that Vespasian only later accepted that some just destiny had brought him to rule over all (21). The healings in Alexandria he takes to be prompted by some of Vespasian's adherents - or by the priests of Serapis themselves, to gain credit for their cult (22). "When Vespasian obtained firm control of the empire, the necessity for further miracles to serve the purposes of propaganda ceased, and...only three other omens concerning Vespasian are recorded" (23). "The fact that the flood of events of superhuman character abruptly ceases with the end of the civil wars, is a good indication that much of it is probably the result of propaganda for Vespasian against Vitellius" (24). One further detail of this propaganda is recorded in the life of Apollonius, the prophet from Tyana, who was in Alexandria himself at the time and delivered an oracle on the future of the family of Vespasian as a dynasty (25).

The new dynasty was also heralded by omens of destruction for Vitellius: the departure of the Capitoline Trinity from the emperor reminds us of the stories about Dionysus leaving Alexandria when Anthony was dying (26). Another omen is of some interest for our purposes:

"An ancient superstition was current in the East, that out of Judaea at this time would come the rulers of the world. This prediction, as the event later proved, referred to a Roman Emperor, but the rebellious Jews, who read it as referring to themselves, murdered their Governor, routed the Governor of Syria when he came down to restore order, and captured an eagle" (27).

The war against the Jewish uprising was to become the great military legitimization of the new dynasty. The "Bellum Judaicum" was itself a propaganda piece, based on Vespasian's own commentaries. The victory - the fall of Jerusalem in 70 - was celebrated the following year with a great triumph in Rome and many series of commemorative coins. They bear the legends "Judaea Capta", "Judaea", "De Judaeis", "Judaea Devicta", etc. and witness to the need of the new dynasty to celebrate a great victory at the outset of their rule (28). Josephus himself was, of course, to play an important role in this propaganda by publishing his work on the war, dedicated to Titus, his great patron.

The coinage of these first years reveals that Vespasian wanted to go back to an ideology like that of Augustus'. The important allusions to this are clearly seen from the legends: "Concordia Augusta", "Victoria Augusti", "Victoria Navalis", "Victoris Imperatoris Vespasiani". Characteristically Roman abstractions like "Providentia", "Salus", "Felicitas", "Fortuna", "Securitas", "Aequitas", "Aeternitas", "Annona",

"Fides", "Concordia", "Libertas", "Iustitia", "Virtus", "Honor", etc. All witness to the return to the golden age of Augustus (29). - Again civil war was followed by peace, and the virtues referred to on the legends listed above are intimately linked to the person of the emperor himself, who is the one who ultimately grants them. Dynastic designs are also evident in the coins with busts of the two princes facing one another on the reverse (30).

The new rule proved to be popular. Of conspiracies only one is recorded in the time of Vespasian, that of A. Caecina Alienus and Eprius Marcellus in 79, the year of the plague and the last year of Vespasian's rule. These were some of the very few victims of Vespasian (31).

The role of the Senate became one of the principal problems for the new rulers, the Flavians having been chosen by the army and not by the Senate (32). The Senate did not like the thought of a new dynasty, which should not come as a surprise after what had gone before. Vespasian actually declared to the conscript fathers that either his sons should succeed him or no one (33).

A new role of the "amici caesaris" seems to come into force with the Flavian emperors, imperial councillors, after a Hellenistic model (34).

#### 11) Religious policy.

The religious task of Vespasian was, of course, much easier than that of Augustus had been - his was one of

maintaining, not inventing a new system (35). Still, a good start was not enough - it had to be followed up.

"Under **V**espasian we have neither the **B**yzantinism of **D**iocletian nor that spontaneous outburst of popular emotion which acclaimed **A**ugustus as more than a man" (36).

"The founder of the new dynasty wished to rival **A**ugustus as a restorer and builder of temples to the gods" (37). He restored the temple to **V**ictoria, to **J**upiter **C**apitolinus, completed the temple to **D**ivus **C**laudius, to **H**onor and **V**irtus, to **J**upiter **C**onservator, etc. All this was meant to mark a return to things **R**oman - going back to **A**ugustus. **B**ridging past and present also meant a break with the policy of **N**ero. It was the **R**oman state religion that he wanted to underline in this way, and it was a conservative policy as such - just as it had been in the case of **A**ugustus (38).

An innovation that seeks to emphasize the new golden age is obviously the building of the vast construction called the "templum pacis", which he had already begun in 71, which was to celebrate the new "pax augusta" besides being a monument to the suppression of the Jewish rebellion. It was here that the sacred objects from the temple in Jerusalem were kept: "When the triumphal ceremonies were over, as the **R**oman **E**mpire was now most firmly established, **V**espasian made up his mind to build a temple of **P**ease. This was completed with speed and surpassed all human imagination. Not only did he have unlimited wealth at his disposal; he also adorned it with



paintings and statues by the greatest of the old masters. In fact, in that temple were collected and deposited all those works that men had hitherto travelled over the whole world to see, longing to set eyes on them even when scattered in different lands. There too he laid up the golden vessels from the Temple of the Jews, for he prided himself on them; but their Law and the crimson curtains of the Inner Sanctuary he ordered to be deposited in the Palace for safe keeping"(39).

Another feature of his religious policy was his banishing all astrologers and philosophers from Rome, probably because he saw them as a threat to his religious designs (40).

The most obvious innovation under Vespasian is perhaps the introduction of the cults of Serapis and Isis to Rome. This has undoubtedly something to do with his stay at Alexandria. Both cults derive from his time in the East. They were combined and a temple erected on the Campus Martius.

The imperial cult was given a new impetus under Vespasian, as may be expected. The new dynasty needed a new heaven - and Vespasian set about preparing the consecration of members of his house, along the lines of Augustus rather than of Nero. Some aspects of this must be mentioned in our context.

The radiated bust of the as coinage of Nero continued to appear, and became indeed a standard feature of the future imperial cult. This is a most interesting fact,

since it is more in line with the policy of **Nero** than with **Augustus**. But, as said earlier, the **Roman Imperial Cult** grew steadily toward the later - and oriental - solution of **Diocletian's** tetrarchy, in spite of "bad" emperors. Otherwise **Vespasian** followed the rules laid down by **Augustus**: the oath in the name of the reigning emperor is again a primary sign of loyalty, and it is his "genius" that is worshipped, not his person as such (41). In **Pompeii** we find a temple to the **Genius** of **Vespasian**.

He did restore the temple to **Claudius** the god on the **Caelian Hill**, begun by **Agrippa**, but almost completely destroyed by **Nero** (42). "The restoration of the cult of **Claudius** is in itself remarkable and a sign of great good sense" (43), but, as **Charlesworth** remarks, this was a way of foreseeing his own deification (44). Going back to the more immediate past of **Claudius** made good sense to his contemporaries. There was implicitly a break away from the ways of **Nero** as well as a recognition of the worth of this **Julio-Claudian** emperor.

**Vespasian** did not allow statues in precious metals to himself, but **Dio** adds that this was partly because he wanted the money they would bring (45), and **Suetonius** comments that "his one serious failing was avarice" (46).

His final remark while dying was the famous "vae, puto deus fio" (47), as mentioned earlier. **Scott** sees in this remark what he calls "a certain cynicism" (48). Indeed this saying has all too often been quoted in order to ridicule the imperial cult, to show that the emperors did

not take it seriously themselves. But that is probably doing injustice to these "ipsissima verba" - if they are true. Vespasian had throughout his reign prepared the consecration of himself as well as that of his sons. Besides, witty remarks were part of his nature and should not be interpreted too philosophically.

111) The Greeks and the Flavians.

The change of emperors made little or no difference to the interests of the Greek East. The Greeks embraced the Flavian House with the same enthusiasm as they had done in the case of the Julio-Claudians: "The inhabitants of the Eastern part of the Empire apparently looked upon Vespasian as a divine ruler much as had been the case with their Hellenistic monarchs and the preceding Roman emperors" (49).

Actually, his cult started in the East, where he had been proclaimed emperor, the year of his accession being reckoned as "holy year" in Syria - "thus from the very beginning the East followed its age old custom of paying divine honours to its rulers" (50). Tacitus tells that when Vespasian came to Antioch and entered the theatre he was greeted with popular acclamations of an adulatory kind, being called "soter" and "euergetes" (51). Divine honours had followed him in the East wherever he went, and Scott lists the best documented cases in ch.2 of his important study (52).

Price adds the following items: at Nicomedia (in

Bithynia) an "oikos" of an association to Vespasian (53); at Lamus an imperial temple to Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, from AD 77 (54); at Pisidian Antioch a cult of Vespasian is attested in his lifetime (55); at Cestrus in Cilicia he lists an imperial temple with statues of Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian and Sabina, but does not specify if this stems from his lifetime or not (56). Cuss mentions that Vespasian was called "kyrios" and accepted the title (57). Josephus is full of references to popular acclamations, and his mentioning of these form part of the important propaganda piece that his work on the Jewish War is: the most common laudatory terms are "soter" and "euergetes", this takes place in Galilee at cities like Tiberias and Gischala (58).

In conclusion to this paragraph it is necessary to stress the fact that his task was much easier than it had been for the founder of the Julio-Claudian house. Both Romans and Greeks alike had accepted the monarchy by now, including its religious aspects. The opposition from the Senate was no real threat, nor was that of popular philosophy. The problem of divine legitimacy - the lack of noble descent - was brilliantly solved by the cures at Alexandria. When Vespasian returned to Rome it was very much as an emperor "a diis electus".

## VIII) TITUS

"He paid divine honours to the departed spirit, thus making a kind of deity of him who but just now ceased to be a man" (1).

"This is the most ancient manner of paying thanks to those who deserve them, namely to enrol such men among the divinities" (2).

"Titus did more than have the Senate decree consecration for his father. He set about the institution of a cult and the erection of a temple near the Tabularium...completed by Domitian, and called it "templum Vespasiani et Titī" (3).

"The municipal flamine was probably established soon after the ruler's death and in many cases lasted for a long time as an institution. The flamines were men of high rank and wealth, and the priesthood was much sought after" (4).

"Since the official creation of a divus by senatorial decree was a distinctly Roman practice, it is not surprising that the flamines occur, as a rule, in the Western part of the Empire rather than in the Greek East" (5).

"Sometimes they (the flamines) were appointed by decree of the decurions and sometimes upon the nomination of the emperor. Often a priest would be appointed to serve the cult of more than one divus...The municipal flamine was not a Flavian innovation, but a continuation of an institution of the Julio-Claudian dynasty" (6).



1) A new heaven.

The **F**lavian "heaven" never grew to be so populated as the **J**ulio-**C**laudian, due to the childlessness of **D**omitian. The dynasty ends abruptly in **96**. Nevertheless it succeeded in having five members consecrated altogether: **V**espasian, **D**omitilla, **T**itus, **C**aesar, **J**ulia **P**ia **A**ugusta (**7**). **V**espasian was deified by **T**itus, the others by **D**omitian.

The year of the consecration of **V**espasian is uncertain: it is either **79** or **80**. **M**attingly goes for **80**, because of numismatic evidence (coins of **D**omitian from **79** having the legend "**A**ug.f." - i.e. "**A**ugusti filius" - and not "**D**ivi f." - i.e. "**D**ivi filius") (**8**), but **S**cott thinks **79** the more likely year since **T**itus is called "divi f." on the inscription of the arch of **A**qua **M**arcia (**9**). He also lists the flamines for **V**espasian known from various inscriptions (**10**). The many commemorative coins struck on the occasion have the eagle as symbol of consecration.

The second member of the **F**lavian house to be consecrated was **D**omitilla, but it is uncertain if she is the sister or the mother of **T**itus and *Domitian*. This consecration also took place in **79/80** (according to **S**cott) or during the years **81-84** (according to **M**attingly) (**11**). (**S**cott thinks that **D**iva **D**omitilla **A**ugusta must be the deceased sister of the sons of **V**espasian (**12**). This difficulty rises from the fact that both the wife of **V**espasian and the daughter have the same

name - **Flavia Domitilla**, and both died before 1/7 62. The majority view holds that this is the daughter and not the wife, while a minority identifies her as the mother (13).)

The reign of **Titus** was remembered by posterity as a singularly happy rule. "His short reign is essentially a continuation of the regime of his father... The program of the new monarch is one of peace, prosperity and justice, as the coins with types of **Pax**, **Securitas**, **Felicitas** and **Aequitas** indicate " (14). **Titus** had actually never been "r.aug." - that is "crown prince" - because he was co-regent with his father until his death.

His building program included the significant temple to **Vespasian** at the foot of the **Tabularium** on the forum, baths near the **Colosseum** (inaugurated in 80), etc. (15). "His affability and his consideration for the **Senate** apparently mollified the feelings of that order" (16). But his short reign was marred by some significant disasters: the fire at **Rome** in 79, destroying among other things the temple to **Jupiter Capitolinus** - and the eruption of **Vesuvius** on **August 24th** the same year. Somehow the inauguration of **Colosseum** in 80, with **100** days of games, restored the feelings in the capital.

**Suetonius** records that no statues in precious metals are known under **Titus**, but he did erect one to **Britannicus** (17). He did not have to stress the imperial cult - his father had done the work for the new dynasty in this respect. **Pliny the Elder** dedicated his **Historia**

Naturalis to Titus, and the language of the preface is, according to Scott, "such as a courtier would use to a monarch" (18) and not to a princeps.

Tacitus states that "his intelligence fitted him for the most exalted station, while he had good looks, too, and a certain dignity of manner" (19). He succeeded his father on June 24th 79 and was on the same day awarded the titles Pontifex Maximus and Pater Patriae (20). The one incident of popular feeling against him was when he settled in Rome with Berenice, the Jewish princess who had become his mistress during the war. She came to Rome with her brother Agrippa (II) in 75, but was sent away for good in 79, when he became emperor. The roots of this popular resentment is commonly taken to be parallel to the case of Cleopatra. In this respect the Romans had a long memory (21).

No conspiracies are known under Titus, and few historians accept the rumor as true that he was murdered by his brother Domitian (22). In the Jewish tradition he is mentioned as the destroyer of Jerusalem (23), while later witnesses like Pliny the Younger accept his apotheosis as justified (24).

The Greek East continued in their worship of the Roman emperor much as before. The - for our purposes - essential difference between the latin "divus" and the Greek "theos" is documented in many inscriptions listed by Scott (25). But he does not give any principal discussion of the religio-political significance of this

variation in titles between the two parts of the empire. This kind of analysis will be dealt with in the next chapter with reference to the work of Price. Josephus refers to popular outbursts of acclamation to Titus during his stay in the East in connection with the Jewish war (26).

The shortness of the rule of Titus prevented him from having many temples and shrines dedicated to him in the Greek world. Price lists only one in his catalogue: that of a temple (?) at Hydissos in Caria (27).

## IX) DOMITIAN

The disproportion at the length of this section is mainly due to two factors: 1) the reign of **Domitian** is an important stage in the development of the **RIC**, pointing ahead toward the latest stages of ruler cult in **Rome** - 11) it is of particular interest for the student of the **New Testament**, perhaps even more than the cases of **Gaius** and **Nero**. These two points will be illustrated as we go along, and we will return to them in more detail in chapter 3.

"**Tiberius** deified **Augustus** but in order to introduce the offence of **maiestas**; **Nero** did the same for **Claudius**, but in order to laugh at him; **Titus** consecrated **Vespasian**, **Domitian Titus**, but the former that he might be seen to be the son of a god, the latter that he might seem to be the brother of a god" (1).

"His reign marked a departure from the moderation of **Augustus**, **Tiberius**, **Claudius**, **Vespasian**, and a return to the ways of **Caligula** and to some extent of **Nero**" (2).

"He governed the **Empire** well, even if despotically ...indeed if he had had a son or brother to succeed him he almost certainly would have been deified...toward the end of his reign a refusal to worship his genius was regarded as a proof of atheism - and the number of men charged with this was steadily growing...his policies in themselves were not bad, but his high-handed methods evoked bitter resentment...the men who served him were good - and kept in



office by his successors" (3).

1) The rehabilitation of Domitian.

The youngest son of Vespasian is a case where the ecclesial tradition and "secular" scholarship part ways. Eusebius, and ecclesial historians after him, has seen Domitian as a persecutor of the Church, a second Nero, a "Nero calvus" (4). This view has always been substantiated by the fact that Domitian suffered a "damnatio memoriae" - like Caligula and Nero - and was, therefore a "bad" emperor, so unlike the great and "good" emperors to come.

But Roman historians have for some time been making efforts to rehabilitate Domitian, and with considerable success (5). As a result of this - or even independently - Church historians have begun to question the ecclesial tradition (6). All this will be discussed further in Chapter 3, but some aspects of his rule will have to be mentioned beforehand.

Domitian is the most interesting of the list of emperors discussed in this chapter.

In the first place he made the imperial rule into a true monarchy, with more oriental overtones than before, pace Caligula and Nero; Domitian was altogether of a different calibre and cannot be lightly dismissed as eccentric or mad.

In the second place his rule has a strong bearing upon the Johannine evidence, both REV and *G<sup>1</sup>hn* - his

newly established cult at **Ephesus** is possibly hinted at in both books, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

In the third place his rule has - according to tradition - a bearing on the early martyrdoms.

Towards the turn of the first **Christian** century a new religious situation had risen for the young **Church** - a break with **Judaism** as well as a new type of confrontation with the state. The **Johannine Christians** find themselves confronted on two sides. While the first of these factors has little to do with **Domitian** directly - though it was the result and outcome of the destruction of **Jerusalem** by his brother **Titus** - the emperor certainly is behind the second of them, although from a distance.

The study of the reign of **Domitian** is therefore most directly relevant to an important part of our discussion: the direct attack on the imperial cult in **Rev.** and the possible presence of a polemic against the **RIC** in the **Fourth Gospel**. Of all **Roman** rulers listed so far he is - with the possible exception of **Augustus** who settled the question of divine cult in the **Greek east** - the most important for our purposes.

It is in the discussion of his general abilities as a ruler - and not that of his personal dispositions in private life or vis a vis his enemies - that the rehabilitation of **Domitian** can be seen.

**Charlesworth** gives a very positive estimation of the rule of the **Flavians** in general, and of **Domitian** in particular (7). The period is difficult to reconstruct,

and the views have been exaggerated. Waters, in his attempt to give a fair evaluation of Domitian, uses writers like Pliny and Tacitus against each other: while they stress the great break between the rules of Domitian and Trajan he sees the continuity between the policy of the two as a key to understanding how both these distinguished Roman bureaucrats and men of letters could profit under both emperors (8). Also Syme makes himself an advocate of this work of rehabilitation (9).

These scholars - and only a few have been mentioned here - break with the tradition of Church history and Church historians. It all started with Mommsen who praised Domitian as one of the most careful administrators who held the imperial office (10). In his study of the Flavians Scott himself goes far in the same direction, as does Salmon (11).

The accession of Domitian on the death of his elder brother had been a point of slander by his contemporaries, but, as Salmon states: "there is no warrant for believing the rumor that Domitian procured Titus' murder" (12). He was proclaimed by the Praetorians on 13th September 81 and this act was ratified by the Senate on the following day. At that time he was only 30 years old. He had until then been kept in the background by his father and brother, and had to settle for being "caesar" - crown-prince - and "princeps iuventutis" while Titus had been co-regent with Vespasian. He found a bare treasury after Titus, and left the public finances in order at his

death: he "cannot be charged with spendthrift recklessness" (13).

His administration and legislation is discussed by Charlesworth (14), for whom he merits praise and who finds as proof thereof that no radical break in policy occurred at his death (15). Unlike Nero he did not have to debase the coinage in order to save finances (16). His legislations show him as a conservative Roman with an "archaic severity" : he vetoed castration, encouraged and protected marriage and family life, and put a ban on child prostitution (17). "From the point of view of civil administration the provinces generally were happy and contented under him, and the routine of Empire functioned smoothly" (18).

Domitian showed particular care for the Greek cities. Accordingly, his popularity was great in the Eastern part of the empire: "it is not likely that the Flavian rule had been anything but popular (in the provinces); but the provinces have no spokesman, save that Jew of Alexandria who, a hundred years later, celebrates Domitian as a prince of peace whom all men worship" (19). Syme is here referring to the Jewish Sibylline oracles (20). In his provincial administration Domitian gave high offices to knights and freedmen; this is another feature of his rule and that of the Flavians in general, the upgrading of the Order of knights - perhaps not so strange with a dynasty that did not have noble ancestry (21). Syme actually gives this compliment to Domitian

the statesman: "State and society were already proto-Antonine as well as cosmopolitan" (22).

Another area of his popularity was with the army - they actually did consecrate him after his death, but this had no lasting effect, and will not be discussed further.

The armed forces were, of course, his only real guarantee and security, not the Senate. This had surely been the case for the whole history of imperial Rome, from Caesar and Augustus onward, and it was precisely unrest with the armies that had initiated Nero's downfall and the civil wars of 68-69.

Domitian increased their pay, a very popular measure. He waged wars on several frontiers: the Dacian, the Parthian and the German. All in all he spent much time on the frontiers, a pattern of behaviour that guaranteed him a continuous good standing with the army. His wars against the Germans earned him the cognomen Germanicus. His first great triumph was in 83. In 86 he was at the frontier again, owing to attacks from the Dacians. This year also saw a revolt in Africa. The year 89 was a point of victory for Domitian: he saw two triumphs, over the Dacians and after a mutiny in Germany. In that year a "Nero redivivus" appeared in Parthia, but diplomacy induced the Parthians to surrender the impostor (23).

The revolt of Saturninus in 89 was no systematic uprising of the legions in Germany (the 14th and 21.), but rather of an individual commander who went for the purple. Domitian immediately left for the north, but the



rising was crushed before his arrival (24).

The most commonly known feature of Domitian's reign is the last years, his so-called "reign of terror". But also here historians like Scott, Syme, Charlesworth, Salmon and others agree that some basic correction to the traditional account is needed. There is no doubt about his difficulties with the Senate and the nobility at large. He also grew more suspicious over the years, to the point of becoming paranoic. While Domitian avoided recourse to a Sejanus, he was trapped in his increasing isolation, and he came to distrust his close entourage (25). Suetonius tells us that his only reading was the diaries and acts of Tiberius ("praeter commentarios et acta Tiberi Caesaris nihil lectabat") (26). This is, of course, not meant as praise, but the modern scholar will interpret it in a contrary sense (27). Syme's assessment of Domitian's last years is one of peace and stability, witnessed to by the long terms of office in the administration and the 28 legions loyal to him (28).

These facts have been worth mentioning as examples of the attempts to reevaluate the rule of Domitian. The area of administration and legislation is where the historians start their work of rehabilitaion. But however popular Domitian was with the provinces and with the army, he was certainly very unpopular with the Senate, as already mentioned.

One of the decidedly outstanding features of Domitian's rule was his vast building program, following up

the initiative of his father and brother, the new dynasty having need for legitimization also here (any visitor to Rome can see traces of its prescence). In fact, this dynasty has left behind some of the most imposing monuments in the Eternal City. The most obvious of these are the vast palace of Rabirius on the Palatine (29), a monumental construction worthy of the monarchical stage of the empire as developed under Domitian. The Arch of Titus that now stands at the end of the Via Sacra was erected after Titus' death - it is dedicated to "Divo Tito", as the inscription shows - replacing an interim arch in the Circus Maximus. Piazza Navona is the great stadium of Domitian, built to encourage the Romans in the athletic ways of the Greeks. The templum to the Gens Flavia at the foot of the Tabularium still shows three restored columns and part of the frieze. - These are just some examples.

When Domitian finally goes down in ancient history - as well as Church history - as one of the "bad" emperors, being likened even to Caligula and Nero, it is due to other factors than those mentioned above. Some of these are his accentuation of his own divinity, others his treatment of the Jews - with sad consequences for the early Christians. But above all it was owing to his unpopularity with the Senate and the many treason trials of his last years. Our traditional view of Domitian - painted by Tacitus and Pliny - is markedly senatorial.

ii) Domitian's religious policy.

A striking fact about Domitian is that he was markedly conservative on the level of religious policy in general, while at the same time much of an innovator on the level of the imperial cult. - After briefly mentioning the first we shall have to look more closely at the second.

Domitian was a great restorer as well as a great builder. In both activities he appears as favouring a strongly traditional religious policy, becoming the new dynasty which wanted to go back to the golden age of Augustus, the beginning of the monarchy in Rome. The time of Domitian was a time of great growth, especially in Rome (30).

Domitian restored many traditional temples: the temple to Apollo Capitolinus - so important in Augustus' monarchical designs - the Atrium Vestae, the temple of Castor, the temple of Augustus (significant for our study) (31). Above all he restored the temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, which had been restored by Vespasian after having been burnt during the civil war, but then burnt again in 80; it cost 12.000 talents and was inaugurated in 82. This temple is significant for the life of Domitian inasmuch as he found shelter here during the civil war and managed to escape as a priest of Isis. He restored the temple of Jupiter Stator. He also rebuilt the temple to Janus. He instituted the "agon capitolinus", after Greek models. It was to be a quinquennial contest (32) and was inaugurated in 86. In 88 he celebrated the ludi

saeculares in anticipation, thereby going back to **Augustus**, who had celebrated them in **17 BC** - and disregarded **Claudius'** celebrations of **48**.

**Minerva** was his favourite goddess and his personal patron (**33**), he even kept her statue in his bedchamber (**34**). Her figure is most common on the coins of the period (**35**). He started to erect the temple to **Minerva** on his new forum, which was only completed after his death and then became the forum of **Nerva** (its podium is still to be seen in situ).

He rebuilt the **Iseum Serapeum** which also burnt in **80**. This is an innovation linked to the **Flavian** emperors, and **Pliny** in his **Panegyrics** states - as one of innumerable accusations against **Domitian** - that he favoured **Egyptian** deities (**36**).

On the conservative side can also be added that he "tried to legislate men into morality" (**37**), he favoured family-life - just like **Augustus** before him - and he punished unchaste **Vestal Virgins**: one was actually starved to death.

"**Back to Augustus**" is definitely a feature of **Flavian** religious policy, and a wise one as such. But on the innovating side **Domitian** was almost equally creative. He built a temple to **Janus Quadrifons**, erected a temple to **fortuna Redux**, an altar commemorating the fire under **Nero**, and the portico of the dei consentes. (**Vespasian** had already erected an altar to **Jupiter Conservator**, showing the adventures during the civil war in reliefs (**38**).)

His traditional public image was marked by his emphasis on the cults of Jupiter, his special patron against plots and dangers (39). The new temple of Jupiter Custos on the Capitol was the first expression of this (40). (Actually Martial represents Jupiter as unable to repay the imperial gift (41).)

He further completed the Flavian amphitheatre, and on the Campus Martius he built an Odeum, a stadium (the one on Piazza Navona mentioned above) and a Circus. He dedicated the temple to the deified members of the Flavian house, Vespasian and Titus. He also erected a temple to the Gens Flavia in the city. His imperial palace has been mentioned above. Salmon writes: "His principal motive for this frenzied building activity may have been to do honour to the gods and perhaps to add to the grandeur of Rome" (42).

Both aspects - restoring as well as building - are certainly aspects of a grandiose manifestation of the new dynasty: "tot nascentia templa tot renata". These words of Martial make a fitting conclusion to this aspect of Domitian's reign, and lead on to another, which is of greater interest for our purposes: the life of literature and philosophy under this ruler.

It is commonly said that under Domitian philosophers were banned, writers went underground while court flatterers flourished.

The philosophers in question were certain stoics and some astrologers. They had been banned already under



Vespasian in 79, but now Domitian repeated the act in 89 and in 95 when he banned them from Italy altogether, one of their number being Epictetus, another Dio Chrysostom. This happened with the consent of the Senate, and is usually taken to be one more proof of the conservative tendencies of this emperor (43). But this did not create a great outrage, philosophers being a somewhat despised and ridiculed class in Rome.

"The opinion of Pliny, Suetonius and Dio however, are altogether too prejudiced against Domitian: the reason is that the Senatorial class alone hated the emperor bitterly, and it is the senatorial tradition which the three writers represent" (44). The one name that first comes to mind is, however, that of Tacitus (ca. 55-120), whose comparison between Tiberius and Domitian has damaged our image of this emperor. Suetonius, loving scandal, depicts a tyrant. But far the worst is Pliny the younger, who shows a savage hatred for Domitian. All these writers come from the senatorial class, and the words of Scott are directed towards them. It is certainly against the picture they depict that the modern rehabilitation is taking place, as well as that of the ecclesial tradition.

It was safest not to publish works that could be considered critical of the emperor, or in the slightest way offensive. This is undoubtedly true during the paranoic last years of his reign. Even Flavius Josephus - presumably living in the imperial palace on the Palatine at the time - did not publish his magnum opus, the

"Antiquitates Judaeorum", until after Domitian was dead. The sinister tone of Tacitus' works undoubtedly reflects the atmosphere in Rome during the nineties, and the jubilant tone in Pliny's Panegyricus the atmosphere in the years after his death. But, it must be remembered, both of these belonged to the only class that hated Domitian and on which he took revenge.

Court-flatterers like Martial and Statius had a splendid time under Domitian, and did not hesitate to join in the praise of his divine monarchy (45). For the divinity of Domitian was one of the issues that most enraged the Roman nobility.

#### iii) New trends in the imperial cult.

The religious innovations of Domitian were not primarily the work of restoring, building or introducing Egyptian deities, but rather his increased emphasis on the cult of his own person. And this is a point where classical scholars and biblical scholars meet, but their discussion move in opposite directions: the one group is busy rehabilitating Domitian while the other is occupied with defending the position of the ecclesiastical tradition, that of Domitian as a persecutor. The background for such a view is not the senatorial protest this time, but the religious dimensions of the state as incorporated in the person of the emperor.

There are three principal innovations to be considered: i) the oath to the "genius" - ii) the use of

the title "dominus and deus" - iii) the significance of statues in precious metals. We will consider them at some length in order to clarify to what extent the reign of Domitian changed the course of the RIC.

## 1) THE OATH TO THE GENIUS.

"He looked upon himself as upon the gods - and upon the gladiators as himself" (46).

The first item to be considered is how the oath to the "genius" was used under Domitian, because this is the traditional expression of the divinity of the emperor in Rome, as laid down by Augustus. - And here it seems that he made his first innovation. For Charlesworth underscores how this oath became compulsory from having been voluntary (47). Scott gives some of the formulas employed: one took the oath a) by the "genius" of the most sacred emperor, b) by his "tyche", c) or by Domitian himself (48). Other oaths one could take (not obligatory) were in the name of one of the various divi (Augustus, Claudius, Vespasianus, Titus) or Jupiter himself or the penates (49).

## 2) THE USE OF THE TITLE "DOMINUS ET DEUS".

"Lord and god" became his regular title both in writing and

conversation" (50).

" He even insisted upon being regarded as a god and took vast pride in being called "master" ("despotes") and "god" ("theos") (51).

"The cult was apparently private in character and it disappeared when senatorial vengeance caused the statues of precious metal to be thrown down and melted...What Domitian did was to permit and encourage to an excessive degree homage which had been shown - generally with more restraint - to his predecessors" (52).

His habit of calling himself "lord" and "god" never became an official title, but remained private, for conversation and letterwriting, as witnessed by Dio (53). But it did occur in popular outbursts, and towards the end of his life it was customarily used (54). Like Tiberius he had in his earlier years refused "dominus" and insisted on "princeps", but "this did not continue to be the case", as Scott puts it (55).

The novelty is, of course, the combination of the two words "dominus" and "deus" - both had been banned from use by earlier emperors (with possible exceptions for Gaius and Nero), and they constitute that dangerous border-line in the Roman imperial cult which the founders of the cult did not dare to transgress.

The question of when this use started is open to discussion. Suetonius unfortunately does not indicate a date, but seems to be assuming a lapse of some years from

his accession to the throne in 81 (56). Scott assumes that the most likely year of departure is 86, the 6th year of his reign: "If we suppose that the emperor first used the title in edicts issued in the name of his procurators about 86, we probably shall not be much in error" (57). It certainly was in use in 89, perhaps in 88, on the evidence of the poet Martial (58).

The usage itself is simply the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult translated into Latin: "kyrios" and "theos", stock language in the East, but forbidden in the West. Its introduction into Rome shows how far the empire had moved from its founding father in this respect. What made it so odious in Roman ears is, of course, the fact that "dominus" is the language of slaves addressed to their master, while "princeps" is the head of a free state (59). The full expression would actually have been "dominus et deus noster", and would have penetrated into popular usage. Its Oriental flavour was too new to be accepted in Rome, even at this stage, but it was merely a question of time before it became the standard title of the emperor - that happened with Diocletian.

Dio tells the story of how Juventius Celsus, a distinguished lawyer, was accused of participating in a conspiracy, and saved his life by making proskynesis to Domitian and calling him "master" - the correct translation of "dominus" in English - and "god" (60).

The court-flatterer Martial is a true treasure-house when it comes to the titles - and presumably also the



"stars" (75), this being a standard expression of the **RIC** in **Rome** (76). **Quintilian** speaks of the "pietas" of **Domitian**, his "pietas erga deos" (77).

On the other side of the fence were all those not joining in this chorus, and one of them is **Dio Chrysostom**, banished by **Domitian** with the other philosophers, who describes the emperor as "an enemy who was called "master" and "god" by all **Greeks** and barbarians" (78). This pejorative expression occurs sometimes in his works (79), as it also does in the **Panegyricus** of **Pliny** - likewise pejoratively (80).

**Pliny** is the severest critic of the imperial cult under **Domitian**. His own panegyric, delivered to **Trajan** in 100 AD, is a vehement attack on this whole vocabulary and the mentality that went with it. His speech is full of references and possible inferences to the language of the inner circles of the court of **Domitian**. Over against the "dominus et deus" he emphasizes the traditional nomenclature like "civic", "princeps", "parens", "pater" (patriae), "optimus princeps" etc. (81). He refers to the odious title (82) and the competitive adulation in the **Senate** in those days (83). All these words - "deus", "numen", "dominus" - are to him expressions of "adulatio" of the worst kind (84).

A modern and critical evaluation of this vocabulary is offered by **Waters** (85). Against the heated attacks on this tendency of **Domitian's** he admonishes us to remember that "dominus et deus" never was an official title replacing

"princeps", but belonged to the sphere of private religious sentiments, even if encouraged by the emperor himself in writing (86), but this is a somewhat restrictive interpretation of the facts. Another interpretation that links Domitian with his predecessors is to read all this as a normal concern for his own deification: "He was anxious for deification in his own lifetime" (87). But this anxiety sometimes went a bit far - as when he reportedly ordered Apollonius, the famous sage of Tyana, to cut his long hair, in order not to appear as a god on earth (88). Again, Domitian himself is reported to have said - after taking Domitia, his wife, back after his divorce from her, following her affair with Paris the actor - that he had "called her back to my divine bed" ("pulvinar") (89). Likewise Suetonius said that he was delighted to hear the audience at the Colosseum shout acclamations like "Long live our Lord and Lady !" ("dominus et domina") (90), and these indicate that the private titles in fact were popular and public, as under Nero.

### 3) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STATUES IN PRECIOUS METALS

"So many honours were voted to him that almost the whole world...was filled with his images ("eikones") and statues ("andrianton") constructed of both silver and gold" (91).

"All those charged with disloyalty or neglect of the state religion might easily exculpate themselves by offering

libations and incense before his own statue together with that of Jupiter and the other gods" (92).

Here we face another innovation of Domitian's. As in the case of oaths and nomenclature he went further than his father and brother with regard to the use of statues, especially in silver and gold. And this issue is mentioned as controversial, for the reasons seen above: statues in silver and gold belong to the divine sphere - that of the divi or of the gods themselves.

The statues in question were posted all round the city. Martial mentions one in front of the palace itself, he calls it "imago ducis" (93). Scott distinguishes between "ornamental" and "cult-" statues, but admits at the same time that it was difficult for the ancients to separate the honour to the mortals and the divine cult (94). The Capitol itself seems to have been the centre of this cult, which is logical enough, where there stood statues and images of silver and gold (95). Suetonius writes extensively on the issue, and Scott discusses this testimony in his article (96). Special crowns for the Flavian priests were adorned with the images of four gods: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva - and Domitian (97). Scott likewise assumes that most of the statues had laureated head, and only few radiated (98).

The most famous - and hated - statue of Domitian stood in the middle of the forum, an equestrian statue eight meters high, the foundation pillars of which may still be

seen in situ.

The Greeks were, naturally, more extravagant in their mode of portraying the emperor, as may be expected. The temples at Ephesus and Laodicea both had portraits of Domitian as a warrior, that is: cuirassed statues, customary for the divine cult (99).

The portrait of Domitian is also worth considering .

There is, first of all, a great difference between the bust of Domitian the "caesar" ("crown-prince") and the "augustus" ("king"- emperor), as anybody can see for himself on the coins in question. According to Sydenham the later and very refined bust of Domitian appears from 85 onwards (100). L'Orange gives a very interesting analysis of this transition in the official portraiture. The coiffure belongs to the traditional Hellenistic royal portrait and is probably a wig, Domitian having been bald (101). The most famous example of this in monumental art is, of course, the Cancelleria-relief of the older Domitian. His features have been assimilated to those of Nerva - after the "damnatio memoriae" - but the distinctiveness of the hair-style remains (102). And the art historian sees this as in "open opposition to the custom of the earlier Flavii" (103). But, he admits, "the later Domitian with the wreath coiffure does not seem to be found on coins" (104). L'Orange finds many parallels with Nero: the difference between the younger and older - the growth of despotic manner - the change in iconography - the Palatium and the "domus aurea" - the hair-style, etc.

(105). The god-like beauty of these portraits - and L'Orange gives the whole list on p.65 in his important study - witnesses to the same expressions as those found in Martial and Statius: "with Domitian a Hellenistic god-king again occupies the Roman chair of state" (106). "As his rule becomes like an Eastern despotism, his portrait is modelled on the royal style of Hellenism, practically in the same way as the portrait of Nero" (107). The coins witness to the same desire for apotheosis: "the upward-looking Domitian...aspiring to the "Flavian heaven" to which his kindred had preceded him" (108).

These three innovations of Domitians were, of course, annulled when he suffered the "damnatio memoriae". But the same strange thing occurs here as we have seen before in the case of Nero: some of these institutions continue. It is in other words a more complex historical process that we are witnessing than merely a battle between Senate and emperor.

iv) The cult of the Gens Flavia. Domitian deified four members of his own house: 1) his brother Titus, 2) his own son "caesar", 3) his sister or mother Domitilla, 4) Titus' daughter Julia. With their consecration went, of course, their cult: temples and priests, games, etc. We will look at these cases in chronological order, and add a note on Domitia Longina.



## 1) TITUS

"The policy of Domitian, which was really a continuation of that of Titus, was doubtless intended to enhance the prestige of the Gens Flavia, the successor of the Julio-Claudian line" (109).

"In fact, Domitian seems to have done more for the cult of Titus than Titus had done for that of Divus Vespasianus" (110).

"Apparently the stories of disrespect for the memory of Titus are false or exaggerated, as the evidence of honour for Titus indicates: the official consecration was voted, many municipalities instituted a flamine, and at Rome monuments bear witness to Domitian's activity in honour of his deceased brother" (111).

The very apotheosis of Titus took place some time after October 1st in 81 - his death being on September 13th - but not long afterwards (112). His interim triumphal arch erected in the Circus Maximus was now replaced by the one of Pentelic marble erected in Summa Sacra Via, dedicated to Divus Titus. Scott discusses at length the various priesthoods to the deified Titus, the "flamines Titiales". From inscriptions there is evidence of priests at Ostia, Comum (the priest here being no other than Pliny the younger), Terraco, Carthago, Novaria, Aphrodisias, Anazarba, and other places (113). Domitian is taken to have instituted four colleges of priests to the Flavian family: Sodales Flaviales - Titiales Flaviales

- **Flaviales Titiales** - **Titiales** (114). But two of these colleges seem to have existed from the days of **Titus** so that **Domitian** founded in reality only two. The priests were men of highest rank, but either patrician or plebeian; the cults which they served were kept up at least until the end of the 2d. century (115). But usually the cults were combined: the priests of **Titus** were entrusted with the cult of **Vespasian** or vice versa. The cult of the **Gens Flavia** as such was celebrated in the quinquennial contests of **Jupiter Capitolinus** - after the **Greek** model - with the emperor presiding, clad in **Greek** style, together with the sacerdots **Dialis** (of **Jupiter**) and **Flaviales** wearing crowns with the image of **Domitian** together with the **Capitoline Trinity** (116).

## 2) **DIVUS CAESAR**

The next member to be consecrated was **Domitian's** own son with **Domitia Longina**. He died in infancy and went to the **Flavian** heaven on the accession of **Domitian**. "Probably the child was formally consecrated soon after his father came to the throne, probably in 81" (117). **Scott** places his birth in 73 and his death in 74, supporting this with the text in **Suetonius** and his filling of the lacuna in this passage (reading: "alteroque anno amiserat") (118). The dates of birth, death and consecration are open to discussion, but **Scott** finds support for his dates in the numismatic evidence, and **Mattingly** likewise dates the

consecration to the years 81-84. To be deified long after death does not therefore seem to be out of the ordinary. The legend on aurei and denarii reads "Divus Caesar Imp. Domitiani F." (119). The coins depict him as a baby Jupiter surrounded by stars together with his mother (120).

His deification is also echoed in literature. Martial mentions him in what Scott describes as "a miniature messianic Eclogue, obviously inspired by Vergil" (121). Silius Italicus also mentions him as deified before birth, in what Scott calls a "prophecy post eventum" (122).

The two sons of Flavius Clemens and Domitilla became the heirs of Domitian. Their names are unknown, but they were called "Vespasianus" and "Domitianus" according to Suetonius (123).

### 3) DOMITILLA

This consecrated member of the Flavian family is either the mother of Domitian and Titus or their sister. The problem of identity has been discussed above (124).

### 4) DIVA JULIA PIA AUGUSTA

She was the last member of the Flavians to be deified. Her apotheosis probably took place in 89 or 90 (125). Both Scott and Mattingly go for the earlier date (126).

Julia was the daughter of Titus. One literary source says that Domitian had been offered her hand when she was still young, but refused to marry her. He seduced her later, while her father and husband were still alive, Suetonius continues, and finally took her as his mistress when she was widowed from Sabinus (127). He is also accused of having caused her death by forcing her to have an abortion - according to rumour she was pregnant with his child - but, as Scott remarks, all the writers mentioning these stories are hostile to Domitian: Juvenal being attracted by the grotesque (128), Pliny showing savage hatred for Domitian (129), Suetonius making abundant use of scandal (130) - in short, Scott does not trust any of them (131).

She was buried in the temple of the Flavian family, and Martial talks about "the sweet divinity of the deified Julia" (132). In art she was assimilated to Juno, as seen from the coins commemorating her consecration (133). She had been honoured as Augusta long before her consecration, and there are traces of her cult in the East (134). She had also been the recipient of flattery associating her with goddesses (135). Scott lists the known flaminicia of Diva Julia outside Rome (136).

Another member of the imperial family that received honours and flattery while alive was, of course, the empress herself. She ought to be mentioned in this context, though she was never consecrated.

## 5) DOMITIA LONGINA

She was married to Domitian in 70 and bore him one son in 73, the "caesar" mentioned above. She received the title "Augusta" before 1/10 81.

She receives a good testimony from history, though gossip accuses her of having had a relationship with Titus (137). Whether this is mere gossip or not, she certainly had an affair with the actor Paris while married to Domitian, after which he graciously took her back to his "divine bed" (138) after two years of banishment (where she was banished we do not know).

Josephus refers to her as "benefactress" (139), which may be mere flattery, or an actual reflection from his life as a writer and honorary member of the imperial family.

Scott discusses a cult to Domitia Longina at Gabil (140). It was, he concludes, a case of private and not official deification - that of a freedman and his wife, not due to a senatus consultum, the cult place being a domestic temple. In fact, Domitia Longina never was consecrated - she simply outlived the Flavian house, and by more than fifty years. But the odd thing is that the private temple to Domitia at Gabil was constructed around the year 140, according to Scott (141), and raised by the late empress' freedman Cn. Domitius Polycarpus. This is interesting information from our point of view, because it shows the popular nature of the imperial cult, even of an Augusta that never became diva, and this happens in the West as



well.

Though her official title was "augusta" - meaning just "empress" - there are examples of her being called "domina", which is not surprising taken into account the designation "dominus and deus" as used by Domitian (142). Statius actually calls her "Romana Juno" (143).

In the Greek East there were possibly two temples in her honour (144). The first is at Laodicea in Phrygia. Here a coin shows a temple with the busts of Domitian and Domitia on the reverse, which leads Scott to conclude that "if the emperor and empress are shown in the temple, I am inclined to believe that both were worshipped at Laodicea, a fact which would not be surprising since we know that Domitia had a priestess at Termessus" (145).

The second place of worship is therefore Termessus where an inscription witnesses to the existence of "a priestess of the goddess Augusta Domitia" (146).

Price is, however, slightly more cautious in the case of the temple Laodicea: he puts a question mark after the identification of Domitia on the coin under discussion (147), but cites von Aulock for the identification of a second coin of Domitian from Laodicea (148). But he does not mention the presence of a priestess to Domitia at Termessus (149).

Scott quotes the legends of various coins from the East calling Domitia "thea", which is typical and not surprising: from Smyrna (150) and from Alexandria (where she is identified with Demeter) (151); other examples may

be found (152). Evidence for Domitia being honoured as "thea" in the East is easily found in the epigraphical material: for Thyssanus (153), and for Brycus on Carpathus (154).

Roman coins, on the other hand, celebrate her as mother of the deified Caesar, in the guise of Pietas (155).

In addition to the consecration of members of the Flavian house under Domitian and to the cult of the divinity of Domitia there are two more factors to be considered in dealing with the imperial cult under Domitian. These are his two temples raised to the Gens Flavia.

The first of these is, of course, the temple to Vespasian and Titus on the forum, as mentioned above. But this was not enough. He constructed a second temple to the Gens Flavia for other deified members of his house.

This second temple is the so-called "temple to the Gens Flavia".

"He converted his birthplace into the Temple of the Flavians", writes Suetonius (156), and the site of this construction of which nothing remains, was on the Quirinal, near the modern Via delle Quattro Fontane (157). It is referred to by Statius (158) and Martial (159) alike, and described as tall, impressive and grand. Scott describes this temple as "a second heaven (i.e. second to that of the deified Vespasian and Titus) which receives the divi of the Flavian dynasty" (160). It contained

the ashes of Julia and Caesar, and with them Domitian's ashes were mingled by his nurse Phyllis after his assassination. The date of construction is discussed by Scott who thinks it was not begun before 94 and finished about 95 (161). The temple appears on Roman coinage (162).

To sum up this section:

Domitian appears as one of the great innovators of the imperial cult in Rome, though the word "great" may seem somewhat inappropriate in his case. His personal development - his more pronounced paranoia of later years - prevents us from attributing human greatness to Domitian. He was undoubtedly a most competent ruler, but went too far in his insistence on his own divinity. The way he made this insistence has been described above: the obligatory use of the oath to the "genius", the title "dominus et deus", the statues in precious metals, the deified members of the imperial house, the cult of the Gens Flavia itself, the prestigious building programs. - All of these turned out to be of no avail. Domitian became the last ruler of the Flavian House.

But this new turn in the imperial cult did not become so counterproductive as might be expected. From now on the imperial rule was markedly more monarchical than before, and this was to continue through that happy period of Roman rule in the Mediterranean world known as the second century. But before we go on to discuss this later development there are more points about Domitian himself to

be taken into consideration. One of them has important consequences for our topic.

iv) Domitian and the Jews.

The tradition of Church history and Church historians has seen Domitian as one of the great persecutors of the young Church. The problems involved in such a tradition were briefly mentioned in the Introduction.

It seems to be more difficult today to talk about a "persecution" under Domitian in an unnuanced way. If the Christians found themselves in difficulties under this emperor - a point on which our secular sources are silent - the reason why this is so may be sought by a more indirect approach: by looking at the situation of Jewry under this despot. For there is ample evidence that Domitian made it more difficult to live as a Jew in the Mediterranean world.

If the Christians were still regarded as part of the world of the synagogue they would share their trouble. But if - as seems to be the case - they were now slowly becoming emancipated from the matrix of Judaism, whether by pressure from the Jews themselves or by other mechanisms innate to the early Church, the treatment that Domitian gave the Jews may also have contributed to a deterioration of their situation, because, of course, a break with the synagogue deprived the Christians of the privileges of belonging to a "permitted" form of atheism, however abused or manipulated by this particular emperor. Once this protection was no longer present they suddenly become

subject to the normal demands of **Roman** religion, especially in its **Greek** context where the importance of the imperial cult was immense, for reasons shortly to be seen. Here, possibly, lies the root of the tradition that **Domitian** was a persecutor of the **Christians**, as recorded in **Book 3** of **Eusebius' Historia Ecclesiastica**. But this argument will be discussed more amply in chapter 3. Suffice it to suggest this line of approach and accordingly focus on **Domitian's** attitude toward the **Jews**. Our sources leave us in little doubt that here we are facing a wrong done to **Jewry** that **Domitian's** successor had to correct.

"**Domitian's** agents collected the tax on **Jews** with a peculiar lack of mercy...they took proceedings not only against those who kept their **Jewish** origins secret in order to avoid the tax, but against those who lived as **Jews** without professing **Judaism**" (163).

The issue in question is, of course, the extortion of the tax to the "**fiscus Judaicus**", that is the former temple tax that after the fall of **Jerusalem** in **70** went to the upkeep of the temple of **Jupiter Capitolinus** in **Rome**. **Vespasian** had ordered that this include all **Jews** between **14** and **60** years of age, and as such it had been exacted also under **Titus** (164). Now, under **Domitian** this changed, for he did not respect the age limit involved. He is reported to have exacted this tax from all **Jews** regardless of age - and of all those sympathizers who according to **Suetonius** "lived as **Jews** without professing **Judaism**", that is the "god-fearers" (165).



Suetonius is himself, for once, an important witness to the ways of Domitian, and is reporting far more than mere scandal and gossip when he continues in the same paragraph: "As a boy, I remember once attending a crowded Court where the imperial agent had a ninety-year-old man inspected to establish whether or not he had been circumcised" (166).

The reason for this brutal extension of this particular tax may safely be assumed to be Domitian's need for money. His vast building programs had tempted him many a time to confiscate the property of convicted criminals from the upper and possessing classes.

But when we come to the execution of Flavius Clemens - Domitian's cousin, consul in 95 together with the emperor himself, husband of Domitilla - the charge of his drifting into "Jewish ways" is linked to the charge of "inertia" (as consul, one assumes) as reason for his execution: "Finally he executed, suddenly and on some trivial pretext, his own cousin, Flavius Clemens, just before the completion of a consulship; though Clemens was a man of despicable idleness, and Domitian had previously named Flavius' two small sons as his heirs and changed their names to Vespasian and Domitian" (167). The charge of "Jewish ways" appears in the later text by Dio, linked to the charge of "atheism": "a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned" (168).

In addition to the question of the tax there seems to be another question: that of Domitian forbidding conversions

to Judaism, even in the form of being a "sympathizer". This question will be looked into at a later point. It appears to be beyond doubt that this emperor made life difficult for the Jews of the empire - including their many sympathizers from the upper Roman classes.

Josephus seems to have been more in favour of his own religion under this reign, and grown less impressed by Rome, for the enthusiastic work of his youth - the *Bellum Judaicum* - is followed up by a much more substantial and above all more critical exposition of the history of his own nation. But this is commonly believed to have been published after the death of Domitian. The next works to appear from the hand of Josephus are the *Contra Apionem* and his *Vita*. The second of these is a not very successful attempt to excuse his role in the Jewish uprising, while the first is a direct apology for his Jewish faith, and here it is possible to see the influence of the anti-Jewishness of the emperor in the work of Josephus (169). It is certainly possible to read the *Antiquitates Judaeorum* as reflecting the author's attitude towards the emperor. This is especially the case in Josephus' treatment of Gaius and this emperor's insistence on the cult of himself (170).

#### v) *Damnatio memoriae*.

The rule of Domitian had begun more as a divine monarchy than had the rule of Vespasian and Titus (171). - It ended in the emperor being declared an enemy of the state, but only after his death and not while still alive as in the

case of Nero.

Our sources for the last years of his reign are not as good as for the previous period. The lost books of Tacitus' Histories had described the reign of the tyrant, but we can only guess what a gloomy picture they would have presented. Dio gives much information, of course, but not without being influenced by the events of his own times.

However, the last years have been reconstructed by modern historians, and some of their findings are worth mentioning before concluding this section.

It was from 89 onwards - that is, the above-mentioned conspiracy of Saturninus - that Domitian grew increasingly suspicious, a tendency that develops into a kind of paranoia (172). Syme adds other unfortunate circumstances: the plague in Rome, very hot weather, and so forth (173). The mounting difficulties are, of course, best seen in his relation with the Senate. From initial good relations they become problematic - and end in terror (174).

The year 93 is the turning-point when the prosecutions of aristocrats and senators seem to be mounting (175). Suetonius gives us a whole catalogue of consuls put to death in these last years: ten names, but without any indication of time and sequence. Pliny himself seems to have been accused of some form of treason and his name was on file at the time of the tyrant's death, something hinted at in one of his most famous letters published at a later date (176). Charlesworth also discusses the lists from

Suetonius and Dio, and states that the names in question all belong to the senatorial class (177).

The murder seems to have been staged by senators and the empress herself. They did not, however, start their work until after they had found a successor: Cocceius Nerva (178). Domitian's death was met with indifference by the people, anger by the soldiers and exultation by the Senate (179). The account in Dio is described by Syme as "lengthy... composite and of unequal value", because it appears to be a precise and "damaging" parallel to the assassination of Commodus, which occurred during the life-time of Dio (180). This author concludes with the anecdote about the notorious sage and charlatan of Tyana: On that September day Apollonius had a vision at Ephesus, and he joyously ejaculated the name of Stephanus, the author of the deed (181).

The many images and statues were immediately destroyed after his death (182). But he was deified by his troops "who at once began to speak of Domitian the god" (183).

The poets recanted under Nerva, it seems. Scott quotes Martial saying that "I am not going to call anyone dominus and deus" (184). This put an end to an adulation that Scott describes as "fulsome" and "absolutely insincere" (185).

As stated before, Scott admits reserve about the picture we can draw from the senatorial sources alone (186). And Waters, in his articles on the rehabilitation of Domitian, admits that things were not

nearly as bad as **Pliny** and **Tacitus** made them out to be (187).

vi) Domitian in the East.

"At **Rome** - as elsewhere in the empire - **Domitian** was the object of private worship, though outside of the city his cult might be provincial or municipal" (188).

"It is not surprising that the cities of the **East** celebrated **Domitian** as a god during his lifetime, as they had done before in the case of preceding emperors or **Hellenistic kings**" (189).

In the **East** **Domitian** was therefore not the innovator he was in the **West** - he had only followed the trend established by **Augustus** and seen through by his successors. Nevertheless, his reign saw an expansion of the **RIC** in the **East**, i.e. a series of new temples, shrines and priests. In addition to this he was a great benefactor and restorer of **Greek** temples and sanctuaries: at **Delphi** he restored the temple to **Apollo**, at **Megalopolis** he rebuilt the temple at his own expense, as he also did at **Rhodes**, and at **Ephesus** he extended the boundaries of the **Artemision** as well as allowed a cult to himself (190).

**Ephesus** is the most significant of these places for our purposes: here was established a cult to **Domitian** "theos", being the first "neokoria" of this important town (191). The temple was of unusually large proportions and the cult statue 4 times life-size; it was rediscovered in 1930 and its head and lower arm are today on display in



the museum at Selçuk. This temple Domitian shared with Domitia, Titus and Vespasian, and after the "damnatio memoriae" it was changed to Vespasian, by a senatorial decree. The title "theos" for Domitian on the base of statues and of altars was then erased. The statue was destroyed in Christian times (192).

Laodicea knew a temple to Domitian and Domitia - as mentioned above - and it is witnessed to from coins (193). Anazarbus in Cilicia also had a temple to Domitian (194). Termessus had a priest of the emperor (195), and Ilium contributed gifts for the construction of a "gentis Flaviae templum" according to Scott (196), but Price only talks about an "alleged Flavian sanctuary" (197).

The Greek vocabulary of this cult of Domitian is discussed by Scott on the basis of evidence from inscriptions and coins, especially the use of "theos" (198), but also words like "kyrios", "soter", "autokrator", "theiotatos" and "epiphanestatos" (199). The evidence from coins is conveniently, though too briefly, listed by Sear in his catalogue of Greek Imperial Coins.

I have in my own possession a tetradrachm from Alexandria with the bust of Domitian and around it the legend "hyios theou" not listed by Sear. It deserves to be mentioned because it touches upon the fundamental issue at stake: the Greek vocabulary of the Roman Imperial Cult, and is, indeed, the Greek rendering of the Latin "divi

filiius". - But going into the details of the vocabulary is to anticipate later issues. Scott adds some very interesting information about the inscription "D.N.Domitianus" from Cordoba of the year 90 - and I include it in this context, although it belongs to the Latin West. "These (letters = D.N.) Henzen deleted, because he could not readily believe that the emperor was called "dominus noster" in a public monument except by a slave or a freedman" (200). It is, of course, a fixed part of the later nomenclature of the dominate, even after Constantine, and it is mentioned here because it illustrates how Domitian is part of an ongoing process and growth.

On the question of the "damnatio memoriae" Price gives examples of varying practices in the East: at the imperial shrine at Bubon Domitian is missing among the divi, no base of his statue having survived. At the imperial shrine at Cestus Domitian is again missing from the divi of the Flavian dynasty, probably having been replaced by Nerva. But, on the other hand, at the Metroon at Olympia Domitian is found among the divi, and continuity seems to have been more important than obedience to the senatorial decree (201).

In short, Domitian stands for nothing new in the Greek context, in contrast to the Latin one. If anything, he can be seen as introducing Greek ways into Rome: the "kyrios kai theos", ways that were rejected by the Senate with some consequences also for the East.

vii) Conclusions.

The figure of Domitian is the most important in this list of emperors under discussion: i) he gave the RIC a further impetus in Rome - ii) he gave permission to the cult at Ephesus that might have given rise to the explicit attack on the imperial cult in Rev. and a possible polemical parallelism in G<sup>j</sup>hn.

The combination of these two factors may justify the emphasis given to this, the last of the Flavians. In spite of the rehabilitation of Domitian as a politician and to some extent as a person, there remains the stubborn tradition from Church history - to be looked into later - that he was the second persecutor of the Christians. We will have to return to Domitian. His figure is a "leitmotif" of this study in more ways than one: the RIC in East and West alike combined with the evidence from Eusebius make him the central political figure of the Johannine writings, "the ruler of this world" according to G<sup>j</sup>hn 12: 31.

## X) NERVA

i) The reaction. An old lawyer, Cocceius Nerva, succeeded Domitian. He was the Senate's man through and through, and our sources compete in singing his praises - finally they had got an emperor of their own liking. On the whole posterity is also convinced.

The "damnatio memoriae" meant that the acts and deeds of Domitian were annulled, just as in the previous cases of Galus and Nero. But, as Waters points out, his reversion to the senatorial notion of protocol was brief and hard reality followed; he became more autocratic as time went on (1).

On a couple of points Nerva did reverse practices of Domitian which have been mentioned above.

In the first place he did not, according to Dio, admit statues or images in precious metals (2). It was under such circumstances that Martial "recanted" - to quote the expression of Scott - his flattery: "here is no dominus, but an imperator" (3).

In the second place Nerva annulled Domitian's way of exacting the tax to the "fiscus Judaicus". A famous coin bears the reverse legend: "fisci Judaici calumnia sublata" (4). These coins were minted early in the principate of Nerva. They witness a return to the practice of Vespasian and Titus as regards this tax (being half a shekel, i.e. 2 attic drachmas, a shekel being 4 attic drachmas according to Josephus (5)). The theory that this

is a question of a) age-limit for those liable to the tax, or  
b) the extension of this tax to "sympathisers" is discussed  
by **Bruce** (6) and will be looked into again later when we  
deal with the persecutions.

The most meritorious act of **Nerva** was, of course, not  
these measures, but his declaring **Trajan** his partner and  
heir, a deed which **Pliny** interprets as an abdication (7).  
He gives this statement in the **Panegyricus** to **Trajan**  
where we also read that when **Nerva** became enrolled among  
the divi after his short reign, it was deserved, because he  
adopted **Trajan** (8). - Such is the new form of flattery,  
so allegedly different from the old!

**Pliny** himself is a very interesting witness to the  
imperial cult under **Nerva**. In one of his letters **Pliny**  
asks **Nerva** for permission to remove from various of his  
estates statues of previous emperors and add to their number  
one of **Nerva**. He was finally authorized to build a temple  
to **Nerva** (9).

**Pliny** was actually a great adherent of the imperial  
cult both on the official and the private level, as we later  
shall see from his correspondence with **Trajan**. In the case  
of how the transition from the "bad" **Domitian** to the "good"  
**Trajan** worked in regard to the imperial cult, **Pliny** becomes  
a most interesting witness.

This change was not so drastic as **Pliny** makes it out  
to be in his famous **Panegyricus**, as we shall see.



## XI) TRAJAN

"Titus consecrated **V**espasian, **D**omitian **T**itus, but the former that he might seem to be the son of a god, the latter that he might seem to be the brother of a god. **Y**ou raised your father (**N**erva) to the stars, not to cause fear to citizens, not to assault the deities, not to your own honour, but because you believed him a god. **T**he act is less when it is accomplished by those who also think themselves gods...for a good succession is the most certain guaranty of divinity" (1).

**T**he reason for continuing our investigation of the history of the **RIC** into the second **C**hristian century is twofold.

In the first place it has been seen in the preceding sections that the **RIC** shows a sort of mounting curve up to **D**omitian - it is for our purposes necessary to see if this curve descends after his assassination. **T**he short rule of **N**erva does not give enough evidence in this matter.

In the second place an excursion into the second century is necessary for the simple reason that the situation of the sporadic martyrdoms of the second century comes as a confirmation of the new situation we find in the **J**ohannine writings. **T**he anxious - or better: hostile - attitude to the state detectable in these writings seems to be substantiated and confirmed by the second century evidence. **A**fter all, the letters of **I**gnatius or the

correspondence between **Pliny** and **Trajan** follow only a decade or so after the **Johannine** writings. **Chronological** barriers are artificial in this context, as are the limitations that a "canon" puts on the early **Christian** literature.

Without running the risk of arguing in a circle, the most reasonable reading of the evidence from this period of transition - for a period of transition it is, pace chronology and canon - is to see the early second century evidence as a confirmation of the late first century evidence, that is: an increase in emphasis on the imperial cult as a test of loyalty in the case of trials of **Christians** - and their execution following in case of their being found guilty, that is, wanting in loyalty to the state and the emperor. And therefore it is important to look at some features of the **RIC** in the second century.

The second century is the century of "adoptive emperors". The **Flavians** succeeded the **Julio-Claudians** as a dynasty, but were themselves succeeded by a number of adopted emperors and no new dynasty. No son succeeded a father in the office until **Commodus**. The next dynasty to follow upon the **Flavian** is in fact the **Severii** in the early third century. **Trajan**, **Hadrian**, **Antoninus Pius** and **Marcus Aurelius** are all adopted by their predecessors.

Actually, this system worked well, and the result is perhaps the happiest period in the history of imperial **Rome**. These are named by posterity the "good" emperors - in contrast to the preceding ones of the first century -

and their century the "great" century of **Roman** imperial rule. **Now** the empire reaches its maximal extension, and under one of them - **Antoninus Pius** - no wars or revolutions are recorded. **The 21** years of his reign are accordingly loathed by historians and regarded as the most boring period of imperial rule.

**This** century saw the most enlightened emperors according to common sentiment, but they were nevertheless responsible - even if indirectly - for some gruesome treatment of minorities, for example the **Christians**. **The** case of **Marcus Aurelius** immediately springs to mind.

**The** second century is also the period when **Christianity** within the **Roman** empire moves from a Jewish to a **Hellenistic** climate of thought, when the ties with the synagogue vanish and when **Greek** philosophy and **Roman** law enter the theological discussion for the first time.

**This**, then, is the age of apologists and martyrs. **But** the martyrdoms are still sporadic and not systematic, they seem to originate from below rather than from above, they occur only occasionally and in very different places. **The Roman** authorities seem to be aware of the existence of **Christians** in a more definite manner, *like under Nero in Rome,* **But** they do not yet know what **Christianity** implies, as witnessed by the case of the martyrs of **Bithynia**.

**And** the next section - however brief - will have to deal with the successor of **Nerva**, the great soldier **Ulpus Trajanus**.

i) Optimus princeps.

The first panegyric addressed to any emperor that has come down to us is that of **Pliny's**. This is not necessarily to his advantage. It means that we do not know the tradition he writes from, and the result is that he emerges as just as much of a flatterer as did some of the poets at the courts of **Domitian**, **Nero** or **Augustus**. But for our purposes it is a very useful piece: on the one hand it reveals much – perhaps too much – about his feelings against **Domitian** and some of his predecessors with whom he is compared, on the other it reveals equally much about his feelings for **Trajan**.

Some recent historical studies have tried to sort out these different pros and cons, and the picture that emerges is of great value for the study of the imperial cult.

First of all: **Trajan** restored the traditional title "princeps". And this is hailed by **Pliny** as a most salutary development after the excesses of **Domitian** with respect to nomenclature.

But here we run into the first surprise. For the full title is this expanded version: "optimus princeps". It occurs for the first time under this emperor, who only accepted it after some years, i.e. in 105 (2). This designation becomes the customary honorary title, a sort of cognomen, for the emperors to follow, together with the traditional ones like "caesar", "augustus", **PP** ("pater patriae"), **PM** ("pontifex maximus"), etc. The title is, of course, meant to reward the return to the **Augustan**

principate, the emperor once more becoming "princeps", after having been "dominus" for some time. As such the title was already conferred on him on his accession in 98. It is very frequently used by Pliny in his Panegyricus (3). Here the "optimus" princeps is constantly contrasted with Domitian, understood to be the "pessimus" princeps - after a "dominatio" follows once more a "principatus".

The surprise in question is, of course, the fact that the title "optimus" also carries religious overtones: it resembles that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the principal state god, the father of the heavenly court, the divine principle on high which the emperor somehow is related to here below. This title can therefore easily be seen as joining other titles linking the emperor to the gods. In other words: the transition from Domitian to Trajan is not necessarily so abrupt or revolutionary as it is usually taken to be. And this is exactly the point in question for those scholars who rather tend to think of Trajan as a "Domitiani continuator".

The panegyric of Pliny has recently been described as "a compost of wishful thinking, extravagant flattery, and distortion of recent history" (4). The simple reason for this is that Waters does not find a sudden reversion from the dominate of Domitian to the principate of Trajan. In a strange way, the tradition of the imperial cult in Rome seems to continue to build on the innovations from the time of the hated and despised tyrant.

Trajan was, in fact, as much of an autocrat as



**D**omitian. The difference is, of course, that **P**liny and **T**acitus happen to like him: he is aristocratic, he is pro-senatorial, etc. - he is as acceptable in their eyes as **D**omitian was not. This is why **P**liny gives us the impression that his rule represents a return to the "happy days" of **A**ugustus. **H**e receives praise only from our literary sources, and we find no contemporary critique.

**A**nd then we come to the bigger surprise: **T**rajan is not only called "optimus" by **P**liny but "dominus" as well, as seen from his correspondence. **A**nd it was precisely in correspondence - in addition to private flattery - that **D**omitian was called "dominus", albeit with the additional "et deus noster". **B**ut the very word that **P**liny never can forgive **D**omitian for having loved he uses freely in his letters to **T**rajan. **P**liny is, in other words, involving himself in contradictions, and he does not hesitate to call **T**rajan "dis simillimus princeps" (5).

ii) Trajanus - Domitiani continuator.

"**H**e (**T**rajan) enjoyed high social prestige, being patrician and consul ordinarius, son of a vir triumphalis. **H**e stood at the peak of the new imperial aristocracy, already visible and solid as capax imperii in the terminal epoch and malady of an upstart dynasty" (6).

"**A**t no time was there greater continuity in the sphere of imperial advisers and other prominent administrators than in the transition from **D**omitian to **T**rajan" (7).

There are many points of contact between the two apart from the ones mentioned above - so many that **Waters** for one does not hesitate to call **Trajan** "**Domitiani continuator**", something that would have been most offensive in the ears of our senatorial writers. The **Dacian wars** are one such point of contact. Here **Trajan** can easily be seen bringing to completion the work of his hated predecessor. Indeed it is this work of his - **Dacia** (together with other regions in the **East**) being added as a province - that gives the empire its largest extent ever to be reached.

Something similar is seen in his building programme. Here self-advertisement is at stake, propaganda and legitimization, not very different from that of the **Flavians**. One popular measure was to turn **Nero's Golden House** into a public bath. But here the **Flavians** had preceded him in a way: they had constructed their amphitheatre - **Colosseum** - in the vast atrium of the same building. **Trajan's** power was in other words as new as **Vespasian's** had been and in need of being made manifest in **Rome**.

He similarly diluted the membership of the **Senate**, like **Nero** and **Domitian** and unlike **Augustus**. About forty percent came now from the provinces - as he did himself (8). He restored the consulate for himself and dispensed with being **Censor Perpetuus** - **Domitian's** choice. But these acts are not a simplification of the nomenclature of his imperial titles, as is seen for example on coins. They are the longest of any reigning emperor and give them

a cluttered look - again, very close to the **Flavians** (9).

iii) **RIC** in the **West**.

"How much more worthy of heaven will you sometime be, since you have added so many services to those on account of which we made him (**Titus**) a god " (10).

The panegyric of **Pliny** was delivered in **A.D. 100**. It takes the future consecration of **Trajan** for granted: here deification is the reward for virtue and merits. He thinks along the same line as his uncle had done before him, and the **Greeks** before him again (11).

**Trajan** deified **Nerva** and his own father, pater **Trajanus**. This latter was to mark the beginning of a new "heaven", that of the adoptive emperors. It did eventually enclose **Trajan's** sister, **Marciana**, as well. But the consecration of **Nerva** only appears on coins after 113. - The importance of this consecration is self evident: **Trajan** can begin his rule as "divi filius", son of a deified ruler, himself destined to the stars. **Nerva** was voted a proper cult, with altars, pulvinaria and a flamen.

The **Senate** decreed **Trajan** one or two statues for the vestibule of the temple of **Jupiter**, but they were of bronze (12). **Trajan** expressly forbade statues in silver and gold (13).

But even the title "princeps" could be furnished with flattering language, and the expression "sacratissimus princeps" is witnessed from inscriptions (14).

**Trajan** was deified by **Hadrian** without any problems.

His temple was constructed next to the column commemorating his campaigns against the Dacians.

iv) Trajan in the East.

Though he rejected divine honours at home, he accepted them in the East, as the case had been with all his predecessors. Actually his cult was very popular in the East as can be seen from archeological sources.

Pergamon has the largest monument, the imperial temple to Zeus Philios and Trajan (15). At the moment it is being restored by German archeologists and dominates the acropolis of this ancient capital of the Attalid kingdom. In fact, it was not completed until after the death of Trajan and then he had to share it with Hadrian as well, the RIC among the Greeks being focused on the living emperor rather than the dead.

Another temple is found at Selinus in Cilicia, where Trajan again is likened to Zeus - with thunderbolt and sceptre (16). Iotape, also in Cilicia, had a sanctuary to Trajan (17), as did Near Cestus, shared with Theos Megalos and Demos (18). Adada had a Trajaneum (19), Kana in Lycaonia had a temple and a statue to Trajan (20).

The most interesting information on the cult of Trajan in the East comes from Pliny himself and is important in relation to our topic.

In one of his letters to the governor of Bithynia Trajan grants him permission to build a temple to himself,

but adds that he is most sparing in permitting honours of that kind (21). Pliny was a great collector of imperial busts and in general a great advocate for the imperial cult. He himself had been a Flamen Titialis in his native town, Comum, that is: imperial priest for "divus Titus" (22).

The most interesting information on the RIC in the whole of Book X of his correspondence with Trajan - which Pliny edited and published after the emperors death - is, of course, the letter 96 dealing with the Christians. Here he expressly mentions the use of the emperor's "imago" and "simulacrum" (taken to mean cult-image and statue, or bust, respectively) in his test of the Christians. The test consisted in their offering "thus ac vinum" to the images of the gods (icons, busts or statuettes) together with the emperor's. When this test had become normative nobody knows. A fair guess is that it emerged under Domitian. But this will be dealt with in chapter 3.

This episode of conflict between Christians and the state is the first which is witnessed by secular sources since the fire of Rome in 64. This time the imperial cult is in focus in a new and accentuated way. It is important that this should happen in the East where the imperial cult was most popular. Apart from the sequel to the fire of Rome in 64 all the sporadic martyrdoms - except that of Justin Martyr and his companions - take place in the provinces, and sometimes with reference to the



imperial cult, though not always.

v) Conclusions.

The point made above is simply that the reign of Trajan did not represent such a change in policy - sacred or secular - as is often made out. A case may indeed be made out for seeing Trajan as a "Domitiani continuator", as Waters does in his articles. Behind the action against the Christians in Bithynia lies the years of the rule of Domitian and the development of the RIC under the last of the Flavians.

This may turn out to be an explanation of the situation we find in Bithynia.

vi) The sequel.

The Roman imperial cult continued along the lines described above until Constantine. We will not go into this story here, but a word or two about the immediate successors of Trajan may prove useful for our purposes.

Hadrian was a great promoter of his own cult, especially in the Greek lands, and there has been found a larger number of small altars to him in the Greek world than to any other emperor including Augustus. His stay in Greece was remembered by his dedication of the temple to Zeus Olympios with an altar to himself. While travelling in Asia Minor he also consecrated temples to himself. Some of these are famous examples of the RIC and ought to be mentioned here.

A temple at **Cyzicus** is listed by **Price**, also this one shared with the father of the gods (23); at **Ephesus**, on the **Kouretes Street**, but **Price** also lists a second temple of unknown location (24); at **Smyrna**, a temple and sacred games called "**Hadrianea Olympia**" (25); at **Phaselis** an "alleged" temple (26); at **Termessus** in **Pisidia** a temple (27); at **Aegea** a temple known as "**Hadriana**" (28); at **Tarsus** in **Cilicia** a possible temple of **Antinous**, there was certainly one in **Bithynium**, his native city (29).

**Hadrian** appears on statues as the most cuirassed of the emperors, probably because he withdrew from warfare and in fact reduced the boundaries of the empire from what they had been under **Trajan** (30). Statues of his favourite **Bithynian** are the most frequent of all, but they were not cult statues. Only one cult of **Antinous** - at **Mantineia** - is known to have been established by **Hadrian** himself; others may have been instituted later (31). Likewise the sudden abundance of coins with portraits of **Antinous** of great uniformity cannot simply be explained as local responses to central practice but suggests central organization. Coins with the consecrated **Hadrian** appear already in 38 while **Sabina** already was apotheosed on coins. This consecration was one of the difficult ones, it turned out, in the history of the **RIC**. This was mainly due to the **Senate** who opposed such an act, because **Hadrian** had expurgated this august body on his accession. But his successor and adopted son saw the consecration

through.

Adoption was the principle for most of the successions - in fact very few of the emperors were succeeded by their sons. There are in fact only eleven instances of sons succeeding their fathers throughout the entire history of the empire: Titus, Commodus, Caracalla and Geta, Gallienus, Carinus and Numerian, Constantine, the three sons of Constantine, Gratian and Valentinian II, Arcadius and Honorius and Theodosius II. - Needless to say this was one of the major weaknesses of the Roman imperial system.

Antoninus Pius stressed more and more his link with Jupiter, as seen from his portraiture, notably on coins: the hair is longer, his beard likewise and his eyes larger; these features are most prominent in the portraiture of the aged emperors. On statues and busts his hair was powdered with gold-dust, creating a halo round the head - a practice continued by Marcus, Commodus and Lucius Verus. L'Orange writes: "When the growth of hair exceeds the usual quantity, as it often does in the case of emperors, we must again take it to signify a glorification and transfiguration of the royal existence, as in the hellenistic kingdoms" (32). On the whole the portraiture on coins of the Antonines, and with Trajan and Hadrian before them, becomes more stereotype and unimaginative than was the case under the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians.

In the Greek world temples to Antoninus are known from various places: at Hyllarima (33); at Sardis where

there was a temple to **Antoninus Pius** and **Faustina** in the **Artemisium** (34); at **Pergamum** there was a "naos" to **Faustina the Younger** (35); at **Sagalassus** a temple to **Antoninus Pius** and his house (36); at **Faustinopolis** a temple to the younger **Faustina** (37). On the whole **Antoninus** had not a role parallel to that of **Hadrian**, but had to do with smaller foundations. By now the imperial cult was firmly established along its own lines. Any outburst of enthusiasm like those we find under **Augustus** and **Hadrian** is not to be expected: his rule was singularly uneventful and did not call for monuments celebrating special occurrences. The **East** welcomed him as it did his predecessors, but no great new foundations characterize his reign and the collective solution of altars or temples to the "**Antonine race**" is prominent. In other words is the process of standardisation operative.

**Marcus Aurelius** was consecrated by **Commodus** in 180, **Faustina** having been consecrated back in 176. He had earlier admitted silver images of himself and **Faustina** in the temple of **Venus and Rome** and a golden statue of **Faustina** for use in the theatre. But **Marcus** the philosopher belonged to the intellectual élite and was thus sceptical of the imperial cult - as shines through in his "**Meditations**". The imperial portraiture under **Marcus** shows a surprisingly great measure of consistency, but while the earlier portraits show his hair falling over his forehead the later ones show the front hair lifted high above his face, as for example seen in the reliefs in the

**Palazzo dei Conservatori**, stemming from a triumphal arch. "Whereas the earlier representation shows a man surveying this world's "adiaphora" dispassionately, the later one shows him with his whole being tense and uplifted in inward emotion" (38). Like the protrait of his adoptive father he thus becomes more **Jupiter-like**.

His co-emperor, **Lucius Verus**, died under the plague in **Rome** in 169 and was deified on his death. His great nimbus of hair was again powdered with gold (39). He is depicted on the **Antonine altar** at **Ephesus**.

**Commodus**, the unworthy son of **Marcus** and successor to the throne, was on the whole a follower of **Gaius**, **Nero** and **Domitian**. A gold statue of one thousand pounds is recorded by **Dio** (40), and he had the **Senate** pass a resolution giving him the name of **Hercules** and calling him a god (41). This tendency grew stronger through his reign (42), and he had the **Neronian colossus** remodelled into a **Hercules** portrait of himself. **Coins** show him with lion-helmet and club, and he called himself **Hercules Romanus** (43). These later portraits are thus far from the idealized youth of the earliest representaions. **Mytilene** had a temple to **Commodus** (44).

**Septimius Severus** is not directly relevant in our context but is worth mentioning as an important corollary to the development we have outlined so far. He was an usurper, claiming to having been adopted into earlier families. He called himself "brother" of **Commodus**, whom he deified (45). **Continuity** with the past families of



imperial **R**ome was important for his dynastic plans, but he represented a break with **R**oman traditions not least on the religious level.

With the **S**everii a change came over the imperial cult - direct divinity became normal practice. This was partly due to **A**frican influences and the cult of **S**erapis that followed. In fact, the later types of portraiture of **S**eptimius **S**everus directly imitates **S**erapis of **B**ryaxis: it is the heavenly man and inspired ruler we here face, not like the earlier **J**upiter-iconography (46). **S**erapis was in fact integrated into the **C**apitoline triad: **S**erapis, **J**uno, **M**inerva. The oriental features of this dynasty led to other interesting changes in **R**ome, like the suppression of the **S**enate. The **S**everian palace on the **P**alatine celebrated this type of monarchy: the emperor is "kosmokrator" and a colossus of **S**eptimius **S**everus was standing among the planetary gods before the palace, the building facing **A**frica - in direction of **V**ia **A**ppia - and not the forum, etc. From the traditional **G**raeco-**R**oman **J**upiter the emphasis is suddenly moved to **A**frican **S**erapis, and under **E**lagabal to the **S**yrian sun-worship already introduced by **G**eta, who favoured the **S**yrian **B**aal, possibly under influence from his mother, **J**ulia **D**onna.

**A** keen advocate for the cult of **S**erapis - the **A**lexandrian god - is found in **C**aracalla, called "philoserapis", the very first introduction stemming from the **F**lavians (47). **C**aracalla was also a very great admirer and imitator of **A**lexander - called "alexandrotatos"

by **Dio** (48) - and had actually seen his body in **Alexandria** (49). In other words: the link between the new dynasty of the **Severii** and the past is not totally fictitious or merely propagandistic. It is, in fact, the terrible conqueror-demon whom **Caracalla's** contemporaries saw in **Alexander**, that has given his portrait its imprint" (50). Under **Caracalla** we have in other words another case of the religious policy we know from **Caligula**, **Nero**, **Domitian** and **Commodus**. He also strongly favoured statues in precious metals. Like **Nero** and **Commodus** he was murdered at 31.

In the **East** this development is reflected in various ways: the statue of **Caracalla** outside the **Serapeion** of **Ephesus** (51), the temple to **Caracalla** at **Pergamum** (52), temple and neocorate at **Philadelphus** (53), a neocorate at **Tralles** (54), a neocorate at **Laodicea** (55). - The new dynasty was, therefore, received with considerable enthusiasm, in contrast to the later **Antonines**.

This whole development was continued under **Elagabalus** and **Alexander Severus**, the former being the most extreme case of religious megalomania. Later emperors like **Gallienus** and **Aurelian** contributed strongly to the further orientalizing of **Roman** religion, centered on the sun-god, which was the starting point for **Constantine**. In between these rulers came the reorganisation of **Diocletian** and the "dominatus" that characterized the tetrarchy.

The theology of the **Great Church** had a rich resort

of divine images when it set about constructing a Christology for the future: Christ assumes the divinity of the emperors, serving as a model for expressing the humanity of God. - But before the Great Church was an established fact this process had been going on for centuries, right from the beginning, since Christ and the emperor roughly speaking were contemporaries as newcomers to the Mediterranean world. The Galilean finally won this competition over divine claims, and later Christian monarchs in East and West alike never managed to reclaim more than a few of his royal insignia.

## XII) CONCLUSIONS

So far our purpose has been to investigate the development of the divine monarchy in Rome, with emphasis on the Flavian dynasty, the emperor Domitian in particular. If we are to sum up our findings so far the following points are of importance:

i) The RIC was in a definite way established by Augustus, whatever the final designs of Caesar might have been like.

ii) In its Western form it was, officially, an indirect kind of cult during the lifetime of the emperor, and a direct cult after his apotheosis.

iii) Apotheosis was far from automatic, in spite of the dynastic principle, and only four out of eight emperors in 1 c. AD obtained this distinction - that is, half of them - not counting the three emperors Galba, Otho and Vitellius.

iv) In addition to the emperors themselves other members of the imperial houses were consecrated, and they in fact greatly outnumber the emperors.

v) Special problems that made divine monarchy awkward on Roman soil was the constant lack of heirs to the throne: the Julio-Claudian dynasty functioned on an adoptive principle, not very different from that of the second century; the Flavians were more successful in this respect, but came to an abrupt end in 96 due to the childlessness of Domitian; the Severii are again a case of a strong dynasty that was too shortlived.

vi) From the outset a special case was instituted for the **G**reeks: **A**ugustus organized the cult on a different footing from what he did in **I**taly, and he and his followers were lenient in giving special concessions to requests from the **E**ast, in spite of initial protests - this will be the theme of chapter 2.

vii) The two peaks of this development are **A**ugustus, who through forty years of rule saw to the establishing of the cult, and **D**omitian, who gave it an increased emphasis.

viii) A special problem was represented by the **S**enate who was opposed to the cult and tried to oppose consecration whenever possible

ix) All in all the pattern of divine monarchy, as established by **A**ugustus, was successful in the **W**est - to say nothing of the **E**ast - and was followed up by the "good" emperors of the second century as well as the dynasty of the **S**everii and the soldier emperors to follow.

x) It came to an end with **C**onstantine because of his conversion to **C**hristianity, though **C**onstatine was in fact consecrated, as easily may be seen from the numismatic evidence.

The story of the foundation and growth of imperial dynasties during the first **C**hristian century is fascinating enough in itself, as outlined above, it has only had a preliminary function for our investigation. It is the **G**reek form of this cult which is our subject proper, not the **L**atin one, a subject which has only been hinted at towards the end of each section. The **G**reek form of the



Roman imperial cult is therefore our next topic of investigation, in order to establish a context for the language used in the cult of the emperor among the Greeks. It would be hazardous to start a discussion of the Greek vocabulary of the RIC without having looked at this cult itself, so different from its Western counterpart.

## CHAPTER 2: **THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT AND THE GREEK WORLD**

The shift from the Latin to the Greek scene shows a surprisingly great difference with respect to ruler cult. The vocabulary used has - as already stated in chapter 1 - a more directly divine character.

This is possibly due to the old traditions of divine monarchy in the East, traditions that certainly influenced the Greeks first and the Romans next. But the Greeks did not simply adopt the ways of Mesopotamia or Egypt. They created their own version of ruler cult, distinct both from the oriental antecedents and the western sequels.

This development started with Alexander the Great. With the exception of the Macedonian kings the successors of Alexander - the Diadochi - found themselves somewhere between heaven and earth, between men and gods, though closer to the latter than to the former. This was an innovation on the Greek scene.

When the Roman emperor was to be fitted into this scheme an already established set of vocabulary and rituals could be applied to him without being novel or causing scandal.

Scholarly debate has here had to face the same fundamental problem as concerns the Latin West: what does the cult mean? Religious overtones are stronger in the

East - as seen from the language employed - and the religious questions are, therefore, not so easily avoidable as in the Latin West.

The work of S.R.F. Price has offered a new possible model for interpreting this cult - with a special view to Asia Minor - which in the following will be used as a key to this little known world. The reasons for the choice of Price's work as a compass are manifold and have been stated in the Introduction, but will be repeated here before we go into all the details.

In the first place : it is the most comprehensive and up to date study of the RIC among the Greeks, besides the fact that it has no parallel in the older literature.

In the second place: it makes it possible - perhaps for the first time in modern debate - to see the imperial cult as a religious phenomenon, because in the work of Price the cult itself is for once discussed: its forms, its function, its language, its iconography, etc.

In the third place: the combination of these two factors complies with the traditional Biblical and patristic view, which sees ruler cult as a classical case of idolatry and deals with it as such.

The alternative - and in a modern sense "classical" - view of the cult as a mere game of diplomacy (politics) or flattery (cult of the patronus) fails to explain the Jewish and Christian reactions as we know them.

This chapter will deal with the following topics:

(i) a historical outline of the Greek cult from

## Alexander to Cleopatra

- (ii) the way the **G**reeks adapted to the **R**oman power
- (iii) a survey of the forms of the cult itself
- (iv) the **G**reek vocabulary of the **R**oman imperial **C**ult.

The issue is both theological and political, and the historical outline will clarify the theological issues as we move along. The task that the **G**reeks had to face from the outset was how to assimilate rulers to the gods, not to heroes or demigods. Their way of solving the problem was practical rather than theoretical: cult was the answer, not theology.

An outline of the argument of this chapter may prove useful at the beginning, so that the traveller in this jungle of information and technical discussions will not be expected to know all the paths and sideways beforehand in order to follow the direction of our discussion.

1) First comes **A HISTORICAL OUTLINE** of how ruler cult developed among the **G**reeks.

i) **A**lexander the **G**reat is the starting point for our exploration. In spite of occasional cults of **G**reek rulers before him, **A**lexander marks a new beginning in ruler cult among the **G**reeks, and this is due to his achievements in the **E**ast. **H**e was the object of worship in various forms while alive, and these will be mentioned in turn. The discussion of possible origins and models of the cult of the living **A**lexander will be referred to: the **P**ersian, the

Egyptian and the Greek models. To choose between these is not our principal task, but the oriental roots of his cult seem to have been undervalued by some modern scholars.

The case of Alexander is the beginning of a development that can be followed right through pagan antiquity: the deification of rulers, living or dead. He certainly willed his own apotheosis and inspired and promoted a new attitude to rulers. It all comes as a result of a new political situation: the problem of how to rule vast empires, unknown to the Greeks before Alexander. Alexander was worshiped by different cities of the Greek world when alive, but his cult was formally instituted and organized only after his death, by his successors, and in a different form from the cult of the living Alexander.

His goal was the blending of oriental and Greek culture as the basis of a new world culture. In this he was ultimately successful: ruler cult is one indication of this success; far more important, however, is the long and slow process of orientalization of the Roman empire, culminating with the victory of Christianity.

ii) The Ptolemies saw to the formal establishment of the cult of Alexander, Ptolemy having stolen his enbalmed body and brought it to Alexandria of political and religious reasons. The greatest innovator was, however, Ptolemy II who founded a dynastic cult based on the worship of his father, Ptolemy I. Here is a great element of continuity with pharaonic Egypt, so different from the other Hellenistic kingdoms. At the same time there are



many points of contact between them.

iii) The Seleucids inherited almost the entire empire which Alexander had created. Here we find a similar development to that in Egypt in respect to the establishing of a dynastic cult: a new development of the cult - i.e. by becoming dynastic - during the transition from Diadochi to Epigoni. But monarchy was an innovation in much of the Seleucid territories and the divinity of the king had to be emphasized in an attempt to relate city to monarch in this vast domain. As such the task was more difficult than in Egypt. The divine epithets applied to rulers are much the same as those we find in Egypt. Similarly, the initial stage of the cult is the most pronounced one; later, when a tradition was established, it seems to have become more relaxed, as witnessed by the practise of sacrifices.

iv) The Attalids did not create any innovations relating to ruler cult, but followed the tradition established by the Seleucids. As this kingdom is much smaller the documentation is poorer.

v) The Macedonians are an interesting exception from this whole development. Here monarchy was no innovation and ruler cult did not exist as such, even if Macedonian monarchs happened to be object of worship in other parts of the Greek world during the Hellenistic period.

An interesting case of late Hellenistic ruler cult comes from the petty kingdom of Commagene, and follows the pattern of the Seleucid kings.

vi) Some concluding remarks to this historical survey

sums up our findings.

**2) THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROMANS** on the Greek scene represented a challenge to Greek ideas of rulers in some important ways.

i) Under the Republic cults of individual magistrates and benefactors are known. But these should be kept apart from the cult of the Roman emperor which was to follow. For the sake of clarity the old view, represented by Bowersock, is contrasted with the recent one of Price. Bowersock reads the history of ruler cult - Hellenistic, Roman republican or imperial - as a diplomatic game exclusively, the most extreme case of "adulatio graeca" known to us. In this way he sums up the old view and stands as the last representative of this approach.

ii) The cult of the Roman emperor is an important innovation on the part of the Greeks as far as Romans are concerned. The republican system is brought to a definitive end and a new situation arises as a result of Octavian's settlement of affairs in the East.

The model of divine cult is the interpretative key to the same, as used by Price in his reconstruction of the cult. The Greek form of the cult is more direct than the Latin version: according to Hellenistic models it is of a far more direct kind, with emphasis on the living emperor and not the dead one. The cult becomes a competitive factor between Greek cities, and in Asia Minor there is great enthusiasm for the new religion. In fact, the

imperial cult is the only religious innovation to come from **Greeks** and **Romans** under the empire - the rest is brought to the **West** from the **East** (the cults of **Isis**, **Serapis**, **Mithras**, etc.). It is essential to the discussion of this topic that the initiative comes from below - from the **Greeks** themselves - and is accepted, or sometimes merely tolerated, by the **Romans**.

The emperor is assimilated to the traditional gods, but in an intermediate way, which gives him a position between gods and men, as we can see from the cultic evidence. No clearly defined theology is worked out, and we have to use the cult itself as an interpretative key throughout this survey of the **Greek** form of the imperial cult.

This new understanding - which is that of **Price's** - is contrasted to and compared with older ones of **Nock** and **Bowersock**.

**3) THE IMPERIAL CULT AS A RELIGION** is finally worked out by highlighting the following points:

i) **Sacrifices**. - Here the article by **Price** offers important insight into the theological implications of the cult, as well as vital information regarding the way the emperor was assimilated to the traditional gods. The category "between god and man" sums up our findings.

ii) **Images**. - This vast topic is given a brief treatment, essential to our discussion of the polemic against the cult on the part of **Jews** and **Christians**, as

will be further discussed in chapter 3. Important is the distinction between cult statues and merely honorific ones. The great variety of images in question must also be mentioned. Private usage is referred to as well. As is the case with with sacrifices, the image of the rulers is an important indication of his status "between god and man".

iii) **Priesthoods.** - Here the difference between East and West will again become obvious. On Greek soil the imperial cult gave ample space for prestige and competition. It is essential that the priesthoods are not professional but "lay" offices.

iv) **Festivals.** - This is perhaps the most important aspect of the cult, since it combines all the features discussed previously: temples, images, sacrifices, priesthoods. There are two different types of festivals: civic and provincial. They were financed by the priests. They were immensely popular. They attracted large throngs of "pilgrims". They were popular religion in every sense of the word. Festivals will be further described in chapter 3 in relation to the cult of Domitian at Ephesus.

v) The question of the popularity of the cult is discussed as a conclusion to this section. Here the new understanding established by Price makes a major advance on that of the older school. It has important bearings on the question of how the Christians fared in the cities of Asia during the first century, and may turn out to be directly relevant for our understanding of the Book of Revelation. The cult was the Greek way of demonstrating loyalty to

Rome while maintaining a considerable degree of independence. This helps to explain the popularity of emperor-worship in the Greek cities, but does not highlight the religious questions that such a cult represented.

#### 4) THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT.

Once the cultic context has been established it is possible to approach the important question of the vocabulary that makes up the backbone of a "theology" of the imperial cult. A discussion without this background would necessarily take place in a vacuum and make any comparison with the New Testament material superficial, to say the least. We have chosen the most common and central words used in the cult. We know them from epigraphic, numismatic and literary sources, as well as monuments and art (see: Appendix 4, Catalogue). The lack of liturgical texts is a drawback when it comes to establishing the meaning of the expressions used in the cult (for an exception, see: Appendix 5). It is vital to observe the difference of religious connotations between the Greek and the Latin vocabulary. While the latter reflects the indirect nature of ruler worship at Rome - as established by Augustus - the former is in direct continuation of the Hellenistic ruler cult, i.e. of more direct divine implications. Among Greeks the emperor is the successor to the Diadochi and Epigoni, and not just to the cult of individual benefactors and magistrates, as the older view would have us



believe.

First follows a comparative list of Latin and Greek terms used in the cult.

Next the Latin vocabulary is discussed very briefly.

Then the question of comparing the two sets of vocabulary is raised. This poses great problems since the one does not derive from the other, except in a very few cases. Like the two versions of the cult - Latin and Greek - their respective vocabularies rise out of different religious and historical circumstances. Adaption, importation and borrowing are not good interpretative keys for the two sets of terms. The Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult existed before the arrival of the Romans, with very few exceptions. The Latin vocabulary developed along independent lines from the Greek one, again with few exceptions. The two never really meet: they operate along different models, as the cults in question also do.

Our main task is to examine the Greek vocabulary, and this is done by way of concentrating on certain important terms rather than discussing the vocabulary as a whole. These are: "theos" - "hyios theou" - "kyrios" - "soter" - various other titles.

This discussion reveals important aspects of the Greek version of the cult: it is different from the Latin one in the sense that it is of a more directly divine nature. The Greek vocabulary - and cultic system as well - lacks an appropriate intermediary category for the Roman emperor. Instead the Greeks put him on the level of their

Hellenistic kings, by assimilating him to the gods, but not totally equating him with these.

In order to arrive at such an understanding, the vocabulary must be *interpreted* in the light of a reconstruction of the cult itself, particularly the practise of sacrifices. This *has* been done in the preceding sections; <sup>thus</sup> the vocabulary is easier to evaluate.

**CONCLUSIONS** end this chapter by way of summarizing our findings so far.

## 1) RULER CULT AMONG GREEKS - A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

"The offering of divine honours to kings is the aspect of Hellenistic-Roman religion that perhaps seems most remote to moderns and therefore requires a somewhat more thorough and careful exposition". (1)

"Looking, therefore, at the evidence as a whole, we may affirm that the kings, from Alexander onwards, set store by their deification, that they encouraged, or commanded their Greek subjects to pay them these transcendent honours". (2)

"Ruler-cult was in the last resort the result of the impression made by personality; after that impression faded it was formalized and had not the impetus to produce or apply such a theology". (3)

Cult of a living man is Greek, not Latin.

How this developed has for a long time been a hotly debated topic among the learned: does ruler cult derive from hero cult or from divine cult (cult of the Olympian Twelve)? While the old discussion tended to favor the former solution, recent studies move in the opposite direction, notably the works of Fishwick and Price. The Introduction in Fishwick (I,1) is actually the most comprehensive survey of the whole debate; at the same time it gives an admirably clear outline of the historical development itself.

Any attempt to interpret the Greek ruler cult depends on understanding the various stages in Greek history: i) classical - ii) post-classical - iii) Hellenistic - iv) Roman.

Stage one ("salvation comes from the gods") is that of the city-states, atomic in nature, equality being the characteristic of Greek society; here there is no cult of rulers as such, but heroic honours may be granted exceptional cases.

Stage two ("salvation comes from good rulers") is the crucial point in question: the stage where the big powers of post-classical Greece produce strong rulers around whom cults arise; this is a transitional stage to the two following ones.

Stage three ("salvation comes from the kings") is that of the Hellenistic monarchies after Alexander; rulers are compared to the traditional gods.

Stage four ("salvation comes from the emperor") is the Greek reaction to Roman power; the emperor in Rome takes the place of the Hellenistic kings.

Some general comments to this development should be made before we go into detail.

The transitional stage - stage two - naturally depends on there being a distance between ruler and subject that was foreign to the classical stage (Pericles was for example never considered more than a mortal man). The development is from "gods as saviours" to "saviours as gods", to simplify the matter for the sake of clarity. The two best

known examples of this transitional stage are, of course, **Lysander at Samos** and **Dion at Syracuse**.

The question of whether the cults derive "from below" (i.e. popular outbursts) or "from above" (i.e. institutionalized cult) is also important. In the case of **Alexander** and the **Diadochi** the movement seems to stem from "below", while the opposite movement is at work in the case of the **Epigoni** as well as the **Roman emperor**. The **Diadochi** (e.g. **Ptolemy** in **Egypt**) did not make claims to divine honours as such, they were offered saviour cults in the old (post-classical) tradition, depending on local independence, i.e. civic worship as thanks for help. With the **Epigoni** (the successors of the **Diadochi**) the initiative comes from above (as with **Ptolemy II**), and we are faced with a state cult, a dynastic cult linking the ruler with the founder and legitimizing his claim to the throne, thereby sacralizing power. In this case the king is worshipped as king.

Another crucial question is the link with the hero cult, which recurs throughout this entire discussion, because older generations of scholars saw the cult of kings as deriving from heroic cults (as did, for example, **Nock**). The alternative model derived from the divine cult dominates the works of **Fishwick** and **Price** and seems to have become the standard modern view, in contrast to that of **Nock**. Heroes are worshipped when dead - kings when alive. According to this line of interpretation kingship becomes a definition of divinity and divinity a definition of



kingship. It seems that a king's right to rule might come to rest on the fact that he was divine. Herioc cults correspond to the cult originally given to non-historical, imaginary heroes of myth and legend. Cults were centered on the tombs and were distinct from the cult of the gods.

These principal questions will reappear in the following historical survey, since they illustrate the discussion. But after the publication of the two recent works referred to here, the older view is likely to disappear from sight.

## I) ALEXANDER THE GREAT

We start with Alexander because he, generally speaking, initiated a new stage in the development of ruler cult among the Greeks, a development that his successors carried further for centuries, and which was continued, after the coming of Rome, in the form of the imperial cult.

As stated in the introductory paragraph to this chapter, there are several ways of approaching this innovation on the part of the Greeks. It can be understood as: (i) a result of Oriental influences, from either Persia or Egypt, or from a combination of both; (ii) a development from Greek traditions only - and here are two possibilities: that of "hero cult", or the model of divine worship, that is, the cult of the Olympians, as had emerged in a few cases earlier, as mentioned above.

Scholars do not agree and tend to side with one or the

other of these possible solutions in a debate that is still ongoing: Taylor goes for Persia as a model (4), followed by some textbooks that deal with the topic (5). Bevan prefers Egypt (6), while Nock favours the Greek traditions themselves (7), as does Price, but using a different model from the one used by Nock: divine cult and not hero cult. In short, modern scholarship has tended to look in the direction of possible Greek roots rather than the Oriental ones of the older approach.

Leaving aside for a moment the question of where it all comes from - or the question of what it all means, for that matter - there is no doubt that Alexander willed his own deification, as in the case of Julius or Augustus. Nor is there any doubt that this started among Greeks while he was still alive, though a cult was only instituted after his death (8). This was "something distinctly new" (9). And there is no question of this deriving from Macedonia where ruler cult never developed in the form known from the other Greek domains. Here monarchy was an old institution and did not need the religious panoply that divine kingship provided.

The following facts are the most important ones.

1) While alive Alexander certainly saw himself as more than human, as the son of Zeus-Ammon, according to our sources (10). Exactly what the oracle at Siwa told him we do not know; he had promised to tell his mother, but did not survive to do so. It is certain that the priests at Siwa hailed him as "son of Ammon", like the Pharaohs

before him. Later birth-legends tell of his divine conception, of how a thunderbolt sent shock waves through the womb of Olympia, or how he was conceived by a serpent (11) - features that figure in the birth-legends of the Roman emperors as well, especially Julius and Augustus.

ii) While alive he certainly received divine honours from his Greek subjects, let alone the Orientals. Famous examples of this can easily be listed: (a) the Athenian "ekklesia" acknowledged him as deity in 324 (12) - this being an act not imposed by Alexander, the Athenians having been free agents; (b) Greek envoys showed him divine honours after his final return to Babylon in 323 (13); (c) Alexander sent a decree to the Greek cities to send him "theoroi" (the terminus technicus for delegates to a god or ambassadors of a city sent to the sanctuary of a god), but this was more a matter of acknowledging his status, since the decree did not request divine cult, i.e. temples and sacrifices (14). This is of a piece with the cults of saviours and benefactors that are typical of individual poleis of the period, i.e. the stage two of Greek ruler cult mentioned in the introduction. It does imply divinity, however, even if there was no developed cult at this stage. That was to follow.

iii) While alive Alexander received divine homage from his Greek entourage and closest friends, something which until then had been unheard of, in spite of exceptions like Lysander and Dio; the case of heroic honours to dead rulers or benefactors should be kept apart.

In short, the cult of **A**lexander while alive should be kept apart from the cults of **A**lexander after his death. The latter ones have their origin in the former, even if the forms of worship necessarily undergo a change. **A**nd we ought to consider further some of the forms used in worshipping the living **A**lexander before we turn to the latter.

The cult of **A**lexander while he was alive was, of course, not an instituted cult (with temples, sacrifices, priests, etc.), but a new way of giving him homage, and it may be of interest to consider some of the forms this homage took, particularly in the case of one important innovation: the "proskynesis".

Taylor sees this as a case of clear Persian influence, since the **P**ersians had a tradition of making "proskynesis" before the image of their king and, additionally, of honouring the king's "daimon" at banquets (15). The **P**ersians had "a well-developed ruler-cult. Its form was the worship of the king's "fravashi", his divine double" - i.e. his "daimon" (16). According to this interpretation **A**lexander united the **P**ersian custom of honouring the "fravashi" of the ruler with the familiar **G**reek toast to the "agathon daimon", in this case: the personal "daimon" of **A**lexander. In addition to honouring the "daimon" of the reigning king the **P**ersians also knew the custom of honouring dead kings, much like the hero cult which the **G**reek cities gave to their founders and benefactors (17).

On the question of the meaning of this "fravashi" Taylor states that it "resembles the cult of the **Ka** of the Egyptian king and the **Genius** of the **Roman** emperors" (18). As far as **Persians** go, "for the living king the worship was offered not to the king in person but to his immortal double" (19). The gesture did not imply direct divinity for the **Persians**, but would have done so for the **Greeks**, especially **Macedonians**, and this is the crux of the matter.

We are, nota bene, not suggesting that this **Persian** element is the root and origin of the cult of the living **Alexander**, but one of its forms, likely to have been understood differently by **Greeks** and **Persians**.

The toast offered at banquets to the king's double - another form that the cult of **Alexander** took - "prepared the way for the formal deification that came to **Alexander** from the **Greek** cities in answer to his demand not long before his death" (20). Here Taylor refers to the toast in combination with the "proskynesis", which the **Persians** offered to the image of their king. Our sources mention this innovation (21). The **Greek** habit of drinking toasts to gods at banquets was also accompanied by a proskynesis to the god, presumably performed before a statuette or image of his "agathon daimon" (22). Here, again, **Persians** and **Greeks** would understand matters differently.

It has, therefore, been suggested that we ought to look for the roots of the cult of **Alexander** in **Persian** customs, as mentioned above. According to such an interpretation



the cult of **A**lexander's divinity - while alive - rises as a union of **P**ersian and **G**reek elements: the element of honoring the kings "daimon" ("proskynesis" to image) in combination with the **G**reek toast to gods at banquets (23). (Sometimes the parallel to the **R**oman custom of the household cult - a libation, and not a toast, to the master's "genius" - is mentioned in this context, but there is no direct connection, say influence here (24)). For **T**aylor **A**lexander did deliberately establish his own divinity, under the influence of **P**ersian customs - **A**lexander is the first orientalized **G**reek ruler. **B**evan also seems to go along with this explanation of the origin of **A**lexander's divinity: as stemming from the old empires of the **E**uphrates and **T**igris, and not from the valley of the **N**ile where so many of the other ingredients of the cult derives (25).

**B**ut in the discussion of possible origins to the cult of the living **A**lexander and its various forms it is necessary to move backward in the history of **A**lexander's life and consider some **E**gyptian elements. **T**hese are a second possible explanation to the cult of **A**lexander, alternative to or additional to the **P**ersian model.

**I**t started with **A**lexander's historic visit to the oracle of **A**mmon at the oasis of **S**iwa, where he consulted the oracle before facing a decisive battle with **D**arius, and where he was identified by the priests as son of the god (to the **G**reeks, including **A**lexander himself, as son of **Z**eus, with whom they identified **A**mmon). **T**his

identification is specifically **Egyptian** (26), because the **Egyptians** hereby gave him a pharaonic<sup>h</sup> status, that is divine, and saluted him with the traditional pharaonic greeting "son of **Ammon**".

**L'Orange** strongly recommends the **Egyptian** model as the universal key for interpreting the cult of **Alexander**, leaving the **Persian** elements aside. It is the **Alexander-Helios** typology that strikes him as most characteristic in this cult: "the **Egyptian Pharaoh** was portrayed with the body of the god (**Ra**, **Ammon**) in his dress, or with the symbols of his power as an outward joining of **God** and man... in the portrait of **Alexander** the divine was infused with the human, the man transformed into a god" (27). **Alexander's** apotheosis was a "sun-apotheosis", according to **Egyptian** traditions: "his transfiguration as **Helios** is a kind of interpretatio graeca of his apotheosis as **Ammon** - making **Alexander** the successor of the **Egyptian** kings" (28). "As **Alexander** stands at the beginning of the ancient world dominion, so the **Alexander-helios** type initiates the **Hellenistic-Roman** representation of the sun-ruler" (29). Indeed, the **Romans** followed this "**Alexander-Alexandria-pattern**" rather closely: cfr. **Nero-Helios**, **Gallienus-Helios**, **Constantine-Helios**.

But there are other models available for the deification of **Alexander** during his lifetime. Therefore one must also consider the Greek models, favoured by the modern discussion, and they are of a two-fold kind.

For *Bevan* the ruler cult is essentially a continuation of the hero cult, where dead (later it will be living) benefactors are rewarded for their merits - this is the key to it all. The step from the cult of dead hero to a living monarch "was easy", according to *Bevan* (30). It is therefore useful to look at some examples of this transitory stage.

Cult of individual Greeks - rulers or benefactors - runs prior to and parallel with the development of *Alexander* and his followers, and offer another approach, whether they derive from heroic cult or not. Such cults are, however not found before 404. Why? Because a new type of centralized power was slowly emerging (this is the stage two referred to in the introductory paragraph: the post-classical stage of "super powers" within the Greek world of city states), and *Alexander* himself became the one to make this new type of ruler possible (31).

The most important cases should be listed.

There was a cult of *Dion* in *Syracuse* (32) and possibly one of *Alcibiades* in *Athens* (33). Additionally *Habicht* discusses the cults of *Lysander* in *Samos* (34) and possibly also in the *Ionian* cities (35). The cult of *Lysander* at *Samos* is also discussed by *Nock*, especially its association with *Hera* in her famous sanctuary (36). *Plutarch* says that he - *Lysander* - "was the first Greek, so *Dorius* tells us, in whose honour Greek cities erected altars and offered sacrifices as though he were a god, or for whom songs of triumph were sung.... Besides

this, the people of **Samos** decreed that their festival in honour of **Hera** should be called **Lysandreia**" (37). **Demetrius Poliorcetes** had his own independent cult at the **Parthenon** in **Athens**, this not being a case, though, of any "hieros gamos", as he was not receiving homage as **Athena's** partner (38). **Demetrius** had an extremely elaborate cult, it seems, and had earned the epithet "soter" - i.e. he had a divine title and a divine cult (39). **Nock** thinks that **Demetrius** also perhaps dwelt in **Apollo's** temple on **Delos**, and was certainly allowed by the **Athenians** to lodge in the **Parthenon** in 304-303 ... he "was in a literal sense "synnaos" in each case" (40).

By "synnaos" **Nock** is, of course, referring to one well known and specifically **Greek** solution to the problem of apotheosis: the putting of the cult image, "agalma", of a ruler in an existing temple ("temple-sharing", as will be discussed later in this chapter; see also **Appendix 1**), or the inclusion of the cult image in a new conjoint temple erected ad hoc (as is known from some famous examples of the cult of the emperors, e.g. that of **Trajan** and **Zeus Philios** at **Pergamum**) (41). A later example is that of **Theophanes** of **Mytilene** who secured freedom for his city from **Pompey**. **Mytilene** was grateful to its influential citizen, and deified him (42). There was also a cult of **Lysimachos** in **Ephesus**, being a founder cult - he was the second founder, having changed the site of the city and renamed it **Arsinoeia** (43). He also had a cult at **Kassandreia** (44), at **Samothrace** (45) and at **Priene**

(46).

The importance of individual cases such as these - local rulers, benefactors, etc. - is the existing model of divine cult prior to and parallel with the Hellenistic monarchies which emerged with Alexander and his successors. Scholars have often failed to keep these two models apart: there is no evidence for heroic cults of Hellenistic rulers.

But the model from divine cult can also be read as purely Greek, without resorting to oriental models, as do Price and Fishwick. - If this is the case we would be dealing with an innovation of a radical kind, albeit of a Greek kind and not necessarily developed under the influence of oriental customs.

It is not primarily our task here to choose between these different explanations - we are more concerned about the forms and function of the cult in question. But having gone through the three options available for deciding the roots of the cult of Alexander, it may, perhaps, be legitimate to say that the oriental influences perhaps are too easily dismissed by the recent approach. Scholars like Taylor and L'Orange may still have their point to make. It is of some importance that all this takes place in the East and not on Greek soil, even if the Greeks knew new forms of ruler cult that resemble the oriental ones in some respects. Secondly it is among Macedonians that the cult of Alexander originates, and they are not likely to take to the divine model of ruler cult without some very important



impulses from without.

Before taking leave of Alexander it is important to mention his cult in Alexandria, where he was honoured as "founder" ("ktistes") after his body had been transferred there from Memphis. "Für alle übrigen von Alexander gegründeten Städte fehlen sichere Zeugnisse eines Grunderkultes" (47).

Alexander was identified in cult and legend with Dionysus, just as Mark Anthony later would also be identified. Demigods like Dionysus and Hercules are typical examples of men honoured as gods after death for their achievements, as a king might hope to be (48). The cult of Alexander in Egypt became a state cult of an unmistakably Egyptian kind. It was organized by Ptolemy I (49). Cults outside Egypt are recorded in the Ionian Confederation (50), Priene (51), Ephesus (52), Erythrai (53), possibly Theos (54), Bargylia (55), Magnesia on the Meander (56), Ilium (57), and Rhodes (58).

Alexander's new and charismatic form for leadership gave a model for his successors, who were ruling over vast territories and could not leave deification to the initiative of individual Greek cities. The initiative "from above" is therefore evident in the first century of Hellenistic rule, but seems to lessen as history moves on and the cults become customary, and some of the most important cases of this development must be considered next.

## II) THE PTOLEMIES

The case of Egypt is in many ways the most outstanding among the Hellenistic kingdoms, due to its pharaonic traditions, so different from the Persian ones.

The pharaoh of Egypt was the representative of the gods on earth, he was already divine and became Osiris when dead (1). Here the Greeks - that is: Ptolemy and his house - followed patterns that were "different from anything known by the Greek speaking world before" (2). The oriental influence cannot be denied in the case of Egypt, whatever this influence was like in the case of Alexander. Only here is there precedence for divine monarchy among the Hellenistic houses - otherwise they ruled over areas where ruler cult was an innovation, like Syria, Asia Minor, etc. The Persian model was of a different and far more indirect kind, as discussed in connection with Alexander.

In Egypt the king was the son of Ra and was served with temples, altars and sacrifices (3). The fact that monarchy essentially was unproblematic in Egypt is clearly illustrated by the custom of offering sacrifices "for" ("pro" in Greek) and not "to" the king (the simple dative), in variance with the customs of the first century of Hellenistic rule, as Price points out in his important article on the topic (4). The whole problem of the difference between sacrificing "for" and "to" the king will be dealt with later, under the topic of sacrifices.

Suffice it here to mention the political aspect of the custom, that is the continuity in the case of **Egypt**, in contrast to the other **Hellenistic** kingdoms - say **Asia Minor** - where monarchy itself was new and had to be established in a very emphatic form.

The chief characteristic of the cult in **Egypt** is that it is a state cult, and not a civic cult - it is regulated "from above" and not by initiative "from below" as in many cases of ruler cult in the other **Hellenistic** kingdoms (5). Revenues from the temples were in fact transferred to the royal exchequer: "such a procedure implies...a real belief in the divine character of kingship, or the device would have had no point" (6). **Ptolemaic Egypt** was an exception all through antiquity in these respects: it had a closed monetary system, unlike the other kingdoms with their variety of coinage in circulation; the **Ptolemies** in fact put their image on the coinage from the outset of their rule, a radiated bust appeared already under **Ptolemy III** (7). Additionally the state cult was centralized in **Alexandria**, with its temple to **Alexander** and the entire **Ptolemaic** dynasty.

The cult of **Alexander** was instituted by **Ptolemy I**, centered on his tomb, stressing the importance of the city of **Alexandria**, and not planned as a dynastic cult as such. **Ptolemy II**, however, organized the state cult and stands as the real founder of the divine monarchy in **Egypt**, because it was he who instituted the cult of the founder of his dynasty - **Ptolemy I**, proclaimed "theos soter" ca. 280

- on the basis of a centralized state cult. **Ptolemy** and **Berenice** were accorded a temple in **Alexandria** with divine cult (festivals, sacrifices, priesthoods, etc.) **But** he also established a cult for himself and his sister, reflecting influences from **Egyptian** practise. **All** the **Ptolemies** shared thereafter the cult of **Alexander** in **Alexandria** (8).

**After Ptolemy II** the king was in fact revered in all the temples of **Egypt**, as the pharaoh had been before: "the thoroughness of **Ptolemy II** is of a piece with all his policy, and the organization of a state church unique in **Hellenistic** kingdoms made it possible" (9). This cult included the living king as well as the dead ones (10). The state cult of **Ptolemy II** was in the first place a state cult of **Ptolemy I**, under the cult of **Alexander** - as "theoi soterai" (11). The cult of **Ptolemy I** in **Ptolemais** was a typical founder cult (12), and cults outside **Egypt** are attested as well: in **Miletus** (13), on **Rhodos** (14), on the **Aegean** islands (15).

**Ptolemy I** and his consort **Berenice** were worshipped as "benefactor gods" - "theoi euergetai" (16). Incorporation into the existing temples of the gods became the rule in **Egypt**: the **Ptolemies** became "synnaoi theoi" with the traditional gods of the land (see **Appendix 1**). Royal statues were accordingly put up in the old temples along the **Nile** (17). Such a cult of a monarch as "co-dwelling" with a god is called "temple-sharing" ("synnaos") and is one form of ruler cult that occurs frequently round the

Mediterranean in Hellenistic and Roman times, a form of ruler cult that has been thoroughly investigated by A.D. Nock.

The tradition of the king being "synnaos" is typical of Egypt, while it is rather the exception elsewhere; examples have already been mentioned with regard to individual Greeks and later Roman rulers (e.g. Trajan at Pergamum) (18). The Egyptian king moves into the temples of the gods where they have their own cultic places, for in Egypt - pharaonic or Ptolemaic - divinity rests in kingship, not in individual kings, and public worship is an elaborate process for securing the necessary blessings through him as a medium. Nock cites as examples from ancient Egypt the presence of kings in the temples of the gods, like Sesostis I and Thutmose III at the temple of Ammon at Karnak (19). Like pharaoh before him the Ptolemaic ruler is in principle divine while alive and becomes Osiris after death (20).

A difference, though, is the fact that the ruler had statues and cults in all temples of Egypt - something which the pharaoh had not - and an additional innovation is that the ruler had this honour conferred on him by priestly synods: "it sounds very much like the strictly Greek way of honouring benefactors", Nock comments, working from the model of heroic and benefactors cults as far as possible (21). Here, according to Nock, are to be found both traditional Egyptian elements (like the king being a channel of divine favour and therefore enjoying automatic



divinity) and Greek innovations (like those mentioned above) (22).

But Ptolemaic Egypt is the only case among the Hellenistic royal houses where Nock cannot have recourse to the model of hero and benefactor cults alone, and he - somewhat unwillingly - admits that other models are at work.

Temple-sharing also occurred during Roman times, especially in the case of Hadrian, and Nock discusses the few known cases (23). He also mentions some known cases of privately built temples to honour the emperor (24). Outside Egypt Habicht records the cults of Ptolemy III in Ainum (25), of Ptolemy III and Berenice II in Itarus (26), of Ptolemy II in Byzantium (27).

The epithets of the Ptolemaic rulers form an essential part of the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult. They are: Ptolemy I "soter", Ptolemy II "philadelphos", Ptolemy III "euergetes", Ptolemy IV "philopator", Ptolemy V "epiphanes", Ptolemy VI "philometor", Ptolemy VII "neos philopator" (28). Nock has given them serious attention, and his findings are worth mentioning in our context (29).

The epithet "soter" was originally conferred on Ptolemy I by grateful Rhodians, and passed later into official use.

"Philadelphos" refers to the marriage of Ptolemy II to his sister Arsinoe.

"Euergetes" is a secular term of benefaction to a city referring to Ptolemy III's uniting Cyrenaica with Egypt.

"Philopator" was a personal epithet used of Ptolemy IV.

"Philometor", of Ptolemy VI, refers to his devotion to his mother Cleopatra.

"Eupator" is a general epithet.

These epithets were normally conferred by the synods of priests, owing to royal initiative rather than their own suggestion. As such they can be considered as stemming "from above". They are quite different from pharaonic nomenclature (30). The Rosetta stone from March 27, 196 B.C. gives this description of Ptolemy V: "who has brought order to Egypt, who has made the lives of men happy, the living image of Zeus, son of Helios, the eternally living Ptolemy, favourite of Ptah, god upon earth, who being god stems from god and goddess...who has brought peace to Egypt, who gave her all her laws, founded temples and altars, and set upright those who needed help, and thus exemplified the nature of a benevolent god" (31). - This is an excellent illustration of the mingling of Egyptian and Greek ideas; the inscription is - typically enough - trilingual.

Of all these epithets Nock concentrates his discussion on only a few, especially "epiphanes", because of its breadth of meaning. The secular usage is "distinguished", while the sacred is "a god showing/ appearing/revealing himself", something which Nock describes as "a convenient width of meaning" (32). The epithet does not describe a specific deity incarnate, but

"the making of a sudden "epiphaneia", appearances in person or manifestation of power"; "a god or a divine king is "epiphanes" when he by his "epiphaneia" produces some striking result" (33).

The case of **Ptolemy V** is interesting as he is called, according to the **Rosetta stone**, "theos epiphanes eucharistos", epithets which he took, not by birth but by his coming of age in **197**, meaning an incarnation of a god on earth (34). But it should be remembered that there are reasons of a historical kind behind the epithet, a historical event, to be precise: the battle of **Panium** in **199/8 B.C.** (35). As "synnaos" with the gods he would have had his "eikon" - cult-image - in every temple in **Egypt** (36).

**Ptolemy IV** was identified with **Dionysus** - as "neos Dionysos" - thereby uniting **Greek** and **Egyptian** elements, **Dionysos** being the **Greek** identification of **Serapis** (37). When the same epithet was used of **Ptolemy XIII** it was again the case that pharaonic<sup>h</sup> conceptions of the monarch as a reincarnation of **Osiris** had found a **Greek** counterpart in the ruler being **Dionysos** incarnate, typical of the "Egyptianizing tendencies of the late **Ptolemies**" (38). When **Cleopatra VII** saw herself as **Isis-Aphrodite** it is "not unlikely that **Cleopatra** played her part in earnest" (39). It was in the same trend of uniting **Greek** and **Egyptian** elements of ruler cult that **Anthony** and **Cleopatra** posed as **Dionysos-Osiris** and **Aphrodite-Isis** respectively, "assuming an attitude

deliberately for political ends and pressed these claims to divinity". Nock does not comment on whether Mark Anthony also played his part in earnest.

The last of the Ptolemies was Ptolemy XVI Caesarion, who ruled with his mother from 42 and was killed, when only 17 years old, on orders of Octavian in 30. Octavian himself - the Roman princeps - became the natural successor of this venerable dynastic tradition, of pharaohs and Ptolemies alike. The temple begun by Cleopatra for Alexander he turned into a "kaisareion", a temple for himself and his successors - i.e. the Julio-Claudian dynasty - but he was at the same time breaking with Egyptian tradition: he did not incorporate this cult into the cult of Alexander or of the traditional gods, but founded new temples to himself and his family (40). As such the RIC in Egypt starts on a new footing. It is a clear case of divine monarchy, but organized differently from its pharaonic and Ptolemaic predecessors.

### III) SELEUCIDS

"Hail to you, son of the almighty god Poseidon, son also of Aphrodite! The other gods are far away, or have no ears or do not exist, or do not inquire after us. But we see you bodily present, neither wooden nor stone, but truly being. Therefore we pray to you !" (1).

The kingdom ruled over by the various successors of **Selucus** is a very different case from that of **Egypt**. It consisted of a heterogeneous amalgamation of satrapies that had been loosely unified in the person of the king. The state cult became official and dynastic, but was decentralized in another way: each province of the kingdom had its own high priest, and eponymous priesthoods prove that dynastic cult existed from an early stage. **Seleucus** - one of the **Diadochi** - was honoured "from below", his cult being civic. But after him it became a cult "from above" (2).

The organizer of this cult was **Antiochus I**, a contemporary of **Ptolemy II**, and shows that it was - as in **Egypt** - the second generation of rulers, **Epigoni** and not **Diadochi**, that organized the cult as a state cult. **Antiochus III** modified the system - just like **Ptolemy IV** - establishing high priests nominated by himself for his own cult, in the satrapies, and appointing a high priestess for **Queen Laodice**. **Antiochus IV** moved one stage further when he assumed the title "theos epiphanes" in an attempt to legitimize and gain control for his regime. The title was adopted by his successors, first by **Antiochus V**.

The epithets of the **Seleucid** rulers are as follows: **Selucus I** "nicator", **Antiochus I** "soter", **Antiochos II** "theos", **Selucus II** "callinicos", **Selucus III** "soter", **Antiochus III** "megalos", **Selucus IV** "philopator", **Antiochus IV** "epiphanes, theos", **Antiochus V** "eupator", **Demetrius I** "soter", **Demetrius II** "nicator", **Antiochus**



VI "epiphanes", Antiochus VII "sidetes", Demetrius II "nicator" Cleopatra "thea", Seleucus VI "epiphanes nicanor", Antiochus X "eusebes", Antiochus XI "philadelphos", Antiochus XII "Dionysos" (3). These are discussed by Bevan and Nock, who make some interesting observations of the provenance on the epithets and the question of deification.

Antiochus I was deified after his death, and the initiative came from the court, whereas Antiochus II "theos" was deified by the high priests while still alive, as known from rescripts (4). The initiative "from above" varies somewhat from case to case. Numismatic evidence is helpful as the king's head depicted on coins often show radiated busts, or other symbols of divinity, as is also the case with the Ptolemies.

By far the most interesting case for our purposes is Antiochus IV "epiphanes theos", who will be discussed further in chapter 3. He undoubtedly identified himself with Zeus, something which is exemplified in his marriage to the priestess of Hierapolis - who was identified with Hera - and took the temple treasury as dowry (5). Another "hierogamos" - from Nanaea in Persia - is referred to in 2 Macc 1,14. Bevan comments on how useful godhood may be to rulers like Antiochus who suffered from the combination of magnificent projects with a meagre purse (6). This tendency of his - temple-plundering - is, of course, mainly known in the case of Jerusalem which led to a revolt. But he suffered other misfortunes as well,

and **Bevan** mentions the case of **Anaitis** in **Persia** (7).

**Nock** notes that **Antiochus** adopted the epithet "epiphanes" and defined it closely as "theos epiphanes" and "theos epiphanes nikephoros" - the three are used regularly on coins (8). (I happen to have in my own possession a very rare tetradrachm from **Antioch** with the legend "epiphanous theou", i.e. in the genitive.) **Nock** points out that these legends, however, do not occur on the first coins, only on later ones, that is on those struck by **Antiochus** from 170 onwards, after his successful invasion of **Egypt**, which again means that the epithets are due to historical circumstances, as in the case of the **Ptolemies** (9). Deification while alive was not simply an automatic affair, according to **Nock**: the rulers had to see to it themselves, at least at the initial stage; a precise historical reference is needed for when it is first assumed in official use. Once established later monarchs could adopt such epithets as a conventional royal title (10).

Cults of **Seleucus I** and **Antiochus** as founders are witnessed in **Apollonia** in **Pisidia**, **Nysa**, **Antioch** on the **Meander**, **Laodicea** on **Lycus**, **Apollonia** in **Caria**, **Antioch** in **Mygdonis** (11). **Antiochus II** had a cult at **Miletus** (12), **Antiochus I** at **Bargylia** and **Theos** (13), and in **Erythrae** (14), in the **Ionian confederacy** (15); **Seleucus I** had a cult in **Magnesia** on the **Meander** (16), on **Lemnos** (17), in **Priene** (18) - the three last together with **Antiochus I** - and in **Colophon** (19), in **Erythrae** (20); both **Seleucus I** and **Antiochus I** had cults in **Ilium**

(21).

History of art confirms that the Seleucids followed Alexander in the "heliomorph" tradition: Demetrius Poliorcetes is acknowledged as "helios" among "asteres", Antigonus of Gonata as "heliou pais kai theos", and Demetrios of Phaleron as "heliomorphos" (22).

To sum up: The case of the Seleucid rulers is a different one from that of the Ptolemies. They did not have a preexisting model of divine monarchy to follow and had to impose their new system with royal initiatives in areas where monarchy was a novelty. And the extension of the Seleucid empire was from the outset almost identical with the empire of Alexander. Its history is the story of how it gradually was shrinking to what later became the Roman province of Syria. Imitation of Alexander, oriental models of ruler cult, and the need for a divine principle to govern such a vast kingdom are all part of the complex reasons behind the establishing of divine monarchy in the Seleucid territories. - This was how the Greeks reacted to a new historical reality: the heritage of Alexander.

#### IV) ATTALIDS AND MACEDONIANS

After the battle of Apamea in 188 B.C. the Attalid house took the place of the Seleucids as objects of worship for the Greeks of Asia Minor. Pergamum became capital of a new and major kingdom, which lasted until it was

bequeathed to **Rome** in **133**.

The epithets of the **Attalid** rulers are: **Attalus I** "soter", **Attalus II** "philadelphos", **Attalus III** "philometor euergetes", **Eumenes II** "soter" (1). **Bevan** lists the following cults, with cities as independent agents: at **Teos** (a priest of the living **Attalus II**, a priestess of the living **Queen Stratonike**), at **Elaea** (**Attalus III** "philometor" as "synnaos" with **Asclepius**), at **Sestos** (a priest of **Attalus III**), at **Sikyon** in **Greece** (animal sacrifice to **Attalus III**), at **Athens** **Attalus III** (as eponymus hero) (2). For the cult of **Attalus III** at **Elaea** **Nock** assumes this to be a cult image in the shrine of **Asclepius** with a priesthood of its own (3). **Habicht** lists a cult of **Eumenes I** in **Cos** (4), and in **Pergamum** (5), a cult of **Philetairus** in **Cyzicus** (6).

**Pergamum** later saw temple-sharing in the cases of **Julia Livilla** (daughter of **Gaius Caligula**) (7), and the famous the partnership of **Trajan** and **Zeus Philios** in the magnificent temple on the acropolis, where they also shared a festival, this temple of a joint cult being a new foundation already in existence by **A.D. 113** (8). Later **Caracalla** was worshipped in the restored **Ionian** temple in the theatre terrace. **Nock** is rather cautious about whether or not this is a case of temple-sharing. He describes it as "possible", and sees it as more likely that the emperor was simply identified with **Asclepius** - he had actually been healed at the famous **Asclepium** of **Pergamum** - since coins show only one statue in the temple (9). Price on the

other hand is more positive in his identification (10).

No separate section on the Macedonians is needed, owing to the simple fact that this is the one kingdom of the Diadochi that did not have divine kingship. According to Nock this is not due to any lack of contact with the East, but to age-old and clearly defined rules of monarchy (11). Habicht lists various cults of Macedonian rulers outside Macedonia, mainly in Greece (12).

Several recent works by Hammond and Walbank confirm this impression, the Macedonian state being of a different kind than the typical Hellenistic ones (13). Heroic cults were performed at the tomb of Philip II, but this is no innovation as such (14).

A famous instance of the last stage of Hellenistic ruler cult is the case of Antiochus I of the petty kingdom of Commagene. Here a monument on the summit of Nemrut Dag - well known to the modern tourist - shows a row of five statues, including Antiochus himself, commemorating the foundation of a state cult of Commagene, which was an internal reaction to the external threat of Roman expansion. The king is called "theos, dikaios, epiphanes, philoromaïos, philhellenos" according to the inscription (15).

## V) HELLENISTIC RULER CULT - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

"What is a god? - That which is strong. What is a king?"



- he who is equal to the divine". (1)

The preceding sections have considered certain aspects of the Hellenistic ruler cult, from Alexander through the Diadochoi and Epigoni. We are approaching the important question of the accommodation to Roman power on the part of the Greeks. But some general conclusion is desirable.

The imposition of monarchy over the flourishing and proudly autonomous Greek city is what the Hellenistic ruler cult is all about: how to relate city to the king. (2) The cities - we are not considering new foundations - attempted to come to terms with royal power by representing it to themselves in the form long used for the gods. Monarchy was an innovation, in need of ruler cult. The obvious exception here was Egypt where monarchy was already established.

The new relation between ruler and city that came into existence was not so static as often envisaged. Hellenistic ruler cult shows stages and modifications in its history: at first cults were closely parallel to divine cults, but as the relationship between city and king gradually settled down, the initial pressures which had led to the establishment of the cults lessened. These conclusions Price offers - they coincide with those of Fishwick on the whole - after a study of the sacrifices in question, a topic to which we will return later (3). However, there is no lack of continuity in the Hellenistic ruler cults, as the study of artistic and numismatic sources

amply demonstrates - all the Hellenistic kings, and Roman emperors for that matter, are in some way or other imitating the Alexander iconography: the "inspired ruler", the "heavenly-gazing ruler", the "apotheosis indicated by the long hair" are features that run through all the centuries in question (4). At the root of this iconography is an imitation of Zeus (5).

The later and more ambiguous stage is witnessed by the many sacrifices "on behalf of" rather than "to" the ruler (6). Hellenistic times show the interesting shift from sacrifices "to" to sacrifices "for" the king, while Roman times show us that the sacrifice "for" is the rule rather than "to", which is the exception. This observation is one of the most interesting points made by Price in his article on the subject. There were many objections against treating men as gods when we look at sacrifices, and the study of sacrifices will help us to understand better how they differentiated between gods and men.

When the ruler cult began among Greeks the sacrificial language was more directly divine than when it had become an established tradition, and it is this ambiguous attitude - vague and imprecise - that the Romans inherit (7). It was very uncommon to build a full temple to the ruler, while sanctuaries and altars are the common expression. Price states that only 2 or 3 examples of temples are witnessed: the perception that the cults were transitory and might have to be changed - because they were focused on the living ruler and not the dead one - was

responsible for the absence of royal temples (8). This transitory character of the Hellenistic ruler cult was succeeded by the stability and permanence of the Augustan times (9).

But, as we have seen in the previous sections, the Greeks centered cults not only on rulers but also on benefactors. Both were worshipped as incarnations of gods (Zeus, Apollo, Asclepius, Hera, Aphrodite, etc.) or demi-gods (Hercules and Dionysus in particular). It is for this reason that Nock argues that the Greek ruler cult is essentially Greek in its inspiration and not oriental (10).

To interpret this as a degradation of traditional religion has long been a commonplace among historians of Greek religion, but is according to Price a far too simple model. Certainly times were changing and political leadership became more of a challenge in the time before Alexander when cities were faced with the problem of accommodating the new power of an individual citizen. But to read the Hellenistic ruler cult in general as another version of heroic honours and benefactor cults is to misunderstand the cult - it was distinctly divine (11). Hero cult with its association with mortality would have been an inappropriate classification system for a king.

Heroic honours and individual cults were ended by Augustus - the new cult is imperial and uniform. Cults of individuals - Greeks or Romans - were no longer possible. The whole power-system of the Greek cities had changed

with the imperial age. Some few petty kingdoms and vassal kingdoms were allowed to exist - often along the borders of the empire - and here the traditions of Hellenistic ruler cult continued to flourish. But this was the exception. The Roman emperor was from now on successor to the Ptolemies and Seleucids. In Macedonia the imperial cult came as an innovation, elsewhere on the Greek mainland it followed already established patterns.

## 2) THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS

The **G**reeks adapted to **R**oman power by means of their ruler cult. This took place in two stages: i) under the **R**epublic and ii) under the **E**mpire.

The republican stage knew cults of **T**hea **R**oma and the **S**enate as well as individual governors or benefactors. It lasted for almost hundred years, during the turbulent period of the late republic.

The imperial stage centralized the cult in a radical way, by focusing on the emperor and his family alone. **T**hea **R**oma and the **S**enate continued to be venerated alongside the newcomers, and proved to be directly useful when the imperial cult was to be established.

We shall discuss the two stages separately.

### I) CULTS OF INDIVIDUAL ROMANS

The integration of a foreign power - the **R**oman - into the **G**reek scene has for a long time been interpreted as the initial stage of that "adulatio graeca" that flourished in a full sense under the empire. A relatively recent and typical contribution to this debate is that by **B**owersock (1965), who reads the whole **R**IC as merely a diplomatic game. The main points of this view can be summarized as follows:

- "As the democratic constitutions of the **G**reek cities were gradually modified in an oligarchic direction,



cults of **Romans** proliferated". (1)

- "**Graeca adulatio**" had an important place in the system of personal relations between **Greeks** and **Romans**. A **Roman** might be called a city's benefactor, its saviour, or its founder; or, in more instances than are often realized, he might be assigned a cult. But benefactor cults were nothing new in the **Hellenistic** world and were, in fact, merely a more extravagant form of honour than the simple title "benefactor" or "saviour" without imputations of divinity". (2)

- "**Rome's** partisans acquired greater and more permanent power and were thereby enabled to manipulate the **Greek** system of honours in the interest of confirmed or prospective patrons". (3)

- "The **Greek** and **Roman** institutions fused together with marvellous ease and gave added impetus to the diplomatic activity of the late **Republic**". (4)

- "**Greek** honours will have been engineered by affluent and highly placed friends of **Rome**, who could use their influence either in the interest of an acknowledged patron or, in times of crisis and uncertainty, to secure a patron". (5)

- "They exhibited adhesion to a great **Roman** and anticipated the bestowal of favours in compensation". (6)

- "**Monarchs** and benefactors had been accorded cults as tokens of gratitude and of political adhesion... The highest honour was worship, disclosing little about the religious life of the **Hellenic** peoples but much about their ways of

diplomacy". (7)

To Bowersock it is all a story of "how the Greeks adapted themselves so easily to the clientela system" (8). It is, according to him, not a religious question at all, as it indeed never had been under the Hellenistic rulers. By interpreting the cult of individual Romans as a way of establishing the Roman clientela system on Greek soil Bowersock reduces the religious aspect to a mere political matter, as he similarly does with Hellenistic ruler cult. It is all a question of diplomacy: "Apart from the worship established by ruling, the initiative will have come from the politically alert segments of municipal or provincial society and inevitably from those who could afford to pay the expenses of games" (9). "Cults were costly affairs: it was precisely the Roman partisans who could both obtain the honours and underwrite their expenses" (10).

In this way he answers the question of "what does it all mean": "the late republican cults were thus integrally tied to the diplomatic relation between Rome and the East". We are faced here with "another manifestation of the system of reciprocal personal support by which Roman rule and the eastern aristocracies simultaneously acquired stability" (11). - His examples of the cults in question are listed in our Appendix 2.

A "system of mutual exchange", a political and at the same time personal and communal relationship is precisely the key to Price's reading of the same evidence, but in a way that explains the religious language in question - that

of divine cult - something which **Bowersock's** model does not, since his reading is not open to the religious dimension properly speaking, either in the case of **Hellenistic** rulers, individual **Roman** benefactors or magistrates, or in the case of the emperor himself. - Understood along the lines established by **Bowesock** the Jewish and **Christian** protests against ruler cult become difficult to understand since there was no religious issue at all, except for the simple-minded or ignorant.

This position is useful to repeat here since it has been popular for a long time and **Bowersock** in a way is a late example of this interpretation, so favoured by older generations of scholars. It is a recent echo of the situation in scholarship which **Price** describes when he states that "little advance has been made in our understanding of the imperial cult since the fundamental studies by **Nock** and **Taylor** fifty years ago" (12). And he continues: "if the imperial cult is treated as an aspect of a decadent religion or as a counter in an elaborate game of politics there is naturally no incentive to study the cult itself" (13). - Actually **Bowersock** recanted after the publication of **Price's** study (evidence for this is a review that is quoted on the back cover of the paperback edition of **Price's** work. Actually I had the occasion to discuss this - among many other points - with **Price** himself during a visit to **Oxford** in 1990).

Cults of **Thea Roma** were in this sense a first step towards internationalization of the **Greek** city, whereby

they would later become linked to the imperial cult. The cult of the goddess **Rome** at **Smyrna** goes back to **195 B.C.** (14).

Cults of individual republican **Romans** are well known in some cases: the cult of **Sulla** at **Athens**, which resulted from the sack of **Athens** in **86 B.C.**, lasted only a few years (15); **Verres** in **Syracuse**, called "soter", celebrated with games and with a gilded statue (16). **Cicero** himself is reported to have been disappointed in a wish for **Greek** honours (17). **Caesar** was given honours, divine and secular, throughout the **East** in **48 B.C.** (after the victory at **Philippi**) - at **Rome** he became "synnaos **Quirini**" after the battle of **Munda** in **45**, when his "eikon" was placed in the temple of **Quirinus** (the deified **Romulus**) (19); a "hieros gamos" between **Mark Anthony** and **Athena** was celebrated at **Athens**, an act which **Nock** dryly describes as no more than a witty figment, or part of a campaign of calumny from **Octavian** ! (20); **Germanicus**, on the other hand, refused the titles "soter" and "euergetes", by an edict of **A.D. 19** to the **Alexandrians**, a refusal for which **Nock** finds political motives (21). But **Nock** makes a very important observation when he, in his study on temple-sharing, underscores that these individual **Roman** benefactors, magistrates or imperators did not obtain the honour of having a cult statue in **Greek** temples and sanctuaries, but had to do with images - "eikones"- to which certain sacrifices could be offered. As such these cults were

merely preparatory for the temple-sharing of imperial times.  
(22).

The cults of individual Romans, benefactors or imperators, appear from ca. 200 B.C. onwards, but are mostly to be found in the first century B.C. They are best interpreted as a sign of increasing autonomy of the cities, that is: a new stage in the political development of the Hellenistic East where a new power - Rome - had to be accommodated. The Greeks employed the traditional cults of heroes and benefactors - divine cult was for kings - in order to make present to themselves the external power facing them. Actually, such cults were more widespread than the Hellenistic royal cults.

The cults of individual Romans came to a natural close after the battle of Actium, when Octavian organized the new imperial cult in the East from 29 onwards.

## II) THE CULT OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR

This section will deal with the integration of the Roman emperor into the Greek system, and at the same time continue to compare the different models used by different scholars in an attempt to explain the rise of the cult. - An outline of the main features of the cult itself will have to wait until the next section.

The discussion that follows will largely consist in comparing the views of Price with those of Bowersock and



**N**ock before him. **I**n spite of fundamental differences of approach there are some important points of contact between the old and the new understanding.

"**T**he first man in **R**ome when controlling the **E**ast, could not evade, even if he wished, the ranks and attributes of a king or a god". (1)

"**I**ts immense popularity (viz. the **RIC**) brought about a gradual change. **T**he problem of **G**reek loyalty was largely solved. **T**he world became the **G**raeco-**R**oman instead of the **R**oman world". (2)

"**O**n the whole, **R**ome, while regulating provincial cults, did not necessarily take any cognisance of civic cultus and did not as a rule object to an exaggerated homage unless attention was officially called to it". (3)

"**W**hen **H**orace speaks of **A**ugustus as **M**ercury in human form (**C**arm. 1, 2. 41) he is not uttering the casual flattery of a court poet, but rather what would in the **G**reek **E**ast be a commonplace". (4)

"**T**hus the same reasoning that inclined to divinize **A**lexander and the **H**ellenistic kings worked to deify **A**ugustus... **T**here was no way to explain a power so prodigious without appeal to a divine nature residing in the soul of **A**ugustus". (5)

**I**n the case of **A**ugustus universal monarchy resulted in a universal religion, on a much larger scale than the **G**reeks had known under the **H**ellenistic monarchies, to say nothing

of individual **R**epublican benefactors. The **R**oman emperor emerged as the ruler of a pre-existent empire, that of the late **R**epublic and the imperators, in contrast to the untraditional and innovatory **H**ellenistic monarchies (6).

As we have seen in Chapter 1 **A**ugustus had enormous success in cloaking his position in a variety of constitutional forms, the so-called "veiled monarchy". For the most part the emperors who succeeded him did not feel the need to promote their own cults and indeed tended to discourage offers made to them. But in the **E**ast nothing was "veiled", as a famous inscription from **P**riene makes abundantly clear: "...the birthday of the god ("theos") **A**ugustus was the beginning ("arche") for the world of the good tidings ("euangelion") that came by reason of him" (7). The inscription is a proposal on behalf of the province of **A**sia to start the new year on **A**ugustus' birthday. It reveals the very different nature of the **R**IC in the **E**ast.

**O**ctavian did regulate the cult in 29 B.C., during his journey through **A**sia. He allowed - as mentioned in Chapter 1 - the **R**omans of the provinces of **A**sia and **B**ithynia to build temples to **R**oma and **D**ivus **J**ulius at **E**phesus and **N**icaea - in special precincts (an indirect form of cult of **A**ugustus), and the **G**reeks to build temples to **R**ome and **A**ugustus in **P**ergamum and **N**icomedia (a more direct cult). These temples were all new. They represent a case of "temple-sharing": **A**ugustus and **T**hea **R**oma. As such the cult was a new foundation and at the

same time in continuity with what was there already, a cult of **Thea Roma** in the **East**. A famous passage from **Josephus** easily comes to mind, where he is describing the temple which **Herod the Great** built to **Augustus** at **Caesarea Maritima**: "In the middle there is a hill on which is a temple of **Caesar** which you see as you sail in, and there is a cult image ("agalma") of **Rome** and one of **Caesar** (8).

The cult of **Augustus** - while he was still **Octavian** - is not a continuation of the benefactor cults ("euergetes", "ktistes") of the **Roman** magistrates of the **Republic** - as **Bowersock** maintained - but rather is an assimilation of the ruler to the divine cult, which the study of the cult itself strongly indicates. Here the work of **Price** marks a considerable advance over that of his predecessors.

For **Bowersock** **Augustus** simply continued the republican tradition, and he finds "the origins of the eastern imperial cult in republican worship of **Roman** magistrates and **Dea Roma**...there was no need for him to institute a new policy for the **East**...it was nothing he had to do to make it happen, except to defeat **Anthony**" (9). Interpreted along these lines the new imperial cult was nothing new, but a mere dynastic cult developing from a tradition of magistrate worship (10).

Actually, **Bowersock** - before recanting - had to admit that there were problems with his theory (the model of the republican cults) and accepted the innovatory feature of a

dynastic cult during the empire, a kind of cult the Greeks had known under the kings (11).

It is important to stress that cults of individual Romans came to a halt after A.D. 29. Augustus brought an end to it all, albeit with some modifications: although "soter" and "ktistes" disappear from honorific inscriptions of magistrates sent out from Rome, "euergetes" was allowed (12). Augustus was, in other words, not trying to Romanize the East - Thea Roma was already an old goddess in this part of the world and had shared her worship before (13). Augustus did in fact accept Greek traditions of ruler cult within the design of his new imperial policy, and this model - which is that of Price's - gives a far better framework for understanding the innovation of Augustus.

To repeat: the cult of Roma and Augustus was commonly built on new foundations, but sometimes resulted from a temple-sharing with a pre-existing cult of Thea Roma (14). These cults were organized by the provincial "koinon", the provincial assembly.

Returning for a moment to the model used by Bowersock, all this reads like a clever game of diplomacy exclusively: Greek zeal had to be tempered, since formal recognition of excessive eastern adulation would have looked bad in Roman eyes. "The Emperor stipulated that his cult must be shared with that of the goddess Roma...a shared cult seemed more modest and provided no difficulty to the Greeks" (15).

It is important to note that by not observing the

distinction between benefactor cult and divine cult, **Bowersock** missed the point when discussing the **RIC**, and accordingly never focused on the cult itself. **Price**, on the other hand, finds two different models to be operative in these cases - that of divine kingship and that of benefactors, something that his study of the cult brings out to the full. Even if there seems to be overlapping between the two in some cases, the model of divine cult explains why the cult of the **Roman** emperor became so popular and why the **Christians** so vehemently protested against it, as the **Jews** had done under their **Hellenistic** rulers. - The **Roman** emperor represents the reappearance of a dynastic cult along the model of divine cult and not just a continuation of the old republican system. The initiative came from the **Greeks** and not from the **Romans**: the cult of **Augustus** was the result of a popular outburst of gratitude and enthusiasm, along **Greek** traditional lines, which was accepted by the **Romans** according to certain regulations.

Another point in question is very clarifying, one that we will return to in more detail in the following sections.

The **Greeks** lacked the means used in the **West** for establishing a ruler cult. No "indirect" or "veiled" monarchy is possible, because they did not have this model at their disposal, royal theology having been of a more direct kind. We see this most clearly from the vocabulary of the **Greek** imperial cult. There is no equivalent to the term "divus" save "theos", "theios" being too weak besides lacking precedence in the cult of monarchs.



The main difference between East and West, however, is the Greek tradition of concentrating on the living ruler: they knew of no apotheosis of the dead one and had no ritual for such an event. It was totally superfluous according to their model (16).

But - and this is another important point to be observed - the Greeks nevertheless felt the need to modify their language concerning rulers. It was difficult to place the reigning emperor on exactly the same level as that of the traditional gods, the twelve Olympians. Even if the cult is modelled on that of the gods (with priests, altars, sacrifices, temples and festivals) the emperor himself must somehow be understood to belong to an intermediate category - that of being similar to and under the special protection of the gods, and in this way understood to be superhuman, but never totally assimilated.

A category "between god and man" is what the Roman emperor came to represent - also in the Greek East - even if he is closer to gods than to men here. Price speaks of a "failure to create a clear intermediate category for the emperor" (17), and underscores at the same time the advantage of such an ambiguity: the key to a correct interpretation of the imperial cult in the East is the study of the cult, that is, ritual. A clearly defined theology on behalf of the Greeks is missing, and the cult itself becomes our principle guide when trying to answer such questions. This is ultimately the greatest strength of Price's study.

The easiest way to illustrate the intermediate and equivocal position of the emperor is by studying the practice of sacrifices and of temple-sharing. Both derive from the practice of divine cult.

"I have tried to show that the imperial honours were in general not fully parallel with those of the gods" (18). What Price is referring to here is the habit of sacrificing "for" - i.e. "on behalf of" - and not directly "to" the emperor (the ambiguity caused by Greek grammar, expressing both in the dative, will be discussed later). The study of sacrifices as such is important for understanding the nature of the cult, and leads to the need for establishing an intermediate category - "between god and man" - though closer to the former than to the latter. This model is slightly more complex than just assimilating the emperor to the gods, and Price talks of "the falsity of the picture sometimes presented of the emperor as an unquestioned god in the East" (19).

Since there is no clearly articulated theology here, the position of the emperor vis à vis the gods is vague and ambiguous - as it was intended to be. Nevertheless he belongs to the sphere of divine cult, as the study of sacrifices demonstrates. While humans were honoured by statues and arches, the gods were honoured by sacrifices - "to" in the case of higher deities, "for" in the case of lower ones.

The picture is quite varied.

We will return to the position of Nock for a moment.

He comments: "the essential point... is the ease with which an ancient could put what we should call human honours and what we should call divine honours on a level without any inevitable mental confusion between the objects of each or the categories to which those objects belonged" (20). The dedications "on behalf of individuals" is the background for the numerous dedications coupling a god and an emperor: **IHDD** ("in honorem domus divinae") in the West and "theois kai sebasto kaisari" in the East. "In West and East alike all and any acts religious and secular can be described as done for the emperor's welfare or in his honour" (21).

This led **Nock** to emphasize the model of hero cult in preference to divine cult, a model where there is a supposed relationship, but where one is subordinate to the other (22). But he did acknowledge the existence of the divine model as well - the altars and dedications to the gods - "on behalf of an individual", "in honour of the man named", being "in a sense a gift to him" - "which is to a modern mind more strange" (23). But to **Nock** these are exceptions.

In spite of the different approach used compared to that of **Price's**, **Nock** has nevertheless rendered the study of the imperial cult a great service by indicating a solution like the one "between god and man", something **Price** does not hesitate to acknowledge (24). But he has the disadvantage of working from a model of a cult (hero-cult and benefactor cult) that is too low for kings

and emperors.

A further sign of the legitimacy of an intermediate category is the frequently collective nature of the imperial cult among the **Greeks**: the cult of the "sebastoi", "who consisted of an indeterminate number of members of the imperial house, past and present" (25). The question of how ruler cult can be interpreted is best answered by studying how ruler cult consisted in adapting to a new centre of power - the **Romans** - in traditional religious terms. And the study by **Nock** does precisely this in the manner frequently referred to in past passages as "temple-sharing", that is: the emperor being "synnaos" with one of the traditional gods, even **Thea Roma**.

"Temple-sharing", then, indicates that the imperial cult is modelled on the divine cult, but does at the same time support the view of the emperor having a status between god and man. For the question the **Greeks** faced was how to incorporate the new element of the **Roman** emperor into existing models. It should however be made explicit that this is not the only mode of coexistence between gods and emperors: there are enough examples of cults to the "sebastoi" (a dynasty or a house) alone, or a single emperor as such, to which we will return.

The best known examples of temple-sharing are the cults of **Roma** and **Augustus** (where the cults of **Thea Roma** are already in existence, as at *Nicomedia and Pergamum*), of **Trajan** and **Zeus Philios** at **Pergamum**, **Caracalla** and **Asclepius** also at **Pergamum** (26). While **Nock** is

surprised at how little temple-sharing we find, **Price's** reaction is the contrary. They approach the same material from opposite presuppositions: one, that divine cult is the exception - the other, that it is the rule.

But temple-sharing need not be based on old and existing cults. There can be new foundations, as is the case with **Trajan** at **Pergamum**. But even here it is not a question of full assimilation of the human to the divine: coins show **Trajan** as respectfully approaching the seated **Zeus** (27). The **Roman** emperor has moved into the new temple of **Zeus Philios** at **Pergamum** - they are cohabitants from the outset - but a distinction between the two is still observed.

The reason that **Nock** is so impressed at how scanty the evidence is for temple-sharing (cfr. "to sum up, there is really very little evidence in support of widespread temple-sharing" (28)), is partly that he is reacting against the work of **W.M. Ramsay**, who saw this as the rule, the emperor being naturally "synnaos" and "symbemos" with the local deities (29). It is in order to clear up this misunderstanding that **Nock** specifies some points of interest. The cult of **Augustus** and **Roma** at the **Artemision** at **Ephesus** (30) is not temple-sharing between the **Anatolian** Mother goddess and the **Roman** ruler, but a new joint foundation, having a separate precinct (31). Likewise at **Cyzicus**: there was an "eikon" (cult-image, not statue) of **Livia Augusta Nikephoros** at the temple of **Athena Polias**, and "here there is no doubt



that temple and cult were shared" (32). Another possible example listed by Nock is that of Claudius sharing a high priest with Dionysus (33). Hadrian had his "eikon" in the Parthenon at Athens (34) and at the Olympeum in the same city (35) as well as at Cyzicus where he was a 13th god (36). Later Julia Domna shared the Parthenon with Athena Polias (with a golden "agalma" - cult statue - and sacrifices) (37). Concerning the cult of Caracalla at Pergamum Nock describes this as follows: "it is thinkable (but no more)" while Price regards this cult as certain (38). At Smyrna Caracalla shared the temple of Roma, giving the city its third neocoria (39). Elagabal later shared the cult of Demeter at Nicomedia, again giving a third necoria to the city in question (40). The same emperor shared a cult with Apollo at Philippopolis in Thrace and was admitted to the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, giving the city its fourth neocoria (41). Gallienus was "synnaos" with Apollo at Side (42). For a synopsis of such cases, see Appendix 1.

A list such as this does not impress Nock, who is working from non-divine models in his overall understanding of the cult. But once approached from different presuppositions it is impressive enough. The fact that the model of hero-cult is too low in our context is of crucial importance. The model of the Olympian divinities, and an understanding based on an assimilation of the emperor to these, explains the features of the cult as we know them and as will be explained in the following section (43).

Another feature of the cult is, of course, the identifications, a topic much beloved by Nock. This practice comes from subjects, as "a variant form of homage. Identifications with divinities alternate with the plain divine title" (44). Famous examples of this kind of homage are: Mark Anthony - "neos Dionysos", Nero - "Zeus Eleutherios", Antinous - "neos Pythios", Hadrian - "neos Zeus", Augustus - "neos Hermes". "These identifications are sporadic and they are, I think, characteristically Greek: the ruling personage is recognized as another form of the particular deity, and this happens more often in private dedications - which are irresponsible - rather than in temple designations" (45). Since Dionysus is a semi-god Nock finds him particularly significant, perhaps the most popular, incorporating elements from many gods (46). Caligula is a well known example of an epithet - or identification - not often given to emperors: "Zeus epiphanes neos" (47).

When it comes to interpreting the significance of such identifications Nock is in no doubt that it means "the gods conceived as protecting the emperor", which largely coincides with the view of Price as the emperor somewhere "between god and man" (48). Nock quotes many other identifications from the bases of statues of dedication: from Cos - "Aesculapios kaisar", from Lesbos - "Ioulia kaisaros thygatri Aphrodite", from Egypt - "Zeus eleutherios sebastos", from Alabanda - "Apollonos eleutheriou sebastou", from Ancyra - Galba represented as

the traditional Anatolian god Men on a coin, and later Caracalla likewise (49). But he finds "such an attitude not the normal form of ruler-worship; it is something extra" (50). This is partly in opposition to Ramsay, for whom this kind of identification is the normal solution to ruler cult in the East, when to Nock it is an extra, and often of a private and irresponsible kind (51).

Evidence often used against the model of divine cult is the frequent refusals mentioned in Chapter 1.

They occur already during the reign of Augustus, are typical of Tiberius and Claudius and reoccur at regular intervals for centuries. The point made by many students of the imperial cult is that these refusals of divine honours are mere formality: the emperors decline them in theory - which was safest in Rome - but accept them in practice, something that Price also is aware of (52). Instead of reading them as evidence of "sensibility" on the part of the emperor in Rome, they should rather be understood as part of the interchange between subject and ruler. It was essential that permission be granted by Rome, through the Senate, selecting an office to supervise the constructions in question. A city with an imperial cult and temple, was rewarded with the title "temple-warden" - "neokoros". The cult was officially approved and the title was decreed by the Senate. Non-fulfilled promises were penalized by the emperors (as in the case of Tiberius and the city of Cyzicus).

To free cities the honour of being "neokoros" became

important. Politically it gave a free city a legitimization of loyalty to the ruling monarch, and was as such a very Greek occurrence, also concerning the Greeks in Italy (53). It represents what Price calls a "a system of exchange", an exchange of gifts, a way of relating periphery to center, to bring the political and religious center of the empire into the civic space of the city, a religious form of internationalizing the Greek city. The initiative comes "from below", that is from the city itself, issued by decree, forwarded by an embassy to Rome most often in connection with requests concerning privileges or on other matters (54).

Some important cities were neokoros several times, as mentioned above: Ephesus, Pergamum, Milet, Smyrna. Sometimes the status of being "temple-warden" was granted by the emperor when he was travelling about, as in the well known cases of Hadrian and Caracalla (55). The use of the Senate for a final decision was, however, the normal procedure and clearly helped to dissipate any awkwardness in the emperor accepting his own honour (56). Initiative from above was not normal procedure under Roman rule - unlike certain Hellenistic kingdoms, in particular Egypt - but occurred when the emperor promoted the cult of relatives and associates, as in the case of Antoninus Pius and Faustina, or Hadrian and his favourite Bithynian ephebe Antinous (57). The rumour that Gaius wanted to take over the temple of Apollo at Didyma is probably slander, but circulated long enough to reach Dio.

The establishing of the cult normally took place under the aegis of the provincial governor, who was both the initiator on behalf of the city and the regulator of the cult on behalf of the emperor, a fact which according to Price further "demonstrates the complexity of the system that constituted the cult" (58). The request for a cult would normally go through him. The cult in turn became a test for the political loyalty of the citizens, or could at least be used as such.

One famous example of this is the trial of Christians in Bithynia under Pliny (59), where we find that the imperial cult was a threat to the integrity of the Christians, in a way which clearly indicates that religious attitudes were at stake. Pliny put up the bust of the emperor together with those of the traditional gods: after having refused to sacrifice to the gods the Christians were asked to sacrifice to the emperor. Some yielded and some refused. The latter were executed while the former were set free.

This pattern recurs throughout the first centuries of the Christian era in the context of the persecutions: when refusing to sacrifice to the gods they are sometimes given another test through the imperial cult. The outcome of this "second chance" was, however, equally disastrous for the Christians as the "first chance" had been, that of sacrificing to the gods. They were in little doubt about the element of idolatry involved in the practices of the RIC (60), as the Jews had been under the Greeks (61).



In this respect the early Christians showed themselves as heirs to the Jewish tradition from the outset, as we will discuss more fully in chapter 3.

### 3) THE IMPERIAL CULT AS RELIGION

"Because men address him as **Augustus** in view of his claim to honour they revere him with temples and sacrifices over all the islands and continents, in cities and tribes, requiting him for the magnitude of his virtue and his benefactions towards them" (1).

This section is based on the works of **Price**, i.e. his monograph and his preceding articles on sacrifices and the **Greek** vocabulary used in the cult (2). This is the only systematic study of the **Greek** forms of the cult, as stated several times already. **Taylor** concentrated her study on the **Latin** forms of the cult, mainly in **Rome**, while the new substantial work by **Fishwick** (new volumes are still appearing) covers the entire **West**. We are, in other words, in the very fortunate position of having major studies of the cult appearing at approximately the same time, resulting in a more or less complete overhauling of this field of study.

By studying the cult itself **Price** approaches the old question of "what does it all mean" from a practical rather than a theoretical point of view. It is not the theology of the cult which is the key to the mystery but its practice - not orthodoxy but orthopraxy. By such a method it becomes easier to answer the theoretical questions in their turn. We will present his most important findings and deal with the forms of the cult in this order:

- i) sacrifices
- ii) images
- iii) priesthoods
- iv) festivals
- v) popularity
- vi) the model of divine cult and politics

## I) SACRIFICES

An analysis of the sacrifices involved in the cult of the Roman emperor is one of primary importance, since sacrifices constitute the core of this religious model (3). "If the imperial cult is treated as an aspect of a decadent religion or as a counter in an elaborate game of politics there is naturally no incentive to study the ritual itself", Price remarked in 1980 (4). This complaint is repeated in his substantial study from 1984 (5). The whole point of scrutinizing the forms of the cult is precisely to find what the relation between the gods and the Roman emperor was like. Because of the lack of a theology of the imperial cult it is in this way that he arrives at his vital distinction between the gods and emperor - the status of the emperor "between [god] and [man]", in a modern idiom. This he can do on the basis of the vital distinction between sacrifices "to" and sacrifices "for"/"on behalf of" the emperor. The work of Price therefore represents an important revision in this field of study, since both the contributions in Den Boer (6) and

in **Habicht** (7) give insufficient attention to the question by following old patterns of investigation.

The material is very scant, containing some regulations only, and **Price** gives this assessment of the evidence: "the problem is that such regulations specify only what was open to doubt, not what was taken for granted" (8). Dedicatory inscriptions are thus the bulk of the evidence and they are of two kinds: dedications "to" and "for" the emperor, i.e. direct and indirect. - The difference between the two is significant.

The **Greeks** had no language of apotheosis and no category of "divus", only "theos" (9). This explains part of the situation concerning sacrifices: they are modelled on the divine cult - heroic honours are too low in this context (10) - but not in the way of direct identification with the **Olympians**. According to **Price** the vast majority of imperial sacrifices are of the indirect kind, and only exceptionally do we find evidence for direct sacrifices. The percentage in question is something like 99 to 1 (11).

Direct sacrifices are more frequently witnessed in the **Hellenistic** period than in the **Roman**: "there is an amount of direct sacrifice to specific, living **Hellenistic** kings which is very striking in comparison to the **Roman** material" (12). But also here, especially in the later period, there is a kind of shift: the dative used in dedications can mean either "to" or "for", a use intended to create a fundamental unclarity, as e.g. in the case of

**Attalus III** of **Pergamum** and **Arsinoe Philadelphus** in **Egypt** (13). Not all the imperial altars of **Roman** times guarantee sacrifices "to" the emperor in their dedications, but some only "for" (14).

But the few instances of direct sacrifice to the emperor are most important for the interpretation of the cult, since they bear witness to the model of divine cult. **Price** quotes some of these: procession to the **Caesareum** with sacrifices to **Augustus** at the games for **Augustus** at **Naples**, during his lifetime - **South-Italy** belonging to the **Greek** cultural sphere (15); quadrennial games in honour of **Augustus** at **Mytilene** in 27 B.C., where he was to be offered the same sacrifices as were offered to **Zeus** on his (i.e. **Augustus'**) monthly birthday (16), "It would seem that here at last the conventional wisdom is correct that **Augustus** was "an unquestioned god" (17); there is a witness from **Cos** (18); later in the second century sacrifices to **Julia Domna Athena** are offered at **Athens**, the fullest account we possess of direct imperial sacrifices. **Price** offers an interesting comment on this particular case: "it may however not be accidental that the sacrifices concerned not an emperor but an imperial woman. The power of such women as **Julia Domna** and **Livia** may have seemed anomalous to the **Greek** city" (19).

There is some evidence for direct sacrifices to the living emperor but never to the deceased (20).

The other type of dedication - "on behalf of" - is the norm: "the whole world sacrificed and prayed on behalf of



the emperor's eternal duration and unconquered rule" (21). This is the emphasis in our sources, "isotheoi timai" ("honours like those offered to the gods"), "but in a modified form, in harmony with the practice of temple-sharing discussed above (22). "Sacrifice on behalf of shows an avoidance of treating the emperor exactly as a god" (23). In other words: "language sometimes assimilated the emperor to a god, but ritual held back" (24). It should not be forgotten in this context that the emperors also sacrificed to the traditional gods themselves.

Where monarchy was well established - as in Egypt - all the known sacrifices are "on behalf of" with very few exceptions, as a result of the pharaonic<sup>h</sup> tradition. A large number of altars show joint dedications, which again is no definite proof for "direct" sacrifices since they are sacrifices "to" the god, or gods, and "for" the emperor in question, that is for his protection and special closeness to the god (25). There are no cases of sacrifices to the emperor on behalf of anything or anyone else (26).

While the Greeks do not make this distinction a hundred percent clear, we are fortunate enough to have evidence from a Jew who draws this distinction - between "to" and "for" - as clearly as possible. Philo, in his "Legatio ad Caium" discusses the issue in a most direct way.

While the Jews offered daily sacrifices on the emperor's behalf in the temple in Jerusalem (27) they refused to pray "to" him in the pagan sense of the word.

This was to become a great stumbling-block for the early Christians after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. The rejection of the contemporary sacrificial system became one of the major reasons behind the persecutions of the Christians - they no longer belonged to a sacrificial religion. Nor did the Jews, but they were a special case, a permitted case of "atheism", which the Christians were not. Alienation from the synagogue soon became fatal for the relationship between the infant Church and the Roman state. - Philo gives very valuable evidence on this whole issue, and the distinctions he makes are repeated by the early and genuine acts of the martyrs. Jews and Christians alike refused to sacrifice to the Roman emperor, because according to them he was only a man.

The "Legatio ad Caicum" draws the distinction between sacrifices "to" and "for" the emperor beautifully clearly (28). Gaius protests that when they sacrifice to another why can they not sacrifice to himself: "All right, that's as may be - you have sacrificed, but to another, even if it was on my behalf. What good is that if you have not sacrificed to me?" (29). Here are two special cases in an extraordinary constellation: the extravagant Gaius who was one of the few who promoted his own cult, so untypical of Roman rulers, and an exceptionally clear-minded Jewish philosopher who saw the issue better than any contemporary Roman or Greek could have done. "For" and "to" are two different things, we learn. - According to Price this distinction must be made in the case of imperial sacrifices

in general - the indirect kind of sacrifice - which served to put the emperor under the special protection of the gods, the distinction being "crucially presupposed by imperial pronouncements on sacrifice" (30).

Another interesting point is the tendency among Greeks to sacrifice to the emperors in a generic or collective way: sacrifices to the "sebastoi". This kind of sacrifice "served as an important way of avoiding the bluntness of direct sacrifice to the emperor himself", by avoiding the equation (31). This form of sacrifice should not be understood as the normal Greeks way of sacrificing for the emperor: it is one possibility, in addition to sacrifices on behalf of individual emperors or members of the imperial race.

The ambiguity is expressed by sacrificial dedicatory formulas such as "to the gods and the Sebastoi" or "on behalf of" the eternal perpetuation and security of their house (32). When the gods in question are not specified it may be due to different reasons: i) because gods "in general" is intended - ii) because this was a way of avoiding precision (33).

In the case of sacrifices "on behalf of" the emperor there are two sacrificial systems, as illustrated from the acts of the martyrs: i) wine or incense - ii) animals (34). Other types of sacrifices were lamps, ritual cakes, etc. (35). Both were performed before statues/busts or temples with altars. The correspondence between Pliny and Trajan shows how incense and wine were

sacrificed to the "imago" of Trajan and to the "simulacra" of the gods (unspecified) (36). At Gytheum on the Pelopponesus we know from a famous inscription that incense was offered at the theatre in front of the image of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius while a bull was sacrificed at the Caesareum "on behalf of rulers and gods and the eternal duration of their rule": "it is clear that no sacrifice was actually offered to the emperor at this festival in spite of the divine framework in which it was set" (37). Since white victims were sacrificed to the Olympian gods and dark ones to the chthonic deities, heroes and the dead, black and white animals were used to show the ambiguity of the cult (38). The most common kind of sacrifice would, however, have been incense or wine, the latter being far less expensive.

These types of sacrifices in the imperial cult continued all through pagan antiquity. Constantine accepted honours but dropped sacrifices, and incense was not acceptable in Christian liturgy for a long time to come.

Price's study of the cult also lists inscriptional evidence for the distinction between "to" and "for" in the language employed of the imperial priests: the "prothytes", "prothyo" indicating sacrifice "on behalf of" (39). Imperial priests had in other words a different function from the priests of the traditional gods, whose function was of a direct kind (40).

This category "between god and man" does not invalidate the claim to divinity on behalf of the Roman

emperor, but it shows a certain ambiguity and not a total assimilation to the **Olympic** gods. The emperor is intermediary between human and divine, and himself in need of protection. "Sacrifices were a way of articulating a large body of thought concerning the emperor by subtly modifying the practices of divine ritual" (41). In his article from 1980 Price adds the word "unformulated" to "thought" (42) in an otherwise identical passage, which emphasizes the fact that the imperial cult seemed to lack a theology as such - it consisted of cult on a divine model: "the sacrifices...should be seen as hovering on the border between preconscious and conscious" ... "Religion should be treated not as an emotional but as an intellectual enterprise which attempts to provide a way of interpreting and ordering reality" (43). This shift in emphasis, from "to" to "on behalf of", he finds evidence for already in Hellenistic times, and sees this as "a careful modification of the cult" and "a deliberate ambiguity" (44).

Such a modification does not, however, represent any obstacle to the emperor's claim to divinity, and the modification in question concerns only the divine cult, not heroic honours.

## II) IMAGES

"For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life, for neither have they existed from the beginning,



nor will they exist for ever. For through the vanity of men they entered the world, and therefore their speedy end has been planned. For a father, consumed with grief at an untimely bereavement, made an image of his child, who had been suddenly taken from him; and he now honored as a god what was once a dead human being, and handed on to his dependents secret rites and initiations. Then the ungodly custom, grown strong with time, was kept as a law, and at the command of monarchs graven images were worshiped. When men could not honour monarchs in their presence, since they lived at a distance, they imagined their appearance from away, and made a visible image of the king whom they honored, so that by their zeal they might flatter the absent one as though present. Then the ambition of the craftsman impelled even those who did not know the king to intensify their worship. For he, perhaps wishing to please his ruler, skilfully forced the likeness to take more beautiful form, and the multitude, attracted by the charm of his work, now regarded as an object of worship the one whom shortly before they had honoured as a man. And this became a hidden trap for mankind, because men, in bondage to misfortune or to royal authority, bestowed on objects of stone or wood the name that ought not to be shared" (1).

"We may say on the basis of inscriptions that for the Greeks the Roman emperor was a god. But that raises the question: what kind of god? How was a divine emperor, a Theos Sebastos, visualized?" (2).

"Greek religion was an iconic religion...the temples were built to shelter the gods" (3).

The iconic nature of Greek religion is one of its main features, Christian or pagan, and anthropomorphism is essential. The traditional religion derived its images of the gods from Homer and Hesiod, as for example in the case of the famous statue of Zeus at Olympia, by Pheidias, following closely descriptions from the Iliad. The imperial image followed in this tradition, being modelled upon the divine cult, as the Hellenistic ruler cult had been (4).

The vocabulary of images reflects a great variety of images. Both Scott and Price seem to have some difficulty in establishing the exact differentiation between the terms employed: "agalma" means a statue ("simulacrum"); "andrias" ("statua") means an honorific statue or image; "eikon" ("imago") seems to cover all meanings of representations of gods or rulers; the Latin equivalents are those established by Scott (5). Price admits that the relation between these terms is a complex one (6), and suggests that the difference perhaps seems to be one of location (7). The division between statues, busts and icons is however easily accepted by both. But the statues vary greatly in size, material and type.

We find basically two kinds of statues: life-sized and colossal. These both have important subdivisions: the life-size statue is either naked or civilian - the colossal

ones are either naked (as the gods), cuirassed (as warrior), or civilian (as princeps). While the former are honorific without expressing divine cult (they were put up in important buildings, in public squares, in wealthy homes etc.), the large ones are those used in the divine cult, and well known examples of these are the statue of Domitian from the temple at Ephesus (cuirassed), of Trajan from Pergamum (cuirassed) and of Hadrian (naked) etc. (8). The naked representation is, of course, the most directly divine, but all three types reflect various aspects of imperial rule. In addition there are the busts (in stone or metal) and the icons (in wood). While the life-sized statues can be put up in a number of places, the colossal ones are for use in a sacred space only (9). Naked and military representations, however, are only for emperors, not for citizens (10).

The colossal statue, then, is the most direct form of modelling the emperor on the gods. Here - in the case of the cuirassed statues - there is no shift from divine to military representations: all colossal statues are of the divine kind with or without any covering. But the form closest to that of the gods is the naked representation, which is the traditional representation of the gods for cultic use, used of kings in the Hellenistic ruler cult (11). But the representations are often historically conditioned - as in the case of the divine epithets discussed by Nock in relation to the Ptolemies and Seleucids - as for example in the case of Hadrian, who was

a most unmilitary emperor, but mostly is portrayed in the cuirassed form, because the "imperial victory" is central to the propaganda of the times (12). Another feature of the imperial portrait are the identifications mentioned above: Trajan assimilated to Zeus, Agrippina to Demeter, Gaius to Zeus, etc. (13). The civilian dress in such cases is either the Roman toga or the Greek himation. The recent excavations at Aphrodisias have revealed new examples of this classification and serve as illustrations to the work of Price (14). In addition to these categories the imperial image also can be found on crowns, cameos, gems, rings, etc.

The metals involved are important for interpreting the religious significance, as already mentioned in Chapter 1. Precious metals were considered divine honours and confined to emperors and gods, as already established in the Hellenistic period (15). The famous speech of Maecenas on this issue has been referred to in connection with Augustus and is direct evidence in our context, as it pertains to images in precious metals only (16). It was representations in gold and silver that were so strongly favoured by Gaius, Nero and Domitian.

Painted images - icons - are featured in the imperial cult, as for example witnessed at the imperial festival at Gythium in the Pelopponesus, already referred to. Here painted images of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius were placed in the theatre on a table, in front of which wine and incense were offered. The painted portraits followed the

armies and were an important feature of the cult among the legions. A third century witness reads: "What prayers ought cities to make to the power above, save always for the emperor? What greater blessings must one ask from the gods than the emperor's safety?... Full of images are the cities, some of painted tablets, some may be of more precious material" (17).

The imperial iconography was the creation of Rome, not of the Greeks. From the center, not from the periphery, came the representations of the emperor. The imperial image was very standardized, the same everywhere. It was not wholly realistic, but idealized according to the models of the divine cult in combination with the features of the emperor, as is most clearly demonstrated in the work by L'Orange. The case of Augustus is a well-known example of how the imperial image does not change through his long years of rule. The emperor does not age: of 250 copies only 3 types occur, all the copies fit into one of these types (18). Here numismatics teaches us the same basic lesson, with some more modifications, since coins in some cases show a clear difference between the image of the ruler at different stages of life, as for example in the case of Nero. The case of Domitian is also illuminating: the bust of Domitian the Caesar is a very inferior representation in comparison with the stately and god-like bust of Domitian the Augustus.

The procedures for diffusion of the imperial image would have been something like this: from Rome came copies



of the official type of representation (as moulds or plaster cast), while the actual statues of marble or bronze were worked in the provinces. Once the initiative was taken to create an imperial image, there was the pressure to conform (19). Deviant images were not tolerated by central authority. Images were in this way distributed from the centre even if the initiative came from the Greeks. Price mentions as an example of this relationship between centre and periphery that of the fifty odd imperial statues discovered at Ephesus: only 3 were erected by the Romans themselves while 50 are of local provenance (20). The imperial image thus bridged centre and periphery and for the local community the reception of the image of a new ruler would have been a basic event. By the same token the imperial image articulated the relation between the emperor and the gods. Only permanent statues were put in sacred precincts, and in this way the Roman emperor moved into the public, civic space of the Greek city: the agorai, the temples and sanctuaries. Secular images were not found in such spatial contexts, as they were not the object of cult (21).

Imperial architecture also witnesses to the model of divine cult in the case of the Roman emperor, because the imperial temples must be seen in the general context of temples to the gods. Their appearance is very traditional and they are not externally distinguishable from other temples (22). Some obvious examples come to mind: the temple of Augustus at Ancyra, of Domitian at Ephesus and

that of **T**rajan at **P**ergamum. **B**ut the imperial monuments show a great variety: beside temples ("naos" - also used of shrines, i.e. a small cult room within a larger structure), there are free standing buildings in their own sanctuary ("temenos" or "peribolos"). **W**e find "imperial rooms" ("oikos basilikos") in gymnasia and porticoes, a mere "temenos" (with altar and statue) but no building, an "imperial site" ("kaisareion" or "sebasteion" - the exact meaning is unclear) etc., but these did not approach the temples of the gods in grandeur or design (23). **O**n the whole the imperial shrines and temples are rather small - the largest **I** have seen in the **G**reek world is the temple to **A**ugustus at **A**ncyra. **W**here there is temple-sharing the imperial statue would be of a different size from a cult statue, i.e. not colossal, but life-size, illustrating the subordination involved in sharing the temple with one of the **O**lympians (24).

**T**hese imperial temples or sanctuaries were generally located in the most prominent and prestigious positions available within the city. **A**nd this is significant for the meaning of the cult both politically and religiously. **T**he imperial cult was an attempt by the **G**reek city to find a position for the ruler within the civic space rather than in a separate one. **E**pheesus readily comes to mind, where the city centre, as it is exhibited to tourists today, is full of monuments to the imperial cult. **T**his led to a formalization of the civic space of the **G**reek city in **R**oman times: it is more regulated. **T**his kind of change in

the cities under **Roman** rule corresponds to the restriction of the freedom of action in the late **Greek** cities. **Price** reads this ordering of space "as a representation of social ideas and as part of the fabric of reality" (25).

Considering the use of the imperial image for cultic purposes there are some basic observations to be made from the outset. While colossal or life-size images (statues) were stationary, busts and icons were carried in processions for religious purposes. A "sacristan" (not to be confused with the imperial priests who performed the rites) was the keeper of the image and saw to its being in good condition (26). Damage done to an imperial image was on the same level as sacrilege. The "**Acta Pauli et Theclae**" mentions an instance of such damage caused by Thecla to the image of the crown of an imperial priest - **Alexander** by name - which brought her the charge of "guilty of sacrilege" (27). The "**Historia Augusta**" mentions the execution of people for having urinated near imperial statues (28). Fines payable to imperial images are mentioned by **Price** (29).

The imperial image also functioned as place of refuge, as asylum, being a growth of the older practice of seeking "sanctuary" in a temple or shrine. One instance is mentioned in **Philostratos'** "**Vita Apollonii**" (30); **Pliny** mentions a case of a runaway slave (31). **Price** thinks this practice was particularly important in such cases (32). **Ulpian's** "**Digests**" tells of a seller of slaves who assures that the slave was neither a gambler, nor

a thief, nor had he ever fled to Caesar's statue (33). This whole practice derives, of course, from the divine cult and is discussed by the senate under Tiberius, according to Tacitus (34). A very clear illustration is to be found in the story of how the jurist Gaius was being consulted by the provincial governor as to slaves who took refuge at the temples of the gods or the statues of the emperors (35). On a different level we find petitions - "libelli" - being presented to the imperial image as another feature of its social function (36).

Stories about miraculous statues are not lacking, and Price takes care to mention some of these, as they are most relevant evidence for the model of the divine cult. Besides, they are well-known from the echoes of Jewish and Christian protests that we possess. The most famous example is that found in Lucian on Alexandros the false prophet, revealing the mechanisms used in the cult of the gods by clever priests, techniques that probably were common to the imperial cult as well.

Jewish and Christian protests sometimes re-echo such. The protest from the Book of Wisdom was quoted at the outset of this section and is often dated to the 1 c. A.D., but it seems difficult to pin down any exact date within this span and a date in the first century B.C. has also been favoured by scholars. If a date of the first century A.D. be correct, it is most likely the latter part of the century which is in question, a stage when the cult already had grown strong (37). For our purposes the

question of the dating of the **Book of Wisdom** is not very important, it makes its point clear, whether it comes from **Greek** or **Roman** times.

More than a century earlier the author of the book of **Daniel** had spoken of the golden statue of **Nebuchadnesar** (at least according to the **LXX**), which would have reflected the state of affairs under **Antiochus Epiphanes** (38). It should also be noted that the three young men in **Daniel 3** are counted as protomartyrs in ancient **Christian** tradition (39). The story of "**Bel and the dragon**" in **Daniel 14** also belongs to the number of protests found in **Jewish** tradition.

**Revelation 13** is in a more specific way attacking the manipulation of statues for religious purposes in the description of the second beast: the beast from the land is taken by **Charles** and many later commentators to signify the imperial priesthood, particularly in **Asia Minor** (40). Here we find that the image of the beast is speaking, which again reminds one of the kind of thing **Alexandros** the false prophet was practising. **Miraculous** statues are also referred to by **Price** (41).

When an emperor suffered "**damnatio memoriae**" it had great consequences for his image, as may well be understood: the features of the person in question were altered and the image reworked to the likeness of his successor (42). In the case of **Domitian** at **Ephesus** the statue was not changed, but in all likelihood taken to represent his brother **Titus** (though some think **Vespasian** to have been



more likely: see **Catalogue**), and the cult was transferred to the **Flavian** house as such, thereby surviving the emperor until **Christian** times (43). Both **Nero** and **Gaius** had suffered the same fate before him. **Price** talks of "orgies of destruction" (44). A famous passage in **Jerome** gives his satirical comments on such a process (45).

"Imperial mysteries" are also known (46), where the cult culminated in a hierophant revealing an imperial object, that is, an icon or a bust (47). The private cult of the emperor goes with the household religion, if not private sanctuaries. **Pliny** had a sanctuary in **Nicomedia** in **Bithynia**, being a great collector of imperial images, having himself been a "flamen **Titialis**" (48) - and **Price** mentions imperial statues erected by individuals, where dedications often are written on the bases (49).

Intellectuals laughed at these phenomena for being popular religion, one famous instance of this being found in **Plutarch's** essay "On Superstition" (50). Indeed, the Jewish and the **Christian** criticism was much of the same kind (51).

When the **Greeks** became **Christians** the object represented by the image changed, but not its function. A corollary to the theory behind the imperial image is accordingly to be found in the **Christian** theology of icons, as expounded by **John of Damascus** and **Theodore of Studium**. **Price** lists as evidence an interesting passage in **Athanasius'** third **Oration** against the **Arians** (52).

The argument is basically the same in the two cases: honour offered to an image goes to the person depicted. - Greek religion, pagan or Christian, is iconic, both after Constantine as well as before. "Indeed, the imperial image and the ceremony of imperial arrival seem to have had an influence on the growth of adoration of Christian icons and relics" (53).

### III) PRIESTHOODS

Another important topic in the study of the Roman Imperial Cult is the imperial priesthoods. We know of two main forms of such priesthoods under the empire: that of the Latin West and that of the Greek East.

In the West the imperial priests were one college of priests among others, being an innovation of imperial times, that is, after the death of Augustus (1). "Flamen" and "sodales" were the traditional priestly titles that now took on a new significance (2). A "flamen Julialis" was instituted in 44 B.C. (3) and a "flamen Augustalis" in 14 A.D. This college consisted of 21 men in the case of Rome, and was instituted by Tiberius. There can be no doubt that these men were of socially high rank. "Flaminicia" was the title of priestesses of the same cult, and was reserved for important ladies, such as members of the imperial household. Livia Drusilla was the "flaminicia" of Augustus after his apotheosis. The western practice concerns only deified members of the

imperial house, that is, the dead ones. This institution lasted throughout the entire pagan period of the empire: the synod of Elvira - AD 306 (4) - states in its canon 2 that if a Christian had sacrificed during his or her lifetime the person in question could not receive communion - canon 55 excommunicates all who have sacrificed to or for the emperor (5).

The East did not know such an institution. Here, with the exception, naturally, of the Roman colonies, the cult was focused on the ruling emperor (6). The Greek cities saw a maximum of imperial priests under Augustus, when the cult was instituted: 34 cities according to Price. Tiberius had fewer (c.11), and after him the practice declined numerically so that 3 or 4 became the normal number. Caracalla was the last to have a priesthood or a temple devoted specifically to him, the practice of collective cult of the "theoi Sebastoi" having become the normal solution, but, according to Price, the practice can be traced down to Valerian and Gallienus (7).

The function differed from that of the priesthoods to the traditional gods. The imperial priests - the "prothytes" - sacrificed "for" the emperor, not "to" (8). But the imperial priest also carried the titles of "archiereus" and "stephanophoros" (9). Through honorary inscriptions recording their offices such imperial priests are widely attested among the Greeks. "It is of course possible that these imperial priests also performed sacrifices to the emperor, but the mere attestation of

their sacrifices "on behalf of" the emperor demonstrates that these were at least considered to be their most important duties, and may have been their only ones" (10).

As mentioned above the terminology of the imperial priests as "prothytes" is taken by Price as evidence for this theory of sacrifice, "pro" signifying sacrifices "on behalf of", and not merely the category of priority, the right of the first sacrifice (11). The first stage in the development of this office among the Greeks was one of individual priesthood, the second was "generic" as mentioned above. The statues of imperial priests from Aphrodisias show crowns with busts of Aphrodite and of members of the imperial family. The story from the *Acta Pauli et Theclae* springs to mind, where Alexander the imperial priest was financing games (animal fights) and Thecla was condemned "ad bestias" for sacrilege after having smashed the crown with images (12). Price suggests a date of around A.D. 160. and the story has a setting in Pisidian Antioch (13).

In processions the imperial high priest used to wear purple, a right that was granted by the emperor alone (14). The title of "neokoros" - "temple-warden" - was also granted the imperial priests, though later it was applied to the city in question. The case of Ephesus serves as an illustration of this practice: after the erection of the temple to Domitian and the establishing of a prestigious cult in the city there was a need for a "neokoros" - and the city could boast of calling itself "twice neokoros" (the

first neocorate being that of the temple of **A**rtemis, not of an imperial temple). From the time of **H**adrian the term was taken up more widely and became a regular civic title indicating the possession of an imperial temple at which a provincial festival was celebrated (15).

Imperial priesthoods were held for life; normally they were inherited. **P**rice mentions an **E**phesian family that actually succeeded in maintaining a priesthood over five generations. The office could also arise from extreme competition, when for example one person or family succeeded in performing an extraordinary act of generosity, outstripping other members of the élite (16).

Social status is one of many features linked to such an office - the imperial cult was competitive from the outset. The **G**reek cities gained by having cults and priests, and in this way they had a dynamic relationship to the centre of the empire, the universal city, **R**ome itself. Seen as a mere game of politics and diplomacy this aspect of the cult has been described in the following way: "The cult, with its roots deep in the **R**epublic, was another means by which the favourites of **R**ome could rise to prestige and power, and eventually penetrate the **S**enate of the capital city" (17). But the model of **B**owersock somehow manages to avoid the religious issue of such priesthoods since it presents the promoters of the cult as a pro-**R**oman elite in the cities, above and beyond the people at large, and thereby misses the point of this being an essentially **G**reek reaction to the presence of **R**ome in



the city. Even if they were wealthy, cultivated and often endowed with Roman citizenship, they were Greeks and exhibit a characteristically Greek reaction to the new factor of the Roman emperor.

The cult was certainly very costly, and, by letting it be financed by individuals and not by the city as such, the office of the imperial priesthood was very attractive within the dynamics of the life of a Greek city in Roman imperial times. The imperial priests were in other words not professional, but lay officials. But their office was perhaps the "pinnacle of achievement" in the life of the city (18). Such a system also knew its darker sides: Pliny mentions one Claudius Aristio who was three times provincial high priest - in Ephesus, where he was the leading citizen - and caused envy, which led him to appear before Trajan's council (19). A famous example is the city of Smyrna where Aelius Aristides makes lengthy attempts to avoid the office of high priest of the provincial cult (20).

#### IV) FESTIVALS

The festivals of the imperial cult are another feature of its religious structure, besides the ones we have mentioned so far (temples, images, sacrifices, priesthoods). The various ingredients of the cult must be described - however briefly - otherwise the Greek vocabulary of the imperial

cult will appear in a vacuum. And this is what normally happens when the vocabulary is under discussion: the setting of this vocabulary - being cultic - is just mentioned but never described (1). Since the imperial cult has no clearly articulated theology, it is by studying the various elements of the cult that a kind of theology may be constructed. Festivals will again be dealt with in chapter 3 in relation to the early Christian protests.

The festivals of the imperial cult, then, are derived from the festivals of the divine cult, like all the other features we have looked at so far. There were three kinds of religious festivals in the Greek city at the time of the empire: the divine festivals - divine and imperial festivals in combination - the festivals of the "sebastoi" alone (2). A difference to be observed is that between sacrifices "to" and "for" as discussed in the article just referred to. It is perhaps legitimate to see these joint festivals as an expression of the same religious attitude as the one expressed by temple-sharing.

Since imperial festivals are derived from divine festivals they are sometimes added to the traditional cults, as for example to that of Artemis at Ephesus, and the Heraea of Samos (under the double title of "Sebasta Heraea" this was celebrated as one festival as before). In such a case both divinities were being honoured at the same time. But most often festivals are in honour of the emperor alone, as for example in the case of Domitian at Ephesus, just as the temple-sharing discussed above is the

exception rather than rule, but an exception that throws interesting light on the cult and its theological implications (3). At the outset the cult of Augustus had been linked to that of Roma, in places where such a cult already existed. But later it became more and more independant, as was the case at Ephesus.

In the West games were considered religious honours and were voted by the Senate, as discussed in Chapter 1. They were supervised by the Sodales Augustales and held annually, normally for ten days (4).

In the Greek East such games were part of the dynamics of the imperial cult and entered into a different relationship between subject and object from the one known at Rome - that is, the relationship between the Greek city and the Roman emperor. The festivals - like the other ingredients of the imperial cult - witness to the Greek perception of permanence and stability of the Roman rule, the "pax augusta": they are institutional and regular. Actually, the province of Asia changed its calendar under Augustus: the new calendar commenced on Augustus' birthday, August 23., called "the beginnings ("arche") of all things" (5).

"Hemerai sebastai" - "imperial days" - were the days of the festival on which great generosity was shown towards the entire population of the city: distributions, large banquets, remittance of taxes, etc.(6). But the core of the festival was the initial religious act of a procession - with the bust or icon of the emperor - to an imperial

temple (or shrine or stoa or temenos or statue) where sacrifices were held; then games followed after the banquet (7). A decree of the Asian assembly - from Ephesus - tells of an annual feast when the imperial choir of all Asia gathered at Pergamum on the birthday of Tiberius Caesar Germanicus, the god. The activities of the imperial choir are threefold: singing of hymns, sacrificing, performing at festivals (8). Similarly epigraphic evidence witnesses to festivals in Ephesus on the birthday of Antoninus Pius, celebrated for five days, each day having shows, distributions of money for sacrifices, etc. (9).

Originally the imperial feasts were held at Pergamum, after the organization of the cult by Augustus, as games of Rome and Augustus. Then the system changed and seven more cities were added. The practice of annual games was retained, with games held in different cities on different cycles: Cyzicus, Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Tralles (10). The frequency of the festivals seems to drop as the cult was established and developed along its own lines. The initial stage was certainly the most "enthusiastic", they were celebrated every fourth year (though a two-year cycle is also known) and we know of names like Sebasteia, Caesarea, Hadrianea, Antoninea, Severeia, etc. The maximum duration of such feasts on record is 51 days! Normally they lasted from two to thirteen days.

The role of the imperial priests in such festivals

would be to provide meals and donations for all citizens, who were free of work during the celebrations (11). But the many sacrifices offered by the inhabitants of the city were paid for by the city or by rich benefactors (12). The number of inhabitants in the city would increase largely due to the many visitors that would come to participate. Cities would actually send participants ("synthythai", "syntheoroi") to one another's festivals (13). An imperial feast would therefore be an important feature of the life of the Greek city under Roman rule. Rivalry between the cities would of course add to the magnificence of the festivals.

The games and shows in the theatre would round off the day's celebrations, and since the Greek theatre had degenerated under Roman influence, these shows would involve animal fights, gladiatorial combats, perhaps using criminals as victims. Here Christian martyrdom comes into consideration, as will be discussed later (14).

A study of the festivals reveals, in short, that they were immensely popular, celebrated all over the cities, in many different places, involving the whole population. This does not conform with an interpretation of the cult that is purely elitist and official. The imperial feasts would rather have involved all the dynamic elements in the Greek city. Here were no clear subdivisions, for the festival was celebrated by the city as such and was far more popular than has traditionally been assumed (15). Precedence from Hellenistic times is not difficult to come



across, and Bevan refers to the cult of Attalus II at Teos and Attalus III at Sestos, two well known examples (16).

The fullest description of a local imperial feast comes from Gythium - as mentioned before - and the two inscriptions in question were published by Rostovzeff in 1930. The purpose of this feast was to secure the health and long rule of the emperor (17). This festival lasted for six days, each day being designed in honour of a different member of the imperial house and two days added in honour of two great Spartans (18). Private celebrations are known from the case of the "hymnodes of Rome and Augustus" at Pergamum (19). This is the case of an association that was involved in the provincial imperial cult, but which also performed their own ritual within the association, meeting at the "hymnodeion".

The Christian invectives against the imperial festivals are strong - perhaps even stronger than invectives against the festivals of the gods, as known from Hyppolytos<sup>(20)</sup> and Tertullian (21). Additional evidence may be quoted: the act of protest from the apostle John at Ephesus when he went clad in black during an Artemis-feast - all others being in white (22), and from Paul and Thecla in Pisidian Antioch, as mentioned above (23). The case of Polycarp at Smyrna is also relevant. The martyrdom of the Christians at Lugdunum is a famous example from the West (24).

## V) POPULARITY OF THE RIC

"Deification in the West does not spring from Oriental roots and can be explained from Greek ideas, such as the concept of the "theios aner" like Empedocles and the concept of heroic and divine rank, as something attained by merit" (1).

"The Greek cities...to avoid feeling an inferior element in the empire ... needed to create a positive relation with the centre...the Roman imperial cult was the charism the Greeks had to incorporate" (2).

"The Greek cults were largely independent of Roman practice, being rooted in Greek tradition, but they were elements in the system linking Greeks and Rome" (3).

The previous outline of the main features of the imperial cult in the Greek cities is meant to form a context for the Greek vocabulary of the RIC to follow. But before we change from cult to language a final word is needed about an aspect of the discussion which has been much misunderstood and where the work of Price once again throws new and, for our purposes, very interesting light on the entire topic.

Was the RIC popular - or was it a an occupation of officials and pro-Roman Greek aristocrats only, as

**Bowersock** for example would lead us to believe? (4). This question touches the heart of the matter, since the reconstruction of the **RIC** along the lines of divine cult (the "isotheoi timai": temples, priesthoods, images, festivals, sacrifices etc.) would miss the point if it had not been supported by the people at large, the ordinary inhabitants of the cities. The question has already been answered in a general way - by discussing the festivals - but its implications for our understanding of the cult is of such importance that it deserves a section of its own.

According to **Nock** - to quote the older view - the cult was one hundred percent **Greek** and not oriental: it was modelled on the hero-cult and the concept of "theios aner", and comes as a reward for merits. It is this situation that the **Romans** inherited in the **East**.

According to **Price**, however, it is a different story altogether: the **RIC** is modelled on the divine cult; it comes largely from below; it is popular; it is religion; it is a cult of the reigning monarch and not the dead one; it knew not the mechanism of "apotheosis" that was so essential in the **West**; we do not find any equivalent expression to the "divus" of the **Latin** vocabulary. In short: the category of the "theios aner" and its various corollaries do not do justice to the phenomenon in question, even if it may appear to represent some kind of parallel; this kind of category is too weak, too unofficial and too obscure. **Ruler** cult among the **Greeks** was from the outset put on a firmer foundation, that is the assimilation to the cult of

the gods.

This reconstruction is strongly supported by the work of Fishwick.

Since the model of divine cult is of paramount importance in this enterprise, the emperor and the gods are more closely related than in the West, though a direct equation is not possible: the Greeks subordinated the emperor by putting him under the special protection of the traditional gods, as witnessed by the practice of temple-sharing and sacrifices. But all other forms of the RIC (architecture, geographical location in the civic space of the city, images, priesthoods, festivals etc.) assimilate him to the gods in some way or other, the sacrificial system being the very point of difference. There is a relative uniformity of the cult - being accepted "from above" while the initiative comes "from below" - and there is a general absence of local variants. The cities also reacted simultaneously, as seen from the active initial stage of the cult under Augustus and his immediate followers.

In this way the Greeks accommodated the Roman emperor by incorporating him within the traditional context of the divine ceremonial. The Greek subjects of the Roman empire were thus able to draw on ancient rituals to honour their rulers. They could not legitimate the emperor through ancestral charter myths of the founding of the kingdom, and talk of divine descent was not very successful. But the cults of the Roman emperor could constantly evoke the traditional deities. In this way the Greek subjects

attempted to relate a foreign ruler to their own dominant symbolic system.

What we have is, in other words, a real faith in the divine qualities of the emperor: he was the true focus of power, politically speaking, and he was the one who brought peace and stability to the Greek world, a fact they did not fail to appreciate; anybody who is in doubt is well advised to read the speeches of Aelius Aristides. The "pax romana" certainly has religious overtones for the inhabitants of the Greek city. The way they flourished under Roman imperial rule can easily be observed by visiting the excavated sites of the cities in question: prosperity, peace and monuments to the divinity of the Roman emperor is what strikes the modern visitor (see: Catalogue). Ephesus is just one of many examples, even if a very striking one - it is the Greek city of Roman times we visit here, not that of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

This system was acceptable to Rome, as proved by the early regulations, and the whole question of "imperial refusals" - so often quoted as evidence against it being taken seriously - was a mere formality, as already mentioned in Chapter 1. - In the Roman colonies of the East the cult was modelled on Roman and not on Greek religion.

Therefore, the distinction between heroic and divine cult is vital in our context, and is, in fact, the point where the work of Price is a great advance over the previous studies of, say, Nock. But there are many points of contact between them, since we are dealing with a



somewhat undefined category "between god and man", as illustrated by the distinction between sacrifices "to" and "for", temple-sharing, and others. Benefactor-cult is the model used by Bowersock and leads to a one-sided, non-religious interpretation of the cult; actually, he is not interested in the cult as such - just as little as Taylor and Nock were in their generation. The Romans did not traditionally know any parallel to the Greek hero-cult until after 150 B.C., when the Gracchi brothers and Marius were offered such honours as a result of popular enthusiasm (5). But when it came to the cult of the emperor these models were too "low", even in the West. The cult that Augustus instituted was of a different kind, however indirect it might have been.

Hero-cult - or the popular notion of the "theios aner" for that matter - does not provide the necessary framework for the new Roman imperial cult in the Greek cities. Architecturally this is self-evident, since the hero-cult involved a courtyard with a room for an altar above the remains of the deceased (6). Heroic honours, with their association with mortality, would have been an inappropriate system of classification for a king. To have been given heroic honours in his lifetime would have laid an undesirably explicit emphasis on the mortality of the king. When heroic honours were celebrated at the funeral of Alexander the Great this was at a moment when his status was in doubt (7). Hero-cult was indeed very old in Greece, but unsuitable as a model for the imperial cult.

It existed - and was therefore an option open for the new rulers - but was rejected, just as it had been in Hellenistic times. Many scholars have failed to see any clear difference between the heroic and the divine cult (cfr. Nilsson), but the fact remains that heroic cult is absent for rulers (8).

The difference between the RIC and the Hellenistic ruler cults is also significant. In Hellenistic times - as seen above - the cults were an innovation, with initiative most often coming "from above". They were not organized for an entire province by a provincial governor but locally only, by individual cities. The link between ruler and city was actually much looser in the Hellenistic period than under the Romans, and the royal cult was a product of specific royal intervention in the city. But these cults are similarly distinguishable from heroic cults: a temple and a sanctuary was, for example, raised over the tomb of Seleucus I of Syria, and not a "heroon". Besides, heroic honours were for citizens of the city - and the Roman emperor was precisely not a citizen, even less than the kings had been.

The crux of the matter is this: how is one to maintain an element of independence, of autonomic rule, and at the same time legitimize loyalty to Rome? It should be remembered that the most distinguished Greek cities - and many of these were found in Asia - enjoyed many privileges under Roman rule. The RIC answered the question brilliantly. And the city is precisely the carrier of the

**RIC** for the first 250 years of our era. After **Diocletian** the city declines somewhat: the vigour of the **Greek** city, which had been responsible for the rise of the ruler cult, had finally been sapped.

The cult of the traditional gods has often been treated as in decline during the empire, and therefore partly answering for the blossoming of the imperial cult in its place, even when understood in a literal sense. This is another old scholarly view that the work of **Price** challenges: imperial temples were not the only ones to be built under the empire. As evidence he lists the important study by **Akurgal**, who found 27 temples recorded as built to the gods under the empire and considerably fewer imperial temples - which leaves us with a preponderance of the traditional cults over the **RIC** (9). The whole enterprise of temple-sharing is not intended to mock the old gods, but rather the contrary. The emperor was not replacing the old gods; there was still expenditure on their cults. The **RIC** cannot, therefore, be seen as the dominant religion under the empire, even if **Cerfaux** and **Tondrieau** are not totally wrong when they describe it as "un concurrent du **Christianisme**".

Scholars like **Nock** and **Festugière** tend to use modern **Christian** criteria of "personal religion" when they discuss the **RIC**. That is, the **Greek** cult of the **Roman** emperor becomes formal, official and void of religious content, because it lacks sincerity - due to a lack of personal emotional involvement. **Price** warns us against such a

criterion of personal sentiments - it does not do justice to the cult as we know it, it is misconceived as a religious criterion on a general scale, it does not comply with the evidence we possess concerning the personal element involved. - The dynamics of the cult have another focus than the private and emotional, even if such needs also are satisfied. Unfortunately such are the views of our present day text-books, as, for example, the recent and well-documented handbook for NT students by Ferguson referred to above, where - under the heading of religion - ruler cult is contrasted with what is called "personal religion" (10).

The popularity of the RIC can be seen from many different kinds of evidence. We shall touch only upon the most obvious of these.

When Price states that "all members were expected to participate in the imperial cult", it is the popular and not the official aspect of the cult he wants to illustrate (11). The cult exploited the most competitive values of the city, for the benefit of all, as mentioned under the section on festivals. It was precisely the élite that did not believe in it - that is: the intellectuals - because the people in fact did; even this is not always the case: many intellectuals accepted the cult when it was considered as merited by virtue of good rule. The traditionally Christian distinctions like formal/personal, public/private, communal/individual do not help us in understanding this kind of cult - they are modern and often

based on **P**rotestant assumptions (as in the case of **N**ilsson and **N**ock, but not in the case of **F**estugière). While lower classes - especially in the **E**ast - might really have "believed" (to use another modern and conventional formula) in the cult, the intellectuals were generally disapproving, as is well known (see: chapter 1).

The whole issue of believing/not believing arises precisely because of this élitist scepticism, with which modern scholars have tended to identify themselves. Once the opposite experiment is tried out - that of identifying oneself with the masses - the whole issue looks entirely different. The civic élite, on the other hand, were the high-priests of the cult, the spokesmen of the masses. This discussion easily becomes anachronistic, for - as we have seen in Chapter 1 and just mentioned above - the intellectuals did find the cult justified in the case of rulers who had deserved it.

We know of numberless private initiatives in the imperial cult, in the **E**ast as in the **W**est (some of these were discussed in Chapter 1). **P**rice mentions the many small imperial altars found in the **G**reek cities, probably used by householders in connection with festivals (12). **A**rcheological evidence confirms the existence of a private ruler cult: statuettes, images, busts, shrines, lamps with images, etc (13). The public pressure must have been very great indeed, something which explains the **C**hristian protest and perhaps cases of sporadic martyrdoms. **L**ucius, the hero in "The **G**olden **A**ss", admits: "I



finally tried to invoke the august name of **Caesar**" - and was granted salvation by **Jupiter**, probably meaning the emperor (14). Private associations of "philosebastoi" are witnessed in both cities and villages (15). At **Ephesus** initiates of **Dionysus** are recorded as having put up a statue of **Hadrian** - traditional cults did not exclude the new ones (16). But membership in a private association could be a very costly affair, as in a recorded case of choristers to **Rome** and **Augustus** from **Pergamum** (17).

Archeological finds such as these are the only information we possess about the personal attitudes of the individual toward the cult - the literary sources speak on behalf of the intellectual élite that was sceptical. The only reasonable conclusion is this: all citizens had a share in the cult; it involved the entire city in some form or other. And it is against such a background that the **Christian** protest must be interpreted, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

The **Roman** imperial cult as outlined above illustrates at the same time a **Hellenization** of **Asia**, how **Greek** culture penetrated the **Anatolian** world, especially along the long coast (from **Byzantium** to **Antioch**) and the valleys (**Hermus**, **Lycus** and **Meander** in particular). The **RIC** in these regions was not modelled on quaint local customs but on the **Greek** culture that had been predominant here for ages. But the indigenous, local cultures also coexisted with the dominant **Greek** force. The **Roman** cultural elements were a kind of superstructure, the result

of administration of the cities, or in cities that were Roman colonies. And it was only in Roman colonies that specifically Roman practices were institutionalized (with "augustales", "flamines", etc.). In the cities otherwise the practise was Greek. But as the empire moved on in time the Roman culture receded, Latin declined in use and the colonist were assimilated. According to Price such colonies were at a later stage simply referred to as "poleis" (18). But the Roman element - especially that "from above" - also produced some cultural innovations in the Greek city: most obvious is the decline of the theatre, now refashioned for gladiatorial games and animal fights - elements that, however popular, were secondary in the RIC, even if they were put on exclusively in connection with the RIC (cfr. the "Acta Pauli and Theclae").

Signs of the process of assimilation of Roman colonies to the Greek city are not hard to come across in this connection, and Price lists some interesting examples: from Pisidian Antioch, where there are witnessed cults of Vespasian and the Antonines, both in their lifetimes, contrary to Roman practice. Other examples are Alexandria Troas, Comama, Iconium, Sinope (19). But Roman culture was sometimes adopted by the Greek élite, viz. by using the Roman calendar, taking Roman citizenship, Roman names, etc. (cfr. Paul of Tarsus). But this is rather transitory: the assimilation went the other way, generally speaking.

What about the local cults in this connection,

those of the countryside? This is a topic "almost totally neglected by modern scholars" (20). The local roots of the **RIC** demand fuller investigation, according to **Price**, since it is not backed by provincial organization as in the cities. The countryside was not **Greek**, in fact, and **Greek** culture does not present the whole picture of **Asia**. Rural life formed a different world from that of the communally organized **Greek** settlements. **Ionia** was the oldest **Greek** settlement in **Asia** and had for our purposes always been **Greek** - **Lycia** had only been colonized in the fifth century **B.C.** and **Caria** in the fourth.

The picture is again varied and there is no crude distinction between "village" and "city", but a whole spectrum of communities, from the most complex city down to the simplest of hamlets. The conceptual distinction between "polis" and "kome"/"katoikia" only became of practical importance to communities under the **Roman** administration and the desire to create clear status categories. These "villages" were - according to **Price** - distributed unevenly, mostly in **Phrygia** and **Lydia**, and were a product of local resources (21). But they were subordinate to the neighbouring city and used to financing their part of the imperial cult in the city. As such they were part of the province of **Asia**. But the **RIC** does not spring from these local elements, and the incorporation of the emperor into **Asian** popular religion was a direct result of the dominance of **Greek** culture. When statues of the **Asian** high priests were erected also in the villages -

according to **Price** (22) - this feature is a direct result of the urban development of the villages in **Roman** times. **Price** cites only one example from **Hellenistic** times as an exception to this rule; ruler cult in the villages is, as a rule, only found under the empire (23).

It is no accident that village cults of the emperor are concentrated in the broad and fertile valleys and plains of **Lydia** and western **Phrygia** where fully urban village communities were most concentrated. **Fergus Millar** cites evidence for villages seeking civic status from the emperor and of cities being deprived of that status as a punishment for disloyalty or through efforts of a rival community (24).

City life, then, is the precondition for **RIC** in **Anatolia** in general, and maps of coin issues and building projects show much the same pattern of distribution as that of the imperial cult (25). The older languages spoken in the villages are only vaguely known: **Old Phrygian**, **Pisidian**, **Solymian** and **Lydian**. The **Lycaonian** dialect is mentioned in **Acts** where the crowd is using the local language (26). **Phrygia** is described by **Price** as a "non-urbanized, remote area" where the cults of local gods flourished, **Iconium** being one example (27). Likewise **Mysia**, **Paphlagonia** and **Cappadocia** had few cities and stronger local cults. - Where there is a blank space on the map of the imperial cult this is due to lack of towns (28). But here there is, generally speaking, no orthodox culture or normative religion as such; rather the

situation is varied and mixed.

The investigation by **Price** of the imperial cult in the province of **Asia** is the most thorough to come on the topic after the works of **Ramsay**, though the recent study by **Hemer** mentioned in the first section of chapter 1 should not go unnoticed (it does not, however refer to **Price**), since it moves in the same direction, being written by a classicist who turned to **New Testament** problems (29). According to **Price's** investigation the **RIC** in **Asia** is scattered in time and place: it covers 300 years and ca. 180 communities. **Asia** is undoubtedly the area where the **RIC** was strongest according to archeological finds (30). It shows an extraordinarily dense distribution and is the outgrowth of a complex urban culture.

The **RIC** in **Asia** started in 29 B.C. when it was established by **Augustus**, who had priests in 34 cities - this initial stage is the most creative one. The provincial assembly - the "koinon" - of **Asia** (the standard designation is "the association of the **Greeks** in **Asia**") established, by leave of **Augustus**, a cult of **Roma** and **Augustus** with a temple at **Pergamum**, where regular festivals were celebrated. The assembly of the province of **Asia** was simply reacting to the very existence of **Augustus** and his general activities rather than repaying him for any specific benefactions: the whole province was free from external pressures and there was no legion stationed in **Asia**; the area as a whole remained free from enemy invasions until the attack of the **Goths** in the 250s.



Augustus' birthday became the date of the beginning of the New year ( the day itself was called "sebaste" and the first month called "kaisarios"), not for one city but for the whole province of Asia. The cults that sprang up as a result of this event went further than the earlier ruler cult in Asia had done during Hellenistic times. While Hellenistic royal cults describe the political benefactions of the king, the Augustan decree - in the case of Pergamum - makes explicit and elaborate comparisons between actions of the emperors and those of the gods.

Price's catalogue of imperial temples and shrines in Asia Minor number 156 shrines (31). A chronological distribution of imperial temples and sanctuaries shows the following development of the RIC in Asia in terms of new foundations (32):

50 B.C. - 1:	13
1 BC - AD 50:	10
50 - 100:	7
100 - 150:	15 (= highest rate)
150 - 200:	9
200 - 250:	2 (= a sharp fall)
undated:	21

Compared to the 11/12 known temples to the Hellenistic kings in the period 323 - 133 B.C. the over 70 temples to the Roman imperial cult show the difference in scale (33). The main centres of the cult during the first dynasty were Pergamum (Augustus), Smyrna (Tiberius) and Miletus (Gaius). These three - with the

later addition of **Ephesus** - were two or more times "nekoros" of the emperor. "Free" **Greek** cities often had an imperial cult despite their independence from direct **Roman** control; well known examples are **Termessus** and **Aphrodisias** (34). The difference of freedom was that cities such as these were not members of a provincial "koinon". But freedom was a slippery privilege, granted by the ruling power, held on sufferance; it was appropriate that they should engage in the imperial cult (35).

The **East** could accomodate the **RIC** in a much freer atmosphere than in the **West**: it did not know the kind of opposition to the imperial cult that the **Senate** represented in **Rome**. By comparison it ought to be mentioned that the only provincial cults in the **West** under **Augustus** are at **Lugdunum** (36), **Colonia** (37) and **Elbe** (38). These involved an altar but no temple.

For **Asia** the case is that the imperial cult and organized community are roughly congruent. The provincial system decentralized the empire - and the **RIC** gave one direct contact with the emperor. The **Roman** administration was of a "light-handed" sort, anyway: a small **Roman** staff, system of free cities, etc., the "pax romana" consisting in order, justice and taxes. The greatest concentration of the **RIC** is along the west coast where it was extremely widespread (39). The imperial cult is therefore easily understood as an "exchange from a distance" and a "personal presence", to quote two favourite expressions of **Price's**. In this connection it is worthwhile remembering that some

emperors - notably **Hadrian** - consecrated temples during their travels: in **Smyrna**, **Ephesus** and **Cyzicus**.

Other areas like **Lycia** and parts of **Cilicia** did not know of any imperial cult before they were reduced to provinces (40). - It is therefore an oversimplification to interpret the **RIC** as a mere continuation of the **Hellenistic** ruler cult. Both are modelled on the divine cult, but they are organized along very different lines and served different purposes.

In **Greece** itself important centres for the **RIC** were **Thessalonica**, **Athens**, **Corinth** (a **Roma**<sup>n</sup> colony), **Olympia** and **Gythium**.

The **Great** temple to **Zeus Olympios** and **Hadrian** at **Athens** is one of the major monuments to the cult. It was begun by **Pisistratus**, as a temple to **Zeus** only, but later completed by the philhellene **Hadrian**. Here is another example of "temple-sharing", of subordination of the emperor to the god (41). The old **Metroon** at **Olympia** - the temple of the mother of the gods - had a whole series of imperial statues: **Domitian**, **Claudius**, **Titus**, **Augustus**, **Domitia**, **Agrippina**, **Julia Titi**. Many of the statues have been found (42). The temple of **Zeus** also had an imperial statue (43). **Gythium** is still the best documented case of an imperial festival from **Greece**, as discussed above (44). In **Olympia** the **RIC** seems to have gone further than even the earlier ruler cult in **Asia**, "since **Emperor Caesar**, son of **God**, **God Sebastos** has by his benefactions to all men outdone even the **Olympian**

god... " (45).

#### 4) THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT

After having looked at a modern reconstruction of the Roman Imperial cult among the Greeks it is possible to approach the topic of the vocabulary itself. It will not appear in a vacuum due to the preceding chapters, unlike what normally happens in studies of this topic; this holds good not only for works like that of Cuss (1), but also for the important works by Taylor and Nock, not to speak of lesser luminaries like Bowersock. In fact, a study of the vocabulary will confirm the impressions we already have formed so far: there is a fundamental difference between the Latin and Greek version of the cult. Whereas the Latin cult worships the living emperor indirectly and the dead directly - that is, after consecration - the Greek cult has no means of doing so, and ambiguity follows. Here only a study of the cult can make the difference clear, and it pointed towards the solution "between god and man" discussed above.

By way of introduction it is therefore best to compare the two sets of vocabulary - the Latin and the Greek - before going into details. The following two columns indicate the similarity and at the same time the difference of the two languages in question (2):

deus	-	theos
deus praesens	-	theos epiphanes



divus	-	theos
divi filius	-	hyios theou
divinus	-	theios
dominus	-	kyrios
dominus et deus	-	kyrios kai theos
dominicus	-	kyriakos
salvator	-	soter
salvator mundi	-	soter tou kosmou
sacer	-	agios
genius	-	tyche/daimon/agathon daimon
numen	-	daimon
inspiratio	-	enthusiasmos
nimbus	-	aigle
honor	-	time
adventus	-	parousia
imperator	-	autokrator
princeps	-	hegemon
pontifex maximus	-	archiereus
rex	-	basileus
caesar	-	kaisar
caesarius	-	kyriakos
augustus	-	sebastos
Jupiter Julius	-	Zeus Ioulios
prostratio	-	proskynesis
consecratio	-	apotheosis
flaminatus	-	hieromnemonia
imago	-	eikon
statua	-	andrias

It is a misunderstanding to read the **Greek** expressions as a translation of the **Latin** ones - except in a few cases - as if this vocabulary is imported from **Rome** to the **East**. The point in question is rather that the **Greek** vocabulary of the cult already existed when the **Romans** arrived, because it was developed under the **Hellenistic** monarchies. The **Romans** should rather be seen as taking over - or accepting, willingly or reluctantly - the vocabulary, as well as the features of the cult itself. The priority lies therefore with the **Greeks**, except in the case of a few expressions. By presenting a comparative list such as the preceding one the interpreter has constantly to move between two linguistic and conceptual systems, the **Latin** and the **Greek**. They do not, strictly speaking, overlap - due to the different nature of the ruler-cult in **East** and **West** - and the task of comparing their religious significance is not an easy one.

This should be clarified in more detail before we go into a discussion of the single terms. Some words about the **Latin** vocabulary and its relation to **Greek** terms is therefore needed at the outset.

i) It is vital to observe the difference between "deus" and "divus", as mentioned in Chapter 1. "**Deus**" is not official nomenclature for the **Roman** princeps, and we find it in private use predominately, where the imperial cult was more excessive, e.g. among the many court-flatterers (3). "**Divus**" is the official title of

the consecrated emperor - and other members of his household - expressing an intermediate being between human and divine (a status the Greek vocabulary fails to express, though there is a compensation in the practise of sacrifices). "Hero" will be left out of consideration, being too low for the consecrated ones.

ii) "Divi filius" is the title of the ruling emperor - except in cases when there is no parentage or lack of adoption: **V**espasian, **N**erva, **S**everus, etc. - and is extremely common on coins and inscriptions (where the normal form is the slightly abbreviated "divi f.") (4). The first to call himself this way was, of course, **O**ctavian, adopted son of the deified **J**ulius. The title "suggested that he himself would after death attain a similar divinity" (5). **T**iberius followed this pattern closely, as did his numerous successors. The expression has no direct parallel in **G**reek, and the attempt to find an equivalent for official usage in the **E**ast was only partially successful from a **R**oman point of view, as will be seen shortly

iii) "Deus praesens" is a direct parallel to "theos epiphanes" and is for example found in **M**artial (6). It represents probably an attempt at direct translation from the **G**reek, and is as such somewhat untypical of the **L**atin vocabulary which developed from independant roots.

iv) "Divinus" - approximately corresponding to the "theios" of the **G**reeks, a terms which was too low to fulfil their needs and consequently does not feature in the **G**reek vocabulary of the imperial cult - means "imperial" for all

practical purposes. It is not a word that occupies the most important part of this vocabulary.

v) "Dominus" did slowly become an important word, although it was banned from the outset by Augustus and his successors. It rises to official use under Domitian and stays on, to our great surprise (see the discussion in chapter 1, XI: Trajan) (7).

vi) "Dominus et deus" - with or without "noster" - is also typical from Domitian's monarchy, but does cease with him. It comes back into force later in the history of the RIC.

vii) "Salvator mundi", as found with the court-flatterers - is another possible case of a term being adapted from the East - Greek: "soter tou kosmou" - and is frequently used under Nero and Domitian. It contains the notion that upon the welfare of the emperor depends the well-being of the world (8).

viii) "Genius" is a word of vital importance in this whole enterprise, as demonstrated in chapter 1. Its roots are Latin and not Greek: the private cult of the household cult - where the genius of the paterfamilias also was worshipped (9). Cerfaux et al. take "tyche" to be its nearest Greek equivalent, and "daimon" as corresponding to "numen". But here the authorities do not agree, as the practise seems to fluctuate. The Latin notion of the "comes" - not in our list above, but worth mentioning here - is a co-ruling god, the god or goddess that in a particular way was associated with the ruler, as e.g. Apollo for

Nero, Minerva for Domitian, Hercules for Commodus and Maximianus, Jupiter for Diocletian, etc. While "comes" added an extra flavour to the cult and frequently appears on coins, "genius" remains the leading concept of the cult of the living emperor in the West. The "comes" becomes, however, much more important under the tetrarchy: Diocletianus Jovius, Maximianus Herculeus.

ix) The ruling monarch is automatically "augustus", this holds true for all the emperors and not just Octavian - a glance at the numismatic legends and the epigraphic evidence will immediately confirm this statement. Here we are again faced with the intermediary role of the emperor, between man and god, that was the way Octavian introduced divine monarchy in Rome. "Augustus" is as important and indicative of this process as is "divus" and "divi filius". Sometimes "augustus" was added to the names of the gods in order to put the Emperor under the god's protection, for example Herculi Augusto, Mercurio Augusto (10). The word certainly implies divine favour when applied to mortals.

x) "Caesar" is the title of the crown-prince. But "caesar augustus", with or without "imperator", is stock nomenclature for an emperor.

xi) The other expressions are of varying significance, and only two of them will be touched upon here.

The "nimbus" of gods and emperors link them together, as does the "clarus orbis".



"Sacer" is used by court-flatterers, as seen in chapter 1, as is the superlative form "sacratissimus". "Pietas" and "honor" also belong to the imperial cult.

The "dies natalis" of the emperor is rendered with "arche" by the Greeks when needed for official usage.

Finally, "consecratio" is the Roman counterpart to "apotheosis". The two do not correspond at all in practical terms, since the Greeks did not know of any mechanism like consecration by the Senate, and did instead worship the living ruler rather than the dead one.

The Greek and Latin vocabulary of the cult thus show obvious similarities and differences, but the differences are the most striking and any theory of seeing the two sets of translations or adaptation from one to the other is useless as a key to the two sets of vocabulary: they developed from different and independent sources, as seen above.

Some general remarks on the nature of the Greek vocabulary should be made before looking at the individual terms.

In the first place: The most striking feature of the Greek vocabulary of the cult in comparison with the Latin one is that it is of a more directly divine kind as a whole. The vocabulary, as the cult itself, is of a more Oriental kind, as discussed at the outset of this chapter. The list of honorary terms among the Greeks is both different and longer than in the case of the Romans. To the list above we may comfortably add: "stephanophoros" - "phosporos" -

"diogenes" - "diotrephes" - "theoeikelos" - "theoeides" - "eleutherios". More examples from the rich store of Greek religious language are also available (11).

In the second place: Of vital importance to the discussion of the Greek vocabulary is the lack of intermediary categories, a fact which follows from the more directly divine model used by Orientals and Hellenistic Greeks. "Divus", for example, has no parallel in Greek, "theios" being too weak. We are therefore left with the situation that "divus" corresponds to "theos" and "divi filius" to "hyios theou" (or: "hyios tou theou"). "Sebastos" thereby loses its intermediary character: "theos sebastos" is much stronger divine language than "divi augusti filius". But "sebastos" is frequently employed for expressing things related to the emperor, and also for the characteristically Roman abstractions (cfr. the terms "homonia sebaste", "eirene sebaste", "sebaste nike", "elpis sebaste"). In short, it means "imperial" or "of the emperor". It is therefore also employed of the gods themselves: "Zeus sebastos", "Helios sebastos", "Dionysos sebastos", "Demeter sebaste" (12). Other Greek terms are "symbomoi" (altar-sharing), "homobomoi theoi sebastoi" (divine emperors of the same altar (13)), "synnaoi" (of temple-sharing), "oikobasilikon" (room dedicated to emperors). Equations like "Nero Zeus eleutherios", "Zeus Ioulios" have been mentioned above. The "neos"-terminology is equally relevant here, and, according to Nock, implies youth or freshness (14).

But it would take us too far afield to look into the significance of all these titles. We must for our present purposes concentrate on those relevant to **New Testament** studies, i.e. the most common nomenclature. Here we ought to mention a matter of practical consequences: The "grading" that is followed goes from "above" downwards: we start with the most directly divine nomenclature, proceed to the intermediary categories and conclude with the terms on the merely human level, so to speak. I therefore suggest - for practical more than intellectual reasons - the following three divisions:

i) divine language: "theos", "hyios theou", "kyrios", "kyrios kai theos", "kyriakos", "soter", "isotheos", "epiphanes", "parousia", "proskynesis", "euaggelion", "basileus",

ii) heroic language: "euergetes", "ktistes", "time", "archon", "arche", "eroikai timai"

iii) ordinary human and sacred language: "archiereus", "theologos", "philos", "kaisar"

The following treatment is not meant to be exhaustive, merely illustrative.

## I) THEOS

"**Maledictum est ante apotheosin deum Caesarem nuncupare.**  
(1).

"To the ancients the line of demarcation between god and man was not as constant and sharp, or the interval so wide, as we naturally think..."theos" does not necessarily imply more than a being possessed of greater power than humanity has and immune from death" (2).

"When they used the word "theos" in speaking or writing of the **Emperor**, the eastern inhabitants of the **Roman Empire** had no feeling of the impropriety which shocked a **Roman** when he was called upon to address **Domitian** as "dominus et deus noster"<sup>1</sup>(3).

"It is important that there was no readily available translation of "divus" into **Greek**, and the bases (of statues at **Perge**) have to employ the term "theos"<sup>1</sup>(4).

**Cults** are attested for almost all the reigning emperors in the first century **A.D.** Actually, the creation of a **divus** made little difference in the **Greek** world and cults of the reigning emperor did not long outlast his reign, even if deified in **Rome** (5). The **RIC** among the **Greeks** is therefore centered on the living ruler, as it had done under the **Hellenistic** kings. The epithet "theos" follows the emperors from the very beginning, and had indeed accompanied

the imperators when they paraded in the East, as mentioned in chapter 1. The usage is of a twofold kind: "theos" used alone - "theos" with the name of the emperor, for example "theos **Neron**" (6). In both cases, however, the usage is unqualified. In numerous other cases there are accordingly further qualifications and epithets: "theos epiphanes", "theos sebastos", "theos soter", etc.

Examples abound in our sources, especially the epigraphic and numismatic ones. The occurrences which follow are taken at random and are only intended to illustrate the usage just described.

The Hellenistic usage has already been described earlier in this chapter. Suffice it here to repeat that "theos" was frequently employed by the Ptolemies, as, for example, by Ptolemy V Epiphanes, as attested by the Rosetta Stone: "hyparchon theos ek theou kai theas kathaper **Horos** ho tes **Isios** kai **Osirios** hyios" (7). "Theos ek theou" is an eminently Ptolemaic title. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was the first ever to put "theos" on his coins (8).

In the case of eastern imperial coinage there are examples of divine nomenclature, as is easily found in epigraphic sources. An obvious case is that of Julius Caesar, and Deissman lists examples out of which I select the following from Ephesus, from the year 48 B.C.: "the God made manifest, the offspring of **Ares** and **Aphrodite**, and common saviour of human life" (9).

With the coming of Augustus and the establishing of



the cult in **Asia Minor** and **Greece** "theos" becomes standard epithet for the emperor, in spite of official religious policy at **Rome** (10). The inscription from **Gytheum** referred to above describes **Tiberius** and **Livia** as "theoi kai hegemones" (11). The **Ptolemaic** title of "theos ek theou" is applied to **Augustus** in an inscription from the **Fayum** (12).

The volume on **Greek imperial coins** by **Sear** (13) gives a handy and rich, albeit far from complete, list of legends from **Greek imperial coinage**, where "theos" is most prominent among epithets: for **Augustus** nos. 1,5,6,7,9,11,143,190; for **Livia** ("thea", naturally) nos. 190,196,201; for **Tiberius** and **Julia** 318; for **Germanicus** and **Drusus** no.364 ("kaisares neoi theoi philadelphoi"), 367 ("theon **Germanikon** thean **Agrippinan**"); for **Caligula** no.407 ("Gaios kaisar theos autokrator sebastos"); for **Agrippina** nos.417 and 420; for **Nero** nos.565 ("theon nerona sebaston"), 644 ("theon nerona kymaion/thean agrippinan"), 645 ("neron sebaston/thea agrippina sebaste"), 650 ("neron theos agrippeina thea"). **Deissman** lists many examples from the reign of **Nero**, e.g. a votive inscription from **Cos**: "agatho theo" (14), an inscription from **Priene**: "genithlios tou theou" (15).

For **Domitian** there is a wealth of evidence. **Sear** lists various occurrences (16).

**Nerva** is called "nerovas theos sebastos" in no. 931.

Trajan has many coins testifying to his divinity among the **G**reeks: no.1001 (from **C**lazomenai, **A**sia) "kai theou uon (sic) nerb. traianos ceb. germ. daki.", no.1002 (from **C**olophon, **A**sia) "av. kai theou uo (sic) nerba traianos ceb. germ.", no.1006 (from **S**myrna) "av. kai theou uo nerba traiano ce. germa.", cfr.nos.1040 (from **H**ierapolis), 1099 (from **C**aesarea in **C**appadocia), and so forth. **P**rice lists much epigraphic evidence for the same rulers, from the bases of statues (17).

**A** piece of evidence from the **N**ew **T**estament itself comes from **A**ct 12,22. **H**ere **A**grippa **I** is being hailed as divine king ("it is the voice of a god", **R**SV) by his pagan subjects in **C**aesarea. **T**his incident will be discussed in chapter 3 with an interesting parallel from **J**osephus.

**F**or identification with the traditional deities examples abound. **T**he "neos theos" terminology originated with **H**ellenism, as stated above, and implies young and approachable incarnations of the old gods. **I**nstances have been quoted in the introductory paragraph to this section.

"**T**heios" means "divine, "more than human", and is the equivalent of "divinus" rather than "deus" or "divus". **A**ccording to **N**ock it is specified as the god whose characteristics you recognize in the one you revere (18). **T**he important point is, of course, that "theios" is not the epithet used for the **R**oman emperor in the **G**reek form of the cult - it is simply too weak and general. **I**t is used as part of the language, but is not one of the words that

conveys the meaning of the cult. According to Deissman it is also used of Christian emperors of later times (19), as is also the case with "dominus noster". The intensive form "theiotatos" is also employed (20), and Scott lists occurrences under Domitian (21).

It is of greatest importance to note that the word "theos/thea" is the most important for understanding the Greek form of the RIC. This vocabulary reflects the same fundamental fact as does the cult itself: it is founded on the cult of the gods, be it in ritual or language - the two belong intrinsically together.

Under the entry "divus" Stephenson writes in his dictionary: "On this point ...he (Eckhel) observes that the word DIVUS was always turned by the Greeks into THEOS, which certainly is the DEUS of the Latins. Thus, where the latter inscribed DIVUS AUGUSTUS - DIVO CARO, etc., the former wrote THEOS SEBASTOS - THEO KARO, etc." (22). Stephenson - under the entry "divus Augustus" - actually finds numismatic evidence for the word "deus" being used of Augustus after his consecration, but this coin comes from Terraco in Spain. But there is actually one example of Augustus being styled "deus" by the mint of Rome itself, under Gallienus (23).

To sum up: the imperial usage of "theos" starts with Augustus and lasts through the first and second centuries of the Christian era; "theios" takes over in the third century and continues into Christian centuries. But the

term is not found in official **Roman** nomenclature of pagan times, here "hyios theou" is preferred; an exception to this rule is, for example, **Gaius**, who insisted on being called "theos", an act which **Claudius** adjusted, as discussed in chapter 1.

The **Greek** response is, however, different and does not observe such distinctions - all emperors are "theoi", whether consecration awaited them at **Rome** or not. As such **Tiberius**, **Nero** and **Domitian** were each of them "theos" to the **Greeks**. The mismatch between the list of **Roman** divi and divae (see: **Appendix 3**) and the imperial cult of the **Greek** world can be explained by the concentration on the living emperor, the lack of equivalent to consecration and to the term "divus": the difference is between two different conceptual religious systems. Accordingly, "theos" does not function as a translation of "divus" - it functions of its own accord, along the long established lines of ruler cult in the **East**. The **Greek** usage does, of course, not create a "theos" - rather it acknowledges the existence of one, which is closer to the modern canonization of a saint than to the creation of a knight, a point which is not observed by the exponents of the view that divine epithets function as reward for merits.

The **Greek** city knows no parallel to the **Roman** **Senate** - its "koinon" or "boule" does not make a "theos", it only recognizes him or her by granting divine cult; all this is thoroughly in accordance with **Greek** religious traditions of ruler worship. While the **Latin** "divus"

comes from "above", the Greek "theos" stems from "below". Like the equivalents to other Latin terms, say "sebastos" for "augustus", the Greek form is more directly religious in its connotations. "Theos" has this wide range of meaning which "divus" does not, and the epithet is found on bases of statues for secular purposes (in stoas, theatres, stadiums, etc.) as well as in a sacred precinct. The question is not of "translations" and exact parallels, but of the accomodation of two different conceptual systems to each other.



## II) HYIOS THEOU

"**HYIOS THEOU** is a translation of the **divi filius** which is equally frequent in **Latin inscriptions**" (1).

"It is startling to find the title "**ho hyios tou theou**", round which so many associations have gathered, applied to the **Roman Emperors**" (2).

What startled the scholar just quoted? - The parallel to **New Testament Christology**, naturally, a subject we have in store for the next chapter. "**Hyios theou**" - or the longer variant "**ho hyios tou theou**" - corresponds to the **Latin "divi filius"**, as found in epigraphic and numismatic sources. The **Oriental** parallels to this royal epithet will be left aside for the moment, it is the **Greek** equivalent to the **Latin** expression we want to focus on.

This expression does not form any part of the traditional **Hellenistic** vocabulary of divine kingship, as seen previously in this chapter. - From where does it then derive? - From **Rome**. It is the **Greek** way of rendering the new expression "**divi filius**" that arose with **Octavian**, and it represents a distinct innovation. It is accordingly used in official **Roman** documents addressed to **Greek** subjects, and is a newcomer to the **Greek** subjects.

An interesting example is a letter from **Nero** to the **Rhodians**, where the introductory formula reads: "**Nero Claudius**, son of "**theos**" **Claudius**, grandson of

Tiberius Caesar Sebastos and Germanicus Caesar, great-grandson of "theos" Sebastos (i.e. Augustus), Caesar Sebastos Germanicus, high priest, holding tribunician power to the magistrates, council and people of Rhodes, greetings" (3). The official nature of the document is clear: Augustus and Claudius are referred to as "theos" - the rendering of "divus" - while Tiberius and Germanicus are not; nor is the reigning emperor himself, Nero, disregarding what the Greeks themselves might have called him. The Greeks did not take notice of Roman deification since Tiberius, like all emperors of the first century, were hailed as "theos". But here the address is directed the other way, and titles follow the Roman rules. It is clear that the Romans did not try to establish a new category in Greek for "divus": they use "theos", according to Greek traditions. But they do create a new category by translating "divi filius" by "theou hyios".

The whole question of "translation" is, however, unfortunate, as mentioned earlier: "theos" does not simply correspond to "divus", nor does "hyios theou" to "divi filius" - the two languages belong to different conceptual spheres in religious matters. This implies that however much "theou hyios" is an innovation due to the official nomenclature, depending on consecration, it does not correspond to "divi filius" in any identical way. In fact, the full title in Greek for the ruling emperor in Rome is "hyios theou theos" - an expression that is frequently attested - which becomes rather odd when

translated directly into **L**atin: "divi filius divus" (4). This fuller form is attested also of **A**ugustus (at **P**ergamum) and **T**iberius (at **S**myrna) (5): "P**r**iest of **R**oma and **E**mperor **C**aesar, son of theos, theos **S**ebastos, high priest and father of his country" (6). The fact that the **G**reeks could use "theou hyios", even in conjunction with other **R**oman titles, shows that they did not regard the simple "theou hyios" in the same way as the **R**omans saw "divi filius". It had a different range of evocations (7).

The vigorous start and popular upsurge of the **R**oman imperial cult in **A**sia minor under **A**ugustus is attested by the many official documents referred to above, on behalf of the **G**reeks. And they do use the expression "hyios theou" with great frequency. In the case of **D**omitian additional numismatic evidence is easily found in von **A**ulock (8) or, on a smaller scale, in the volume on **G**reek **I**mperials (9), especially nos. 898 ("auto. kai the. hyios domitianos se. ger."), 890 ("aut. kais theou hyios domit. seb. germ."), 865 ("auto. kai the hyi. domitianos se. ger."). I have in my own possession a tetradrachma from **A**lexandria with the legend "hyios theou" surrounding the stately bust of this most monarchical of early **R**oman emperors.

Here is a vague echo of the **P**tolemaic use of "theos ek theou", but otherwise there is no direct precedent in **H**ellenistic usage. The title is a newcomer, among **G**reeks as well as among **R**omans.

### III) KYRIOS

"KYRIOS" is a very comprehensive term: it has both civil, political and religious connotations. For our purposes it is the combination of political and religious meanings - and not just the religious one - that matters, as will be seen in chapter 3. "Kyrios" is, in other words, an important part of the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult, the "isotheoi timai" ("honours equal to those paid to the gods"). It has been thoroughly explored by both classical scholars and New Testament theologians, even if, among the latter ones, any agreement does not exist as to where this important title derives from - Hellenistic Judaism or the Graeco-Roman environment - and the tension between the two views is still with us (1).

The term does not represent an innovation like "hyios theou". It is older than "theos", historically speaking, deriving from the relationship between master and slave. It was applied to gods, and later to kings and emperors, when it became another important tool for expressing the intermediary category we have called "between god and man".

i) The political aspect is well illustrated in the articles referred to *above*. Moulton and Milligan give examples of religious usage being transferred to rulers in the East after Alexander (2). Deissmann lists usage from Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV (3). During Roman times "kyrios" refers automatically to the "sebastos" in

this political sense, as "dominus" refers to the "augustus". While "dominus" was banned in the West until Domitian, the East followed its own traditions and "kyrios" is commonly found from the early days of the empire, increasing in frequency under Claudius and especially under Nero (4). Deissmann also gives epigraphic evidence for usage under Herod the Great ("basilei herodei kyrio", OGIS 415,1), and Herod Agrippa ("kyriou basileos", idem 418,1) (5). For Claudius and Nero the examples listed by Moulton and Milligan are numerous (6). In Acts the procurator Festus refers to Nero while talking about the "kyrios" (7). Meyer also lists many examples of the same kind (8). - The occurrence of "dominus" in the Latin vocabulary has been discussed in chapter 1 (9).

This political use of "kyrios" is practically speaking synonymous with "sebastos"; it simply means "the emperor".

ii) The religious aspect has been touched upon several times in the foregoing sections. "Dominus" was banned from public usage in the West by Augustus, though later imposed by Domitian, precisely because of its religious overtones, not to mention "dominus et deus" which is unequivocally divine language. - The latter expression illustrates the point of "kyrios"/"dominus" being of the nature of a "symbolic evocation" - illustrating the category "between god and man" - while "dominus et deus"/"kyrios kai theos" is notably "higher" language.

We need not give many examples of this usage. Schütz



lists occurrences from the reigns of **Caligula**, **Nero** and **Domitian** (10). **Augustus** is called "theos kai kyrios kaisar, autokrator" in an inscription from **Egypt** of **12 B.C.**, now in **Berlin** (11).

iii) The Jewish and Christian reaction to such a usage has been much discussed. In **Greek-speaking Judaism** "kyrios" was possibly used as a rendering of the **Tetragrammaton** as well as "**Adonai**" (12). Here would have been a clear distinction between what was to them a merely secular usage (i.e. "emperor") in contrast to its sacred connotations. This distinction did not create greater problems in **Roman** eyes, the **Jews** being "atheists" - at least in principle. A problem did however arise under the first revolt when sacrifices for the emperor's health were abolished by the revolutionaries in **Jerusalem**: **Josephus** states explicitly that the **sicarii** would use "kyrios" of **God** alone (13).

The **Christians** - once they became separated from the world of the **synagoge** - lost this privilege of belonging to a legally permitted form for atheism, and ran into great trouble vis à vis the state; the sporadic martyrdoms witness to this development. **Tertullian** makes the distinction clear when he states that he is willing to call the emperor "dominus" in a political sense, but never in a religious one (14). The "**Martyrium Polycarpi**" makes this same distinction when the bishop of **Smyrna** refuses to pronounce the words "**Caesar** is lord" ("kyrios") and offer incense (15). The same occurs in the "**Martyrium Scillorum**",

where the words "dominus", "rex" and "imperator" are linked together (16). Pagan sources, naturally, do not bring out this difference between the political and religious meaning as clearly as do the Jewish and Christian ones. In the apostolic and post-apostolic age there is therefore good reason to find a polemical meaning behind the use of "kyrios" in the New Testament. But the scholars are far from agreeing as to what such a polemical usage implies.

"There is good reason for finding in the Apostle's (i.e. Paul's) insistence upon the name of kyrios - which (Phil 2,9) is above every name - a protest against the worship of "the gods many and lords many" (I Cor 8,5)" (17). Writes Deissmann: "we cannot escape the conjecture that the Christians of the East who heard St. Paul preach in the style of Phil 2,9 and I Cor 8,5-6 must have found in the solemn confession that Jesus is "the Lord" a silent protest against other "lords", and against "the Lord", as people were beginning to call the Roman Caesar. And St. Paul himself must have felt and intended this silent protest" (18). It is, by the way, interesting to find that this statement is quoted by K. Scott in his monograph on the imperial cult under the Flavians (19). Cuss devotes several pages to such a polemical use in the Fourth Gospel, and we will return to this in the following chapter (20).

iv) The combination of "kyrios" with "theos" has naturally been commented on extensively by New Testament scholars. But Fuller is probably wrong in insisting that

Foerster was right when stating that "kyrios as applied to the Roman emperors does not by itself connote divinity. It does so only in combination with theos" (21). In itself "kyrios" had ample possibility of expressing emperor-worship. This will be discussed in that part of chapter 3 which deals with St. Paul.

"Kyrios kai theos" does in its own way, as stated above, express a further precision of the religious aspect of the term "kyrios" (22). It was not needed as such, but since the vocabulary of ruler cult was equivocal ("honours like those to the gods": "like" never being fully clarified), it was welcomed, especially by certain rulers. The evidence for the usage in the West under Domitian is listed by Scott (23).

The adjective "kyriakos" means "imperial" or "of the emperor", "belonging to the emperor". It carries political as well as religious overtones. The "kyriake hemera", for example, would refer to the imperial institution of a "Sebaste-day" (24). While the word formerly was considered as a specifically biblical word - even as a coinage of St. Paul's - Deissmann states that St. Paul took it from the language of contemporary constitutional law, in which it meant "imperial" (25).

For the sake of clarification it may be added that Paul, even if merely trying to render Hebrew and Aramaic terms, must have been aware of the ambiguity of the Greek expressions. But as to his precise intentions it is difficult to be a hundred percent sure, all the time his

expressions may be understood as derived from Jewish sources alone. The references to later Christian writers and to the acts of the martyrs indicate, however, that the ambiguity was rather evident to the early Christians.

#### IV) SOTER

Another term that belongs to the language of divine cult is "soter". Like "kyrios" it is taken from secular language and applied first to the gods (the classical stage), next to rulers (the transitional stage between the classical and the Hellenistic), and then to kings and emperors. It illustrates the status "between god and man" which we are dealing with. .

"Saviour" being transferred to men presupposes larger political unities. In classical times the city state was under the protection of the gods - later of superpowers like Athens and Sparta, and finally of empires. It became a hallmark of ruler cult. It is too strong for benefactor cult and belongs to divine language during the periods we are dealing with (1). In a nutshell this development may be expressed in the following way: from "gods as saviours" it came to express the idea of "saviours as gods". It bridges the gap between terms like "ktistes" and "euergetes", often they go together. Again the political and the religious significance belong together. An excellent and short summary of this development is given by Fishwick (2).

Examples of such usage can easily be found in our sources.

The term being used of gods is found in the cases of "Zeus soter" and "Asclepius soter" from Pergamum, just to give two examples to illustrate this usage (3).

The term being used of Hellenistic kings is discussed



by **Nock** in relation to the cult of **Ptolemy I** instituted by **Ptolemy II** (4). **Mithradates** of **Pontus** is referred to as "theos" and "soter" by **Diodorus Siculus** (5).

Of other rulers, imperators or officials we find that: **Demetrius Poliorcetes** is referred to as "euergetes" and "soter" (6), **Titus Flaminus** as "soter" (7), **Camillus** as "soter" and "pater" and "theos" (8). **Gaius Verres** (!) was granted the title by the **Syracusans** according to **Cicero** (9), who also mentions a festival called **Verria** (10) as well as gilded statues (11), but **Nock** maintains that the title in this case - as in some others - is not divine, just honorary (12). **Caesar** is hailed as "soter" and "euergetes" by the **Athenians** in 48 B.C. (13).

The term is used liberally of rulers after the establishment of the "pax romana". Of **Augustus** an example is found at **Priene** (14). A case of **Germanicus** being called "soter" comes from **Egypt** (15). Of **Caligula** there is an example in the "Legatio ad **Caicum**" (16). Of **Vespasian** and **Titus** there are examples in **Josephus**, deriving from the battles at **Tiberias** and **Gischala** (17). An example of non-sacred usage is found in **Tacitus** where the term is applied to the freedman **Milichus** after saving **Nero** from the **Pisonian** conspiracy (18).

Commenting on well known imperial refusals of this honorific title **Nock** observes that it was "pertinent when something formal was proffered by a community...not when there had been nothing more than popular huzzas" (19).

The longer term "soter tou kosmou" is quite ordinary in the vocabulary of the imperial cult (20). Deissmann lists examples from the reigns of Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian and Titus (21). The Latin equivalents are easily found in Martial: "rerum certa salus" (22), "rerum felix tutela salusque" (23), "rerum prima salus et una" (24).

"Soter" looms large in discussions of NT christology (25). "Polemical parallelism" is discussed by Deissmann (26) who gives more epigraphic evidence; the same expression is used by Hemer (27) in his important study on Revelation.

## V) OTHER TITLES

The following brief survey is only meant to be supplementary to the ones discussed above; they do not form any important part of the discussion to follow in chapter 3. But they are among the most common in every discussion of the imperial cult in its Eastern form and should therefore be included, however briefly.

i) "Isotheoi timai". The term is a keyword in the Greek vocabulary of the Roman imperial cult. The terms we have looked at so far are examples of how the cult is articulated in speech. - The vocabulary is as ambiguous as is the cult, both illustrate an undefined status "between god and man". "The very term "isothēoi timai" surely implies that the recipient of such honors is not personally a god" (1).

"Theios" is therefore too weak to carry the meaning of "divi filius" in a Greek context. "Isotheos" is stronger than "theios" (2). "Isotheoi timai" is to be clearly distinguished from "heroikai timai" (3).

ii) "Euergetes" derives from benefactor cult with roots in divine language. Once applied to rulers it changes its meaning in a more markedly divine - direction. The point is no longer benefaction as such, but the title is given to rulers because of their likeness to the gods. "It was a less dramatic word than "soter" and could describe continued

helpfulness as well as sudden aid in an emergency" (4). As seen above it was used of Hellenistic rulers, but as result of specific historical events (5). It is stock language of Roman rulers. The usage applied to Roman benefactors before the Empire is discussed by Bowersock who links it to the Roman patron-system (6). "At least one bilingual inscription actually offers "patronus perpetuus" as a translation of "euergetes" instead of something like "benefici ergo" " (7).

iii) "Ktistes" is in itself nothing savouring of the divine, but is applicable to superhuman beings and becomes a regular feature of the language of the imperial cult (8). It is not divine language in itself, but acquires religious overtones once found in the new context of ruler cult (9).

iv) "Proskynesis" derives from Oriental customs where honour is paid from a socially lower to a higher, as discussed in connection with Alexander. Among Romans it was an innovation and represented a piece of flattery, but becomes a regular part of court etiquette under the later empire. An example from the early empire is the episode of Juventus Celsus making "prostratio" when accused of conspiracy (10). It was also practiced before images of various kinds (11).

v) "Euangelion" is another term that became linked to the language of the divine cult of rulers. A famous

inscription from **P**riene, now in **B**erlin, is often quoted as example: "**B**ut the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of tidings of joy (**"e**uanggelion") on his account" (12). The god (**"theos"**) referred to here is **A**ugustus. **D**eissmann calls this a "remarkable sentence...of great importance in the history of the sacred language of **A**sia **M**inor" (13). **A**gain, it is a case of how language, when adapted to ruler cult, acquires sacred overtones.

vi) "**E**piphanes" develops from the secular meaning of "distinguished" into the sacred "god made manifest", as mentioned in the discussion of the epithets given at the beginning of this chapter. **N**ock has investigated its historical origins in connection with **P**tolemy **V** and **A**ntiochus **I**V (14). **S**cott discusses its further derivations like "epiphanestatos" and other expressions (15). **D**eissmann gives a survey of its various meanings in **L**AE (16). The **L**atin equivalent is "praesens"; "epiphanestatos autokrator" is thus rendered by "praesentissimus caesar" (17).

vii) "**P**arousia" ("adventus") is regularly used of the appearance (arrival) of the king or emperor from **H**ellenistic times and through the empire. **E**pigraphic sources can for example give the following expression: "In the year **69** of the first paousia of the god **H**adrian in **G**reece", discussed by **D**eissmann (18). "**A**dventus augusti" is very common feature of **R**oman coinage, as will



immediately be seen from every catalogue of the imperial series (19). The word has the connotations, according to Deissmann, of inaugurating a new era in the place in question (20).

viii) "Basileus" was naturally transferred from Hellenistic usage to Roman emperors. In fact, it becomes synonymous with "kyrios" for all practical purposes (21). Deissmann calls it "a decoration of actual great monarchs and also a divine title" (22). "Basilikos" means simply "imperial", as mentioned in connection with temples and shrines (23).

ix) "Arche" is frequently found as part of divine language. It is linked to the new era beginning with the accession of a new king or emperor, as seen, for example, in the inscription from Priene (24). It is accordingly also used of the birthday of the ruler, sometimes described as "the beginning of all things", "the beginning of the breath of life", etc. (25). The reformed Asian calendar took its start with the birthday of the emperor Augustus (23. September) (26). The Latin rendering would be "dies natalis".

x) Various other titles are:

- "archiereus" ("pontifex maximus") (27)
- "stephanophoros", used of imperial priests wearing imperial crowns for the cult

- the combined expression "archiereus stephanophoros" is used of the priests of the divi and of the reigning emperor in the East (28)

- "theologoi" ("heralds of God") were in Asia Minor official special preachers in connection with the imperial cult (29); they were probably also "hymnodoi" for the cult. Deissmann thinks the Christian usage is adapted from the pagan one (30).

## CONCLUSIONS

By way of summary to this chapter the following points ought to be observed:

- The **RIC** among the **Greeks** was a popular religion, perhaps even more so than in the **Latin West**; this is due to historical circumstances of a political and religious kind.

- There is no protest to this development on record, except from intellectuals; but in the **East** they seem to have had less difficulty with the institution than was the case in the **West**; this must be due to old traditions of monarchy in the **East**.

- The **Greek** version - centered as it is on the living emperor - is modelled on the divine cult, and as such it becomes different from the more indirect form of the cult in the **West**.

- But the **Greek** version is at the same time trying to cope with the problem that ruler cult creates for religion; it seeks to find intermediary categories, while at the same time holding on to the model from divine cult.

- The result is a "language of symbolic evocation"; it places the rulers closer to the gods than to men, but at the same time seeks to differentiate between the two, as seen in the case of sacrifices.

- The titles employed in the cult are to be understood in this latter context; they do not mean that the rulers are gods like the **Olympian** ones in a literal sense,

but still they want to express that divinity of some kind is their prerogative.

Of the insights so far discussed there is ample scope for a comparison with the language of the **New Testament**. When the early **Christians** tried to find expressions for their belief in the divinity of **Christ** they were in some way trying to do something similar to what the **Greeks** had done when they tried to accomodate the **Roman** emperor within their traditional religious framework. - No wonder the two clashed.

The position of **Deissmann** frequently quoted above leads us to a still unresolved question in **New Testament** study: to what extent do the books of the **NT** derive terms from the vocabulary of the **RIC** and to what extent do they derive from an attempt to accomodate Jewish concepts to the **Greek Language**. This problem will be of importance for our discussions to follow in chapter 3.

**AAGE HAUKEN**

**The Greek Vocabulary  
Of the Roman Imperial Cult  
And  
The New Testament  
Del II**

**Dissertatio ad lauream  
In Facultate S. Theologiae  
Apud pontificiam Universitatem  
S. Thomae de Urbe**



I venture to explore two more areas of research that may turn out to be fruitful for further study:

i) 2 Thessalonians and a probable (my word) reference to Caligula's attempt to have his statue put up in the Jerusalem temple in the year 40.

ii) a possible (my word) "polemical parallelism" against the cult in the Fourth Gospel.

More ought to be said about this selection of texts.

1) The Book of Revelation is directly related to the imperial cult - but in what way? My point here is far from new: there are clear and polemical references to the imperial cult in the book of Revelation (the references to the two beasts). But here I want to go further and suggest that the understanding of the beasts should be revised in one important respect: they are likely to be the real targets of the book as a whole, and may prove to be a useful key to unlock the background to the hymns in Rev. and the seven letters. If we look for evidence along the lines established in chapter 2 the matter looks slightly different from what is traditionally understood. It may turn out that the book is directly related to - by way of being occasioned by - the new cult at Ephesus. Here is also a possible criticism of the cult in the hymnic material, and many possible references to the cult in the letters to the seven churches.

The new understanding of the cult as outlined in the work by Price suggests, to me at least, that it should

not be treated as a peripheral religious phenomenon. The cult at **Ephesus** can accordingly supply important information relating to the background of **Revelation**.

2) The episode of **Gaius Caligula's** attempt to erect his statue in the **Jerusalem temple** was far more serious than often assumed. Seen in the context of the previous chapters it comes as no surprise that it may explain one **Pauline** outburst, even if this takes place a decade later; the episode was not easily forgotten. - Actually, the same is the case with the reference to **Nero** in **Revelation**: the book comes from later times but reflects an episode that was not to be forgotten. Both cases show us the imperial cult demasked and its true face exposed.

3) The **Gospel of John** may also be related to the same background as **Rev.** But here the polemic is of a very different kind: the kingship of **Christ** is portrayed by means of tools that have parallels in the cult. These may be a case of i) adapted **Jewish** expressions or ii) terms borrowed from the imperial cult. In any case, this leaves us with an "implicit" polemic; this is the only sensible conclusion to such a parallelism - in the case of **Rev.** we found a polemic of an "explicit" kind. In other words: the **Johannine** milieu as a whole seems to reflect a very hostile attitude to the cult of the **Roman** emperor. Since it is likely that these writings come from the same place and time, the reason behind such hostile attitudes is also

likely to be the same.

No substantial study on this topic is known to me so far, and what follows must be understood to be of a very tentative kind: it is the possibility of a polemic we want to explore. The question is: along which lines may such an interpretation be reconstructed? Historical research and methodological considerations will have to converge in such an undertaking.

One more point should be made at the outset.

I have deliberately elaborated on the historical episodes - or situations - behind my three examples. Gaius' efforts, Nero's persecution of the Christians in Rome and the cult of Domitian at Ephesus are too easily passed over with a brief mention in our commentaries. Attack being the best form of defence, I would be so bold as to claim that once New Testament scholars stop reading each others books and instead concentrate on reading ancient sources - and consult classical scholarship! - the New Testament books would stand a better chance of emerging from that misty fog of so-called "historical background" that often is a characteristic of the commentaries.

The lack of any major monograph on the topic of the RIC and the New Testament indicate that this is not one of the great themes of the New Testament writings. Normally we come across it in connection with the Johannine writings, at the final stage of the coming into being of this collection of books. This is the same as to overlook

the previous stages of the cult - the initial ones. The Christians had experienced confrontations with the state before the age of Domitian.

Of course, little of what follows is as new as it might look. I have finished my discussion with very many quotations from various scholars - ancient and modern - to prove that this is a classical topic. But none of these scholars have put the evidence together under a perspective of the cult as we know it today. Once a modern reconstruction is available - like that by Price - the temptation to do so is too great to resist.

It is my hope to be able to pursue this problematic in other areas of the New testament writings and early Christian literature.

A brief outline of the argument of each section will be given before going into details.

## 1) NERO, DOMITIAN AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Interpretation of the **New Testament** often suffers because of a lack of a good foundation of historical knowledge. Many twentieth-century **Bible** expositors are oblivious to the positive contribution of a century-and-a-half of scholarly endeavor in the field of history and approach the **New Testament** writings as though they had been written within the past few decades. Other **Bible** students, more academically oriented, are at best indirectly aware of the great work that has been done in the study of antiquity; but rather than devoting their energies to the study of the **New Testament** documents themselves in the context of the history and literature of the **Graeco-Roman** world, they tend to focus on what other scholars are saying about the **New Testament**. In the former case, the result is unhistorical and idiosyncratic exegesis; in the latter, unsubstantial and often even absurd speculation. In either case the **Scripture** is dishonored". (1)

"The book (of **Revelation**) starts with a well-defined historical situation, to which reference is made again at the end, and the intermediate visions which form the body of the work cannot on any reasonable theory be dissociated from their historical setting. The prophecy rises out of local and contemporary circumstances; it is, in the first instance at least, the answer of the **Spirit** to the fears and perils



of the **Asian Christians** toward the end of the first century. Hence all that can throw light on the **Asia** of **A.D. 70-100**, and upon **Christian** life in **Asia** during that period, is of primary importance to the student of the **Apocalypse**, not only in view of the local allusions in chs.ii-iii, but as helping to determine the sum and drift of the entire work". (2)

"This method (the **Contemporary-Historical Method**) rightly presupposes that the visions of our author relate to contemporary events and to future events so far as they arise out of them. The real historical horizons of the book were early lost. Yet, even so, traces of the **Contemporary-Historical** method still persist in **Ireneus**, **Hippolytus**, and **Victorinus of Pettau**. But with the rise of the **Spiritualizing Method** in **Alexandria** this true method was driven from the field and lost to use till it was revived by the **Roman** and **non-Roman Christian** scholars of the 17th century. These scholars established as an assured result that the **Apocalypse** was originally directed against **Rome**. The **Apocalypse** is not to be treated as an allegory, but to be interpreted in reference to definite concrete kingdoms, powers, events, and expectations". (3)

The study of the book of **Revelation** is the place in the **New Testament** where the study of the **Roman Imperial Cult** usually is focused - the references to the cult in the case of **2 Thess.2** and **Mk.13** are much more rare, if they

exist at all, and in the case of the **Fourth Gospel** the issue normally passes unnoticed. In the case of **Revelation Bible** students have often studied the cult and arrived at some definite results (4).

Since the work done by classicists constantly is in the state of being revised according to new findings and insights, the same holds true for the study of **Revelation** - here exegetes will have to follow closely the development on the classical front. Modern works on **Revelation** that are of quality try to correlate the two worlds to each other: that of the imperial cult and that of the **Bible**. The best example of such an attempt to come out of **New Testament** scholarship in recent years is the study by **Hemer**, an updating of the classical work by **Ramsay** (5). It is a case of how the study of the **New Testament** ought to proceed, not only in relation to the book of **Revelation** but to all its books in general, and we are fortunate to have from his hand a substantial study of **Acts** as well.

The following part of this chapter is intended to discuss the bearing of the **RIC** on **Rev.** in light of what was established in chapters 1 and 2. In order to do so it is wise to follow the advice of the scholars just quoted above and relate the discussion to the historical framework of the book as such. We will go about the task in the following way:

- i) giving a synopsis of the argument to follow,
- ii) some general remarks on the book as we know it (authorship, date, place, the **RIC**, **Nero**, etc.), looking

at the traditional **Sitz im Leben** of this apocalypse,

iii) a discussion of the persecution of **Christians** in **Rome** following the fire of **64**, in an attempt to understand better the references to **Nero**

iv) a discussion of the first beast (from the sea)

v) a discussion of the second beast (from the land)

vi) a discussion of the "blasphemous titles"

vii) a discussion of the references to the **RIC** in the letters to the seven churches of **Asia**

viii) we will conclude this section by a discussion of whether there was a persecution under **Domitian** or not.

In the following we will accept - as well as argue for - the traditional place (**Patmos**) and date (**Domitianic**) of **Revelation**, and also the traditional identification of the first beast with **Nero**. This brings us to a situation that in many ways reminds us of the references to **Caligula** in **2 Thess.2** and **Mk.13**.

**First of all: Why does Nero appear in the book of Revelation?**

The question may be put in a slightly more precise way: **Why does the author refer to Nero when he has access to the use of Domitian himself?**

This is no rhetorical question. It brings us, on the contrary, to the heart of the matter: **Nero** reappears in this work of many of the same reasons that **Gaius** made a reappearance in the passages just discussed. The past is present whenever certain situations arise - the present is highlighted by the past - the future is forshadowed in both

cases. Both **Paul** and the seer look back, due to circumstances of their own days - and they look forward to what is to pass. Indeed this perspective is a commonplace in Jewish apocalyptic (6).

There is a difference in the case of **Gaius** and **Nero** that should be mentioned: the threat from **Gaius** was never realized while **Nero** actually became a persecutor. But in the case of **Gaius** there was the realized threat from **Antiochus** to make up for missing elements of which **Nero** has no need. **Nero** was the second extravagant emperor with respect to the **RIC** (cfr. chapter 1). In addition he was the first great persecutor of the **Christians**, at **Rome** itself. He easily becomes a symbol in our context: the references to his name are cryptic, as are those to **Gaius**, and they function on different levels at the same time.

In the case of **Nero** we may safely operate with two levels of context, as we did with **Gaius**: the first being the historical past, **Nero** - the second being the historical present of the seer, **Domitian**. In the book these levels are interwoven in a way that can make it difficult to disentangle the different levels of meaning. But this must not deter us from the attempt to reach an interpretation that is historically and theologically sound.

## I) THE ARGUMENT

By way of introducing our argument in this section it is important to emphasize that **R**evelation for a long time has been understood as the one book in the **N**ew **T**estament that deals with the imperial cult. In view of recent works on the cult itself (**P**rice) and the seven churches (**H**emer) this is more obviously the case than earlier generations of scholars assumed. **H**ere classical scholarship comes to the aid of exegetes. **B**ut the question still remains open concerning how extensive this polemic really is. **W**e will go about the task in the following way.

i) In the first place we look briefly at the dating of the book, as well as its place of composition. **T**he traditional understanding of these two aspects are easily confirmed by what we know of the imperial cult in **A**sia at the turn of the century. **B**oth questions are related to how we understand the references to **N**ero and to the presence or absence of persecution under **D**omitian. **T**he point of this section is that the traditional understanding of the **S**itz im **L**eben of **R**ev. fits the facts as we know them. **B**ut the recent works referred to may also be understood as a further indication that the book as a whole ought to be understood as provoked by and directed against the establishing of the new cult of **D**omitian at **E**phesus and also one at **L**aodicea, a fact which has escaped biblical scholars.



ii) In the second place we look at the persecution of **C**hristians in **R**ome under **N**ero. **N**ero might function in **R**ev. in an analogous way of what was the case with **C**aligula in **2** **T**hess. **2** and **Mk.13**, as mentioned in the introductory paragraph. Increased difficulties for the **C**hristians in **E**pheesus, and **A**sia in general, may explain the reappearance of **N**ero in this book. **H**e has in some important aspects taken over the sinister role of **A**ntiochus and **G**aius in **J**ewish and early **C**hristian apocalyptic tradition. **T**he presence of **N**ero may therefore be understood to indicate an absence of persecution in **A**sia at the time of writing. **H**ere modern scholarship and ancient ecclesiastical traditions disagree. **N**ero became a symbol - depicted cryptically - of future realities, not yet fully developed. **A** look at the sporadic martyrdoms of the second century may confirm this reading of the evidence: their worst fears came true.

iii) In the third place we discuss the decoding of the first beast of chapter **13** and **17**. **T**his is the place where a polemic is best established. **T**he question of **N**ero and of counting emperors reappears. **T**his attack on the religious aspect of the **S**tate is best understood in light of the new cults in **A**sia under the last of the **F**lavian emperors.

iv) In the fourth place we discuss the significance of the second beast of chs. **13** and **17** and find that the old

identification with the new imperial priesthood - or priesthods (in case the cult at Laodicea is established at roughly the same time) - is the decoding that best unlocks the text. Much evidence in favour of this old theory is found in the recent work by Price. But here is needed a more specific context even. And the new priesthood of Domitian at Ephesus is a better target for the invectives in question than the imperial priesthods in general. It is necessary to look for a new situation in Asia as a background for this outburst. And it is not necessary to look for this in theories concerning a persecution under Domitian.

v) In the fifth place we discuss the possibility of there being a polemic against the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult in the hymnic material of Rev. Here the method of "polemical parallelism" is an old and useful tool. But it is far less conclusive than might first appear, since the titles referred to can be explained from a traditional Jewish-Christian background alone, without recourse to such a parallelism. But - as we will see later in the case of Acts 17 and the subsequent correspondence of Paul with the Thessalonians - the vocabulary used would have been understood as antithetical to the cult of the Roman emperor by contemporary readers of this apocalyptic tract of the times. Any firm evidence from hymns used in the cult is, however, missing, and a "polemical parallelism" remains a useful theory that cannot

be proved. It is both possible and likely, but not certain.

vi) In the sixth place we look at possible references to the imperial cult in the letters to the seven churches. Here, again, the material is inconclusive. An attempt to read the entire book as directed against the new cults at Ephesus and Laodicea rests on the reading of chapter 13 and 17. In light of these chapters obscure references to groups, movements, objects and rituals may fit the picture established above. But in case such a framework is lacking it is harder to see how these letters, judged on their own merits, can substantiate the thesis that the book of Revelation is primarily directed against the cults and priesthoods in question. Most information can be gathered from the letter to Pergamum, but this can easily be understood as an invective against the imperial cult as such in Asia. Specification of these references is a recurring problem in the reading of the letters. Some of this, however, has to do with lack of ancient evidence in case of several of the cities. Here the gap in time and space complicates matters considerably.

The findings of this investigation are distressingly inconclusive: and we are left with the question of how chapters 13 and 17 can be seen to represent a key to the book as a whole. But it must be underscored that the letters do not give satisfactory evidence for there having been a persecution going on in Asia at the time. And this

is important for our understanding of the book and its invectives against the imperial cult. The strong language used of the synagogue may provide clues to the increasingly difficult situation that the Christians experienced in Asia.

vii) In the seventh and final place we look for the last time at the evidence relating to the theory of a persecution under Domitian; this complicated issue deserves a section of its own. It does, on the whole, strengthen the case for a reading of Rev. as suggested above: lack of evidence for persecution on an organized scale - presence of the ghost of Nero - due to increasingly difficult conditions for Christians living in pagan cities at the turn of the century - hostility towards the State - hostility towards the synagogue.

The situation reminds one of that which is reflected in the pages of the fourth gospel.

## II) THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In the following we will consider some principal questions relating to the book of **R**evelation in order to establish its proper historical framework. **M**ost of the issues will be discussed at greater length later.

### i) The place and date of the book.

"**I** John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island of **P**atmos on account of the word of **G**od and the testimony of Jesus" (1,9).

There are two readings of this information that ought to be mentioned at the outset - one of a literary nature, the other of a historical - because they are misinterpretations and do not help to establish a realistic life-setting of the text.

a) The one asserts that the location of the seer at **P**atmos is literary fiction (1). Since the seer's knowledge of some of the most important cities of the **R**oman province of **A**sia is solid, to say the least, such an inference is totally unnecessary. **P**atmos lies some **40** miles from the mouth of the **M**eander, about **65** miles from the site of **E**phesus, and is easily reached from **S**amos (2). Its position guarantees a close connection with the mainland **C**hurches - as well as a safe distance - and this factor helps us to read the book as integral to the **J**ohannine "school" or "church".



b) The second misunderstanding is related to why John was on Patmos. Verse 9 of chapter 1 describes the author as a "companion" (Greek: "sygkoinonos") in tribulations known to his audience. This naturally leads to speculation about whether John was there in hiding (voluntarily) or as exiled (involuntarily). The misunderstanding in question is that he should have been sent there by the emperor himself - Domitian - by some imperial action. This view is frequently found in textbooks of various kinds (3).

The "relegatio ad insulam" was a common enough feature of imperial policy and administration, and in the case of Patmos it is witnessed from various sources, for example Pliny the Elder (4). The whole question is discussed in the RE (5). A recent discussion is that by Hemer (6).

It is highly unlikely that Domitian can have been involved in a case like that of John. His actions of a punitive kind were directed against members of his own family and the Senate (as mentioned in chapter 1). In the first case it is a question of a purge within the imperial family. In the second case it is a question of his ongoing fight with the Roman aristocracy - mainly in search of money. Eusebius - who states that Domitian is the direct cause of banishment - contradicts himself, indicating the unlikelihood of an imperial action, when he quotes a tradition from Hegesippus referring to an interview between Domitian and some poor relatives of Jesus (7). Precisely because they were so insignificant - i.e. poor workers - he found no fault with them, but despised them as beneath his

notice and let them go free.

But John may still have been in exile, banished from above - by local Roman authorities. This is the more common view among modern commentators. Caird takes this to be a case of "relegatio ad insulam" by the proconsul of Asia to an island within his jurisdiction (8). He is followed in his view by Hemer, who suggests that John was the victim of a delator somewhere on the mainland - presumably Ephesus - and the proconsul chose the solution of relegatio and Patmos for place. He does, however, admit that "this is only inference", and does at the same time rule out the possibility that this be the result of a direct intervention from Domitian (9).

This kind of action could also be interpreted as "protective custody", which assumes that the proconsul took the same view as Domitian himself on the relatives of Jesus according to Eusebius (10).

A third possibility is, of course, that John is in voluntary exile, escaping from a situation on the mainland that we do not know the exact nature of. "Tribulation" (Greek: "thlipsis") can mean a variety of things, and is no indication of a persecution going on. As we will see in the following, there are no clear references to a persecution of Christians in Asia at this time, either in the book of Revelation or from other sources, only in later ecclesiastical writers (11). The whole question of a persecution under Domitian will be discussed at the end of this section on Revelation.

The dating of the book has caused more substantial controversy among interpreters. It is a strange discussion and illustrates how **NT** scholarship finds it hard to lay ghosts.

There are two favourite dates: one **Neronic** and one **Domitianic**. In addition there are some ingenious solutions attempting to combine both. We will leave out of consideration other possibilities.

a) The **Neronic** date has been a favourite of a strong minority for a long time and has also been favoured by many classicists. "**Neronic** date" should not only be understood to mean a date during the rule of **Nero** but also a date from the turbulent time which followed after **Nero's** death. It is favoured by the **Canon Muratori** and by **Jerome**. Among modern interpreters **Robinson's** redating of the **New Testament** is a late contribution to this view (12). Here a main argument is the situation of a persecution in **Asia** which forms the background to the document as such. Since **Robinson** - quite rightly - cannot find evidence for such a persecution under **Domitian** outside the ecclesial tradition, he goes for the time of **Nero** when such a situation is unquestioned. The long year following the suicide of **Nero** saw civil war in **Rome**, described in great detail by **Tacitus**, and war in **Judea**, described in great detail by **Josephus**. Another scholar sums up the evidence in the following manner: "The **Apocalypse** was not prompted simply by persecution of the **Church**, but by general political and social upheaval, which led **John** to envisage the end of the

Roman empire...There was only one period in 1c.AD. turbulent enough to evoke this strong reaction from a Christian, and that was the year and a half following Nero's death" (13), i.e. between June 68 and 15 January 69.

Unfortunately this line of arguing rests on the assumption that there is an ongoing persecution of Christians in Asia at the time. This cannot hold true for two reasons: in the first place the book of Revelation does not describe a situation like this as a general background - in the second place the persecution of Nero was strictly limited to Rome.

We will revert to this question several times in the following.

b) The Domitianic date is that of the majority of scholars, and is much more strongly substantiated in ancient sources than the Neronic one (Ireneus and Tertullian) (14). Turner gives a brief account of this view in Peake's Commentary and underscores that this dating does not exclude the possibility of earlier material from the time of Nero had been incorporated (15). A similar exposition can be found in The Jerome Biblical Commentary, by D'Aragon (16). The great strength of this line of arguing is twofold: the imperial cult is directly attacked in Rev. in a way that does not seem to reflect a Neronic date - here is no need to assume a situation of persecution in the text itself, whereby there is no obstacle to a Domitianic date.

c) There are other scholars who are not willing to go along with a Domitianic persecution without wanting to choose among the two dates mentioned above. Instead we are offered a combination of both: in Rev. we have two documents combined into one. Chapters 13 and 17 use the same language - because they stem from the same author! Later they were joined together by someone else - or perhaps even by the author himself. What we have is this: two apocalypses by the same author, one from Neronic times and one from Domitianic, the first containing the references to the beast in ch.13, the other the reference in ch.17. These two apocalypses simply must stem from the same pen since there so obviously is unity of style, many repetitions, etc. (17).

Needless to say, this solution to many of the problems of Rev. is ingenious but hardly convincing.

The question of dating seems always to end up with the counting of emperors. You have to decide where to start the necessary list of seven if the number be understood as more than symbolic: with Julius or with Augustus. But the crux of the entire counting business lies not there, but in the question of which emperors to admit and which ones to omit. This key to the discussion simplifies the matter considerably. If you include the three shortlived emperors of the long year 68/69 - Galba, Otho, Vitellius - you are somewhere in the reign of Galba, as suggested by Bell.

If you chose to exclude them you are in the Flavian era and Nero is the ghost of the story.



A date under Domitian would then imply that the perspective of the author is the chronology of the penultimate: Vespasian is, Titus will come and rule for a short while, and then comes the end - under Domitian, who is the logical eighth and will be destroyed and replaced by Christ. The author put himself back to the time of Vespasian, while he in reality was living under Domitian, thereby heightening the dramatic effect - as the author of Daniel had done in the case of Antiochus. "Vaticinia ex eventu" is common enough in apocalyptic literature.

The identification of the fifth king with Nero should now be considered in more detail.

ii) Nero in the book of Revelation.

"And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads... One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder... And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words... Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them". (13,1-7)

"It (the second beast) deceives those who dwell on earth, bidding them to make an image of the beast which was wounded by the sword and yet lived". (13,14)

"This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number,

its number is six hundred and sixty-six". (13,18)

"And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns...And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...The beast you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition...The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth". (17,3-18)

The identification of the fifth head is rather obvious. It has a human number, i.e. a personal name, cryptically rendered by the number 666 (or 616). "Neron Caesar" rendered in Hebrew or Aramaic letters equals 666 (or even the variant 616). It is witnessed by an Aramaic fragment that was published in 1963 (18). Nero was matricide, Christianocide, murdered and several times reported to be alive somewhere in the East (cfr. Sib.Or.5,361ff.). Suetonius also plays with numbers concerning Nero: in Greek 1005 would mean "murdered his own mother" (19). Nero functions

beautifully as a symbol of wickedness in high places. As seen in chapter 1 he did push the imperial cult further in an orientalizing direction and wanted to represent divine monarchy in a more absolute way than any of his predecessors had done. His persecution of the Christians in Rome made him the first great enemy of the Church, and for the first time they had direct experience of hostility from the state in an organized way.

Nero lingered on in memory much in the same way as Hitler did after World War II. The whole "Nero redivivus" discussion shows how he was both popular and feared. The sudden disappearance of this tyrant was too unexpected - and he keeps reappearing outside the empire. There was a pretender in 69, according to Tacitus (20), another in 79, according to Suetonius (21), and still one in 88, slightly mentioned by Dio (22). This return of Nero is also mentioned by the Sibyl (23). In itself these rumours cannot explain the presence of Nero in Rev., but combined with the memory of the first organized persecution the return of Nero could mean a serious threat to the Christians.

The accusation of "blasphemous names" also fits Nero, who was immensely popular with the Greeks - since he was strongly philhellene - and received all kinds of customary honours in addition to special ones (e.g. his close association with Apollo). Some examples of these can be found in epigraphic sources (24). Nero was no innovator in the East as far as the imperial cult is concerned, <sup>but</sup> in

the **West**, as was pointed out in chapter 1. The **Greeks** needed no further development in the case of ruler cult: they had ample resources for accomodating the **Roman** emperor, whoever he might be. We will return to the "blasphemous titles" later.

In short, **Nero** is the only emperor who really qualifies to be identified with the fifth king. His memory lived on among pagans and **Christians** long after his death. In a book written under **Domitian** it is no surprise that he appears, as little as it is surprising that **Gaius** should be reflected in **2.Thess. 2** or **Mk.13**. **Gaius** was remembered for what he tried to do in **Jerusalem**, **Nero** for what he actually did in **Rome**. While the first case affects **Jewry** as a whole, the second only concerns their messianic fringe, the **Christians**. But from their point of view **Nero** is not only as bad as **Gaius**, actually, he is worse.

The fact that **Nero** reappears in a document from the time of **Domitian** testifies to a time of trouble for the **Christian** community, or communities, in question, just as **Paul's** experience at **Thessalonica** and **Mark's** context (the long year **68/69?**) brought forth the ghost of **Caligula**, who was already dead at the time of writing. Here is a kind of parallel technique, and we shall call it the "first and second level of context", **Nero** and **Domitian** respectively. A person from the past becomes a symbol with forebodings for the future. **Nero** functions in these various aspects: a monster from the past that comes to symbolize the

religious dimensions of the state as experienced in the present, with sinister prospects for the future - i.e. the situation of the Christians at the turn of the century.

If a time of trouble was afoot, why does not Gaius reappear? Because Nero had overshadowed him in some important respects. The author prefers cryptic references, probably as some kind of safety-measure, just as we saw in the case of Gaius, and Nero is depicted instead of Domitian himself - just as Tacitus depicted Tiberius as a monster instead of Domitian. Nero is the background of Rev. while Domitian is the context.

iii) Letter or Apocalypse?

"Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear...". (1,3)

"Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea". (1,11)

We are not going into the complex discussion of the literary structure of the book of Revelation. But it ought to be mentioned at the outset, due to some of the factors referred to in the previous section.

In the first place the book is an apocalypse of a kind similar to 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. What is special in Revl. is the form with which it introduces itself: as a circular letter, addressed to seven churches in Asia.



Whether the first chapters are original or not need not concern us here, we are dealing with the book in its final form. And as such it gives a vivid picture of the life of the Church in the cities of Asia towards the turn of the century. Each of the cities will be considered in its turn. The letters of Ignatius - following shortly after our book - are somewhat similar to those of Rev.: they are addressed to much the same churches and contain almost the same message in each case.

In the second place there is no real need for splitting the document into several sources because of the question of repetitions. Cyclic - or repetitive - form is common enough in Biblical literature, both Daniel and the gospel of John for that matter can illustrate this point. The various septets - whether they be many or few in number - begin with the seven churches and is the backbone of the book.

In the third place the question of the technique of septets normally leads to the thorny question of counting emperors, as illustrated in the previous section. It is important to notice - as discussed above - that the three emperors of the long year 68/69 ought to be left out in order to accomodate both Neronic and Domitianic interests. It is equally important to leave out Julius, for the reasons discussed in chapter 1: whatever he really was, he was never an emperor, something everybody knew; the empire started with Augustus. Therefore the attempt to split up the document into several sources in order to

explain both the **N**eronic and the **D**omitianic aspects of the text is misguided as well as unnecessary. The counting suggested above accomodates both emperors and solves the question of persecution, to be returned to shortly.

In the fourth place there is a parallel in the contemporary **4 E**zra - that is, the part of the book which is oldest: chs. **3-14** - with its invectives against **D**omitian (**25**). This is interesting and concerns our topic, because of the worsened situation of Jewry under the last of the **F**lavian emperors (to be discussed at the end of this section; see also ch. **1, IX**: "**D**omitian"). Both Jews and **C**hristians had good reasons to complain during the last decades of the first century, but for rather different reasons.

iv) The **R**oman **I**mperial **C**ult in the book of **R**evelation.

"If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of **G**od's wrath..." (**14, 9-10**)

"The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and **G**od remembered great **B**abylon, to make her drain the cup of the fury of his wrath." (**16, 19**)

"And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over kings on earth". (**17, 18**)

"There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of **G**od and of the **L**amb shall be in it, and his

servants shall worship him; They shall see his face, and his name shall be written on their foreheads". (22,3-4)

"The attitude of the author of the **A**pocalypse is quite different from that of **S**t.**P**aul in his letter to the **R**omans (13,1-7), and it would seem that the whole situation had changed radically since 57/58 AD." (26).

The theme of polemics against the **R**IC in **R**ev. is a big topic, much loved and discussed by commentators, albeit of very varying worth. The book gives two kinds of references: direct (e.g. kings, statues, image, crowns, etc.) and indirect (the cryptic ones: beasts, heads, etc.). The empire (the first beast), the emperors (the heads or kings), the imperial priesthood with all its apparatus for the cult (the second beast), the blasphemous titles (theos, hyios theou, kyrios kai theos, kyrios, soter, kosmokrator, etc.), martyrdom and persecution (the souls slain) - they are all mentioned in turn, as well as numerous illusions in the letters to the seven churches. Like 2 Thess. 2 and Mk. 13 cryptic references occur in combination with more explicit language.

This situation corresponds very well with the traditional dating under **D**omitian, a point in time when the cult had a new upsurge under a new dynasty and enjoyed considerable popularity. Towards the end of the first century the imperial cult was almost omnipresent in **A**sia, i.e. more developed than was the case under the

Julio-Claudians (27). The outline of the cult offered in chapter 2 corresponds to the reality which the author is aiming at. It is prudent to keep in mind that he knew the cult far better than we do. He would have known the festivals, the hymns, the amount of images and sacrifices and liturgies in general, particularly the vocabulary that was blasphemous in the ears of Jews and Christians. He may, of course, have known of the imperial mysteries as well. The question of how far all this ceremonial has influenced the heavenly liturgy of chapter 4 and the many hymns scattered throughout the book will be explored later in relation to the imperial cult (28).

John writes from a situation where the Christians have become estranged from the synagogue and the religious aspects of the Roman state thereby became much more of a threat than was the case in the days of Paul (see part 2 of the present chapter). In Rev. the parallel to the gospel of John is very close.

The book foresees the end of the Roman empire, its fall and destruction by God himself. This must come because the empire has taken on a religious identity that is blasphemous, serving the purposes of the Devil (the dragon), and represents an antithesis to the kingdom of God that is to come. It is in other words the Roman empire in its religious aspects - not merely political - that is under judgement. Hostility towards the state is nowhere expressed in stronger terms in the New Testament than here. The author is pessimistic as regards the possibility

of the empire to be saved, in contrast to ecclesial writers of the fourth century like **Eusebius**. He speaks a language that is reechoed in other apocalyptic literature, for example **4 Ezra** and **2 Baruch**.

It is important to note - as we <sup>will</sup> in connection with **2 Thess. 2** and **Mk. 13** - that the imperial cult here represents the last stage of paganism, its lowest point, blasphemous also in comparison to the traditional pagan cults. It is impious and wicked men that are revered as gods in the cult - it is, in short, a perversion of all genuine religion, as previously expressed in **Daniel** and **Wisdom 14**.

His message to the readers of **Asia** is a message of doom - the end of the existing system where **Rome** rules the known world - and a message of hope - the imminent arrival of the **Kingdom**: fallen is **Babylon** and the new **Jerusalem** is soon to descend from heaven to earth. The state had made a god of itself in the imperial cult - now **God** himself will bring this intolerable situation to an end (29). The "false prophet" (16,13;19,20;20,10) is the theologian of the state, serving the purposes of the **Dragon** (20,2).

The references to the cult are the key to a reading of the book that puts it in its right **Sitz im Leben**. The book should as a whole be read as a warning against the influence of the **RIC**, not just chapters **13** and **17**. We will elaborate on this later. In the following we will highlight some of these. But before leaving this



introductory survey of **Rev.** the question of persecutions ought to be given more attention. This is not the same as the question of a persecution under **Domitian**, but rather the presence or absence of persecution in the book as such.

v) Persecution in the book of **Revelation**.

"**T**he devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **B**e faithful unto death." (2,10)

"**Y**ou did not deny my faith even in the days of **A**ntipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where **S**atan dwells." (2,13)

"**I** will help you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on earth". (3,19)

"**W**hen he opened the fifth seal, **I** saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of **G**od and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "**O** **S**overeign **L**ord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" (6,9-19)

"**A**fter this **I** looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the **L**amb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands..."**W**ho are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?"..."**T**hese are they who

have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". (7,9,13-14)

"Also it (the beast from the sea) was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them". (13,7)

"I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands". (20,4)

The important question of presence or absence of persecution in Rev. is one with which all commentators deal. And this brings us back to the question of dating and of the references to Nero and Domitian.

The problem is this. The references to persecution in Rev. as quoted above are they: i) past or ii) present or iii) both?

Scholars opt for various of these solutions and have not reached any agreement on the issue. Unfortunately this question is too frequently linked to that of dating and of counting emperors. Those who prefer a Neronic date regard persecution as references to the past, with warnings for the future. Those who prefer a Domitianic date normally follow Eusebius in the ascription of a general persecution, at least in Asia, under Domitian, and this is part of their evidence for such a dating. Some, finally, try to combine both, with or without splitting the document in two

- hereby sometimes, and unfortunately, combining the discussion of dating and persecutions with that of the structure and integrity of the book.

There can be little doubt that the persecution under **Nero** is referred to: the harlot is seated on seven hills and drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of **Jesus (17,6)**; the name of the city is **Babylon**, the place where the first organized persecution of **Christians** took place; also, this is the only persecution from above that is one hundred percent certain.

But this does not make the book of **Revelation** contemporary with this persecution. There is strong evidence that this is a past fact referred to, as a reference for identifying the beast and its fifth head (or king). In **Rev.** the saints and martyrs are already dead and this is referred to as a well known and accomplished fact. Their death is not something that is happening at the moment of writing. It belongs to the mystery and identity of the beast. It is, in fact, looking to the past, by referring to **Nero's** persecution in **Rome**.

The past is also a lesson for the future. And **Rev.** is full of warnings against the tribulations to come soon, as quoted above. One witness is already killed at **Pergamum - Antipas**, otherwise unknown - and there is more to come. The book seems to predict a general state of danger for the **Christians** in **Asia**, and one which is closely linked to the imperial cult, since the religious aspect of the state is the focus of attention time and

again: those who will not worship the beast can expect all kinds of dangers. But this emphasis on the **RIC** is not quite satisfactory as it concerns **Nero's** reign. The danger from **Nero** was of a different kind. Therefore the danger to be faced in the near future is more likely to have something to do with a strengthened position of the imperial cult in **Asia**. And this corresponds well with the situation under **Domitian** in those regions, as will be discussed when we deal with the seven **Churches** and with the question of a persecution under **Domitian**. The author comforts his readers with the words that the tribulation to come will be short - as did **Paul** and **Mark**, this is common eschatological thinking - and salvation close at hand, this time in a final manner.

If persecution belongs to the past and to the future, what about the present time, the moment of writing?

Nothing indicates that this is a time of persecution. It is rather a time of apostacy: the book warns against worshipping the beast and receiving its mark, but does not admonish people to flee - as we shall see **Mark** doing - or make resistance or anything along that line. **Rev.** launches instead an attack on the divinity of the **Roman** empire (first beast) and the role of its priesthood (second beast) and promises the readers that the **Roman** state soon will be replaced by the **Kingdom of God**.

**Rev.** comes from a time of difficulty for the **Churches**. That is why **Nero** reappears (just as did **Gaius** after **Paul's** failure at **Thessalonica** and the circumstances

surrounding the writing of the gospel of **Mark**, as we will see later in this chapter). They did not live in a situation of persecution either, but expected future tribulations and therefore reminded their readers of the lesson of the past.

Something similar to what had happened under **Nero** is expected to happen under **Domitian**, not because of an event like the fire of **Rome**, but because of social and religious pressures from the imperial cult. In short, the seven **Churches** are not in a state of being persecuted by the state at the moment of writing, but this can easily happen and is indeed foreseen by the author. They are, however, in a state of committing fornication with the harlot if they do not stay awake.

**Nero** should, therefore, be seen as a background figure, a symbol of a sinister past, while **Domitian** is the threat from the present, due to the imperial cult and not to any organized persecution.

A further possible reason for arguing along these lines is the odious language used of the synagogue in **2,9** and **3,9**. Once a break with the synagogue was a fact - and the expression "**Satan's** <sup>may</sup>synagogue" indicate that this is so, the expression being unthinkable in **Paul's** days - the **Christians** would not have any protection against the state if in trouble. This is precisely the chapter of **Church** history that follows the **New Testament**, as for example seen from the correspondence between **Pliny** and **Trajan** and the following martyr-acts from the second



century. Once we move into the second century the situation described in **Rev.** is clearly spelled out before our eyes. - The book surely merits its status as prophetic.

vi) Authorship of **Rev.**

This is not an important issue for our purposes and will just be mentioned in passing.

There are several Johns as possible candidate, as is the case with the gospel. The difference is, though, that while the gospel itself is anonymous (the person pointed to as author in the concluding chapters is never named), **Rev.** is not so. Several times the author is identified as John (1,4;1,9;22,8).

The author might, of course, be a pseudepigrapher, doing what apocalyptic writers had done before him and used some historical person as a literary fiction, in this case John of **Ephesus**. Be this as it may, the pre-critical tradition lump the Johannine writings together under one name, and rightly so, because they belong together in time and place and have many features in common. The critical tradition has struggled to separate the documents in regard to authorship and would generally speaking insist that **Rev.** is from a different hand than the fourth gospel. Some of the **Fathers** actually made the same comment (30).

### III) THE FIRE OF ROME AND THE CHRISTIANS

Since the persecution of Christians in Rome looms so large in the background of Rev. it may be useful for our purposes to give some attention to the episode itself as far as we are able to reconstruct it.

"And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus". (Rev. 17, 6)

"Punishments were also inflicted on the Christians, a sect professing a new and mischievous religious belief". (1)

"But neither resources, nor imperial munificence, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated. To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats - and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus. But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstition has broken out afresh, not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome. All degraded and shameful practices collect and flourish in the capital.

"First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of

others were condemned - not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies. Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his Gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited displays in the Circus, at which he mingled with the crowd - or stood in a chariot, dressed as a charioteer. Despite their guilt as Christians, and the ruthless punishment it deserved, the victims were pitied. For it was felt that they were being sacrificed to one man's brutality rather than to the national interest". (2)

"By reason of jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted, and contended even unto death. Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles. There was Peter who by reason of unrighteous jealousy endured not one nor two but many labours, and thus having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy

place, having found a notable pattern of patient endurance".

(3)

"When **Nero's** power was now firmly established he gave himself up to unholy practices and took up arms against the **God** of the universe. To describe the monster of depravity that he became lies outside the scope of the present work. Many writers have recorded the facts about him in minute detail, enabling anyone who wishes to get a complete picture of his perverse and extraordinary madness, which led him to the senseless destruction of innumerable lives, and drove him in the end to such a lust for blood that he did not spare even his nearest and dearest but employed a variety of methods to do away with mother, brothers, and wife alike, to say nothing of countless other members of his family, as if they were personal and public enemies. All this left one crime still to be added to his account - he was the first of the emperors to be declared enemy of the worship of **Almighty God**. To this the **Roman Tertullian** refers in the following terms:

Study your records: there you will find that **Nero** was the first to persecute this teaching when, after subjugating the entire east, in **Rome** especially he treated everyone with savagery. That such a man was author of our chastisement fills us with pride. For anyone who knows him can understand that anything not supremely good would never have been condemned by **Nero**.

So it came about that this man, the first to be heralded as a conspicuous fighter against God, was led on to murder the apostles. It is recorded that in his reign Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter was likewise crucified, and the record is confirmed by the fact that the cemeteries there are still called by the names of Peter and Paul, and equally so by a churchman named Gaius, who was living while Zephyrinus was bishop of Rome. In his published Dialogue with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian heretics, Gaius has this to say about the places where the mortal remains of the two apostles have been reverently laid:

I can point out the monuments of the victorious apostles. If you go as far as the Vatican or the Ostian Way, you will find the monuments of those who founded this church.

That they were both martyred at the same time Bishop Dionysius of Corinth informs us in a letter written to the Romans:

In this way by your impressive admonition you have together all that has grown from the seed which Peter and Paul sowed in Romans and Corinthians alike.

For both of them sowed in our Corinth and taught us jointly: in Italy too they taught jointly in the same city, and were martyred at the same time.

These evidences make the truth of my account still more certain. (4)



"Thus, fifty years after the event, members of the Roman governing class seem to have regarded the affair as the destruction of a conspiracy fomented by some extremist sect among the Roman Jews, and these were crushed in exactly the same way as the Bacchenes...and Druids...had been... The Neronian persecution was a single catastrophe, but not the beginning of a consistent policy of persecution". (5).

The first organized persecution of the Christians took place in Rome following the great fire that destroyed large parts of the city. How long the persecution lasted and how many were killed is unknown. Whether the two apostles were victims of Nero's desperate action is also uncertain, in spite of later ecclesiastical traditions. It is also most unlikely that this event is a result of a general imperial edict against the Christians as such - it seems to be local, limited to Rome, with no consequences for the rest of the empire. It is not known that the episode led to popular pogroms against the Christians elsewhere, unlike what happened to the Jews at the outbreak of the war in 66 when a wave of anti-Jewish actions took place all over the eastern part of the empire. What is most mysterious is how the Christians came to be victimized, i.e. how they were singled out from the large contingent of Jews in Rome. That is why M. Grant can call the whole event "an unsolved mystery" (6).

The reign of Nero has been discussed in chapter 1, from the point of view of the imperial cult. The episode

under consideration forms no part of his policy as such. But the rebuilding of the capital does, however, reveal a lot about the later Nero, his ambitions and his form of monarchy. The fire must be considered as an accident during the hot summer months in Rome:

"In fact...the responsibility cannot be fastened on Nero: If he had wanted to demolish buildings for the Golden House, he would not have started the fire quite a distance away from the area in question. Furthermore, what the conflagration did reach and destroy was his own palace on the Palatine, which he had no desire to scrap since he had just redecorated it and clearly intended its incorporation into the new plan. Nor, surely, would he have got to work precisely when the moon was full - calculations have shown that this was the case - a full moon not being the best time for arson to escape notice. Nevertheless, the rumours that Nero was responsible raged among the distressed population. He had never been so unpopular, and a great burst of official, propitiatory, religious rites did nothing to distract public opinion from these perilous allegations. It had therefore become imperative to divert the charge to some other person or group" (7).

What is certain is that the cause was the fire itself, and not Christian attitudes to the emperor. This has nothing to do with the imperial cult, but at a later age the memory of Nero did become intimately linked to the Christian experience of the Roman state, as the quotation

from **Eusebius** makes clear. This is also the case with **Revelation**.

If one wants to look for an explanation by considering how **Rome** did react to foreign cults, there is a long list of examples from republican and imperial times, discussed at length by **Frend** in his work on the persecutions (8). There was the episode of the **Bacchanalia** in **186 B.C.** mentioned by **Livy** (9). Later there came the episode of **Isis-worship** of **28 B.C.** when **Augustus** forbade **Egyptian** rites to be celebrated inside the pomerium (10). There was a new case of scandal in connection with **Isis-worship** at **Rome** under **Tiberius**. This time the emperor acted resolutely: the temple was razed, the statue thrown in the **Tiber** and priests were crucified (11). This has been referred to as a "persecution" on a small scale. The case of **Mithraism** is another example of how difficult it was for foreign cults to gain foothold in conservative **Rome**. When it survived it was probably because of its successful integration into paganism.

The point in question here is the politico-religious consequences of foreign cults on **Roman** soil. Here the **Bacchanalian** conspiracy is a good illustration of the real issue, because this was the story of "how a small association of women worshippers of **Bacchus** developed into a vast politico-religious conspiracy among the plebeians that aimed at setting fire to **Rome**...a reminder of what happened when a foreign cult got out of hand" (12).

Examples such as these are normally mentioned in

connection with the fire of **Rome** and the **Christians**, but does not seem to explain the case in question. The **Christians** belonged to the synagogue-world of **Rome** and the answer is hidden somewhere in the intricate relationship between messianic and non-messianic **Jews**, a chapter largely - and regrettably - closed to us.

We know something of how the **Jews** fared in **Rome** under the early empire. They were a large group and had suffered several times from the suspicion of the **Roman** rulers. **Caesar** was their friend and protector, something that **Augustus** followed up on the whole. But **Tiberius**, **Gaius** and **Claudius** regarded them as trouble-makers. **Nero** was, generally speaking, friendly disposed towards **Jewry** - **Domitian** decisively not.

**Tiberius** expelled the **Jews** together with the **Isis**-worshippers in **A.D. 19**: **4000** Jewish freedmen were shipped to **Sardinia** to fight bandits (13). This act is often supposed to have something to do with proselytism, the fact that **Judaism** enjoyed admiration and support in higher social strata and could easily become the object of suspicion from those who looked after the interests of the state-religion.

**Claudius** expelled the **Jews** from **Rome** in **49** (14). This happened because of a trouble-maker called **Chrestus** ("impulsore **Chresto**"), without making clear whether this person was present in **Rome** or acting from afar in some sort of way (15). This much discussed expression may be of relevance here, if the reference to **Chrestus** is a reference

to **C**hrist (the two names would probably have been pronounced identically by this time), in which case there is perhaps going on in **R**ome a confrontation between messianic and non-messianic **J**ews, and the two groups are beginning to separate. **C**laudius reacted by expelling both. In case this is just a question of some sort of riot on the part of the **J**ews, it should not be related to the problem under discussion. "**C**hrestos/**C**hrestus" means "good" and is a common enough name for eastern immigrants to **R**ome, for example a **J**ew. In **I** **P**eter it is actually used of **C**hrist: "for you have tasted the kindness of the **L**ord" ("hoti **X**restos ho kyrios").

The real problem is how the **R**oman police knew how to distinguish between the **C**hristian and non-**C**hristian members of the **J**ewish community in **R**ome. **M**any have been looking for a solution along the lines that the **J**ews gave the **C**hristians up to the **R**omans. **A**nd their contact with **N**ero could possibly be through **P**oppaea **S**abina:

"**W**hy, then, did **N**ero, when he wanted scapegoats, not descend upon the **J**ews? **O**ne reason is likely to have been that they enjoyed the favour of **P**oppaea. **B**ut, in addition to that, an attack on the **J**ews of the capital would have had unfortunate repercussions on **R**oman administration in the east. **T**his was because the flashpoint between **G**reeks and **J**ews was low. **T**he governors of **E**gypt, **S**yria, and **J**udaea were perpetually engaged in the delicate task of keeping the balance and the peace between these mutually and savagely hostile communities. **A**nd they by no means always decided



in favour of the **G**reeks. **A**s it happened, the discontents of the **J**ews in their homeland were at this very moment rising rapidly to a climax. **T**o fall murderously upon their co-religionists in **R**ome would have been to invite the worst troubles in **J**udaea and all the oriental provinces" (16).

**B**ut the **C**hristians were a different case from that of the **J**ews. **E**ven if the **R**omans still did not distinguish them from the **J**ews as such, those aware of the distinction would know that a persecution against such a small group would not cause anything like the same adverse repercussions. **T**here were possibly members of their faith in **N**ero's household (17); he may even have had a **C**hristian concubine (18). **B**ut these were not people with anything like as much influence as the pro-Jewish empress, or **A**grippa **I**I, the Jewish client monarch of the regions adjoining the Judaeae province.

"**A**nd the **J**ews themselves were most unlikely to sympathize with the **C**hristians, or regret any misfortunes they might suffer. **W**hen **P**aul, a few years earlier, had arrived in the capital and requested support from the local Jewish leaders, they gave a non-committal answer - referring chiefly to all the reports they had heard against the **C**hristians (19). **A**nd then, after hearing him, they had been divided about whether to back him or not. **B**ut in **J**erusalem, at just about the same time or slightly later, a fierce rift had developed between the **C**hristians and **J**ews, whose high priest **A**nanus, profiting by an interregnum between **R**oman governors, arranged for **J**ames the just, said

to be the brother of Jesus, to be stoned to death (c.62). And so now, only about two years later, the Jews would surely not make trouble if Nero persecuted the Christians" (20).

An indirect confirmation of this interpretation is often looked for in the words from 1 Clement quoted at the beginning. Here the deaths of the "greatest and most holy pillars" are related to the persecution following the fire. But the information is far from clear: Peter is the victim of "unlimited jealousy" and Paul of "jealousy and strife" (21). The author "had the fate of Peter and Paul in mind, and he places this in the context of internecine rivalries among God's people, "envy and jealousy", not pagan persecution" (22).

This piece of evidence stems probably from the end of the first century. Its exact meaning is uncertain, but it draws the attention to circumstances in the synagogue-world at Rome, a milieu that increasingly had been split into two factions, as a result of the activities of a messianic minority. This minority was the focus of attention as a result of the fire, and the Romans were from now on aware of the Christians as a distinct group, albeit within the orbit of the synagogue.

The mystery is still unsolved - inferences like those quoted above remain hypothetical, but not unlikely. We do, however, know something about how the Romans viewed the Christians, based on popular rumours. But these references come to us from some years later. They come

from a date when Church and synagogue were split apart and treated as different cases by the authorities, local as central. The expressions used of Christianity are revealing of how they were understood - or misunderstood - but they also can tell us something about the way the Christians lived at the time.

First of all there is Tacitus who writes not too long after the events he describes. His picture of the Christians is summed up by the words "odium humani generis" (23). But this kind of expression he uses also of the Jews: "adversus omnis alios hostile odium" (24). This indicates that it is precisely the social consequences of their religious life that he detested, their isolation from the others, the fact of being different, the closed nature of their association. The words are unclear, due to grammatical circumstances: if the genitive is objective genitive it expresses the anti-social tendencies of the Christians, which is the common interpretation - but if the genitive is subjective the point is that the Christians were detested by the entire human race, and this might be precisely because of their anti-social tendencies (25).

Tacitus, in his account of the fire, refers to the odd fact that unidentified persons tried to prevent those who wanted to extinguish the fire. Were they i) Jews - ii) criminals - iii) Christians? All these suggestions have been put forward. Friend, in an early work, suggests that behind Tacitus' obscure words is a clear indication that the Christians were persecuted for incendiarism, not for

being **Christians** (26). **But** this remains rather speculative since **Tacitus** seems to regard them as innocent of anything relating to the fire, but guilty of all kinds of other crimes relating to the religious and social sphere.

This interpretation is confirmed by the expression used in the correspondence between **Pliny** and **Trajan**: "superstitio prava et immodica" (27). **Pliny** did conduct interrogations of the **Christians** himself - something that neither **Tacitus** nor **Suetonius** did - and is a primary source as concerns the impression the **Christians** made on the **Roman** officials. **He** regards them as good and honest people, but, alas, subject to religious delusions, of a dangerous kind. **He** does not hesitate to execute them. **His** expression is technical: "prava" signifies destructive, possibly evil and dangerous, certainly something debased.

**Suetonius** gives a very similar description: "nova et malefica superstitio" (28). **Like Tacitus** and **Pliny** he does not charge them of criminal acts - he does not even link **Nero's** persecution and the fire together (29) - but focuses upon their depraved religion; the persecution of the **Christians** is not recorded as one of **Nero's** worst acts, rather the contrary. **Again** we come across a terminus technicus: "malefica". It indicates something magical, and is used by **Tacitus** of such cases (30). **But** "superstitio" is a technical enough expression in itself: it is used by **Cicero** of the **Jews** (31), by **Tacitus** of the **Druids** (32) and of **Pomponia Graecina** (33).

**M. Grant** writes: "The latter (**Christians**) made

peculiarly suitable scapegoats. They kept themselves to themselves in an even more suspicious fashion than the Jews, indeed to a degree which, in an extrovert, nationally-minded community, must inevitably lead to hostile rumours. Their talk about universal love spread the belief that the religious services they conducted were orgies of sexual promiscuity and incest. The Eucharist with its symbolism of the body and blood of Christ, was widely regarded as a cannibalistic feast. But the worst suspicions of all were roused by the apocalyptic views passionately held by the early Christians. They still believed that the end of the world was very near, and that when it arrived the Second Coming of the Messiah would be accompanied by a general conflagration" (34). Actually, Grant does keep it as a possibility that the Christians could have started the fire, but thinks it more likely that it was an accident (35). The popular accusations referred to above are also found in Tertullian: "sceleratissimi de sacramento infanticidii et pabulo inde et post convivium incesto" (36).

The legal questions involved are complicated. Tertullian's theory of an "institutum neronianum" (37) has been abandoned by critical scholarship. The expression "would seem to refer to a Neronian "usage" and is part of the African's panoply of argument to show that "only bad emperors persecuted" (38), just like Eusebius did later. Musurillo considers this the least likely (39). Instead other explanations have come up. The



theory of "collegia illicita" is one of the most attractive ones, but can only be applied if the **C**hristians were separated from the synagogue in some way or other. In this case there is the "lex **I**ulia de collegiis" to enforce action. **S**herwin-**W**hite proposed the theory of "contumacia" to account for the sporadic martyrdoms as such (40), but is not generally accepted by **R**oman historians all the time the initiative in the processes against the **C**hristians - as we know them from the martyr acts - does not come from the magistrates but from "below". They waited until someone was denounced, "hence the sporadic nature of the anti-**C**hristian repressions in the 2.century" (41). **M**usurillo is inconclusive when summing up this discussion: "there seems to be no definite solution that would be acceptable to all...but on the basis for the persecutions before **D**ecius and **V**alerian, I cannot feel that the acta offer any solution" (42).

The question of the persecution of the early **C**hristians is much studied. What is certain is that before the edict of **D**ecius there are no systematic persecutions - therefore the name "sporadic" - except that of **N**ero, which does not seem to have any legally binding force. **P**liny does not refer to any edict from the time of **N**ero. **B**ut he certainly knew that it was unlawful to be a **C**hristian. We will return to this thorny question at the end of this section on **R**evelation, in relation to **D**omitian.

In the memory of the early **C**hurch **N**ero was a monster,

the first persecutor, as both **T**ertullian and **E**usebius witness to. **A** scheme comes into being: "bad" emperors are persecutors - "good" emperors are not. **A**nd the "bad" emperors in the first century are **N**ero and **D**omitian. **B**efore them **G**aius also had suffered "damnatio memoriae".

#### IV) THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

"And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying: "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months; it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb who was slain". (Rev.13,1-8)

"And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her

hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication. **A**nd on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "**B**abylon the great mother of harlots and of earth's abominations". **A**nd **I** saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of **J**esus. **W**hen **I** saw her **I** marvelled greatly. **B**ut the angel said to me: "**W**hy marvel? **I** will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. **T**he beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition; and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. **T**his calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. **A**s for the beast that was, and is not, it is an eighth, but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. **A**nd the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. **T**hese are of one kind and give over their power and authority to the beast; they will make war on the lamb, and the **L**amb will conquer them, for he is **L**ord of **L**ords and **K**ing of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful". **A**nd he said to me, "**T**he waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes

nations and tongues. **A**nd the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for **G**od has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of **G**od shall be fulfilled. **A**nd the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth". (**Rev.17,3-18**)

"**A**nd **I** saw the beast and the king of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the throne and against his army. **A**nd the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worship its image". (**Rev.19,19-20**)

**T**he first beast is not difficult to decode.

**I**t is a parable of the **R**oman empire, depicted as an image of a beast rising out of the sea, thereby combining traditional imagery from **G**en., **D**aniel, and many other biblical sources. **T**his decoding is not subject to much controversy among scholars. **W**hat is not clearly spelled out by our commentators is the fact that the state is depicted in its religious aspects more than in its political. **T**hat is: the real target is the religious nature of the state - the imperial cult. **T**he ideas of **ch.13** are developed in further detail in **ch. 17**, where the religious issue is even more obvious. **I**t is possible to



argue that the **RIC** is not just under attack in **Revelation**, something that all commentators seem to agree on - the **RIC** is the real target of these chapters and therefore of the book as a whole. **Rev.** addresses the **Christians** of **Asia** at a time when the imperial cult presents a real danger, because it was so popular, and should be warned against. The lesson from the past - **Nero** - reveals the real nature of the empire: it is a religious monster, persecutor of **Christians** and a blasphemer. The **Christians** of **Asia** seem to be asleep and unaware of the danger. **Compromise** with the beast means perdition. The beast will strike again, the author tells his readers - and immediately **Nero** reappears.

This is due to new developments of the imperial cult under the very popular **Flavians** - **Domitian** had a temple consecrated to him at both **Ephesus** and **Laodicea**. Additionally the separation from the synagogue makes the position of the **Christians** vis à vis the state much more vulnerable. And in this situation the threat from the imperial cult becomes very real indeed. This view is easily confirmed by the acts of the martyrs from the following century.

The only way to spell out such a reading of the book or **Revelation** is in the context of chapters **13** and **17**. As stated in the introductory section on **Rev.**, we regard the two chapters as part of the same document, by the same author, from the same time and place (i.e. the traditional dating and location). We will suggest a reading of the

book as a whole that may be summed up in five points.

In the first place the traditional decoding leads us into the historical setting of the book. The very popular "pax romana" is interpreted as a camouflage for the Roman empire being the instrument of the Devil (the dragon). At the time of writing the empire had definitely recovered from a very serious wound - the civil wars of the long year 68/69. The Flavians were immensely popular with the Greeks, and there was no danger of the situation returning which the East had known before the empire, during the last turbulent years of the Republic. Civil war was a fact of the past - the "pax" has returned to stay. The highly successful new dynasty - the Flavian - was the new guarantor of peace, something the Greeks loved but seemed unable to procure for themselves. The Romans were accordingly hailed as saviours of mankind, gods and sons of god - all very deservedly. To the Greeks they must have appeared as superior in many ways.

The cities of Asia prospered greatly under the Flavians. It was a time of growth, as any visit to the sites in question will reveal. It must have been difficult for the average Christian to feel differently about the time he lived in from the citizens at large. The RIC crowned the Greek experience of Rome and was very much part of the life in the Asian cities. The material collected in chapters 1 and 2 can easily substantiate this picture of things. Still, the seer depicts the times as darkness and not light.

According to our author the empire has had its day, its time is up and judgement follows for all its adherents, pagans or Christians. Rome is drunk with the blood of the saints. God and his Christ will destroy Rome and finally also the dragon who gave it power, the source of evil behind the scene.

The empire had indeed received a serious wound, but was healed. This is often referred to as Nero having died and returned (1). But it is the empire as such that has suffered a setback, not just one of its heads (kings). The kings have a symbolic number, seven. The number of the empire is seven (signifying completeness, totality), but in the case of Rome it is a negative completeness that is expressed by the number. The number of the kings being seven does not prevent it from also functioning in a chronological sense: symbol and historicity often work together in apocalyptic literature.

An interesting feature of our text is the reference to the ten kings corresponding to the ten horns in 13,1 and 17,3. Like Daniel (2) our author uses the imagery of the horn to denote a king or a dynasty of kings. The decoding is normally taken to mean powers outside the Roman empire, barbaric kings, hostile to Rome (3), and not client kings, as sometimes is suggested - these had too little power to be dangerous. But the seer underscores that these kings are spiritually related to the beast - of the same nature - even if they can be used as the rod of God in a punishment of Rome (4). The most important power in

question is, of course, the **P**arthian, which gave the **R**omans constant political headache all through the history of the empire.

**B**ut our seer does not primarily want to focus on **R**ome as a political phenomenon, even if it, roughly speaking, corresponded to what they would understand with the expression "the world". **T**he empire is under attack for very specific purposes.

"**T**he first beast...is a parody of the true **C**hrist, and all the supposed references to **R**ome and the emperor cult can be taken as part of this parody, which dominated the chapter and the rest of the book" (5).

In the second place we must therefore focus upon the religious nature of the **R**oman empire, as done circumstantially in chapter 1. **O**ur elaborate introduction to the topic of the polemic against the divinity of the **R**oman emperor in the **N**ew **T**estament is more understandable once we arrive at **R**evelation. **B**ecause here it is the very issue under attack, as the texts clearly witness. **D**ecoding is no difficulty once a comprehensive knowledge of the cult and its many forms is given. **O**ur commentators do not hesitate to stress that the empire under attack has religious dimensions, which they simply refer to as the imperial cult, without spelling out what this means in reality (6). **T**herefore the cult as we know it is never described in detail, and the references remain obscure.

**H**aving gone through the material relating to the divinity of the **R**oman emperor and the cult itself in two

substantial chapters before dealing with **Rev.**, we are in a better position to cope with the question. Also we have given some attention to the rule of **Domitian**. A catalogue like the one in **Appendix 4** is indispensable for any student of **Rev.** And we will revert to the question of the presence of the **RIC** in the seven cities later. This is the place to repeat - however briefly - some important aspects of our earlier findings, in order to relate them to a correct interpretation of our text.

To the ancients sacred and secular were not separated in the way we are used to, and the state has religious dimensions that a modern student finds difficult to comprehend. In the case of the **Roman** empire this is articulated by the belief in the divinity of the head of state: the emperor. In this way they were heirs to the **Hellenistic** royal traditions, and the **Roman** empire acquires many oriental features as time goes on. There are two basic forms of the imperial cult: the indirect (**Latin**) and direct (**Greek**). The **Greek** form is the one known to the author of **Rev.** and is also the most provocative from a **Jewish** and **Christian** point of view. Our findings indicate what kind of milieu the **Asian Christians** lived in at the turn of the century.

**Chapter 13** and **17** do not contain references to **Antiochus** or **Gaius**, except for the use of the word "abominations" in the plural, which may very well cover temples, altars, statues and such like (**7**). Instead **Nero** appears, because he reveals how dangerous the emperors can



be from a **C**hristian point of view. **T**he emperors have already persecuted the **C**hurch, and in view of the increasing popularity of the cult under the **F**lavians this may easily happen again - when the **C**hristians realize what is at stake. **T**herefore the beast is portrayed in its religious panoply from the outset of the description: **I**t carries a blasphemous name, uttering blasphemous words, and is worshipped by all the world, and its worship is entrusted to the false prophet. **T**he seer warns against joining in this cult, because it is against true religion.

**N**ot persecution but the imperial cult is the topic of this book. **T**he real threat to the **C**hurch is not the sword, but the divine pretensions of the beast. **W**hat is popularly taken to be supreme blessing is in reality a stance against the true and only **G**od.

**T**he issue is therefore much wider in **R**ev. than is the case - as we shall see later - with **G**aius, in **2 T**hess. and **Mk. 13**. **N**ot a person but an institution is under attack. **N**o event but rather the divinity of the emperors is the focus of attention. **T**he seer in this way wants to "demythologize" the **A**ntichrist myth of primitive **C**hristian tradition (the "anomos" of **2 T**hess.) by referring it back to the **R**oman state - not as desecrating the temple at **J**erusalem but as threatening and corrupting the **C**hurch, the true temple. **T**he **RIC** is ultimately the instrument of the **D**evil (**13,1**). **A**nd the divine title of **1,4** - "who was, who is, and is to come" - is parodied in a direct attack on the beast: "which was, and is not, and is to

ascend" of 17,8.

An interpretation such as this makes the book far easier to read, because it takes into account our findings concerning the cult itself. The cult of the emperor is no side-issue in Rev. - it is the heart of the matter.

In the third place this interpretation is confirmed by the repeated warnings to the Christians of Asia. The cult knows of only one martyr so far, Antipas, the faithful witness from Pergamum. But many more are to come. The warning - "keep awake" of 16,15 - is a warning against apostasy, to the imperial cult. This means that Christians in Asia were prone to compromise, to be indifferent or perhaps even accept the cult without realizing its dangers. The book is a "call for the endurance and faith of the saints" (13,10). The seer illustrates his point by twice falling down (making proskynesis) and worshiping the angel, but is severely admonished not to do so. Instead the angel - a true servant of God - tells him: "Worship God!" (19,10; 22,8-9).

The recent commentary by Sweet brings out these implications clearly - as did the classical commentary by Charles. But they both fail in making their insights from chapter 13 and 17 a key to the book as a whole. Sweet comes quite close to the point in a comparison with the history of our own century: "There is a formal parallel in the stance of the "confessing Church" over against the "German Christians" who supported Hitler in the 1940s". (8)

The warning should be read against the background of the newly established cults of Domitian at Ephesus and Laodicea.

In the fourth place the role of Domitian in Rev. should be considered. The best way to do this is to discuss the reference to the eighth emperor in 17,11. "As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition". V.8 refers to the beast as one which "is, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition" and "it was, and is not and is to come". This is a second clue to the identity of the beast.

According to the standard counting of emperors Vespasian is, Titus will come for a short time, and Domitian is necessarily the eighth, a figure not mentioned in ch.13. Charles finds this interpretation awkward (9), Caird does not (10), but prefers the Nero redivivus solution, due to his belief in persecution under Domitian, and additionally seems to miss the apocalyptic technique of the "penultimate" (John writes under Domitian but pretends to write earlier - under Vespasian - to strengthen the impact of his message). According to this way of reckoning the eighth king is future to John - which he in reality is not: it is under him John writes - but not far off (11).

John indicates clearly that the eighth is the last emperor, whom Christ will crush, and whose rule will be replaced by the millennium. The "penultimate device" (sixth out of seven is) - conventional enough in apocalyptic -

makes possible a forecast of future events, most of which come to pass precisely because they had already happened; this lent authority to the actual prediction. But eight is the number of Christ and his new order - the opposite of the penultimate, 666, which is incomplete (12). It appears claiming the transcendence that eight expresses - cfr. the lawless one of 2. Thess 2,3ff. - but in fact it is one of the old firm, its being is as derivative as theirs (13).

In the fifth place there is much evidence for increased emphasis on the imperial cult under Domitian, as mentioned in ch.1.

"John did probably write under Domitian, as Ireneus says, but it is wrong to appeal to Domitian's Neronic traits as evidence. They were evident only to disgruntled aristocrats in Rome: in Asia the Flavians were popular" (14).

Here Sweet is right, it seems, in not needing a Nero redivivus to account for the eighth when Domitian suffices. Nor do we need any persecution under Domitian to make sense of this reckoning. But where he and the other commentators fail is in not making the reader aware of the increase in the imperial cult under Domitian. We need not go to the West for evidence - as often done - where this emperor insisted on divine titles. Asia saw new cults to Domitian: at Ephesus and Laodicea. And these can fully account for the situation in Rev. where the cult of the emperor is a threat to the Christians.

Given such evidence there is no need to mention the **RIC** in a vacuum - the seer must have felt the social pressures himself on many occasions. They may very well have been the occasion of the imperial festivals (these we will return to in the next section on the gospel of John) as outlined in chapter 2.

Ch. 1, 9 calls the author "your brother who shares with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance". And the situation behind this expression could very well have been some occasion related to the imperial cult. The apocryphal acts of John did actually tell of John at Ephesus who went clad in black on the day of the feast of Artemis when all the others went in white (15). This was possibly also the case on imperial feast-days. - Were there also some Christians among them?

The seer seems to recommend passive resistance, i.e. withdrawal. In this perspective no "relegatio ad insulam" is needed, neither locally nor centrally. But if there be any kernel of historical truth behind this story - i.e. due to local initiative - it may explain how such a relegation came to pass.



## V) THE BEAST FROM THE LAND

"Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men; and by the signs which it was allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, bidding them make an image for the beast which was wounded by the sword and yet lived; and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: Let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty six".  
(Rev. 13, 11-18)

"And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worship its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur". (19, 20)

The identification of the second beast is not more of a problem than was the case with the first beast.

For at least a hundred years exegetes have understood this image to mean the imperial priesthood (1). Price gives the same decoding (2), but with much more authority than the average commentator, since it comes in the context of a reconstruction of the cult itself. As far as Revelation is concerned we ought to speak of pre-Price and post-Price commentaries or studies. The commentators consulted here (Charles, Caird, Beasley-Murray, Sweet) all belong to the former category - pre-Price - except the substantial study by Hemer (3), which is so close to Price in date that it has not managed to include the work in his study. But the two works are complementary in many ways. They certainly are indispensable tools for the study of Revelation. We are, in other words, in a better position to study this book than ever before.

First of all: the imagery of the "beast" has well known parallels in 1 Enoch (where two monsters are parted: Leviathan goes into the abysses and Behemoth onto dry land) (4), 4 Ezra (5) and 2 Baruch (6). But the closest parallel is with Daniel: the first beast being an adaptation of 7,1ff. and the second of 8,3ff.: the ram with two horns.

A decoding is therefore less problematic than in the case of the first beast, where it is unclear if the numbering is merely symbolic or literal (i.e. chronological) or both. Here we have more information, details pertaining

to the imperial cult as we know it.

The decoding of this image knows many variations. One is that by Caird who suggests that it be understood to mean the Asian "koinon" (commune) and not specifically the imperial priesthood. But then he states the Asiarchs in question were priests to the RIC in all probability, since they were the greatest promoters of the cult (7). Cullmann follows the identification by Charles (8). Cuss does the same, describing the priesthood of the imperial cult in Asia as "middlemen" between the emperor and the people for promotion of the imperial cult (9).

Price takes the image of the second beast to mean a local authority - not central - concerned with the worship of the beast from the sea. "The obvious candidate is the priesthood of the imperial cult, of the province of Asia" (10). Read in the light of Price's reconstruction of the cult itself - as summarized in our chapter 2 - the conclusion seems inevitable. Perhaps we may be even more specific and relate the image to the new priesthoods of the cults at Ephesus and Laodicea.

What follows is a brief commentary on the text in light of principal features of the cult. We aim only at highlighting this aspect of the text (not others such as textual problems, the Hebrew imagery, parallels to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, etc.). It is probable references to the ingredients of the cult that are important for our purposes.

V.11 tells us that the second beast rose out of the

earth. It is a different institution from that of the first beast, but we shall see that the two are closely linked together. It looks like the ram from **Daniel 8**, as mentioned above, that is, it looks innocent enough, but its voice is that of the dragon, the **Devil** (cfr. **Gen 3, 1-5**). This links the second beast to the first from the outset. Being lamb-like we take to mean that the priesthood has the ability to deceive the **Christians** in **Asia**, leading them into apostasy by persuading them to join in the cult. The warning contained in this verse would mean that the **RIC**, as practiced in **Asia** at the time of writing, is dangerous for the believers in **Christ**, because the message of the beast comes from the dragon. The lamb-like beast is a false prophet, the true prophet is the **Lamb**.

The actual outfit of the imperial priests is known from archeological finds. A visit to the museum at **Aphrodisias** is enough to show us what is aimed at. The priests and priestesses are clad in white and carry crowns with the imperial images. In their hands they would carry images of the "theoi Sebastoi", or sacrifices of some kind. - It is clearly a false prophet that is hinted at here, as we also find in the description of the lawless one in **2 Thess. 2** and **Mk. 13**.

**V. 12** specifies the information given in **v. 11**. The second beast exercises all the authority of the second beast. It somehow represents the first beast, and does so in its presence. This may safely be taken to mean the visibility of the "theoi Sebastoi" in a province like **Asia**,

that is, the many kinds of images belonging to the cult (see: ch.2). The cult took place before statues, altars, images, etc., in temples, shrines, or monuments of all kinds dedicated to the emperors.

The second beast therefore makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast. This is a major clue to the decoding of the image. The understanding of the **RIC** as outlined in chapter 2 makes clear that it is a question of worship along the lines of divine cult. Sometimes it is joined to the traditional cults (as at Samos and Ephesus), sometimes it is new and independent (as at Pergamum). Some places would know both (such as Ephesus). The cult is popular and well received, it seems, which fits well with what we know of the **RIC** in Asia.

The reference to wounding and healing is often linked to the **Nero redivivus** stories. This is not only unnecessary, but also unfortunate: for in this way the cults in question are forgotten. Besides, **Nero** had no temples in Asia.

The reference to the wound that was healed need not refer to **Nero** at all. It might refer to the institution of the empire itself that is under attack. The empire survived the civil wars of 68/69 when it looked like a return to the chaos of republican times was imminent. But the "pax romana" was reestablished, thanks to the **Flavian** emperors, who were hailed as saviour gods, enjoying immense popularity in the East. Visible signs of the popularity -



and the gratitude felt on behalf of the **G**reeks - were, for example, the newly founded cults of **D**omitian at **E**phesus and **L**aodicea.

**VV.13-14** give us interesting insight into details of the role of the priesthood in the cult: **I**t brings down fire from heaven; it works signs in the presence of the beast; it deceives people; it bids them to make an image of beast.

**F**ire from heaven may, of course, be taken to mean a parody of the descent of **H**oly **S**pirit at **P**entecost. **B**ut it is closer to interpret the expression in light of fanciful techniques employed by the priesthoods of various cults. **A**nyone who finds himself in doubt about the engineering abilities of the ancients should at once read **L**ucian's treatise on **A**lexandros the false prophet: here is thunder, lightning, megaphones, etc. in abundance. **S**tories about signs and wonders in the imperial cult are also referred to by **P**rice (11). **S**everal statues were reported to be miraculous, and this is the most likely interpretation of the words "in the presence of the beast" (12). **W**e find references to this aspect of pagan cults in both **2.Thess. 2,9** and **Mk. 13,22**. **A**ccording to **Sib.Or. 3,63** and **As.Isa. 4,10** they were worked by the **A**ntichrist himself. **H**owever miraculous the statues in question were, to **J**ohn - as well as to **P**aul and **M**ark - they are worked by demonic powers. **I**n a post-miraculous age such as ours the biblical expression "signs and wonders" is normally interpreted in a too narrow

sense. To the ancients the meaning of the expression is quite wide. And "supernatural" features accompanied the cults also of the traditional gods (as in the case of Alexandros).

The bidding to make an image of the first beast describes one of the main functions of the imperial priesthood. It refers primarily to cult statues, but may also cover the wide range of imperial images. The new and colossal cult statue of Domitian just erected at Ephesus for his new cult easily springs to mind. At this point in his commentary Sweet actually gives a direct reference to the new cult at Ephesus (13). He also refers to coinage, which we will return to shortly. - As part of traditional apocalyptic language this reminds us of the cult image of Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel 3 and the statue of Zeus (together with that of Antiochus?) in Dan 11,31.

V.15 tells us that the imperial priesthood gave breath to the image of the beast, so that it could even speak. The biblical allusions to Gen.1-2 and Ezekiel 37 are usually mentioned by the commentators. But the tricks used by "false prophets" in the cult - as just referred to - is as relevant. "Speaking statues" were known in antiquity, and Charles lists evidence for such occurrences at Troas and Parium (14). Sweet makes statements about these techniques used in the RIC, but without offering documentation (15).

In this verse we are also told that the priesthood caused those who would not worship to be slain. This may

very well be a reference to a new situation of martyrdom that is beginning to occur in **Asia** (cfr. the martyrdom of **Antipas** in ch. 2), but can also be taken as a warning for the future. In his letter to **Trajan** **Pliny** tells of how he had the image of the emperor brought before the **Christians** to make them offer incense or wine in sacrifice, something they refused. The refusal is here - as in **Rev.** - an example of passive resistance.

**V.16** tells that the imperial priesthood also caused everybody to be marked on the right hand or on the forehead. Tattooing as a mark of a god's ownership is well attested from pagan cults, and would probably also have been employed in the imperial cult (**16**). It is here contrasted to those who are marked with the mark of the **Lamb**. **3 Macc 2,28-30** tells of how **Ptolemy IV Philopator** demanded that **Jews** should offer pagan sacrifices to their own god. Those who opposed this were put to death - those who merely refrained were reduced to serfdom and branded with the emblem of **Dionysus**.

**V.17** goes further and draws out the practical implications of this marking: no one can buy or sell without the mark of the beast. Here it is natural to refer to the coinage of the **Greeks** under **Roman** rule, the so-called "**Greek Imperials**", series struck by free cities ("**civitates liberae**") and **Roman** colonies alike. "The one way in which the commune (of **Asia**) could make it impossible to buy or sell without the mark of the monster was by the coinage" (**17**). This indicated the omnipresence of the first beast.

The coinage would be regulated by the "koinon" and its Asiarchs, who also would be chief-priests of the cult. To the early Christians the image of the beast was, in short, unavoidable - you could not even buy or sell without using its image.

V.18 gives a cryptic reference to the beast's name: 666 (or 616, according to another manuscript tradition). We will not repeat the questions relating to the decoding of this number here, we have previously accepted Nero as the name referred to. The readers of the book would not find it cryptical, but obvious: "Let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast" - which sounds very much like Mk.13,14, "let the reader understand".

To sum up our findings so far: Why should Nero suddenly appear in a book that is directed against the imperial cult in Asia under Domitian? Why refer to the persecution in Rome some decades ago?

The answer lies in the threat that the imperial cult represented to the Christians of Asia. Martyrdom was mentioned earlier in this passage, and even if there was no organized persecution under Domitian the general situation was becoming more difficult, which has a bearing on the staying of John at Patmos, voluntary or not. The seer forecasts a development like that which we find in the second century, and as witnessed to in the case of the martyrs of Bithynia, Polycarp at Smyrna, the rescript of Hadrian to the proconsul of Asia, etc. In short: Nero

showed them the true face of the first beast - it should never be forgotten that this is the reality that the second beast serves, in an apparently lamblike way.

In the section of ch. 13 analyzed above the seer warns his readers to wake up from the sweet slumber of admiring the "pax romana" and the cult of the emperors. Going along with the cult means apostasy - refusing to do so means passive resistance. The cryptic reference to Nero implies that the RIC ultimately stands for persecution of those who offer resistance - the warning against the cult is realistic enough. For those who go along with it the RIC means apostasy, spiritual death and final condemnation. The second beast is therefore described as a "false prophet" (16,13;19,20;20,10). It goes to perdition together with the beast it serves.

More detail should be added in order to explain the legitimacy of the seer's description.

The imperial priesthood was directly responsible for creating the social pressure from the imperial cult. It organized and sponsored the festivals with meals for all citizens and donations (18). As explained in chapter 2, it was drawn from the laity, but from those of high social standing - often Asiarchs - and of great wealth. We saw previously how members of the imperial family served as priests and priestesses of the cult. Their titles vary according to functions: hiererus, archiereus, stephanophoros, prothytes, theologos, neokoros, etc. At the first stage of the cult their office was individual, later it became



collective, as did the cult of the "sebastoi" themselves. Their offices were organized by the "koinon" of **Asia** and lasted usually for a year, elected from the different cities on a rotating basis (19).

We probably get a glimpse of them in the vision of the heavenly liturgy in chs. 4-5 of **Rev.** Here they are portrayed by their heavenly counterparts - the twenty-four elders - in a liturgy that may have borrowed features from the **RIC** in **Asia**, as known to the seer. They are clad in white, they wear crowns, they offer incense, they play harps and sing hymns. The latter is probably modelled on an imperial choir. We will return to their liturgical activities in the next section.

How far they were instrumental in processes against the **Christians** is not clear, but is highly likely; we are talking about the sporadic persecutions before the edict of 249. One echo from early times comes from the **Acts** of **Paul** and **Thecla**, mentioned in the previous chapter. The martyrdom of **Polycarp** also mentions the imperial priest at **Smyrna**.

The invectives against the priesthood in **Rev.** should be interpreted against a concrete occasion, not an institution as such, left in a vacuum. New cults produced new priesthoods and increased social pressure. This is exactly what happened in **Asia** when **Ephesus** acquired a new cult, to **Domitian**, and the city becomes "neokoros". A **Domitianic** date strengthens this assumption. Here we have an obvious pretext for these invectives: "Indeed I have seen

no other interpretation which fits the known geographical context" (20).

Rev. is an attempt on the part of the author to provoke passive resistance to the new cult in a situation where they seemed to be spiritually asleep and perhaps even carried away by the new development. The popularity of Rome was considerable among the Greeks, as often mentioned in the preceding two chapters. In particular, one should not forget that Rome represented a much loved bulwark against enemies like the Parthian empire in the East and the chaos of the Greeks themselves. "A recent parallel might be the attempts of Bonhoeffer and others to alert the German Christians of the 1930s to the true nature of Hitler's Reich, at a time when men were dazzled by his achievements and he was widely regarded as civilization's bulwark against Bolshevism" (21).

## VI) THE BLASPHEMOUS NAMES

"Round the throne were twenty-four thrones and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads...the twenty-four elders fell down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns down before the throne, singing...". (4,4-10)

"And I saw a beast rising out of the sea...with seven heads...and a blasphemous name upon its heads". (13,1)

"If we take the singular then the blasphemous name on each head is no doubt "Sebastos", i.e. divus Augustus - a blasphemous title involving divine claims and connected with the imperial cult. The terms "theos" and "theou hyios" were frequently applied to the emperors in inscriptions from Augustus onward". (1)

"Men...worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast...?"". (13,4)

"In this verse our author takes up the theme which led really to the composition of the book as a whole, the worship of the beast, the imperial cultus. Since this meant a subordination of the interests of religion to those of the State, it became the chief source of strife between Christendom and the Roman Empire. Again and again this

subject recurs throughout the chapters that follow". (2)

"And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words". (13,5)

"And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names...". (17,3)

"The author of the **A**pocalypse was thoroughly convinced that the claims of **C**aesar were antithetical to those of **C**hrist. **S**o convinced that he regarded any compromise as impossible and any accomodation as blasphemy. **S**o convinced that he produced an elaborately designed and ingeniously crafted literary work in which he both heightened and schematized that antithesis to persuade his wavering readers that his perceptions were not only right, they coincided with the perspectives of **G**od himself... John's description of the heavenly ceremonial practiced in the throne room of **G**od bears such a striking resemblance to the ceremonial of the imperial courts and cult that the latter can only be a parody of the former". (3)

**A**s we saw in chapter 2 the **G**reek vocabulary of the imperial cult is found in inscriptions and on coins, occasionally also in literature, though this source is not as valuable as the two former ones. **A** most important source would have been liturgical texts - hymns, etc. - but these are not preserved, though our author must have known

them. This language was "in the air" in **A**sia at the time of writing, more than ever before after the establishment of the new cult of **D**omitian at **E**phe<sup>s</sup>us. **I**mperial choirs, hymnodes, theologians and priests would have kept this language alive through the imperial feasts in the different cities. **I**n addition there are private cults of various kinds.

The hymnic material in **R**ev. cannot make up for the missing liturgical texts, but in their own way they may perhaps serve as pointers as concerns this aspect of the cult.

**I**n his article **A**une tries to demonstrate that the heavenly liturgy of ch.4 is inspired by court ceremonial. **B**ut his reconstruction is not based on firm textual evidence, because we do not know what this court ceremonial really was like. **H**e does instead offer a synthesis of the cosmic symbolism involved in the cult, as discussed by **L'**Orange (4). **T**his is praiseworthy, but does not lead to any certain liturgical conclusions; neither do his parallels from the acclamations known from literary texts. **H**e also fails to explain how the seer should know the court ceremonial, since this normally took place in **R**ome, or the places where the emperor resided when on visits throughout the provinces. **H**is examples are from **N**ero's **G**olden **H**ouse with its revolving rotunda, symbolizing the heavens, and the audience hall of **D**omitian's **D**omus **A**ugusta on the **P**alatine, with little or no direct bearing on the texts from **R**ev. (5). **T**he proskynesis made to the empty throne



is certainly a striking parallel. Still, we do not know the liturgies at this time and the parody of court ceremonial in **Rev.4** must remain a hypothesis.

**Touilleux**, in his interesting study on **Rev.**, does not hesitate to identify the second beast with the new cult of **Domitian** at **Ephesus**. But due to the lack of liturgical material he offers no reconstruction of the hymns in question; he only refers to the hymnodes of the cult, with obvious parallels to the hymns in **Revelation (6)**. His model is, however, the cult of **Cybele** in **Asia**.

It may therefore be justified to look to the provincial cults for a context more than to court ceremonial. But here we are faced with the same problem, of not knowing the hymns. This certainly leaves room for speculation. If the liturgy of **ch.4** in some way reflects imperial cult in the province of **Asia**, the hymns scattered through the book may do the same. They do in their own way offer a summary of the "theology" of the cult, however, since the divine titles used coincide with those of the cult, as to be seen shortly.

Therefore the parody - if it be so - is another form of polemical parallelism.

The hymns in question would have been composed by the imperial theologians. "The theologi, of whom there were organized associations, were quite well-known dignitaries in the Imperial cult of **Asia Minor**, against which the **Apocalypse** protests so strongly...and it is significant that the examples come from the very cities mentioned in the **Apocalypse**, **Pergamum**, **Smyrna**, **Ephesus**. These

"theologians" seem occasionally to have borne actually the name of sebastologi, as being the official preachers in connection with the imperial cult in **Asia Minor**, and when we further

consider that they were often hymnodi at the same time, the borrowing of the title becomes all the more intelligible" (7). The borrowing referred to by **Deissmann** in this passage is the application to the seer - as well as to the author of the **Fourth Gospel**, understood as one and the same person - of the title "theologos" by the early **Church**: "The well-known explanation, that he was so called because he taught the divinity of the **Logos**, is so obviously a little discovery of later doctrinaires, that it does not merit serious discussion. The title is much more likely to have been borrowed from the **Imperial cult**" (8).

We are better equipped concerning imperial choirs, thanks to an inscription from **Pergamum**, discussed by **Price** (9). It is complete and lists the celebrations of imperial birthdays. The number of members was forty, and their task was singing hymns to the emperors on their birthdays, which was **New Year's Day** in **Asia** (10). The membership most likely carried with it considerable social prestige.

The theory of polemical parallelism ought now to be considered in the context of these hymns. For references to the **Greek vocabulary** of the cult, see the concluding section to chapter 2 ("The **Greek vocabulary** of the **Roman Imperial cult**"), the epigraphic material given by **Smallwood** and **Crum** (11), and the catalogues on the **Greek Imperial**

series (12), Deissmann gives much epigraphic evidence for the various titles (13); the best discussion of the vocabulary is the article by Price (14). Cuss discusses the most common titles (15).

We will now go through some of the expressions as they occur in the book. The following examples are not meant to form any exhaustive list as concerns Rev. We want only to highlight the most obvious occurrences.

1.8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega", says the Lord God (kyrios ho theos), who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty (pantokrator)".

"Kyrios" and "theos" are LXX renderings of Adonai Elohim, but so common in the imperial cult that if Rev. is an attack on its vocabulary, this is where the seer puts the terms in their right context, the worship of the only and true God, who is the lord of all creation, antedating creation and being its final goal in the Kingdom. Alpha and Omega - "who was...and is to come" - is being contrasted to transient cults, and our author expressly uses this latter expression as a polemical device against the beast: "which was, and is not, and is to descend" in 17,8. "Pantokrator" is unique to this book in the New Testament (except in a quotation in 2.Cor.6,18), and may be directed against the emperors' use of "kosmokrator" as occurred under Nero and Domitian (16). The language used is creationist, and aspects of time are used to express the nature of God's omnipotence (cfr.4,11).

1,10: "I was in the **S**pirit on the **L**ord's day..."

Here is certainly a parallel to expressions used in the cult. The adjective "kyriakos" means "imperial" in the context of the **RIC**. Deissmann explores the legal aspects of the word in contemporary pagan usage, but links it to the more common "**S**ebaste **D**ay", and thinks "the **L**ord's day" is antithetical to the "**S**ebaste day" of the imperial cult: "This name, formed probably after some **H**ellenistic model, was analogous to the **P**rimitive **C**hristian "**L**ord's **D**ay" as a name for **S**unday. The more I regard this detail in connection with the great subject of "**C**hrist and the **C**aesars", the more I am bound to reckon with the possibility that the distinctive title "**L**ord's **D**ay" may have been connected with conscious feelings of protest against the cult of the **E**mperor with its "augustus **D**ay" (17). Commenting on Deissmann, Charles adds epigraphic evidence about the **S**ebaste day being the first day of every month and also, perhaps, of the week. On the expression as used by our author he concludes: "It may have first arisen in apocalyptic circles when a hostile attitude to the **E**mpire was adopted by **C**hristianity" (18).

If the expression here is used of an imperial feast at **E**phesus it may throw light on the nature of **J**ohn's exile. But this remains hypothetical.

2,18: "And to the angel of the church in **T**hyatira write: "The words of the **S**on of **G**od, who has eyes like a

flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze".

Here this important title is put to its right usage: there is only one true Son of God. Our commentators do not dwell on this issue, but in the context of a discussion of polemical parallelism it becomes significant.

4,8: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty".

This verse offers nothing new, but repeats the titles of 18,8, commented on above.

4,11: "Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power...".

Here we are faced with an expression that is not traditional - i.e. biblical - but distinctly Domitianic. It was discussed in ch.1 and in the last section of ch.2. Deissmann discusses the usage and its occurrence in GJhn (19). The other honorific terms - doxa, time, dynamis - also belong to the cult, and will be discussed later. "Isotheoi timai" is, it should be remembered, the very expression used of the cult of the emperors, along the lines of divine cult.

6,10: "They cried out with a loud voice: "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true...".

"Despotes" is not divine language as such, but in the context of "hagios" - to be discussed later - it may acquire such connotations. "Holy Lord" is certainly divine language, and very useful in the cults. Perhaps this is an



echo from hymns of the cult?

**11,15:** "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever".

"Basileus" was very frequently applied to the emperors by the Greeks, though in the West the title "rex" was forbidden. This is, of course, because the Greek vocabulary of the RIC has its roots in Hellenistic royal ideology. To the eastern inhabitants of the empire it would be quite natural to speak of the empire as a "basileia", or of the rule itself. "It has been shown...that in the age of the Revelation of St. John to confess the kingdom of Jesus was to set vibrating a tense polemical feeling against the Caesars" (20). It was, however, not limited to the age of the seer of Patmos, we found it clearly expressed in Acts during Paul's stay at Thessalonica. The verse contains dangerous political language. It comes from a subculture in the Greek-speaking world (i.e. Christian Jews and pagan converts or sympathizers) but it could be dangerous once the authorities turned their attention to it.

**11,17:** "We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign".

Here is another summaric statement of the creed of our seer, pregnant with polemical associations.

**12,10:** "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom and the authority of his Christ have come".

"Soteria" is important in our context, and it would have been very surprising not to find it among the many titles from the **RIC** present in the **Rev.** The emperors were certainly "saviours" to the **Greeks**, not only in relation to the everlasting **Persian** threat - the **Parthians** at the time - but also as successors to the civil wars of the late **Republic**, so often fought on **Greek** soil, not to speak of rivalry among the **Greeks** themselves. Under the **Flavian** dynasty, following the turmoils of civil wars, the title was again pregnant with meaning.

**13,4:** "Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" "

"Proskyneo" is the verb for "worship". It has a long history in the imperial cult, originating with **Alexander** and favoured by extravagant emperors like **Gaius**, **Nero** and **Domitian**. In the **Greek East** it would be a common enough expression for homage to rulers and part of divine cult in general. The point made in this verse is that emperor worship is **Devil** worship. It is a call to wake up from slumber, a theme recurring time and again in the letters to the seven churches. "The power of the **Roman Empire** is derived from the **Dragon**, and the **Dragon** is worshiped as

the source of this power" (21).

13,5: "And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months".

The reference to Daniel 7,8.20 and 11,36 bears directly on the pagan cult of Antiochus in Jerusalem, something that the readers of this book could not fail to understand (see also: 1 Macc. 1,24b) (22). The mouth of the first beast is, of course, the second. The theologians and hymnodes of the imperial cult were the primary propagandists of the cult. It is important to remember that the initiative to the cult came from below, from the Greeks themselves. The imperial cult in Asia, as instituted by Augustus in 29 B.C., should be understood as a response to a typically Greek reaction to Roman power, as we saw in ch.1 in relation to the Republic and its magistrates (cfr. Appendix 1). This implies, nota bene, that an organ like the imperial priesthood with all its different functions is absolutely necessary for the cult to function as popular religion. The study by Price has altered our understanding of the nature of the cult in this respect. We now know that the role of the second beast was of far greater importance than formerly believed.

13,6: "It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling..."

"The impious claims of the Caesars are here in the

mind of the writer...Domitian's claims here are very explicit: Suetonius, Domitian. 13, "Dominus et deus noster hoc fieri jubat". (23).

Charles also refers to the distinctions made by Philo, and the "anomos"-passage in 2 Thess.2. The early Christian apocalyptic tradition is a clear continuation of the polemic we find in Daniel. It is precisely in this theological genre that it survived, was recalled and developed further according to new situations, as here after the establishing of a cult to Domitian at Ephesus. Again it is important to remember that this cult was a result of local initiative: the Ephesians did not have any imperial temple except the small ones to Divus Julius (for Romans) and Augustus and Rome (for Greeks) in the upper city. Now, finally, they had obtained a cult on a large scale. It must have made a great difference to the religious life of the city, as was the very construction of the temple itself, as it rises imposingly on a huge platform overlooking the upper agora.

The "blasphemous words" are clearly to be understood as a reference to the Greek vocabulary of the RIC. References to the Latin nomenclature - official or private - are not really relevant here, since the Greeks had a tradition of divine cult of kings that the Romans lacked. They were therefore much better equipped when it came to articulating the theology involved. It was based on a language of symbolic evocations: it was divine language and did not observe clear distinctions between the human and

divine spheres; but then the sacrificial system made up for some of the ambiguities.

**13,8:** "And all who dwell on earth will worship it..."

This is no exaggeration. The Catalogue in Appendix 4 amply illustrates how popular and widespread was the imperial cult.

**14,7:** "Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water".

The call to true worship is a contrast to the idolatry and blasphemies of the **RIC**. It is a constant and recurring call in this book, directed to the **C**hristians of **A**sia who ought to have known where the true focus of the divine titles is to be found.

**15,3:** "Great and wonderful are thy deeds, **O** Lord **G**od the **A**lmighty! Just and true are thy ways, **O** **K**ing of the ages!"

This verse puts divine kingship into its right perspective, as was the case with the titles above. "King of the ages" is antithetical to the "kosmokrator" of the emperors and similar kosmic imagery; the alternative reading "king of the nations" is antithetical to the "**B**asileus" ideology of the empire.

**15,3:** "Thou alone art holy".

The terms "hagios" and "sacer" are part of the divine



language of the cult, as discussed in chs. 1 and 2. We will return to this expression shortly; it basically indicates the presence on earth of divine attributes. In Hebrew thought, on the other hand, it expresses the transcendence of God, his otherness.

17,8. "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition".

This is, as mentioned earlier, a powerful parody on the divine claims of the emperors as contrasted with true divine language. Since the cult uses blasphemous names, it is appropriate to ridicule it by contrasting these with true theology. It comes as a warning to the seer himself: he had just marvelled when seeing the beast, thereby putting himself on the level of his readers (24). The interpretation of this verse as a witness to the "Nero redivivus" traditions is discussed by Charles (25). We have chosen to regard this and similar references as being to the institution of the empire as a religious entity rather than using the myth of the return of Nero. But the two may not necessarily be mutually exclusive. Our author is a master of imagery and symbolic evocations, and his words can easily contain several layers of meaning.

17,14: "For he is Lord of lords and King of kings".

This expression is used again in 19,16. Here the author uses images from the Babylonian and Persian past. They are also found in 1 Enoch 9,4 and 2 Macc. 13,4

(26). These titles were not used in this form in the imperial nomenclature, but since both "kyrios" and "basileus" are highly central, the words cannot have been understood but as challenging imperial claims. Here they are applied to Christ, otherwise - in the literature referred to above - they are used of God. Deissmann thinks these expressions are the clearest example of "a tense polemical feeling against the Caesars" (27).

The concluding section of chapter 2 dealt with the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult. If we compare this with the divine titles in Rev. it is striking to see how far they coincide. What we have just found are the following expressions:

- theos
- hyios theou
- kyrios kai theos
- kyrios
- soteria
- basileus
- pantokrator
- proskynesis
- hagios
- time
- kyriake hemera

What is new in the understanding of the titles suggested above? - Very little. We have deliberately quoted

Deissmann and Charles in order to show that the critical tradition - in combination with classical scholarship - has the same understanding of **Rev.** as that proposed by **Price**: it is directed against the establishment of a new cult at **Ephesus**.

What is new is our better understanding of this perspective as a result of the first reconstruction of the cult on a larger scale, that of **Price**. The language of the divine cult of rulers is, in a Jewish and early **Christian** perspective, truly blasphemous, as is the cult itself. It represents the last stage of pagan religion - as we will discuss later in dealing with **2 Thess.** and **Mk.** - a false surrogate for religion, of devilish origins, deadly dangerous to the first **Christians**. But this understanding is only comprehensible if we concentrate on the higher titles - *theos*, *hyios theou*, *kyrios kai theos* - and not just on the pattern of "*kyrios*" and "*soter*" as do many commentators. The model of divine cult explains fully how the claims of our seer are justified (28).

Some additional aspects of this vocabulary should now be considered.

**Schütz** has compared the vocabulary in **Rev.** with that of the court flatterers of the **Flavian** age (29). The vocabulary is really an attempt to reconstruct the hymns of the cult. Since they are not known to us they easily become an object of speculation. But the hymns could have gone further than the vocabulary discussed so far, and the parallel with the language of court flatterers and the

acclamations may not be very far fetched. Schütz wrote *shortly* after the discovery by Austrian archeologists of the temple to Domitian in Ephesus and the colossal cult statue in 1930. He calls his comparative study a "Begriffsparallelismus im Kaiserkult und Christuskult" (30). Using Martial and Statius as sources he finds "eine Reihe von Parallelwendungen" in Rev. (31). These coincide largely with the parallels discussed by Touilleux (32).

- hagios, hosios (Rev. 6,8;15,14) - sacer (Martial, Ep. V 1,190)

- doxa (1,6;4,2;19,1) - terrarum gloria (idem, II,91,1)

- soteria (13,10;19,1) - salus (idem, II,91,1; V,17)

- exousia (12,10) - potestas (idem, IX,79,7)

- axios labein ten dynamin (5,12) - quo non dignior  
has subit habenas (Statius, Silvae, 1,103)

- ho theos hemon ho pantokrator (19,6) - dominus et  
deus noster, dominus terrarum, dominus mundi (Martial, Ep.  
I,4,2; VII, 5,5)

- su ektisas ta panta (4,11) - parens orbis  
(Martial VII, 7,5; Statius IV, 2,14)

- hoi ophthalmoi autou hos phlox pyros (1,14) - ana  
sideras imitantia flammis lumina (Statius I,1,103)

- he ophis autou hos ho helios phainei (1,16) -  
immortale jubar (Statius I,1,71)

- pantokrator (1,8;4,8;11,17) - potens terrarum

**Dominus** (**Statius III, 4, 20**)

- **kyrios tes ges (11, 4)** - **terrarum Dominus**  
(**Martial I, 4. 2; VII, 5, 5**)

- **basileus basileon (17, 14; 19, 16)** - **rex magnus,**  
**regnator terrarum (Statius IV, 1, 46; 2, 14)**

As long as we do not have any liturgical material from the cult these parallels are of course tentative and hypothetical, but nevertheless very striking. Since our sources to the **Greek** vocabulary of the cult mainly are epigraphical and numismatic it would be a true stroke of luck if any liturgical texts happen to turn up. Perhaps the discussion will have to continue as before.

"In John's situation and from his perspective, **Roman** claims could only be heard as a blasphemous usurpation of **God's** sole rulership and could only be resisted. In John's situation...the challenge to **Christian** responsibility was not expressed as a direct call to active political resistance, because John's theology is expressed in the apocalyptic medium, a medium which had already had a venerable history in the resistance movements of **Judaism** and **Christianity...**" (33).

Passive resistance is the seer's answer to the new cult, not "holy war" - the angels will fight for them at the last battle (19, 11-16; 20, 7-10) (34). Here he is clearly continuing the tradition from **Daniel**. The answer to violence is martyrdom, and salvation lies in the future - the **144.000** will reign during the millennium (35).



Here is no call to follow the war-like and heroic examples of the **Maccabees** (36).

In this way **R**evelation reminds us of the crises under **G**aius and **N**ero and at the same time points forward to coming troubles. **T**here never came a persecution under **D**omitian. **W**hat came, however, was a worsening condition for **C**hristians as regards the possibilities of resisting the pressures from the imperial cult. **E**xamples of the new situation for the early **C**hurch is easily found in the acts of the martyrs from the second century.

**T**he comparison with **H**itler's **G**ermany has become commonplace in commentaries written after the war (37). **I**t may seem an exaggerated point of comparison. **W**hat was so wrong in honouring the emperors of the second century - that century which **G**ibbon called the happiest period of man on earth? **O**ur seer paints everything black or white. **H**e may not have known **P**aul's **C**orinthian correspondence where the issue of pagan sacrifices is discussed in a way that leaves the believer with several possible patterns of action. **I**n case he did know, their historical situation is very different: when **P**aul wrote **C**hristianity did still belong to a sacrificial system, the **J**ewish one - when **J**ohn wrote this had been drastically changed, with serious consequences for the future history of **C**hristianity in the **R**oman empire.

**I**s **J**ohn of **P**atmos a fanatic, narrow minded and puritanical? **H**is book strongly indicates that he is a **H**ebrew **C**hristian, perhaps even with a **P**alestinian

flavour.

Our question can only be answered when the next chapter of the history of the Christian Church in the pagan empire has been considered, as just hinted at above. The systematic, rather than the sporadic, persecutions of the Christians will prove him right: the emperors are the enemies of God, it turned out, just as they had seen forebodings of in the case of Gaius, not to speak of Nero.

The new cult of Domitian at Ephesus was a reminder of this sinister past - and a warning for the future.

## VII) THE RIC AND THE SEVEN CHURCHES

"Since one should each year make clear display of one's piety and of all holy, fitting intentions towards the imperial house, the choir of all Asia, gathering at Pergamum on the most holy birthday of the Sebastos Tiberius Caesar god, perform a task that contributes greatly to the glory of Sebastos in hymning the imperial house and performing sacrifices to the Sebastan gods and conducting festivals and feasts". (1)

"The birthday of the god (Augustus) marked for the world the beginnings of good tidings through his coming...a saviour who put an end to war and established all things..."  
(2)

"The Christians, as men living in the true religion, prefer to celebrate the Emperor's festivals with a good conscience, instead of with riotous behaviour. It is, obviously, a splendid mark of respect to bring fires and couches out into the open air, to have feasting from street to street, to turn the city into one great tavern, to make mud with wine, to rush about in groups to acts of violence, to deeds of shamelessness, to the incitements of lust". (3)

"Imperial festivals were certainly not casual, half-hearted affairs. Some celebrations were attached to festivals of

local deities, others were carefully organized on a regular basis; they lasted a significant period of time and at the provincial festivals the city would be thronged with visitors." (4)

The seven churches of Asia have been studied by scholars for some time now: Ramsay, Blacklock, Yamauchi and Hemer have taken their life-setting seriously and offered detailed background material, as well as exegesis of the text. By far the most important of these is the recent work by Hemer, who updates the classical study of Ramsay with a wealth of new material. In the following we shall search for allusions to the imperial cult in the letters, and our guides will be Hemer and Price. Although the former work is post-Price in date (5) it is too close to the publication of Price's study to take its findings into account. They must therefore be seen as independent contributions, supporting each other's views.

The most important context for the RIC is naturally the festival, as outlined in ch.2. Some words must be added about these in order to fill out the picture before looking at the letters themselves.

"All come together in the festival...Here the conceptual systems of temple, image and sacrifice had their civic embodiment" (6). "It is the regularity of the standard imperial festivals that reflect the Greek perceptions of the permanence and stability of the Roman empire" (7).

Right from the start the "koinon" of Asia put a special emphasis on the imperial cult, as seen in chapter 2. This goes back to 29 B.C. when all other cults of Roman magistrates or benefactors were abolished and Octavian regulated the new cult while journeying through Asia (8). This "koinon" existed already under the Republic, but from now on it served the purposes of the new cult (9). In fact, this system spread to other provinces.

There were two systems of festivals: on a regular basis - and the irregular ones. The regular festivals took place: i) annually, ii) every 4<sup>th</sup> year, iii) every 2<sup>d</sup> year according to local arrangements. The irregular ones would be held on the occasion of something special occurring: accession to the throne of a new emperor, significant victories, birth of heirs, etc. (10).

In Asia the initial festival was held annually at Pergamum. Later seven more cities were added to a rotating system: Cyzicus, Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Tralles. Hereby there developed a double system within the regular pattern: of civic as well as provincial festivals. The new cult of Domitian at Ephesus, for example, would have been celebrated along this system, developed by this time. Ephesus would have seen at least two such festivals to Domitian: one civic and one provincial, probably according to the four year cycle. Since the cult was transferred to the Flavian house (or to Vespasian) after his "damnatio memoriae", the



epigraphic evidence is not conclusive as to the arrangement of the festivals at the early stage (11).

"Participation in imperial festivals by the whole populace was a product of the nature of the Greek city; elsewhere in the empire other distinctions within the city existed" (12). The main event of the festival would be the procession with the imperial priesthood and the statues of the **Sebastos** or **Sebastoi** (in later times the cult became more collective and less centered on one person, probably because the emperors changed more frequently during the *Later* centuries; it should be remembered that **Augustus** ruled for forty years and thus stabilized the cult as centered on his own person, something that is unheard of in the third century). Actually it must have looked much like the patron feast of a local saint as celebrated in southern **Europe** today.

There was a regulation that households should sacrifice on altars outside their houses as the procession passed. Long series of small altars are found outside private houses at **Athens**, **Sparta**, **Miletus**, **Pergamum** (13). The private sacrifices were expected. The general - or public - sacrifices would be paid for by the city. But there is also evidence for distribution of money to each citizen for sacrifices during a celebration of **Antoninus Pius'** birthday at **Ephesus** (14).

Another feature that would increase the social pressure during such a festival were all the "pilgrims" coming from all over the **Asian** cities, augmenting the

population considerably.

The entire civic space would have been employed in the festivities. There were sacrifices in the central square, theatres were used, the stadia (for animal games), the council house, etc. The imperial temple would be the natural climax of the celebrations. The civic space of the cities were increasingly marked by the monuments to the cult, as any visitor can see for himself at **Ephesus** and **Pergamum**.

Transformation of civic space is paralleled by a significant transformation of the calendar in the province: the imperial birthday - **August 23**. in the case of **Augustus** - was the new **New Year's Day** from **29 B.C.** onward; it was originally proposed by the **Roman** governor as a realistic act of gratitude to the ruler (15). This date was above all others the "sebaste hemera": "In **Asia** there was no feeling that the change (from old to new calendar) was unnatural or artificial. **Augustus** was honoured by marking his birthday in perpetuity as a part of the natural order" (16).

A reconstruction along such lines as these explains why **Rev.** is a document of resistance to the cult and its new emphasis at **Ephesus**. "The imperial cult was clearly one of the features of the contemporary world that troubled the **Christians**. Their responses during the first three centuries of the empire consisted essentially of passive resistance" (17). The non-participation by the **Christians** must have worried their pagan neighbours

considerably as a serious case of anti-social behaviour. We have only a few echoes of this clash, but they are interesting enough and should be mentioned here, even if they have been touched upon earlier.

Under Hadrian the situation arose in Asia that the "koinon" wrote to the emperor on the matter. The answer - the famous "rescript" to Minucius Felix - was that no death-sentence was to be given to the Christians as such, only for criminals (18). Here the situation is clearly different from the one we found at Bithynia some decades earlier when Pliny knew of a practice where Christians should be punished with death because they were Christians and for no other reason.

The apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla mentions an incident on an imperial feast, where Thecla was repulsing unwelcomed advances from an imperial priest and damage was done to the imperial image on his crown. Thecla was condemned "ad bestias" at the show put on by the priest (19).

Polycarp at Smyrna is another instance of passive resistance. His martyrdom took place on the day of an imperial feast according to the acts (20).

If the tradition about John at Ephesus from the apocryphal acts carries any historical truth, his wearing black during the great feast for Artemis, would be more provocative than passive resistance and suggests a pattern of behaviour that, if historical, may have included imperial feasts as well. Such an action could therefore be a

beautiful explanation of his exile on **P**atmos. **A**las, this remains highly hypothetical.

In any case, our author would have little understanding for compromise in the case of the cult. **C**ompromise meant apostasy to our seer. **T**ruе witnesses are contrasted with sleeping and lukewarm **C**hristians in **A**sia.

In the letters we find another enemy of the true **C**hristians: members of the synagogue - **S**atan's synagogue. **H**ere the seer also indicates that evil powers are manipulating the earthly religious structures. In other words, the author of **R**ev. indicates that estrangement from the Jewish matrix complicates matters considerably for the **C**hristians. **T**hey are exposed to social pressures to a new degree.

**W**e shall now turn our attention to the imperial cult in the seven cities and possible traces of this in the letters. **T**he evidence comprises honours to the **J**ulio-**C**laudian and **F**lavian dynasty.

**T**he seven churches are distributed in a circle, moving up the coast from **E**pheesus to **S**myrna and **P**ergamum, then inland to **T**hyatira, **S**ardis and **P**hiladelphia, next to **L**aodicea. **T**he following adds some information not found in **A**ppendix 4.

## 1) **E**PHESES

"**I** know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who

call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false; I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen, repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have, you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God". (2,2-7)

#### A) The RIC at Ephesus

##### 1) The temples to Divus Julius and to Rome and Augustus in the upper agora.

The imperial cult had modest beginnings at Ephesus. It started - as the cult in Asia in general - with the visit of Octavian in 29 B.C. Some think that this was the occasion when Ephesus was made the provincial capital after Pergamum (1), but it is far from certain when the change actually took place (2). The cult was organized in this way: Nicomedia and Pergamum were granted temples to Rome and Augustus (replacing cults of Rome), while Nicaea and Ephesus were granted temples to Divus Julius and Rome (for Roman inhabitants).

The temples in question were two small Italic temples



in the upper agora, a double temple in fact (3). Later a "sebasteion" - a small temple, or imperial shrine, to Augustus - was added to the Artemisium, around A.D. 5/6 (4). The former did probably replace an older cult of Rome and P. Servilius Isauricus (5). There is a much discussed possible temple to Augustus in the middle of the upper square, known from inscriptions and a head of Augustus (6). This is for Greek cult (7), but it did not grant Ephesus the title of "neocorate". This building Akurgal takes to be an Isis-temple (8).

There was also a royal portico - a "stoa basilike" - in the upper city, with statues of Augustus and Livia in a room at the end of the portico. This is known from a bilingual dedication (9). The heads of the statues were discovered during excavations, with a cross added on the head of Augustus, from Christian times, now on display in the Selçuk museum (10). "The impact on the civic space is even more marked at Ephesus, perhaps the richest city of the province. There the whole upper square was redesigned during the reign of Augustus" (11). But this was not a neocorate temple, only a subsidiary. For a neocorate Ephesus had to wait.

ii) The temple to Domitian.

Ephesus knew four neokorate temples during the imperial period: to Domitian, to Hadrian, to Caracalla and Geta, and to Elagabal (later transferred to Valerian and Gallienus). This gives a total of four, while Pergamum

knew three (**A**ugustus, **T**rajan, **C**aracalla), **S**myrna two (**T**iberius, **H**adrian) and **S**ardis three.

The temple to **D**omitian gave the city its first neocorate. It was a provincial foundation, according to modern views (12). Belonging to the second stage of the imperial cult in **A**sia, the festivals would belong to a four-year cycle, alternating between civic and provincial systems. The new cult was not the responsibility of the traditional pagan priesthoods but required a priesthood of its own (13). "Numerous small cities were involved in the dedication of the temple of **D**omitian at **E**phesus, and may have contributed directly" (14).

The building was **H**ellenistic, not **I**tallic, unlike the double temple to **R**ome and **D**ivus **J**ulius (15). **M**agie argued for a date under **V**espasian, but this view is now abandoned (16). It is not shown on coins, which generally show the **A**rtemisium (17). But there are coins from **E**phesus during the reign of **D**omitian (18). A reconstruction of the cult is offered by both **S**tauffer - who is elaborate and must be treated with care (19) - and **T**ouilleux, who is more modest in his claims (20). **S**chütz also offers many suggestions, mainly on the role of the "hymnodes", as mentioned in the previous section (21).

"At great expense they erected the temple on the best and most central site in the town opposite the state agora...on a terrace supported by a substructure measuring 50X100 m. in area" (22).

"Roman state art might have appeared at its grandest

in the temple to **Domitian**, put up in his lifetime in the thoroughly **Roman** city of **Ephesus**, but rededicated to the **Gens Flavia** (esp. **Vespasian**) in **A.D. 96**" (23).

The temple itself has disappeared - its stones are probably to be found in the **Byzantine** city at **Ayasoluk** or other later constructions - but some of its most important furnishings are still to be seen by the visitor; these we will return to presently. It was a small temple on a huge and imposing platform overlooking the upper city, and it was excavated in **1930**. It had a small prostyle, four columns in front, a peristasis of eight columns on the short side, and thirteen on the long side. The cella was only **9X17 m.**, the stylobate **24X34 m.**, with an **8-stepped** crepidoma (24). The dedicatory inscription was changed to "The **Ephesian** temple (naos) of the **Sebastoi**" (25).

One sensational find was, of course, the upper parts of the cult statue itself - the head and the right arm - in the vaults underneath the structure of the platform, where the inscription museum now is housed. It is now on display in the **Selçuk** museum. By some it has been identified as the portrait of **Titus** - i.e. a new statue replacing the old after **96** - but this is an unnecessary conjecture, "it could, in fact, pass for any of the **Flavians**" (26), and there is no serious reason to doubt that it is the original cult statue of **Domitian** we are looking at here. It is more likely to have been destroyed in **Christian** times (27). **Bammer** thinks that the statue was placed outside the

temple, but this is challenged by **Price** (28). The statue is colossal and cuirassed - like those of **Trajan** and **Hadrian** at **Pergamum** - showing military propaganda for the **Flavian House** (29). "The statue passed as a representation of **Vespasian**...this emphasizes the similarity to cult statues of the gods which were not altered or replaced" (30). **Price** thinks the statue depicts **Domitian** sitting, while **Akurgal** says it was standing (31). But **Vermeule** thinks the statue was nude, i.e. **Domitian** clothed as **Zeus**, as a **Hellenistic** prince, or in the heroic nude (32). The dedication reads "autokratori theo **Domitiano** kaisari sebasto", with **Domitiano** in rasura and "theo" in rasura (33).

The second item to survive from the temple complex is the altar on the platform in front of the building. This witnesses to the understanding of sacrifices "for" the emperor, i.e. "on behalf of", as discussed by **Price** (34). It is enriched with elaborate shields, weapons, arrows and bow-cases in the **Hellenistic** tradition, and is to be seen in the **Selçuk** museum (35). **Domitian** also had a fountain building dedicated in his honour (36).

The background to the temple which had been erected by the **koinon** of **Asia** is to be found in the general growth and prosperity under the **Flavians** all over **Asia** and the **Greek** world. All the cities of **Rev.** and most others can exhibit signs of having prospered at this time (37).

Of other dedications to **Domitian** at **Ephesus** **Magie** lists a new gymnasium, a triple collonade and harbour

buildings (38). Actually, Domitian exempted Asia from his legislation against more planting of vines - in favour of grain - after his edict of 92; this was due to a legation to Rome on behalf of the province (39). "In his administration of the provinces Domitian seems to have shown both vigour and intelligence...he exercised such control over the governors that they were never more ...just" (40). "In general, the statement regarding the excellent character of provincial governors under Domitian is born out by what is actually known of the men who held office in the provinces of the East" (41). Magie goes on to list names like Pater Trajanus (proconsul of Asia), Trajanus himself (also proconsul of Asia), Plinius Secundus (senator) and others (42). Even if the senate was nominally responsive, Domitian had a voice in the selection. "Of the cities which thus profited from the prosperity of the time, the most conspicuous example was Ephesus" (43). The Library of Celsus belongs roughly speaking to this period, at the beginning of the century.

Archeology in Ephesus - as in most Asian cities - witnesses to the extent to which Trajan was "Domitiani continuator", as discussed in chapter 1.

Later neocorates in Ephesus were the imperial temples to Hadrian, on the Kouretes Street (44); the temple to Caracalla and Geta; the temple to Elagabal (later changed). The large Antonine altar with reliefs, located near the library of Celsus, should also be mentioned (45). The Vedius gymnasium carried the name of



**Antoninus Pius**; his statue behind the altar was replaced after his death by that of **Marcus Aurelius** (46).

## B) THE LETTER TO EPHESUS

"It is in principle quite likely that the establishment of the cult of **Domitian** at **Ephesus**, which involved the participation of the whole province, as attested by the series of dedications by numerous cities, led to unusually great pressure on the **Christians** for conformity. **John** might well be worried about his flock. Those that did worship the beast and its image were conveyed by an angel to everlasting torments" (47).

"It is likely that **Domitian's** reign marked a deterioration in the standing of the **Ephesian** church. That emperor enforced his worship with a rigor hitherto unknown, and a pretentious temple to him was actually established at **Ephesus**. He appears also to have extended the boundaries of the temple of **Artemis**...the hints of increasing danger from the pagan opposition will readily explain the activity of **Nicolaitans**. They also suggest that the "false apostles" are likely to have been men of similar tendency". (48)

The important points to be looked at in this letter are:

- i) the false apostles of v.2
- ii) the **Nicolaitans** of v.6
- iii) the reference to the "tree of life" in v.7

i) The "false apostles".

It has been held for a long time that the persons referred to by this expression are Judaizers (49) or Gnostics (50).

In the former case they may have been regarded as an external more than an internal threat to the Ephesian community that John is addressing, that is, persons claiming to belong to that wider group of apostles which included James the Just, Barnabas, Paul, Silas, Andronicus and Junias. Paul had had a similar experience at Corinth (51). Ignatius, in his letters, often refers to Judaizers operating in the Asian churches, but in the case of Ephesus he praises their bishop Onesimus for the fact that no sect could win a foothold in Ephesus, and that, when anyone tried to introduce any harmful teaching, the people closed their ears and would not allow it to be disseminated (52). This praise corresponds well with what we can learn from the present letter: the Ephesians have found these so-called apostles to be false, after having tested them. Both John and Ignatius are full of praise for the Ephesian Christians in this respect.

If this interpretation is correct the expression is a clear witness to the severed relationship with Judaism and synagogue in the city. "The break from the synagogue...may have been more complete and of longer standing than elsewhere" (53).

Another reading goes back to Bousset and is taken up

by Charles in his commentary. This is an attempt to identify the false apostles with the Nicolaitans (54). In this case the Ephesians experience the same kind of attack from two different quarters. But this identification fails to explain why John differentiates between the two.

ii) The Nicolaitans.

The group referred to by this expression is represented not only here but also in other churches of Asia, they are dealt with most elaborately in the letter to Pergamum. They are certainly related to the issue of the imperial cult and seem to be of the opposite inclinations from the false prophets, if they be Judaizers.

"The only information we have about these people is contained in the letters to Pergamum and Thyatira, and we must postpone discussion of them until the evidence is before us" (55).

From the three relevant letters it appears that conforming to the doctrine of this group is mortal to Christianity in Asia. This corresponds well with the general picture in Rev. of the imperial cult as a great danger to the believers. The Nicolaitans have also been rejected by the Ephesians. But with increased pressures from the new cult at Ephesus the issue has to be brought up. And John seems to think that the danger is far from an issue of the past, since he finds his flock wanting in love and fervour.

iii) The tree of life.

This expression has a parallel in the cult of **Artemis**; the biblical roots of the expression are also very strong, where it denotes a return to the state of paradise (56).

Hemer discusses its significance in relation to the chief cult of **Ephesus**, and reminds us that the **Artemisium** was a tree-shrine in many ways (57). The tree certainly belongs to **Artemis** and functions as an emblem of the city on coins, in addition to the bee and the stag (58). The remark is, in other words, a polemical point against the greatest cult at **Ephesus**, that for which the city had been famous all through antiquity. But nothing indicates that the pressures from this cult is a main issue in the letter. There was a small temple to **Augustus** at the **Artemisium**, but it is hardly alluded to here.

In short, the **Ephesian Christians** receive both praise and admonitions. The tone of the letter is cautious, and nothing indicates that they should feel too safe or selfconfident. Possible polemic against the imperial cult must therefore be seen against the background of the letters as a whole.

The mysterious, almost numinous, term "the **Conqueror**", at the end of the letter, occurs again and again in these letters. It certainly expresses some major concern of the author. In 15,2 we find a definition of all John's conquerors: "those who had conquered the beast

and its image and the number of its name..." and they sing the true hymn to the true God, who is theos, kyrios, pantokrator, basileus ton aionon (59). "Nikan" in Rev. is linked to the theme of passive resistance and martyrdom (60). To John apostasy meant that Christianity might die, and therefore he threatens to remove the lampstand from this church in case they do not repent.

"The Ephesian letter, like the others, has a strongly Asian background which indicates that the writer must have known the city intimately. The case for this is extensive and cumulative, and better illustrated from the whole series of epistles than from any one exclusively...this factor is seen also in later parts of the Revelation... John may have seen in the revival of paganism and imperial cult at Ephesus under Domitian a crisis portending systematic persecution of the church in Asia" (61). But a conclusion like this is - it must be admitted - by way of inference.

## 2) SMYRNA

"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is going to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear,



let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death." (2,9-11)

#### A) THE RIC AT SMYRNA

The following monuments to the RIC are normally listed in the case of Smyrna:

- i) a temple to Tiberius, Livia and the Senate (1)
- ii) a bronze statue of Domitian (2)
- iii) a second neocorate temple under Hadrian (3)

The first neocorate temple replaced the old one to Rome and the Senate, from 195 B.C. "With the provincial cults the rivalry between cities was almost unbounded. The decision as to which city should be the site for an imperial temple, and hence for a regular imperial festival, naturally involved the elaborate ranking of the claims of individual cities. The difficulties in the process is illustrated by the case under Tiberius, when the assembly of Asia decided to erect a temple to Tiberius, Livia and the Senate following two juridical decisions in its favour. Permission was granted in Rome but three years later the cities were still squabbling as to where the temple should be located; the Senate eventually had to adjudicate between the claims of eleven cities" (4). "Typically both emperor and Senate were involved in the decision. Permission for the Asian temple to Tiberius, Livia and the Senate was given by the Senate, Tiberius tacitly assenting...the

Senate...selected a special official to supervise the construction" (5).

The temple contained a cult statue of Tiberius in toga, perhaps with a veiled head. The implications of the veiled head is that the emperor was shown as a priest. "It might seem to break all the categories to find the emperor as the object of a cult of himself shown as a priest and even holding the sacrificial patera over an altar. But the gods often held their own eponymous priesthoods and are often shown making sacrificial offerings of this kind" (6).

The Christians at Smyrna would thus have been familiar with the imperial cult since it required a festival at regular intervals, provincial as well as civic. The temples to Tiberius, Livia and the Senate, together with the second neocorate temple to Hadrian are shown on a coin from the time of Caracalla (7). Here we see that the former cult is that of a double temple, like Divus Julius and Rome at Ephesus in the upper city. The temple dates from shortly after A.D.26.

ii) Flavian honours.

Vermeule gives a dedication to Titus, A.D.80, and one to Domitian, A.D. 83. A bronze statue, close to the river Meles, is also given (8).

## B) THE LETTER TO SMYRNA

Here will be considered:

- i) reference to future persecution
- ii) the expression **Satan's** synagogue
- iii) the crown of life

"The letter shows the church to be in imminent danger, from the **Roman** authorities probably, but at the instigation of the **Jews**" (9).

What kind of tribulation the seer here forecasts is unclear, but it will be of short duration. A possible context of the imperial cult can only be conjectured from the book as a whole and not from the letter itself. The martyrdom of **Polycarp** half a century later immediately springs to mind, but does not, of course, explain our text. "If a sympathetic **Roman** tries to persuade them to save their lives, as later the governor **Statius Quadratus** suggested to **Polycarp**, by a trifling concession, such as offering a pinch of incense before the emperor's statue or taking an oath by the fortune of **Caesar**, they will recognise that this is a **Satanic** onslaught on their integrity, and will be loyal even if they die for it" (10).

It should be noticed that the systematic persecution which so many commentators find under **Domitian** - following **Eusebius** - and which they think the seer saw coming, never actually came. What came was sporadic martyrdoms, as e.g. in **Bithynia**, at **Rome**, at **Lugdunum**, and here at **Smyrna**. This does not, however, mean that the warning for the future is less relevant. Local persecutions, based on initiative from below, could be serious enough. But no such occurrence is on record before **Polycarp**.

ii) The synagogue of Satan.

The slander ("blasphemia") against the Christians may, of course, originate with the Jews - and it may not. We found plenty of accusations from pagans while discussing the fire of Rome. But the slander - as well as the sporadic martyrdoms themselves - depend on the break with the synagogue as a precondition for such an estrangement from both Jews and pagans. Charges of anti-social behaviour would arouse suspicions among pagans, and the occasion of an imperial feast, where they stayed away from the communal celebrations, would be a good occasion for such behaviour being noticed. Pressure from the state would only be effective in case of non-membership in the local synagogues.

But the *Martyrium Polycarpi* states explicitly that the Jews of Smyrna did play an active part in the bishop's martyrdom (11). The martyrdom of Polycarp *certainly* took place at *some important* feast. The Jews were also active in the martyrdom of Pionius under the Decian persecution, also at Smyrna (12). To our author, in any event, slandering Christians means blaspheming God, and those who do so are not really Jews, because the true Jews are those who believe in Christ (13). The inscriptional evidence for a strong Jewish presence at Smyrna is given by Hemer (14).

A short term of imprisonment may, of course, refer to the interim period of suffering in anticipation of martyrdom (15). Hemer does in fact find echoes of this expression

in the language of the arena, from an inscription at Smyrna, and is supported in his reading by Robert: "The communal rejection of the Christians by the national Jewish community would accordingly place them in particular danger in the situation we have postulated as obtaining the last years of Domitian" (16).

iii) The crown of life.

This expression has been much discussed. "Stephanos" in its most usual sense means "wreath", not diadem (17). The following suggested interpretations are the most common: the athlete's crown of victory, the crown given to the presiding priest at the Mysteries of Dionysus, crown as symbol of earthly honour, awarded in Asia for civil merit, the crown worn by sacrificing pagan priests - whose victims the Christians would be, or perhaps reference to the eponymous priestly magistrates of the city known as "stephanophoroi", the festal crown representing the Christian's joy, or even allusion to the physical appearance of Smyrna itself (18). Hemer prefers an interpretation that combines several of these aspects.

The crown of the imperial priest becomes an issue in the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla. But in Rev. such an interpretation can only be tentative. The conqueror that appears at the end is, however, certainly to be understood in light of passive resistance and martyrdom.

### 3) PERGAMUM



"I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; you hold fast my name and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality. So you also have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it". (2,13-17)

#### A) THE RIC AT PERGAMUM

Pergamum has been called the "spiritual capital" of Asia. When the title was transferred to Ephesus is unclear, but Rev. may offer some evidence since it starts its chain of letters with the city of Ephesus, unless this is due to the geographical proximity to Patmos (1). But the naming of Pergamum the spiritual capital is legitimate, precisely because of the imperial cult.

Pergamum saw the birth of the new cult in Asia, in 29 B.C.

"Three times Pergamum was the first to receive the honour or a repetition of it (the neocorate), and its status in the cult is shown by the coins of the Commune of Asia which represent the emperor being crowned by the province in the first temple there...And there are many instructive indications on the coinage of the early years of Roman rule to suggest that Pergamum had a close, though perhaps not exclusive, connection with authority" (2).

The temple to Rome and Augustus is listed in Appendix 4, no.39. Price gives important information on the festivals of Pergamum: As long as there were no other imperial temples in Asia the festivals were held annually at the old Attalid capital; a three-days festival on the birthday of Livia and Augustus is attested; the birthday of the emperor was celebrated monthly; a private association for Augustus and Rome is also attested and may witness to imperial mysteries; the calendar of the imperial choir is known (3).

Later a four-year cycle of feasts replaced this early arrangement, when seven more cities were added. The feasts would be celebrated in different cities, both as provincial and as civic feasts. Sometimes they would also use the temples of the traditional gods, involving the entire pagan cult of the city (4).

The cult of Augustus continued into the second century (5).

## B) THE LETTER TO PERGAMUM

The whole enterprise of reading the letters to the seven churches in light of the explicit polemic against the imperial cult as found in chapter 13 and 17 of Rev. is full of problems: the references we are looking for are not unquestionable, and it is possible to read them without this context. But the attempt to interpret chapters 2 and 3 in light of chapters 13 and 17 - even if this is by way of deductions from previously established knowledge - is somewhat easier in the case of Pergamum than with some of the other letters. Here there are expressions that best can be explained in the light of the new cult in Asia. They are:

- the reference to the work of the Nicolaitans
- the expression "Satan's throne"
- the martyrdom of Antipas, the faithful witness
- the hidden manna
- the white stone
- the new name

i) The Nicolaitans are given more attention here than in the letter to Ephesus: They take a liberal view of eating food sacrificed to idols, and as such they are accused of committing fornication.

This issue was, of course, known to Paul, in the context of pagan worship in general (1 Cor. 8, 1-10). Also the apostolic decree in Acts 15 comes to mind. In our context there is, however, no strong reason to suppose

that John attacks this practice, i.e. as a question of a general policy towards paganism in Asia (cult of the traditional gods). Rev. is directed against new forms of paganism - the **RIC** - rather than old ones. To link this issue to the central issue of chapters 13 and 17 seems therefore justified. In light of what we have established concerning the imperial cult in Asia the problem of eating food sacrificed to idols is one of the ways that compromise and apostasy can manifest itself, according to our author. New social pressures would renew the interest in this old problem.

Sacrifices in the imperial cult were discussed in chapter 2. They certainly were the most important rituals employed, and were a direct link with the old divine cults of the gods. The charge of idolatry - fornication - comes naturally to mind once the rituals of the cult are considered. The Nicolaitans were identified by Ireneus as followers of Nicolaus (Acts 6,5) and the earliest Gnostics (6). But Hemer refutes this interpretation: "The Pergamum and Thyatire passages seem to oppose errors of practice rather than of speculative doctrine..." (7). Their erroneous attitude is attacked in three of the four letters - to Ephesus, to Pergamum and probably also to Thyatira - and has therefore something to do with the life of the church in Asia at the time of writing.

"Allowing for these differences of setting we may suppose that the movements in Ephesus, Pergamum and Thyatira were essentially similar. Nicolaitism had locally

gained a partial control in the church, though John regards it as wholly subversive. We cannot tell from these texts whether it possessed a dogmatic system" (8).

In order to look for more precise contexts within the life of the city, the many guilds and organizations of craftsmen and traders have been suggested. The imperial cult would certainly have become part of their rituals from an early date (9). If there is more at stake than half-hearted compromise, the Nicolaitans may well have been great admirers of Rome and Greek culture. But they seem to represent a minority in the churches. Hemer thinks the root of Nicolaitanism may be found in the misrepresentation of Pauline freedom: At Corinth he had preferred to refer the question of sacrificial meats to individual judgement and social responsibility (10).

This interpretation rests on the attempt to identify the Nicolaitans with the followers of Balaam's false teaching, based on the emphatic comparison between Balaam and the Nicolaitans in v.15 (11). But the identification is not certain. Both the teaching of Balaam and of the prophetess Jezebel at Thyatira is identified as antinomian in one or several ways (fornication may be taken literally). If v.15 differentiates between these teachings and does not identify them with each other, they are different movements and the identification of the teaching of the Nicolaitans seems to be beyond reach while the others are identified. The reading favoured by Hemer and the majority of commentators (12) is that of Charles, who translates the



verse in the following way: "Thus in like manner thou too (i.e. as well as the **Ephesian Church**: cfr. 6) hast some who hold the teaching of the **Nicolaitans**" (13). "**Homoios**" he takes to be a reference to the **Ephesian church**.

If this be the case, we do know something about the **Nicolaitan** heresy in three of the churches of **Asia** at the turn of the century, and the **RIC** lends itself readily for a likely context of the issue at stake. **Sweet** offers another parallel to the "**German Christians**" under the third **Reich** (14).

11) The "throne of Satan".

There are three principal candidates for the decoding of this cryptic expression:

a) the great altar of **Zeus**, now in **Berlin**; this is the majority view (15)

b) the cult of **Asclepius**, the god of medicine carrying the blasphemous title of "soter" (16)

c) the temple of **Augustus** and **Rome** as centre for the imperial cult

The altar to **Zeus**, so-called, is a monumental colonnaded court in the form of a horseshoe and is a **Hellenistic** piece of work, celebrating the traditional gods. (Their heads were, alas, destroyed by **Christians** in later times.) Since **Rev.** is not attacking paganism in a general way this identification of the term is not the most obvious one.

Recent commentaries - for example **Sweet** and **Hemer** -

strongly support the identification with the imperial cult; see also the reminder that **Christ** has the "sharp two-edged sword" as set against the proconsul's *ius gladii*. It was on this ground that the **Christians** faced the actual threat of **Roman** execution (17).

"We must conclude that the expression "throne of **Satan**" refers primarily to the emperor-cult as enforced from **Pergamum** at a time of critical confrontation for the church. We note the strong hints of the growth of "polemical parallelism" between **Christ** and **Caesar**. The claims of **Caesar** are viewed by **John** as a **Satanic** parody of those of **Christ**. And some of the imagery of the later chapters may rightly be seen to refer to **Roma** as a persecuting power and so to reinforce our picture" (18).

This is a clear reference to the methodological issue hinted at above: once the cryptic references in chapter 13 and 17 are decoded, the imagery of chapter 2 and 3 falls into place. It is not a case of arguing in circle, since the decoding of the latter chapters is not deduced from the early ones. But it remains unproven.

iii) **Antipas**.

The reference to **Satan** must have something to do with the death of **Antipas**, since the reference to **Satan** is repeated in the context of his martyrdom (19). "Witness" is here used in the sense in which it occurs in later **Christian** literature (20).

But the immediate historical allusion is obscure.

Antipas was perhaps the first to die as a victim to the imperial cult, maybe as a test case of whom the authorities wanted to make a public example. It is not even clear that he was from Pergamum. The words "par' hymin" might even suggest that he was brought from elsewhere to suffer in Satan's headquarters (21).

iv) The hidden Manna.

Has this symbol a life-setting in the problems of the church at Pergamum?

Most commentators reject such an approach, favouring a purely eschatological understanding of the expression. 2 Macc. 2,4-7 tells how the ark and its contents were to be hidden until Jeremiah would appear and deposit them in the new temple in Jerusalem. A variant is found in 2 Baruch 6,7-10, perhaps contemporary with Rev. Neither of these passages mentions manna, but its inclusion in this tradition can be inferred from Heb. 9,4 and is explicit in Rabbinic sources (22).

If the context is pressures from the imperial cult, the message seems to be that the heavenly feast will belong to those who now abstain from the imperial idolatry (23).

v) The white stone and the new name.

The parallels to various "tesserae" in imperial times offer interesting insights on the imagery in front of us.

Hemer discusses three possible candidates out of many for a decoding of the imagery:

a) the tessera used as a ticket of admission to a feast in connection with unidentified associations - or tesserae granted to victors at the games, granting them rewards at the public expence (24).

b) the analogy with pagan amulets inscribed with the secret name of a pagan god, the point is then an allusion to ancient ideas of the power of divine names: here the power of Christ to save and protect is exalted over that of his pagan rivals (25).

c) the tessera given to a gladiator at his discharge from the arena, exempting him from the obligation to risk his life again there. Many of the tokens involved survive; most examples belong to the first century B.C. or A.D. and come from Rome (26).

d) the most complete parallel to our passage, is, according to Hemer, with the cult of Asclepius, and has much to do with the practise of incubation in the sanctuary of the healing god (27).

To chose among all these possibilities may seem impossible for the modern commentator. But the expression is closely linked to contemporary life at Pergamum, in one way or the other.

All in all this letter has more possible specific references to the pressures from paganism and the RIC than most of the others in Rev. But much of the decoding depends on what is established during the decoding of the imagery in chapter 13 and 17, if the RIC is the target.

#### 4) THYATIRA

"I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. **B**ut I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her immorality. **B**ehold, I will throw her on a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her doings; and I will strike her children dead. **A**nd all the churches shall know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. **B**ut to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some of you call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay upon you any other burden; only hold fast what you have, until I come. **H**e who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received from my Father; and I will give him the morning star". (2,19-28)

#### A) THE RIC AT THYATIRA



Thyatira (Catalogue no. 56) had no imperial temple at this time, the city being probably too insignificant. Price discusses a possible temple under Hadrian, but concludes that this must have been a "royal room" in a Hadrianeion (1). V lists dedications to Vespasian and Domitian (2).

But the site is little explored, due to continuous occupation (3), and surprises may turn up. Hemer calls this the "least important and least remarkable of the cities" (4), even if it has the longest of the seven letters addressed to it.

## B) THE LETTER TO THYATIRA

"The longest and most difficult of the seven letters... The letter was not, I think, obscure to the church in Thyatira; the problem lies in our remoteness from the contemporary facts... The scantiness of our usual materials makes the difficulty the more acute... The primary sources consist mainly of inscriptions, supplemented by coinage, but neither is particularly rich, and their evidence is often tantalizingly incomplete" (5).

Three points are usually mentioned in relation to this letter:

- i) the trade-guilds
- ii) the evidence for Judaism
- iii) the reference to Jezebel

i) The theory of trade-guilds as a background to the references in this letter is open to doubt, according to Hemer (6). But the existence of such guilds is not in doubt, and they would have had a religious connection, but with the traditional gods and not the emperors. But this subject leads to the only New Testament reference to Thyatira outside of Rev., Lydia of Philippi in Acts 16,14. She was a "god-fearer", and Hemer thinks it more likely that she received the faith in her own city since there was no synagogue at Philippi (7).

ii) The evidence for Judaism at Thyatira is confined to a problematic inscription, and we do not know how Christianity came to the city. It may have been evangelized during Paul's residence at Ephesus (8). "It is likely that Jews came as resident aliens when the Roman peace made the city an increasingly important commercial centre. If they lacked the organized status and privileges they sometimes enjoyed elsewhere, they had perforce to come to terms with a mixed pagan society in which they had no part. The situation may have favoured their exploitation of syncretistic cults" (9). Syncretism in religion was the natural ancient way of uniting disparate elements.

iii) The reference to Jezebel.

Here is a reference of a similar kind as that of Balaam above. She teaches syncretistic practises, which was apostasy to the seer. We must assume she was an

influential member of the church. The exact nature of her teaching is obscure. It may, naturally, be understood against the background of **Acts 15**, as referred to in the case of the **Nicolaitans**. Immorality may be understood figuratively or literally, and it is the former case that is interesting for our purposes. The temptation to immorality and/or apostasy may easily have been connected with the practises of the trade-guilds. Jezebel may have taught that a **C**hristian could participate in them for the sake of livelihood, in disagreement with the principles of **Acts 15** on **C**hristian conduct in a pagan society, and as such the seer seems to have found in Jezebel an **OT** model that would be eminently understandable to his audience. This makes her teaching look like that of the **Nicolaitans** discussed above. But whether Jezebel's teaching was actual **Nicolaitanism** remains unclear. It was at least a doctrine of similar antinomian tendency, perhaps in response to a slightly different situation (10). The issue may easily have some bearing upon the participation of **C**hristians in the imperial cult, but this is only one possible inference.

The expression "the deep things of **Satan**" may link this form of antinomianism to the imperial cult, being in its very nature **Satanical**, according to our author. Possible early **G**nostic interpretations of this expression are frequently discussed by the commentators, but with no conclusive results. Hemer offers this tentative conclusion: "At **Pergamum** the **C**hristian's life was directly threatened by the pervasiveness of the imperial

cult, here his livelihood by the issues involved in membership of the guilds. The teaching of a woman in the church provided him with an answer to his pressing problems. It met what were easily represented as the plain necessities of commercial life. It may have been a shock to hear this popular teacher equated with Jezebel" (11).

## 5) SARDIS

"I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. Remember then what you received and heard; keep that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." (3,1-5)

### A) THE RIC AT SARDIS

- i) Augustus was honoured with a provincial temple from 5 B.C. He is otherwise honoured in 21 inscriptions (1).
- ii) There was a festival and cult statue of Gaius Caesar (2), the statue being put in the temple of

**Augustus (3).**

iii) **V** lists a statue of **Tiberius** from **A.D 17**, after the earthquake and the restoration of several **Asian** cities by the direct intervention of the emperor; likewise a statue of **Drusus**, son of **Germanicus**; a dedication to **Antonia**. **V** gives epigraphic evidence for honours to **Agrippa**, **Julia**, **Gaius Caesar**, **Tiberius**, **Germanicus**, **Drusus**, **Antonia**, **Caligula**, **Domitia (4)**.

iv) The most interesting aspect of the **RIC** at **Sardis** comes from later times, when the **Artemision** was shared with the cult of the emperors: colossal statues of **Antoninus Pius** and **Faustina** were added and the cella divided for shared purposes **(5)**.

v) The city had **3** neocorates under **Elagabal (6)**.

## **B) THE LETTER TO SARDIS**

If there are references to the imperial cult in this letter they may occur in the context of the "white garments", an expression we discussed in relation to the cult at **Ephesus**. White garments denote festivity, but the context is as obscure as is the case with most historical references in the letters. **Ramsay** went for the **Roman** triumph as background, and **Hemer** finds this more plausible than the many other suggestions that have come up **(7)**.

The letter as a whole is a call from sleep, and our seer distinguishes between the few and the many. In a brief discussion of the theme of the "victor" **Hemer** suggests that



the majority in the church had gained acceptance in the synagogue at the cost of implicit denial of the name of Christ. The faithful few had perhaps faced deletion from the synagogue-register, a matter of serious import under Domitian. This connects well with the reference to the "book of life", and a polemical parallel may even be drawn to the curse on the Minim. On this view they were resisting a temptation like that which the "synagogue of Satan" had offered the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia (8).

## 6) PHILADELPHIA

"I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven,

and my own new name". (3,8-12)

This small city is poorly known, due to lack of proper excavations: it is mostly covered by the town of Alasketir. It was one of the cities destroyed by the earthquake of A.D. 17. It was renamed Neocaesarea as a result of the rebuilding. The concept of Philadelphia as a new city with a new name to honour the divine emperor whose patronage had restored its fortunes, has again been related to Rev. 3,12. Under Vespasian the city took the imperial epithet "Flavia" (1). Ignatius witnesses to a Judaizing schism in the church there (2). The parallel with Smyrna is likely to reflect a similarity of background.

The bitterest opposition is Jewish. Hemer finds a situation behind the letter which illuminates the relations of local church and synagogue under Domitian. He thinks active proselytizing of Christians is referred to. If acceptance in the synagogue offered a status of exemption from the liability to imperial cult, this was a standing inducement to the weaker Christians. Even after Domitian, hostile Jewish informants might still activate the standing machinery of persecution (3). In this context the words about Christ holding power of admission and excommunication in the heavenly kingdom fall into place (4).

## 7) LAODICEA

"I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him and eat with him, and he with me. He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my father on his throne." (3,15-21)

#### A) THE RIC AT LAODICEA

Various cults relating to the time of writing of Rev. are attested:

i) a temple to Domitian and Domitia Longina; this is not mentioned in Hemer, but referred to as undoubted by both Price-Trell and Price (see Catalogue). The temple was later rededicated to Trajan and then to Caracalla.

ii) votive statues to Titus

iii) gateway dedicated to Domitian

iv) bath dedicated to Hadrian

The archeological site is very poorly excavated, but the evidence for the Domitianic temple is both epigraphic and numismatic (1).

The discussion in Hemer is obsolete, due to the lack of information on the new cult of Domitian and Domitia in this city. He otherwise gives a good account of the history of the town and its life in the first century. But since there is no imperial temple to which he can relate the text of the letter, his interpretation is unconvincing.

The dedicatory inscription from the temple shows that the cult was instituted as a result of the military victories of Domitian ("epineikios") (2). The cult statue - according to the image on the coin - shows the emperor in civil Roman dress (3). The statue has not been found.

A reading of the letter may therefore look like this:

a) The luke-warmness of the church in Laodicea - a reference to the tepid waters coming down from the springs at Hierapolis - is a possible reference to compromise with the new cult.

b) The white garments may in this context well reflect the imperial festivals; but it may also refer to the conqueror and victor from triumphs, as in the case of Sardis.

c) The Jews were numerous in this city, famed for banking. Here the dilemma of belonging or not belonging to the synagogue may be one of the factors that made life in

the churches difficult,

What is important in this letter is the background of an imperial temple to Domitian at Laodicea, unnoticed by our commentators. - I fail to find a single one who takes this insight into account.

The question of how the letters of Rev. are related to the imperial cult is not very difficult to answer, as demonstrated in the preceding section. It is easy to defend such a reading, but it depends on the understanding of the purpose of the book as a whole, and is closely related to the exegesis of chapters 13 and 17.



## VIII) THE SO-CALLED PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN

"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor". (1 Pet. 2,17)

"Revelation is probably the reality behind Domitian's reputation as a persecutor". (1)

"There is no doubt - concerning Domitian's persecution of the Christians". (2)

"It is generally accepted that the persecution mentioned throughout the Apocalypse applied to the later struggle against the Christians under Domitian. Towards the end of the reign of Domitian, there was a furious attempt to crush Christianity from the empire before it was too late". (3)

"With Domitian's developing awareness of the possibilities of his own divine status, it is evident that the framework of loyalty-testing by imperial worship was gradually constructed during his reign". (4)

"It would seem that Christianity only became a "crime" towards the end of the 1.c. under Domitian or the second century; before this, persecutions had been local affairs, due to diverse causes and of short duration". (5)

"With **Nero** the curtain falls, and when it rises again on **Pliny's Bithynian scene** the atmosphere has changed". (6)

"The universal church tradition that this emperor was a second **Nero** may not be true in strict historical fact; yet in another sense it is true, for the **Christians** no less than others suffered mental torture as they were left in an agony of suspense in many ways harder to bear than direct persecution". (7)

The quotations above illustrate a wide range of opinions on this much debated topic. The reason for the ongoing debate is the discrepancy between secular and ecclesiastical sources, between **Roman historians** and **Church historians** (see: Introduction to chapter 1). But recently the two have started to come closer in an attempt to solve the mystery. We shall highlight this discussion in the following way:

i) The religious policy of **Domitian**, looking at the secular sources;

ii) The ecclesiastical tradition

iii) **Domitian** and the **Jews**

iv) **Jews** and **Christians**

v) **Domitian** and the **Christians**

vi) A future for **Christianity**?

i) The religious policy of **Domitian**.

In chapter 1 we offered a survey of the religious policy of

Domitian along the following lines:

a) he was very conservative in one respect, restoring old cults and banishing philosophers and astrologers - following up the policy of his father;

b) he was a great innovator in relation to the imperial cult: the oath to the genius of the emperor became obligatory, the use of the title "dominus et deus" was used in official documents, he introduced statues in precious metals, and established a new "heaven" of deified members of the gens Flavia.

Whom did he persecute in the course of this development?

First there was the senatorial class, and this is due to his growing paranoia after various attempts on his life (see: chapter 1).

Secondly there was the group of philosophers and astrologers, but this was nothing new in Rome. Vespasian did the same, and so had Tiberius before him.

Thirdly he was very suspicious of certain influential religious individuals, like Appolonius of Tyana: people called him a god and prayed to him (8). This prophet is contemporary with Rev. and his background is found in the same cities to a large extent.

Fourthly he executed certain members of his own family, a topic to which we will return shortly.

Fifthly, Domitian was suspicious of anything but the most orthodox religion (9).

Suetonius praised Nero for persecuting the

Christians, but does not mention such acts as part of Domitian's religious policy (10).

Pliny, on the other hand, states that he remembered that Christians had been tried for their lives in Rome, but he had not been present at such trials, and he was accordingly ignorant of the procedures (11). This can only mean that sporadic martyrdoms are alluded to, and no systematic persecution. The persons in question are unknown to us (12). "Some Christians may have lost their lives in the reign" concludes Salmon (13).

The famous words of Trajan, "nec nostri saeculi est", from his correspondence with Pliny, refer to the use of delators, anonymous accusations, that were prominent during the last years of Domitian's reign and created an atmosphere of terror in Rome (14).

The evidence from Dio will be discussed below.

All in all the secular sources are not helpful. On the contrary, they are silent regarding measures against the Christians as an aspect of Domitian's religious policy. Those Roman historians who have rehabilitated the last of the Flavians do not operate with such measures as a persecution of Christians (15). The quotation from Jones (n.2) expresses a view that safely can be seen as outdated.

#### ii) The ecclesiastical tradition.

The quotations from Cuss (nn.3-5) expressed the traditional view and is based solely on ancient Christian writers. We will consider these in turn.

First there is 1 Clement and the references to "sudden misfortunes" at **Rome**. Traditionally this has been taken as decisive evidence for a persecution in **Rome** (16). Eusebius informs us that **Clement** wrote under **Nerva**, after the death of the tyrant (17). **Barnard** thinks that the epistle "was written just after the reign of **Domitian** when the church was not sure how the new **Emperor**, **Nerva**, would react" (18).

How the words are to be understood is difficult to say. Individual victims is the explanation favoured by those who find a systematic persecution out of the question (19). But the letter is neither anti-Roman, nor overtly pessimistic, nor apocalyptic. Prayer for the state is even included (20). It is quite close to the expression from **1 Peter** quoted above. A possible explanation is suggested by **Barnard** as "a succession of short, sharp assaults - the series of sudden and repeated misfortunes that had prevented **Clement** from writing to the **Corinthians**" (21). Might this refer to the kinds of trials that **Pliny** knew of? In any case, this is nothing worse than sporadic martyrdoms under the emperors of the second century. Each one of them has been named "persecutor" by some historian or other: **Trajan** (in the case of **Ignatius**), **Antoninus Pius** (in the case of **Justin** and **Polycarp**), **Marcus** (in the case of the martyrs of **Lugdunum**).

In short, **1 Clement** does not witness to a persecution going on in **Rome**, any more than **Rev.** does in the case of **Asia**.



But two well known names tend to appear in the context of possible individual victims under Domitian: Flavius and Domitilla. Their case will be discussed below, since it is not at all certain that they were Christians.

The second source is Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius (22). The episode of the relatives of Jesus has been mentioned earlier, when discussing the question of a persecution in Rev. Even if the ecclesial tradition of Hegesippus, Melito, Tertullian and Eusebius himself is unanimous, it is on the use of the Hippolitus source that Eusebius contradicts himself when quoting the story of the poor relatives of Jesus from Palestine, being dismissed by the emperor as too insignificant. This tradition actually gives a rather favourable picture of Domitian, something that Eusebius seems to be unaware of (23).

Melito, bishop of Sardis, is quoted as an authority for the view that Domitian was a second persecutor, "who alone ... wished to accuse our doctrine, from whom also it has come to pass because of this absurd custom of false accusation that falsehood has become current against the Church" (24). Here the tendency is clear: bad emperors are persecutors - good ones are not. This view is presented in the apology to the emperor Marcus. But it does not carry conviction.

Tertullian holds the same view in his Apology. He says that the persecution was of short duration, "for, being in some degree human, he (Domitian) soon stopped what he had done and restored those he had banished" (25). This

is the origin of the tradition of the "relegatio ad insulam" of John. Tertullian indicates clearly that withdrawal from the imperial cult is the reason for the Christians being persecuted (26). But it is difficult to see the issue as being so simple. The cult is a reason for passive resistance from Christians, i.e. withdrawal. And it does sometimes feature in the acts of the martyrs, as a test-case, when the sacrifice to the traditional gods was out of the question. It is traditional religion that the emperors want to reinforce.

We will revert to this question. It has many facets.

Eusebius himself fails to give names from the alleged persecution under Domitian, and concentrates his discussion on the author of Rev. and his banishment to Patmos. But in an introductory sentence he indicates that the victims were non-Christians: "Many were the victims of Domitian's appalling cruelty. In Rome great numbers of men distinguished by birth and attainments were executed without a fair trial, and countless other eminent men were for no reason at all banished from the country and their property confiscated" (27).

Eusebius on the whole adds no new information on this point. On the one hand he quotes earlier writers and follows the pattern they established. On the other, he knows the senatorial tradition, which is extremely hostile to Domitian, as we can see in the expressions "for no reason at all", "without a fair trial". His combination of these two factors has been the standard view until modern

times. "The general impression from Christian sources was that the persecution towards the end of the century under Domitian was considerably more fierce than that of the Neronian epoch...not all later writers support this view" (28). - This concluding remark is even more to the point today than when Cuss wrote.

iii) Domitian and the Jews.

This topic was also briefly discussed in chapter 1. It is of the greatest importance for the study of the book of Revelation, and the role of the Jews has been mentioned frequently in the preceding sections. If there was a changed situation for the Christians under Domitian this was partly due to the changed situation of Jewry itself. We will discuss this under two headings: a) the case of the "fiscus Judaicus", b) the case of Flavius and Domitilla.

a) The "fiscus Judaicus".

Numismatic sources speak of a "calumnia" done to Jewry under Domitian, of such a magnitude that it had to be reversed by Nerva (29). Our first task will therefore be to look again at the issue of the "fiscus Judaicus".

After the fall of Jerusalem the temple tax was transferred to the Jupiter Capitolinus temple in Rome by Vespasian. Domitian in his turn, being a great builder and in constant need of money, extended the age-limit of the Jews liable to this tax: there was to be no age-limit any more. He also included among Jews converts and god-fearers.

- This was the calumnia against the "fiscus Judaicus" that **Nerva** put right and that **Suetonius** referred to (30).

There is in other words no change in official **Roman** policy towards the **Jews** as such - as little as there was under **Gaius**. They are still a case of tolerated "atheism". But the question of who belonged to the synagogue became more accentuated than before. In addition to this the case of proselytes was a particular focus of attention, because they were not exempted from the tax any longer, and this was another innovation on the part of **Domitian**.

Proselytism was in reality banned under **Domitian**, and this act is a measure in order to prevent **Roman** citizens from becoming "god-fearers", something that links well up with **Domitian's** religious policy at large. "Very probably they (the proselytes) had not received any explicit exemption by **Vespasian**, but his agents had been lax in enforcing this liability" (31). **Grant** thinks that proselytism was the principal target of this campaign, but this is a slight misunderstanding of the issue: money was at stake. But **Domitian** was pronouncedly anti-Jewish in his personal attitudes (32). It is important to remember that the temple to **Jupiter** burned down in 80 and was restored by **Domitian** in 82, so more money was needed in addition to the expenses of the cult itself. The tax in question gave a considerable income. Anti-Jewish sentiments are easily found in the court-flatterers under **Domitian**, especially **Martial** (33).

Both these measures - abolition of age-limit and inclusion of proselytes - were unpopular measures, and were accordingly annulled by **Nerva**, who returned to the practise of **Vespasian** (34). Thus the calumnia was "sublata".

It should be noted that **Josephus** published his "Antiquities" during the last years of **Domitian's** reign. This work contains readings in some part different from the "War", which was a propaganda piece written under **Titus**. The most interesting aspect of **Josephus'** life under the imperial patronage of **Domitian** is certainly his attempt to save his own skin after the publication of **Justus'** history of the war, written under the patronage of **Berenice**. **Josephus'** "Vita" defends his own role in the war and adds only to the interpretation given in his "War". But as a result of all this he finally composed an "Apology" - "Contra Apionem". And this certainly has bearing upon the fate of Jewry under **Domitian**. The former pro-Roman Jewish priest ends up as an apologist for his faith and his people.

b) **Flavius** and **Domitilla**.

The second aspect of the fate of Jewry under **Domitian** to be considered here is the question of the religious identity of **Flavius** and **Domitilla**, the former executed by **Domitian**, the latter taken to be **Christian** by the ecclesial tradition, but taken to be proselytes by secular and Jewish historians.

**Suetonius** tells us that **Flavius** was executed for



"inertia", and gives no charge in the case of his wife Domitilla (35). Dio gives the far more interesting information that the charge was against "Jewish rites and atheism" ("asebeia") (36). "Inertia" indicates that the neglect of duties (perhaps pertaining to religion) was at stake, since Clemens was consul ordinarius in 95 (37). The expression "Jewish rites and atheism" indicates that he - together with his wife, presumably - was a Jewish proselyte. It is important to note that the two sons of Flavius were designated heirs to Domitian, who was childless; they were named Vespasian and Domitian (38).

Domitilla was exiled to Pandataria (39). Flavius was executed, he must have been Domitian's cousin, the son of Vespasian's brother T. Flavius Sabinus. Dio adds that he was not the only one to be charged in this way: "Many others also were condemned who had drifted into Jewish ways" (40). But we know of only these two names, because they belong to the imperial family.

In the case of Flavius "Jewish ways and atheism" may not be the true reason behind his death, however guilty he might have been of being a god-fearer or proselyte. He was in all probability suspected of conspiracy; Suetonius actually mentions Flavius as an absurd example of the many victims of Domitian's paranoia, and not in the context of religious policy. Other victims are named, but will not be considered here, since they occur outside our context.

It is due to Dio that the names of Flavius and Domitilla are linked to the question of Jews and

Christians under Domitian. An additional difficulty is that Eusebius tells us that Domitilla was the niece and not the wife of Flavius (41).

Christian tradition claims these two victims for itself. Archeological evidence has been used to strengthen the literary evidence: the cemetery of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina outside Rome is linked to her name, containing, as it does, epitaphs commemorating bearers of the Flavian name (42). On literary evidence alone this identification is uncertain, as showed above. This brings us back to Dio. For many prefer to trust his information than the archeological evidence, and refuse to identify the two as Christians.

"The reports - that they were Christians - do not appear to be well-founded. They are a reflection of a situation in which the Christians wanted to take the palm of martyrdom from the Jews - because relations between the two communities throughout the empire...were rapidly worsening" (43). Grant takes Flavius and Domitilla to be Judaizers rather than full Jews. Still he believes this to be a pretext rather than a reason for their downfall - the issue was conspiracy within the imperial family, or mere paranoia on the part of Domitian (44). Bruce, however, follows the Church tradition, as does Frend (45).

The term "atheism" has been much discussed. Christians are called "atheists" in several places, for example in the martyrdom of Polycarp (46), in the Apology of Justin (47), and of Tertullian (48). But

Judaism was also "atheism" to the pagans, even if not an illicit case of such.

The issue cannot easily be settled. All that is certain is that Christianity may have had something to do with Flavius and Domitilla, but this was hardly the pretext for their condemnation.

iv) Jews and Christians.

One very important factor concerning the still ongoing discussion of a so-called persecution under Domitian is the question - often referred to above - of the estrangement of Jews and Christians at this time. And this has little to do with Domitian.

After the fall of Jerusalem Judaism became a less pluralistic and more monolithic religious entity, under the leadership of the Pharisees. The Christians were less welcomed in the new situation, of reasons easily understood. The hostile language used in Rev. and John indicates that the Christians - who still are Jewish Christians on the whole - are becoming estranged from the synagogue. This means that their names would not any longer appear in the lists of members of the Jewish "koinon". Whether the initiative to such a regulation came from "above", i.e. central Jewish authorities, or from "below", i.e. local ones, is unknown. But this whole development is always linked to the discussion of the curse on the Minim, usually dated to the last decade of Domitian's rule. Moore thinks that this curse was a means of detecting Christians

in the synagogues, and should be understood as an initiative from above (49). We will not go into that question in detail, but consider some consequences for the early Christians in case this interpretation is correct.

"The situation placed the Jewish community in a situation of peculiar power. By disowning a Christian and informing against him, they might deprive him of his possible recourse to toleration at a price, and render him liable to the emperor cult" (50). He also indicates that the lists in synagogues of members for the authorities to check may be referred to in Rev. 3,5 et al. under the expression "the book of life".

What is certain is that the question: "Who is a Jew?" became more precise after recent developments like the fall of Jerusalem and the Fiscus Judaicus calumny.

v) Domitian and the Christians.

In an indirect way Domitian may be understood to be a second persecutor of the Christians: if they by now have become separated from the synagogue, they are more easily identifiable in the eyes of the state. From now on the imperial cult may be more of a threat to Christians and not just in Asia.

If there were any martyrs under Domitian in Asia the reason may be of the kind described above.

If Domitian actually executed some Christians, it would have been in Rome and they would have been people of some significance, therefore they were most likely

god-fearers. The Christians in question would not have been persecuted as Christians, but as persons who threatened Domitian's authority. "Domitian's anti-senatorial inquisition must have turned up an occasional Christian to be tried on charges of maiestas. - The total number must have been insignificant from the Roman point of view, but to the small fellowship of Christians the sudden loss of even three or four prominent members would be a staggering blow" (51). But there is no certain evidence of any such persons, only a vague possibility in the case of Flavius and Domitilla, and the obscure reference in 1 Clement to "sudden misfortunes". In fact, this is the strongest evidence we have for the so-called Domitianic persecution. The rest is guess-work.

Pliny gives us valuable information about some who abandoned their faith twenty years previously, which would bring us back to the reign of Domitian (52). This may be due to the various kinds of pressures we discussed in relation to Rev. After all, Bithynia is not far from Asia. What looks certain is that from now on the government's knowledge of Christianity had grown more precise, and that this growing precision produced a more clearly defined policy, as witnessed by Pliny. This may be the historical foundation for the tradition that Domitian was a second persecutor. During his reign things happened that made life much more difficult for the early Christians, Christian Jews as well as godfearers and proselytes.



That **G**amaliel **II**'s visit to **R**ome in **95** should have resulted in an alliance between the emperor and the Jewish authorities against the **C**hristians is an interesting piece of speculation, but hardly more (**53**).

There is no indication that the list of names of the victims during **D**omitian's last years given by **S**yme contains **C**hristians. If they existed at all, they certainly are anonymous (**54**).

vi) **A future for Christianity?**

"**H**istory presents no universal pattern which can be predicated in advance, neither is it wholly determined by social and economic causes which can be calculated by students of those branches of learning. The impact of human personalities and "the changes and chances of this fleeting world" have a decisive effect in shaping and moulding the texture of history for good or evil..."(**55**).

The sporadic martyrdoms occurred until **D**ecius started the first systematic persecution in **249**. The situation is then radically changed, and it is the study of the sporadic martyrdoms that can throw light upon **R**ev. and the situation under **D**omitian. But it is rather futile to postulate all kinds of anonymous victims when we happen to have a list of martyrs from the **2.c.**: those of **B**ithynia, **I**gnatius, **J**ustin, **P**olycarp, martyrs of **L**yon, of **S**cillum. It is wiser to turn our attention to these recorded cases of persecution with a view to finding some parallels to the situation in **R**ev. there instead of speculating around a

possible persecution under Domitian.

Price offers some conclusions about the aspect of the imperial sacrifices and the Christians. It is clearly the case that imperial sacrifices occur in the case of trials of Christians, as is first demonstrated in the case of the trials in Bithynia under Pliny. But in the persecutions of the Christians - sporadic as well as systematic ones - the cult of the emperor was less important than the cult of the gods. Provincial, or civic, officials were mostly concerned to enforce sacrifices to the gods. These sacrifices might be made on behalf of the emperor, but it was exceptional that sacrifices to the emperor were demanded. There are in fact among the genuine martyr acts only four references to such demands. In addition comes the correspondence from Bithynia. In two of these cases the imperial sacrifice is required as a lesser alternative after the Christian had refused to sacrifice to the gods; it is recognized as different in kind (56). The Christians were aware that to sacrifice to the emperor was to imply that he was a god and they refused to let the conflict with the *divinity* of the emperor remain latent (57).

## IX) CONCLUSIONS

For the relationship between the study of the imperial cult and the **New Testament** the book of **Revelation** proved to be a useful source. It has more to offer than is the case with **Gaius** and **Paul**, as we will see shortly. The references to the cult have been recognized by scholars for a long time, and recent works like those of **Price** and **Hemer** reinforce their arguments in many ways.

But our task has been marred by obscure or cryptic language used by our author, as well as various contexts lost by time (the hymns, the references to the cult in the letters, etc.). Our findings cannot be said to be proven, but they have perhaps become more probable than before. They were certainly possible options from the beginning of critical scholarship. But this method of weighing possibilities, probabilities and likelihoods is in the end distressing for the historically minded. It is, alas, a hallmark of **New Testament** scholarship, and prevents it from ever becoming a historical discipline proper. The **New Testament** comes from a subculture (messianic Jews) within a subculture (Judaism) in classical antiquity. It is therefore hard to relate it to contemporary contexts in many cases. - What we have been looking at is a theological tract for the times, much like the gospel of **Mark**.

At the end intellectual fatigue is a constant feature in works of this kind. Many disappointments await those who set out to explore this path: the identity of our author

is lost, so also is the exact date of writing and the occasion for his apocalyptic outburst, the method of "polemical parallelism" is uncertain, the hymnic material is lost, the references to the imperial cult in the seven letters are uncertain, we do not know how many imperial feasts were celebrated at Ephesus after the founding of the new cult of Domitian, we do not know of certain cases of martyrdom under Domitian, etc.

How great are the chances that the reconstruction suggested above is true? I would claim only 50-60 percent in the case of the suggested interpretation of the book as a whole, far more in the case of chapters 13 and 17.

What is certain, however, is that the study of the imperial cult and the early Christians ought best to be studied in the context of 2. and 3. century sources. The study of the apologists, the acts of the martyrs and many other sources, puts the entire discussion on a firmer footing. - The New Testament is only a preparatory stage in this field of study.

Another thing is equally certain, and related to the statement just made: the study of the book of Revelation cannot be severed from the study of the cult in the following centuries. The constant references to Pliny, Polycarp, Pionius, and others witness to this state of affairs. The Johannine writings belong, in short, to an age of transition. And it is vitally important to take into account the situation that awaits the Christians a

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decade or two later.



## 2) GAIUS CALIGULA AND THE THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE

"Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time...The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders" (2 Thess. 2,3-9).

This passage reflects the episode of Caligula's attempt to have his statue erected in the temple of Jerusalem. Such is my thesis. An outburst like this cannot be explained by recourse to the stock of Jewish or primitive Christian eschatological traditions alone. Something more is needed, some kind of context that explains the famous words of St. Paul (1).

Why should he go into such detail if the details themselves were not important to his argument? The episode under Caligula provides such a context, in a precise way. The fact that the event occurred a decade earlier (2) is no obstacle to my thesis. Commentators happily accept such a procedure in relation to Revelation,

supposedly written under Domitian, but reflecting occurrences under Nero (3). The episode under Caligula must have been known to St. Paul. It did upset Jewry not only in Palestine but also at large. It was of such an explosive nature that it could have triggered off an armed rebellion a quarter of a century before the Jews of Palestine actually did take up arms against the Romans.

Paul would have been familiar with the imperial cult in its Greek form from his many travels in the Eastern Mediterranean. We will start by tracing some of the most important monuments to this cult that he encountered both before and after he wrote his letter. It is important for our purposes, since it gives a context for Paul's work in relation to the cult. He came across this everywhere - as the next section will demonstrate - and the references in 2 Thess. would immediately have been understood by his readers; they were also well acquainted with the new cult.

## I) THE ARGUMENT

By way of introducing this section it is necessary to outline the argument to follow.

We want to explore a possible polemic against the Roman imperial cult in the New Testament, and the first instance is the echoes of the episode under Caligula in A.D.40. They are of several kinds. To prepare the ground for a possible reading of the passage in question we make some necessary soundings.

In the first place we look at the imperial cult in the cities as Paul knew them. A brief catalogue gives a necessary survey of principal cults and honours. This list concentrates on the provincial capitals, which are so central to Paul's missionary strategy. The case of Thessalonica is important, but unfortunately not satisfactorily clarified, due to the partial state of excavations. The various cults and honours at Corinth are also important and may highlight various aspects of Paul's teaching in the correspondence to his church there, but are not explored here, only hinted at. His long stay in Asia would have brought him into close contact with the cult, which was more popular there than anywhere else, and may explain expressions in both Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians. Athens was a special case.

It would be immensely rewarding to have a clearer picture of the cult at Antioch, but the sources are too limited to be really representative of the imperial cult

in this important capital.

In the second place we look at the episode itself, in order to see how important it really was. Everything indicates that here was a major crisis under development, so great that its obvious point of comparison in Jewish history was the case of **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**. Had **Gaius** succeeded, the catastrophe of the years **66-70** would have been anticipated by several decades. At the same time we look at some discrepancies among the sources as to what actually happened and referred to one recent attempt to clear up the ambiguities. **Philo** is important evidence for the issue at stake, making important distinctions relating to the imperial cult.

In the third place we look at the text in **Acts** where **Paul's** stay at **Thessalonica** is described. This provides us with an immediate context for his correspondence with this church. It turns out that **Paul** here became victim of charges of a political kind. These are described in terms that can only be understood as "polemical parallelism" to use the expression of **Deissmann's**. And it is a term very much related to the imperial cult - "basileus" - that is the focus. The reading of **Paul's** message as rendered by his opponents, is one that is hostile to the state, including its religious dimensions. "Royal theology" is at stake. Another aspect of the text is that here, for once, **Acts** gives us a glimpse of **Paul's** difficulties with civil authorities, an aspect of his life that **Luke** generally does not want to describe, though we

know from the letters that it must have been an important aspect of the apostle's labours.

In the fourth place the text in 2 Thess. is considered from the point of view of Caligula's attempt to erect his statue in the Jerusalem temple. The allusions to Antiochus become more dramatic once understood in this way, and we argue for a reading of the text that does not have to choose between the two candidates in regard to being prototypes for the "lawless one": since the past becomes a prototype for the present, we can safely operate with several levels of context. And context is what we need in order to interpret these verses. Why Paul should have referred to the crisis under Antiochus if it were not for his experiences at Thessalonica and the recent crisis under Gaius is hard to understand. Both together may explain his apocalyptic outburst in 2 Thess. He was forcibly reminded of the sinister aspects of the State and of its cult. Therefore it was Satan who hindered his return, at least until some years later. This exegesis has had its supporters for a long time.

In the fifth place we look briefly at the "little apocalypse" in Mk. 13. It can easily be seen to refer to our episode, but from a later historical perspective, perhaps when revolt in Judaea was a fact. Under such circumstances it is far from surprising to find that Caligula reappears.

In the sixth and last place we look at another example of polemic against ruler cult in the New



Testament, again from Acts. The account of Agrippa's death is best understood as a protest against divine pretensions on behalf of a ruler. This interpretation is substantiated by the parallel account in Josephus. It is, of course, related to Caligula since this Jewish prince had lived close enough to the emperor to be impressed by his divine claims. Josephus turns out to give valuable information on the same issues as did Philo.

All in all the Caligula-episode is useful - indeed necessary - material for the study of ruler cult in the first century. It naturally commended itself as first example of polemic against the cult in the New Testament, and the obvious starting-point of our investigation of the relationship between the Greek vocabulary of the RIC and the New Testament.

## II) ST. PAUL AND THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT IN THE GREEK EAST

In the brief survey to follow we will deal with the Greek East only (i.e. leaving out Italy), and give references to the Julio-Claudian dynasty only; Paul lived through most of this period.

The catalogue numbers referred to are those of my own compilation in Appendix 4. Otherwise numbers in brackets are ordinary notes. The following survey only indicates some major occurrences of cults and various honours (busts, statues, altars, dedications, etc.).

We will try to trace Paul's route from Antioch in Syria along the coast to Attaleia, <sup>to Cyprus,</sup> inland to Ancyra, then down the Meander valley to Asia Minor, up to the Troad, over to Macedonia, then down to Athens and finally to Achaia. Only important monuments will be listed. We can safely assume that Paul had seen these, since the cities in question were heavily marked by the imperial cult, as mentioned in chapter 2 ( i.e. as "transformation of the civic space"). The modern visitor to the same places will immediately be struck by the wealth of monuments to the RIC in these sites. But this is more than what Paul himself saw. The cult accumulated monuments until its end, and it is the sum of this development that meets the eye of the modern visitor. What Paul saw was, of course, a more modest collection, but dominating enough to make him aware of the popular nature of the cult. Additionally he had the

great advantage of having seen the cult functioning in many places, and would have known from direct experience to what extent it was "blasphemous" in a Jewish or Judaeo-Christian sense of the word. It should be remembered that Paul probably knew the cult better than we do. When we come to the book of Revelation it is obvious that this is also the case with the seer of Patmos, and probably also the author of the Fourth Gospel.

A word about Paul's missionary strategy may be useful before we embark on our journey.

It would seem the apostle had a preference for the provincial capitals. Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth were to become his "stations". Here he had the great advantage of being able to keep in touch with a large number of people from many different cities in Asia and Greece. These capitals were the major harbours of the Eastern Mediterranean, and he was able to move between, say, Ephesus and Corinth with ease. Where this strategy failed was, of course, at Thessalonica, to be discussed below. Had he succeeded there this would have meant another important "station" for his missionary work. As it happened he had to concentrate on the other three, and they provided him with a network of contacts that forms the core of the Pauline "movement", to use Meeks' expression (1).

I would like to point out that since Paul concentrated his missionary activity on the provincial capitals - as the corpus of his letters also witness to - he must have been well acquainted with the cult of the Roman emperor in its

Greek form. The study of Paul's attitude to the cult should be interpreted against such a background. The various cults at Antioch, Ephesus, Thessalonica and Corinth will account for many of his reactions.

The discussion of these reactions has traditionally concentrated on his use of the words "lords many" (2), "principalities and powers" (3) and the like. Such studies connect Paul's language to the politics of his day in a general way, and offers an interpretative framework for his understanding of history. But another branch of Pauline studies has explored his angelic theology and wants to shift the emphasis from earthly powers to their heavenly counterparts in Paul's thought (4). Somehow this view has exculpated the historical rulers by concentrating on the role of the angelic intermediaries in history.

We shall not go into this latter discussion, but the former one will occur in the following.

The pattern from the letters and from Acts shows us the apostle at work at a time when the "pax romana" secured free access to any part of the empire. Travelling round the Mediterranean was in some important ways much easier in his day than in ours, as in the case of going from Corinth to Ephesus. Roads and sea routes were secured by the imperial peace, which guaranteed free access to wherever he wanted to go. The nuisance of national states did not hinder him.

I include a large range of minor cities or towns, because it is not likely that a stay in Corinth or

**E**phesus, for example, should not include the surrounding country. **H**is audience would surely have come from the surrounding cities (as for example the letter to the **E**phesians makes clear, accepting this letter as addressed to the city and region of **E**phesus and that it is **P**auline) and an inclusive way of reconing is more likely to do justice to the actual world that was **P**aul's than the contrary. **I** never found it credible that **P**aul could have passed through the **M**eander or **L**ycus **V**alley without stopping at the great urban centres along the route; the cities in question are therefore included.

**ANTIOCH AD ORONTES** (**C**atl.no.4) knew a great variety of honourary monuments to the imperial cult, as may be expected in a provincial capital, and was one of the largest cities of antiquity. **B**ut the site is not excavated, needless to say, and our sources are not really representative of the way the cult was present in the city. **T**he sack by the **P**ersians would have destroyed most remains, if any had survived after **C**hristian times. **V**ermeule lists cults of **A**grippa and **T**iberius.

**TARSUS** (**C**atl.no.50) had supposedly a provincial temple, being capital of **C**ilicia, from the time of **A**ugustus. **I**mperial statues are listed by **V**.

**PAPHOS** (**C**atl.no.37) was provincial capital of **R**oman **C**yprus and has as such cults to the imperial race.



V lists much relevant material concerning honours to the Julio-Claudian house: Livia, Julia, Agrippa, Gaius Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, et al.

**SALAMIS** (Catl.no.44) V lists honours to Lucius Caesar, Caligula, Augustus (later Tiberius), Livia, Gaius and Lucius, Nero. These would be of the nature of statues, altars, dedications and the like.

**ATTALEIA** (Catl.no.10) V gives evidence of honours to Claudius and Nero, a priestess of Julia Augusta and Rome. Again excavations are very unsatisfactory.

**PERGE** (Catl.no.40) V lists honours to Caligula and Claudius.

**SIDE** (Catl.no.48) V gives evidence for honours to Augustus, Claudius and Nero.

**ICONIUM** (Catl.no.26) V lists a bust of Augustus and a possible chief priest of Tiberius.

**LYSTRA** (Catl.no.29) was part of a chain of Roman colonies (itself not military) as a supporting point to Antioch in Pisidia, with Greek inhabitants in addition to indigenous people. A cult of Divus Augustus is suggested by V, with a possible temple.

**DERBE** (Catl.no.21) **V** gives epigraphic evidence for various honours.

**ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA** (Catl.no.3) was a **Roman** colony (**Caesarea Antiochia**) from the time of **Augustus**. **P 123** discusses the temple to **Augustus**. **V** lists the details linked to this cult, as well as an arch to **Augustus**, a statue to **Drusus**. **Levick (1968)** gives the most detailed discussion.

**ANCYRA** (Catl.no.2) was provincial capital of **Galatia** and had an important temple to **Rome** and **Augustus** (cfr. **Nicomedia**, **Pergamum** and **Ephesus**). Details are discussed by **V**. The temple still stands and is famous for its inscription, the "**Monumentum Ancyranum**".

**DORYLAEUM** (Catl.no.23) is discussed by **V** who gives epigraphic evidence; the city does not feature in **P**.

**LAODICEA** (Catl.no.28) was rich in imperial monuments under the **Flavians**, but did not seem to acquire such distinctions under the **Julio-Claudians** when the cult mainly was developed in provincial capitals and major cities.

**HIERAPOLIS** (Catl.no.25) is taken by **P** to have had a temple to the imperial family, witnessed on **Claudian** coins.

**APHRODISIAS** (Catl.no.4) was rich in monuments to the Julio-Claudian family, even if not being a provincial capital; it was a city loved and favoured by **Augustus** himself, something the inhabitants knew how to take advantage of. **P** mentions the "sebasteion" which is a very rich monument to the Julio-Claudian house, and **V** gives much detail of the honorary monuments in general. The recent excavations have revealed a wealth of information on the topic of the **RIC** in **Aphrodisias** (see the works by **Reynolds** and **Erim**). The many statues found include imperial priests and priestesses.

**TRALLES** (catl.no.57) was rich in monuments to the Julio-Claudian house and had, according to **P**, a temple to **Augustus**, as well as honours to **Julius Caesar**. **V** gives information of a priestess to **Agrippina I**, statue to **Claudius** and **Nero**, bust of **Antonia** and a headless statue of **Nero** with the inscription "nerona klaudion theou klaudion kaisaras hyiou".

**EPHESUS** (Catl.no.24) had the richest collection of imperial monuments in **Asia** and functioned as the actual capital of the province of **Asia**, though it seems to be unclear when this title was transferred from **Pergamum**. The cult began with the temple to **Roma** and **Augustus** in the upper city (and with a sister temple to **Divus Julius** and **Roma** for the **Roman** inhabitants), with another temple

to **Roma** and **Augustus** at the **Artemisium**. **V** gives much additional information of honorary statues, busts and dedications to all the other members of the dynasty. - **St. Paul** would have encountered the manifold forms of the cult wherever he went (**5**). During his long stay he probably would have seen the cult functioning.

**MILETUS** (**Catl.no.30**) was also rich in monuments to the first dynasty of the **Roman empire**. **P** lists a temple to **Augustus**, imperial altar in council house, a temple to **Gaius**. **V** lists honorary inscriptions.

**PRIENE** (**Catl.no.43**) had a cult of **Augustus** at the temple of **Athena Polias**, surrounded with imperial statues of the **Julio-Claudians**. **V** lists honours to the other members of the house.

**DIDYMA** (**Catl.no.22**) had, reportedly, one of those major temples in the **East** (to **Apollo**) that **Caligula** coveted for himself, but the truth of the story is doubted by **P**.

**CLAROS** (**Catl.no.16**), close to **Ephesus**, had a cult of **Tiberius**.

**TEOS** (**Catl.no.51**) had a temple to **Augustus**.

**SMYRNA** (**Catl.no.49**) was rich in monuments to the

Julio-Claudian dynasty. **P** lists the temple to **Tiberius**, **Livia** and the **Senate**, and **V** lists evidence for monuments to the other members of the imperial family.

**PERGAMUM** (Catl.no.39), being capital of the province, saw the beginning of the **RIC** in **Asia**. The temple to **Roma** and **Augustus** is discussed by **P**. **V** gives much additional information on honours to other members of the imperial house and to successive emperors.

**ASSOS** (Catl.no.8) is supposed to have had a temple to **Augustus**, but this is refuted by **P**. **V** gives a list of honours to other members of the dynasty: Here there was a stoa dedicated to **Theos Caesar Augustus**, a statue of the goddess **Livia** and a bath dedicated to her.

**THASOS** (Catl.no.53) knew a priest to **Claudius**, discussed by **P**, and **V** gives evidence of many honours to other members of the dynasty from **Augustus** onwards.

**PHILPPI** (Catl.no.42) was a **Roman** colony, and **V** gives various honours to members of the imperial race.

**THESSALONICA** (Catl.no.55) was a provincial capital and as such rich in monuments to the imperial family. But the evidence is deplorably scarce, due to the difficult conditions of excavating in the city. **Edson** mentions the cults, and the most significant of these are a



cult of **Roma** and **Divus Julius**, a priest of **Augustus**. **V** lists various honours from **Augustus** onwards.

**BEROEIA** (Catl.no.11) knew honorary monuments to the **Julio-Claudian** house, according to **V**.

**ATHENS** (Catl.no.9) was a shrine to **Greek** culture and enjoyed a privileged position among **Greek** cities in the **Roman** empire. The imperial cult was present everywhere. Greater and smaller monuments scattered around the city centre witnessed to the rapid spread of the cult under the **Julio-Claudians**. A small temple to **Augustus** was in fact the last temple to be erected on the **Acropolis**. **P** gives other shrines. **V** lists a wealth of information as the busts, statues, altars, dedications, etc. round the city center. In the case of **Athens** the new cult was embraced enthusiastically, and in this way the city reciprocated its many privileges and special status (6).

**CORINTH** (Catl.no.17) was a **Roman** colony and provincial capital of **Achaia** (**Southern Greece**). It was exceptionally rich in monuments to the imperial race. Under **Augustus** the temple to the **Gens Julia** was erected in the forum. It was principally a temple to **Divus Julius**, with the other members of the ruling house included as time went on. **V** gives much artistic and epigraphic material. **Murphy O'Connor** (7) is admirable for his discussion of **Paul's** stay at **Corinth**, but seems to be unaware of the

presence of the imperial cult on a scale that is realistic. Kelso also seems to be uninterested in the problem (8).

**OLYMPIA** (Catl.no.36) was a shrine to the imperial race as well to the **Olympians**. The two sets of divinities are coordinated in a way that amply illustrates how the **RIC** is modelled on the divine cult. **P** and **V** are full of references to different kinds of material. This sanctuary was the religious heart of **Achaia** and of **Greece** in general. There is, of course, no reason to suppose that **Paul** did go there, but he was certainly aware of its importance.

The list above indicates how omnipresent the cult of the **Roman emperor** was in the **Greek East**, even if it was new. **Paul** the traveller must have been used not only to these monuments but also to their rituals. Of books relating archeology to **New Testament** study the best titles are those by **Yamauchi (1980)** and **Hemer (1989)**. The latter's work on **Acta** - published pothumusly - is rich in references to the cult during its early stages. The works by **Ramsay** are dated but still full of important information.

Since a major work on this topic has not yet appeared the only solution for those who might want to know what **Paul** actually saw on his journeys is to consult a variety of sources and studies. I have chosen **Price** and **Vermeule** because they have done us the great service of compiling a

wealth of information and do have good catalogues as well as indices. **B**ut in order to arrive at anything like a survey of the evidence as known today much more research would have to be done than provided here. **T**he list above is far from pretending to offer anything like a complete picture.

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### III) ST. PAUL AT THESSALONICA

(Acts 17,1-10a)

"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded, and joined Paul and Silas; as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the people. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them; and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard this. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Beroea."

Wherever Paul went he encountered the imperial ideology in

some form or other. But the only direct encounter we hear of seems to be at Thessalonica, the provincial capital of Macedonia. We know this from two sources: one primary (the correspondence), the other secondary (Acts). We start with the secondary source, quoted above in the RSV translation.

What is so interesting about Paul's stay at Thessalonica is, of course, that it was a failure in some important ways. It was a failure to Paul's missionary strategy; he did not manage to include Thessalonica among the provincial capitals that became the framework for his activity. Paul and Silas were expelled from the city and fled to neighbouring Berea.

The failure was due to opposition from the Jews - as usual, his preaching split the members of the synagogue into two groups - who were clever enough to detect possible political implications in his message. Accordingly the city authorities were notified about anti-Roman activities abroad in their city. They were, not surprisingly, alarmed and took action.

According to Acts Paul worked within the Greek speaking synagogue world. He refers to himself as the apostle to the Gentiles in Gal.1,16, but this should not be understood in any exclusive sense, since we see from Acts that the synagogue is his primary focus of evangelization, and his audience counted few pagans in the ordinary meaning of the term. Those concerned are all throughout Acts described by Luke as "devout"



("godfearers", Gr. "sebomenoi"), mostly women but also a significant number of men. we hear about preaching to the Gentiles directly - and not via the synagogue - only twice in Acts: at Lystra and Athens. The preaching elsewhere presupposes knowledge of Judaism, the Scriptures and the synagogue liturgy.

According to Luke the opposition to Paul's preaching comes from the Jews, not from the Romans. The latter are generally portrayed as friendly, even politely interested in the new gospel (cfr. Sergius Paulus at Paphos, the magistrates at Philippi, Gallio at Corinth, Felix and Festus at Caesarea). The epistles give a more nuanced picture, indicating that Paul must have suffered under the Roman authorities on many occasions. The political and theological tendencies of Acts have been discussed in all major studies (1), and we are not going to dwell on them here. We shall only mention that Luke has a definite scheme, or framework, for his "vitae parallelae" (on Jesus and Paul) that leaves the commentator with the difficult task of keeping an eye on both what Luke has to offer of historical information as well as what goes on in the author's mind.

The episode we are dealing with here has the characteristics of both historical credibility and at the same time exhibits characteristically Lukan features: Paul is accused of seditious activity, and at the same time treated benevolently by the authorities.

If Luke's picture of the role of the Romans holds

true, it is hard to understand why **Thessalonica** became a failure and did not develop into one of the major **Pauline** "stations". **The Romans** may in reality have been a little less benevolent towards intinerant preachers such as **Paul** and **Silas** than **Luke** would have us to believe.

Anyhow, the conflict is spelled out by **Luke**, regardless of his theological or political bias. And what, according to **Acts**, put an end to a major stay at **Thessalonica** was the fact that his "royal" theology clashed with that of the **Greeks** and **Romans**. How **Paul's** theology was spelled out to his audience we are not told, but the correspondence following his stay is helpful in this respect, as will be seen later.

More than mere politics is at stake here, precisely because it is all a question of "theology" - that of a **Messianic Jew** as compared to the ideology of the empire and its cults (the "decrees" referred to in v.7, "dogmata" in the **Greek**). This confrontation touches upon the royal theology of the empire since the word "king" has religious overtones and is used by the author as a summary way of referring to the divinity of the **Roman emperor**. **Kingship** is for **Paul**, strictly speaking, the language of theology proper, since **God** alone is king. But the word has religious connotations for pagans as well, and to them there was only one candidate at the time in question, the emperor in **Rome**, that is **Claudius**. He alone was entitled to be named "kyrios", "soter", "basileus", and all the other titles that were discussed in the previous chapter. Once

the vocabulary of the imperial cult was applied to other human beings a confusion - or even conflict - arose, of which the episode under consideration is a good example (in chapter 1 - IX: Domitian - we referred to the interesting rivalry between Apollonius of Tyana and Domitian concerning divine attributes: under the empire the political implications of divine language became increasingly clarified and unequivocal - as in the case of historical persons, not mythological ones).

Such a reading of the episode is easily substantiated, especially in the light of the preceding two chapters. The heart of the matter is, of course, the special interplay of secular (political) and sacred (language), the two spheres overlap in a way that is hard to understand for moderners. Pauls' religious proclamation has political overtones once the kingdom and its agent is focused. Here, for the first time, we can over hear a case of "polemical parallelism".

Paul's stay at Thessalonica is typical enough according to the perspectives of Acts. The apostle goes to the synagogue, where he finds two kinds of believers: the Jews and the Godfearers (mainly women). He preaches a crucified Messiah and receives mixed reactions from his audience: some embrace this doctrine and some not. The former group numbers, presumably, a large number of godfearing pagans (especially women), while the latter group, presumably a majority, consisted of Jews only. This split of the synagogue audience causes the habitual turmoil,

as seen elsewhere in **Acts**, and **Paul** is finally forced to leave **Thessalonica** for a neighbouring town. So far everything is typical enough, as far as both **Paul** and **Luke** are concerned.

What is untypical, however, is the charge brought against **Paul** by his Jewish opponents: he is accused - before the city magistrates ("politarchs", **Thessalonica** being a "civitas libera") - of treasonable or seditious activity. The accusation is clearly of a political kind. However, the origin of this political crime must lie in his religious message, as we would express ourselves today. But the state had such religious dimensions that our neat distinction does not prove to be helpful. The kingship of **God** and of his **Christ** is a very serious issue in the first century, more so in the case of messianic Jews like the first **Christians** than in the case of non-messianic Jews, for example **Paul's** opponents in the synagogues around the eastern **Mediterranean**.

**Thessalonica** was, as pointed out by **Edson** and **Donfried** (2), very pro-Roman in both a political and a religious sense. In spite of the lack of proper excavations, due to continued habitation on the site, enough has emerged to confirm that the imperial cult was as strongly represented here as in other provincial capitals. The maximum of monuments to the cult is reached under **Trajan Decius**, with four neocorate temples (3). But already in **Paul's** day the cult was represented in the customary manner, as seen from the catalogue given above.

This relationship between **Rome** and the provincial capital of **Macedonia** (as it was at the time, after several rearrangements on the part of the **Romans**) started, in the first century **B.C.**, with benefactor cults, in the way discussed in the previous chapter and illustrated by **Appendix 1**. To these cults were linked the cult of **Dea Roma** at some time around **50 B.C.** **Augustus** instituted the cult of the empire by founding a temple to **Divus Julius** and **Rome** in **29 B.C.**, in the same manner as at **Nicaea** and **Ephesus**, in order to serve the purposes of the **Roman** population of the city, which was a minority, as shown from the corpus of inscriptions edited by **Edson**. The priest to **Augustus** mentioned in the catalogue of the previous section would have been an imperial priest, having precedence among all priests of the city, according to the article by **Edson** quoted above.

This is the evidence discussed by **Edson** and used by **Donfried** as basis for his discussion of **Paul's** stay at **Thessalonica**. Other cults are naturally witnessed as well, but they do not concern us directly (the presence of **Egyptian** cults, indicating how cosmopolitan the city must have been in its population). In short: the case of **Thessalonica** is typical enough concerning the imperial cult, even if not on the scale found in the province of **Asia**.

**Donfried** mentions a coin with the legend "**Ioulios theos**" (4), which corresponds to the **Latin** "**divus**", as discussed at the end of chapter 2. A coin from the



neighbouring city of **Amphipolis** carries the legend "theou hyios" as referring to **Augustus**, and corresponds exactly to the "divi filius" of the **Romans** (5). **Thessalonica** was a "civitas libera" - with **Greek** constitution, much as at **Ephesus** - as witnessed to by the term "politarchs" of the city magistrates, something the commentators never fail to underscore, usually as part of the argument in favour of the historical reliability of **Acts** (6).

In the case of **Paul** security against further disturbance of the imperial peace was exacted from **Paul's** host, **Jason**, who in this way was bound to prevent the apostle from returning to **Thessalonica** (the fact that **Paul** actually does so later, is taken to indicate that such an ordinance did not outlast the magistrates' term of office). The punishment was therefore mild, described as an "ingenious device" by **Ramsay** (7). **Grant** comments on the "atomic" nature of the empire in the **East** and explains the background for the episode from a constitutional point of view, being to the advantage of the apostle; by chasing him on to the next town they handed over the problem to others (8).

According to **Grant** the accusation brought against **Paul** - "acting against the decrees ("dogmata") of **Caesar**, saying that there is another king, **Jesus**" - is "obscure", and he does not offer any solution, but describes the action of the magistrates as being "to drop such a perilious case like a hot brick" (9). We shall split the question in two - the decrees of **Caesar** and the kingship of **Christ**

- and discuss them separately.

The term "the decrees of **Caesar**" has been taken to mean different things by different commentators. **Ramsay** took the expression to mean "the honour of the emperor" and concludes that the accusation was one of treason (10), something that **Sherwin-White** denies, without saying what the charge actually was (11). **Hemer** offers a more detailed explanation, and thinks that the "dogmata" in question were specifically meant to cover Jewish **Messianic** agitation ("we cannot be more specific", he concludes), the decrees not being securely and specially identified, but may also be taken to refer to edicts against predictions, especially on the death or change of rulers (12). **Donfried** discusses the "decrees" in the context of anti-**Roman** feelings at **Thessalonica** in general, going through the vocabulary used by **Paul** in his proclamation as known from **Acts** and the letters (13). **Judge** is more specific, suggesting oaths of allegiance (14).

The term "king" ("basileus") is also much discussed.

"We certainly do find elements which could be understood or misunderstood in a distinctly political sense", **Donfried** concludes, referring to 1 **Thess.** 2,12 ("God, who calls you into his own kingdom") and 5,3 ("When people say, 'There is peace and security,' the sudden destruction will come upon upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape.") (15). **Meinardus** also takes the term to refer to the message of the **Kingdom**, referring to the high

eschatological expectation in the letters (16). Bruce is more specific in his reconstruction of the message delivered at Thessalonica. The proclamation of a rival emperor - i.e. Jesus, the agent of God's Messianic rule - could be said to be "turning the world upside down": "there was just enough colour of truth in the charge to make it plausible and deadly" (17). The charge against Jason was one of harbouring political messianic agitators, and he describes this as a "subtle charge" (18).

But it is of importance for our purposes to remember that the term "basileus" was of a collective nature: it sums up all the political and religious prerogatives of the emperor as illustrated by the vocabulary of the cult. Deissmann gives interesting evidence of the popular usage of this term among the eastern inhabitants of the empire, although it was strictly forbidden in the Latin West (19). But in this context "kyrios" would also have been dangerous enough, a word Paul could not have avoided in his preaching of his "euaggelion" to the Macedonians (20).

The primitive Christian Creed "kyrios christos" would have carried overtones that might be interpreted in a political sense.

"Whether the unusually strong civic cult in the city would have created an environment particularly hostile to early Christian proclamation and language" is the final question that Donfried asks, and which he seeks to answer in the context of his discussion of the civic cults at Thessalonica at large (21). These cults are hardly the

issue referred to by the "dogmata" of Caesar, but the cult of the Caesar himself would among Greeks always provide a framework within which we can understand their attitude to Rome better. There was no real opposition to the cult, anything of this kind would have been understood as seditious propaganda, deadly dangerous, something the Greeks knew well. Besides, they needed the cult in order to manifest their loyalty to the rulers.

Another interesting aspect of this whole discussion is, naturally, the role of the Jews. Why are they so afraid of any offence against the "dogmata" of Caesar?

If the traditional dating of Claudius' decree expelling the Jews from Rome - possibly due to something similar to what we find here, according to one interpretation of the obscure reference in Suetonius about the cause being "impulsore Chresto" - to the year 49 is correct, it may provide interesting and highly relevant background material for our episode. Hemer - favouring the traditional date against e.g. Lüdemann (who puts it as early as 41) (22) - discusses the evidence and concludes that the decree is an embargo on Jewish meetings in Rome, with consequences for Jewry elsewhere as well. This event coincides more or less with Paul's first arrival in Macedonia and it would not be surprising to find that the Jews there - being numerous - were sensitive to the issue, and wanted nothing of the same kind to happen at Thesssalonica. This is, naturally, a conjecture, but a plausible one, granted that the chronology of the edict is

the traditional one. The "dogmata" may then more comfortably be understood in the direction of specific decrees against Jewish Messianic propaganda, if that be their intention. Meinardus supports such a reading as well(23). The Jews of the synagogue may therefore have had ample reason for getting Paul off the premises, as would the city magistrates.

The episode is referred to later by Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians: "We wanted to come to you - I, Paul, again and again - but Satan hindered us" (1 Thess. 2,18). These words were written from Corinth shortly afterwards and reveal to us that Paul saw Satanic machinations behind the politarchs' decision (24). It is the political authorities that have been manipulated by Satan and ruined his chance of making the provincial capital of Macedonia a permanent "station" along his missionary road. Ramsay offers a brief discussion of this verse along such lines (25).

So far the evidence does not offer any direct attack on the imperial cult as such from the mouth - or pen - of Paul. But the imperial theology is the focus of concern in the account from Acts, and political implications of Paul's message causes a confrontation with the authorities.



#### IV) ST. PAUL AND THE 'LAWLESS ONE'

"Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah, and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets." (1 Macc. 1,54-56)

"Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their fathers and cease to live by the laws of God, and also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and call it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus the Friend of strangers, as did the people who dwelt in that place. Harsh and utterly grievous was the onslaught of evil. For the temple was filled with debauchery and revelling by the gentiles, who dallied with harlots and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit. The altar was covered with abominable offerings which were forbidden by the laws". (2 Macc. 6,1-5)

"Upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate" (Dan 9,27).

"Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering.

And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate"  
(Dan 11,31).

"And from the time that the continual burnt offering is  
taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set  
up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days"  
(Dan 12,11).

The reference in 2 Thess. to the "man of lawlessness"  
usually begins by a discussion of the authenticity of 2  
Thessalonians: is this a genuinely Pauline piece or a work  
from one or more disciple, even a "Pauline school"? (1).

The opposition to the genuineness of this letter comes  
from scholars who, for some time, has argued along  
theological rather than stylistic lines. Style and  
vocabulary are both Pauline, but the theology not, we are  
told. And the theological point in question is precisely  
the passage in 2,1-12, quoted at the beginning of this  
chapter in the RSV translation.

The discussion is summed up by both Whiteley (2) and  
Meeks (3), who arrive at different conclusions. As  
Meeks points out the argument against authenticity depends  
on theological incompatibility alone (4). Even if Meeks  
defends the genuineness, he takes the other view into  
account when he classifies the letter among the doubted ones  
(5). Whiteley describes the traditional understanding of  
this issue as the eschatology in the two letters not being  
contradictory but complementary (6).

The issue at stake is this: when **1 Thess.** states that the day of the **L**ord will come like a thief in the night, when all is quiet and nobody expects anything to happen, **2 Thess.** teaches that the day will not come until the rebellion has come to pass, i.e. a general rebellion on the part of the wicked ones. This theme of suddenness is, of course, far from unique in the **N**ew **T**estament and Jewish apocalyptic literature (cfr. **Mk. 13, Revl., 4 Ezra**). It is part of traditional apocalyptic imagery, as discussed by **Meeks (7)**. But this is far more specific teaching than what we find in **1 Thess.** It should, however, be remembered that in **2 Thess. ch.2** **P**aul is discussing a specific misunderstanding that rose among the **T**hessalonians believers, and this is precisely an occasion for **P**aul to go into detail, as we often see in the undisputed letters. As such it is not surprising that he should give a general answer to a similar question earlier on.

Discussing the sudden appearance of traditional apocalyptic imagery in **P**aul, **Meeks** offers this assessment of the issue: "**M**any of the criticisms of the theology of **2 Thessalonians** have presupposed a consistency in **P**aul's thought - by modern standards of theological discussion - that is difficult to substantiate in the undoubted letters" (**8**).

We will not dwell on this point, but only observe that the traditional view is the more easily substantiated and the burden of the proof is on the minority. In the following **2 Thess.** is treated as a genuinely **P**auline

piece, for the reasons stated above. Together with the information we find in **Acts** the two epistles to the **Thessalonians** underline what a difficult episode this was in **Paul's** life. **Acts** provide us with a concrete context for all the eschatology in the letters, whether it be of the one kind or the other. The opposition from the authorities and the expression "**Satan** hindered us" in **1 Thess. 2,18** indicate that something serious was at stake.

**Donfried** actually takes the view that there followed a persecution of the first **Christians** at **Thessalonica** after the expulsion of **Paul** from the city. He thereby makes the visit one of the most dramatic in **Paul's** life, based on a supposed "oath to the **Caesarian** house" along the lines of the **Paphlagonian** oath discussed in his article (this is his understanding of the expression "those who have already fallen asleep in **1 Thess. 4,14**: i.e. as a result of violent death due to persecution from the authorities) (9). This is probably carrying the discussion too far. The evidence in **Acts** gives enough substantiation for reading the visit as highly problematic on the normally supposed ground (expulsion from the city, etc).

A comparison of the material in **Acts** with that in the letters provides much common ground. Suffering is central to the language of both letters (**1 Thess. 1,6;2,14;3,4 - 2 Thess. 1,5-6**) and the role of **Satan** is underlined in relation to **Paul's** prospects of revisiting the city (**1 Thess. 2,18;3,5**) (10). These two points of reference are the most important ones. In

addition comes the eschatological issue raised in both letters, albeit from different points of view. The two sources go well together, as is the view of **Bruce** (11).

We pass to **2 Thess.** itself.

**2,1-2:** "Now concerning the coming of our **Lord Jesus Christ** and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the **Lord** has come".

The **Sitz im Leben** of these words, introducing the eschatological theme, is a misunderstanding at **Thessalonica**, where the view is abroad that the general resurrection already is an accomplished fact. What we overhear in this letter is perhaps an echo of a slogan that spiritualized the concept of "the day of the **Lord**", this is the most common understanding (12). The misunderstanding probably derives from enthusiastic converts, immature **Christians** having misunderstood part of what **Paul** had been teaching them. A related misunderstanding on the issue of the resurrection of the dead (which would have been a very difficult question for gentile converts) can be seen in **1 Cor. 15**. Again, it is in the letter from **Paul** that we learn of the issue - not from **Acts** - and again he is going into detail because the issue is raised due to a misunderstanding among the newly converted. **Whiteley** devotes a whole section to the topic in his "**The Theology of St. Paul**", under the heading "**Teaching peculiar to 2 Thess.**" (13). He takes the view that what **Paul** is doing



is damping down unhealthy interest at Thessalonica, much along the same lines as does Bruce.

v.3: "Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition".

"Rebellion" in the RSV is a rendering of the Greek "apostasia". As Meeks points out, it is a question of pagan rebellion against the believers more than Christian apostasy that is meant by the term (14). It is referred to as a general event, not local, and cannot be taken to mean a specific persecution as such. It is at variance with the teaching found in 1 Thess according to those commentators that doubt the genuineness of this letter, as mentioned above. Here is present a feature common to apocalyptic thinking: a general rebellion of the powers of evil before the final victory of God's goodness.

The "man of lawlessness" (gr: ho anthropos tes anomias), is the preferred reading to the better attested "ho anthropos tes hamartias" (15). It is clearly a figure of the Antichrist-type, as Whiteley points out (16). And this is important for our purposes: the rebellion belongs to the realm of history. It is directly related to events like those Paul met at Thessalonica. The rebellion and the man of lawlessness are features of history, depending on human factors. Here we have "not an abstract principle of evil, but a concrete, though independent human being", is the conclusion Whiteley offers (17).

v.4: "who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of **G**od, proclaiming himself to be **G**od."

Here we find further substantiation for the understanding that we are dealing with historical realities. There are commentators who agree that these words are modelled on the actual behaviour of **Antiochus IV Epiphanes Theos**, in the past, and **Gaius Caligula** in the nearer past (18). This man of lawlessness cannot be exclusively mythological (19). On the either side: the latter project was never realized - as saw above - while the former was. Therefore **Antiochus** functions as a point of origin of this imagery, something that the readers of **Paul's** epistle would know - being **Christian Jews** or godfearers with Jewish culture - and something the Jews would have in mind in a most direct way under the episode of **Caligula's** attempt to erect his statue in the Jerusalem temple.

"Who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship" is easily applicable to the imperial cult, **Hellenistic** or **Roman**. The cults were innovations, existed alongside the traditional divine cults of the **Olympians**, and very popular, as seen in the previous chapter. **Meeks** makes this comment on the verse: "The picture of a tyrant who put himself in the place of **G**od in the temple entered apocalyptic imagery through the desecration of the Jerusalem temple by the Syrian king **Antiochus IV**...and was reinforced by the attempt of the

Roman emperor Gaius Caligula to install his own statue there in A.D. 40" (20); see also the description of Pompey in Ps. Sol. 2, 28-29.

v. 5: "Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this?"

This verse reveals useful information. Paul had told them all this before - there was no need for confusion or misunderstandings. What he does not reveal is in what context he did tell them so. It was evidently part of his eschatological teaching, but he does not tell us whether this had something to do with the opposition from the civil authorities at Thessalonica, the accusation used against him - which carries implications of royal theology - or simply refers to his eschatological teaching.

v. 6: "And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time."

Again the reference is to teaching delivered at Thessalonica. They knew what was the restraining power, we do not. Commentators since Tertullian (21) take this to mean the Roman empire as an institution. The logic would then be that the empire is part of God's order of things, for the time being. That is, God himself restrains the lawless one until the time has come to destroy the powers of evil in a final way (22). Cullmann has proposed another interpretation: the preaching of the Gospel is itself this restraining power (23), but this suggestion has not convinced the scholarly world in any significant way.

v.7: "But the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way".

The operating forces of evil have been experienced long enough in a concrete historical sense for this to be mythological language pure and simple. The imperial cult brought new relevance to the conflict under Antiochus, both in a general (the popularity of the cult) and a specific sense (Gaius Caligula's assault against the Jerusalem temple). Again we are brought back to the initial remark in v.2 that the end has not yet come. The signs of the times indicate that more trouble is in store of the same kind. And by going into such detailed language Paul makes the connection to the imperial cult rather obvious.

v.8: "And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and by his appearing and his coming."

Whether the lawless one will turn out to be Claudius or one of his successors is only known to God. It is a blasphemous parody of Christ that Christ himself will slay. And this the Thessalonian Christians would know, since - according to Acts - Paul had instructed them about the kingship of Christ and his role in the establishing of the Kingdom.

vv.9-10: "The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth

and so be saved."

Satan is the force behind the historical figure of the lawless one (24). The word "pretended" is misleading: the signs and wonders - which accompanied the imperial cult - were real enough but in the interest of falsehood. The cult, understood as the real target here, is blasphemous also in comparison to the cults of the traditional gods, as mentioned under v.4. In Revelation we will find further invectives against these aspects of the cult.

Vv.11-12: "Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in righteousness."

The conflict is of the most serious kind. Paul warns against placing the religious focus in the wrong place. Truth and falsehood are antitheses, as illustrated by the imperial cult, being of a blasphemous nature.

His message is not the repetition of these details - he seems to be retelling them what he knew they had heard before. But he wants to warn them against believing that the final act has taken place or is taking place before their eyes. A misunderstanding is cleared up - and we are, as so often in the Pauline letters, better informed about the teaching of the apostle.

Did Paul expect it all to happen in his day? - If so, the episode under Caligula is the more relevant to this discussion, being closer in time, a "sign" of the times.

Whiteley defends such an interpretation (25). He



repeats this view in his major study on the theology of **Paul**, taking the entire passage to refer to "an event and a person...which are to be expected in the near future" (26).

According to the foregoing interpretation the first level of context of this passage would be the episode under **Antiochus IV**, the second level of context the episode under **Gaius Caligula**. Before returning to the second a few more words ought to be said about the actual desecration of the temple under the **Seleucids**. They can contribute to strengthen the case for interpreting the passage in light of the **Caligula**-episode in particular and the imperial cult in general.

What happened under **Antiochus IV** is well known from Jewish sources, **Josephus** and **1** and **2 Maccabees** in particular. These put the blame on the king for what happened in **Jerusalem** and **Judaea**. But the study by **Mørkholm** sees it all from the point of view of the **Syrian** officials and this leads to a more nuanced picture (27).

The robbing of the temple treasures in **169 B.C.** turns out to be an "administrative measure to recover arrears of tribute long overdue" (28). The capture of **Jerusalem** in **168** - with plunder and murder - was an intervention against the rebellion of **Jason** who had taken up arms against the king (29). This led to there being established a **Greek** polis in the city of **David**, with the walls of the city razed and more taxation imposed (30). The decree against Jewish practices followed, and put an

end to sacrifices, with a heathen altar placed on or beside the altar of **Yahweh**, and the slaughter of a pig as sacrifice (31). In **December 167** the temple was actually dedicated to **Olympian Zeus** and a cult statue of the god set up in the temple, together with statues of the king, and monthly sacrifices for his birthday. In addition to this pagan altars were set up all over the country where Jews were forced to sacrifice pigs (32). Revolt followed resulting in the famous letter to the **Gerosia** of the Jews whereby the decree of **167** was abolished, amnesty granted to rebels and Judaism permitted (33). In **December 164** Judas enters Jerusalem and the temple is rededicated (34). The same year **Antiochus** dies at **Persis**.

In his study of the Syrian king **Mørkholm** made the first serious attempt to rehabilitate a ruler who was always understood to be weak and politically incompetent. His conclusions are of interest in our context because he finds that the king is not to blame for the introduction of a **Hellenizing** policy in Jerusalem. The culprit was **Menelaus**. The mistake of the king was rather the appointment of **Menelaus**, who presumably introduced and administered the religious persecution together with a certain **Ptolemaeus**. This was **Antiochus'** greatest political mistake ever (35).

As a first level of context for the passage from **2 Tness**, this has a direct bearing upon ruler cult as such. And these become part of traditional apocalyptic imagery thanks to the book of **Daniel** (probably written during the

revolt), where **Antiochus** is referred to as a "little horn": "it magnified itself, even up to the **Prince of the host**" (8,9). Here, as in **2 Thess.**, there will be a rebellion on the part of the evil powers to precede the final establishing of the **Kingdom**. Of all Jewish writings known to **Paul** this book must have been in his mind when writing to the **Thessalonians**.

But **Daniel** contains other allusions to ruler cult than the examples quoted so far. In **3,1-8** we have the story of **Nebuchadnezzar's** golden statue and the three young men refusing to worship it. Again this is likely to be referring to **Antiochus** and the cult of him in the **Jerusalem temple** - the monthly sacrifices on the date of his birthday, a custom carried on by the **Romans** in their cult. The **LXX** makes the statue into one of the king himself, while the original leaves open to doubt whether it be the king or his god.

**Price** discusses this text (36) and reminds us of the fact that the story was used in the early **Church** as polemics against the imperial cult: the three young men - **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** - became protomartyrs and were depicted on **Catacomb** murals. What is interesting here is that the early church fused the **Biblical** tradition with the contemporary experience of persecution, as seen also on sarcophagi of early fourth-century date: the king has become the **Emperor** and his image a bust placed on a column (37). Now, this is precisely what **Paul** does in **2 Thess.**: the example of **Antiochus** is replaced by the

Roman emperor. Why? - Because of Caligula. But Gaius did not succeed in his plans, as we have seen above. He did, however, remind the Jews forcefully of the issue at stake. And Paul seems to be in no doubt that when the powers of evil make rebellion against the saints, something of this kind will happen; but he also seems to think that the next onslaught will be the final one. Whether this would take place under Claudius or his successors he does not discuss, obviously, but it is not far ahead. The Caligula-episode makes such a logic quite understandable when it is considered in its details. That is why it is legitimate to talk of the episode as a second level of context in the case of 2 Thess.

Before leaving Daniel it should be noted that another of the stories that make up the first part of the book also contains elements of polemics against ruler cult: "All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions" (Dan 6,7). Here the conflict is projected onto Darius the Mede, but the issue is clearly the same as under Nebuchadnezzar.

The most explicit polemic against ruler cult as such from Jewish writings roughly contemporary with Paul is found in the book of Wisdom, often dated to the end of the first century A.D. (38). It was quoted at the outset

of this chapter and goes very well with both **Daniel** and **2 Thess.** It comes from **Jews** living in the **Greek** sphere of the **Roman** empire, experiencing the role of the imperial cult in its **Greek** form, dealing with cult statues specifically. Like **Greek** intellectuals the author believes that ruler cult originates with the cult of the dead (**39**):

"For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life, for neither have they existed from the beginning nor will they exist for ever... Then the ungodly custom, grown strong with time, was kept as a law, and at the command of monarchs graven images were worshipped. When men could not honour monarchs in their presence, since they lived at a distance, they imagined their appearance far away, and made a visible image of the king they honored, so that by their zeal they might flatter the absent one as though present... And the multitude ...now regarded as an object of worship the one whom shortly before they had honored as a man. And this became a hidden trap for mankind, because men, in bondage to misfortune or to royal authority, bestowed on objects of stone or wood the name that ought not to be shared " (**Wisd 14,12-21**).

**Paul** - like the author of **Wisdom** - was heir to a theological tradition that viewed ruler cult as a genuine act of idolatry, as seen from **Daniel** and further reflected in **Wisdom** and in the traditions of the early **Church**. It is "fornication" in the religious sense of the word, an act of paganism, genuine idolatry - worse than the old one.



Ruler cult is viewed as the ultimate stage of paganism -  
after ruler cult comes the Kingdom.

## V) THE EPISODE OF GAIUS CALIGULA'S STATUE IN THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

"The insolence with which the emperor **Gaius** defied fortune surpassed all bounds; he wished to be considered a god and to be hailed as such...his impiety extended even to **Judaea**"  
(Jos. **BJ II 184, ET LCL**)

"But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in **Judaea** flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything away; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle". (**Mk.13,14-15**)

History seemed to repeat itself when **Gaius** tried to convert the temple in **Jerusalem** into a cult place of his own: somehow **Antiochus IV** had reappeared. The episode was far more important than often referred to and could have led to a full scale revolt a quarter of a century before this actually happened. Additionally, it is another example of how ruler cult gains an even stronger place in apocalyptic imagery, **Jewish** or **Christian**. An elaboration on the episode itself is therefore necessary in order to strengthen our argument in this chapter. Even if never realized - unlike **Antiochus'** orders concerning **Jerusalem** - in the minds of **Jews** and **Christians** it remained a lesson of how far ruler cult could go, and its consequences.

The appearance of the images that we find in 2 Thess. and Mk.13 is in response to dangerous historical circumstances. The allusion in Mk.13 will be discussed at the end of this section.

It comes as no surprise that our *earliest* example of how the Roman imperial cult affects the New testament writings occurs under Gaius. Together with Nero and Domitian he was the most extravagant promotor of his own divinity among the 1.c. Roman rulers, as discussed in chapter 1. Like the situations to be highlighted under Nero and Domitian in the following parts of this chapter there are concrete historical occurrences that can substantiate a sudden outburst of polemic against the imperial cult in our texts. Gaius became to the Jews another Antiochus, and for good reasons.

Most writers on this episode fail, however, to take into account the various problems relating to our sources: they give a fairly great measure of agreement on the course of events, but are not always in agreement on interesting and important details. Therefore I shall highlight the episode with a special view to the article by Bilde (1), who actually does clarify some aspects of the issue that often have appeared somewhat obscure.

First let us establish the chronology of the episode, which takes place before and around the death of Gaius, that is in A.D. 40 and 41 (2).

- The riot in Alexandria of A.D.38 was provoked by the Greeks of the city, and not by Gaius, as Philo

wants us to believe (3).

- **Gaius** was in **Gaul** and **Germania** from **September 39** to **May 40** when he returned to **Rome**.

- The riot at **Jamnia** occurred in the spring of **40**.

- The order from **Gaius** to erect the statue comes soon afterwards; the following mass demonstrations and strikes follow immediately upon the arrival of this order, i.e. late spring/early summer of **40**.

- **Philo's** delegation from **Alexandria** is staying at **Puteoli** during the summer months of **40** awaiting admission to the emperor in **Rome** when the news reached them of **Gaius'** project for **Jerusalem**.

- **Petronius'** procrastination of the project comes in the fall of **40**. **Bilde** rejects the interpretation that all this happened in **39**, **Philo's** chronology not being clear.

- **Agrippa's** intervention comes later in the fall of **40**, i.e. **October-November**.

- **Petronius'** letter to **Gaius** recommending a cancellation of the entire project follows in **November**.

- **Gaius** is murdered on **24 January** in his palace in **Rome**.

- The news of **Gaius'** death reaches **Syria** in **February 41**.

- The order to commit suicide reaches **Petronius** in **March 41**.

The historical problems relating to the episode stem from the varying nature of our sources: **Philo** (**Legatio**

199-338, who is much more detailed than the account in Ant.Jud., but simplifies the issue to a question of Caligula's megalomania, punished by God himself), Josephus (BJ II 184-203 and Ant.Jud. XVIII, 261-309, who gives different - but not really differing - accounts of the events, not following any literary pattern or scheme for his account), Tacitus (Historiae V,9) and others (including Rabbinical traditions in Megillath Ta'anith, usually dated between c.68-135).

The average comment on the episode follows Philo closely and writes it down to be a question of another instance of Gaius' insanity. But the study by Balsdon (4) has taught us to treat this question with great care and not be carried along by his later image. Later writers did not ask after the reasons of each instance of his megalomania, but tended to make jokes at his expense. Instead one should study each of these accusations. Then it may turn out that they belonged mostly to the category of flattery or mockery, being both unrealistic and unrealized.

The recent monograph by Barrett (5) adds little to our understanding of this question, and therefore the work by Balsdon is still highly recommended reading on the topic of ruler cult under Gaius. The article by Bilde follows a similar path, being very careful about making bold psychological explanations (Gaius being simply "mad", extravagant, a megalomaniac, etc.), wanting rather to consider the problem from other points of view, that is the conflict between Greeks and Jews in the Near East.



Considering the unanswered questions surrounding the episode it is not too much to claim that it does deserve a monograph of its own.

The simple fact about the cult of Gaius at the time of our episode was that he had very few cults in the East, Miletus being the sole exception in Asia (6), and this fostered the rumour that he wanted the Didyma temple converted to a cult of himself, something most students dismiss as fable, as discussed briefly in Chapter 1.

The problems chosen by Bilde are the following ones:

- i) the origins of the episode
- ii) the purpose of the cult in question
- iii) the role of Petronius
- iv) the Jewish reactions
- v) the role of Agrippa I
- vi) how the project was stopped

At the outset one important issue ought to be mentioned.

A popular misunderstanding of the issue is to interpret Caligula's project as a change of Roman policy towards Jewry in general: they were no longer to enjoy the privilege of being a permitted form of atheism (a "religio licita") but had to conform to the official religious practice of the empire, including the imperial cult, as illustrated by our episode. Such a view is found again and again in handbooks on the New Testament, and a convenient example is the work by Ferguson (7). Here Gaius is a Roman parallel to Antiochus.

This misunderstanding is the starting point for Bilde, who in his article makes clear that the reasons must be looked for elsewhere. There was never any change of policy on the part of the Romans. It was rather the preconditions for this policy that came into focus, these being that the pagan inhabitants of Palestine should enjoy religious liberty, that is : the Jewish majority should not in any way try to interfere with their cults. In other words: the conflict is between Greeks and Jews - like at Alexandria - and not Romans and Jews. The Greeks had for some time begun to set up monuments to the imperial cult in synagogues here and there, a pattern that led to much frustration. The Jamnia episode is related to such provocation.

i) The origins of the crisis was precisely an attempt on behalf of the pagan inhabitants of Jamnia to erect an altar to Gaius in thanksgiving for his campaigns in Germania and Gaul (8). Here Bilde follows Philo rather than Josephus, who refers the origin to the strife at Alexandria where the Greeks had used the imperial cult as a weapon against the Jews in 38 in the same way (9). The pagans set up a crude altar to Gaius in the town (not in a synagogue as is sometimes wrongly stated) and was immediately torn down by the Jewish populace: "The Gentile inhabitants of the place set up a crude altar to the emperor to show their zeal for Caesar and to annoy the Jews" (10). Their motives were therefore mixed and the Jewish reaction

was understandable but not justifiable.

Later an episode similar to that in Alexandria occurred under Claudius: some youths at Dora set up an image of Claudius in a synagogue, but Agrippa I protested to Petronius referring to Claudius' edict to the Alexandrians, which secured the immunity of the Jews in that important city after a series of riots (11).

The destruction of the altar at Jamnia was immediately reported to Gaius by Herennius Capito, the procurator of the district (12). To Gaius the act was of a political kind. It was a question of revolt, centered on the imperial cult, which again was an act of loyalty to Rome on the part of the Greeks. The emperor was enraged and decided to wage war on Jewry in general. Bilde underlines that to Gaius this was not so much a question of violation of the rights of the Jews but as an act of enforcing the precondition for the Roman protection of the Jews: the condition that the Jews tolerated and did not intervene in non-Jewish cults. The "Legatio" brings out clearly how different the episode at Jamnia looked from the two points of view. The counter-action was radical: Gaius decided to desecrate the temple at Jerusalem (from a Jewish point of view) by insisting on the legitimacy of pagan worship in Jewish territories (from a Roman point of view). There was no ban on Judaism as such, that is: no change of general policy. But from now on the Jerusalem temple should be turned into a monument to the imperial cult, as an attempt to teach them this lesson once and for all. Philo mentions

another protecting measure of Gaius': there was to be no interference with persons outside the capital (Jerusalem) who wanted to set up altars to the emperor (13).

"It is still a riddle why Gaius chose to punish the Jews by erecting a statue of himself in Jerusalem" (14). But overreaction was not alien to Gaius' temperament. His concern may have been legitimate enough, but the occasion was unfortunate, to say the least, and the punitive measures highly misguided. The orders went forth to the legate of Syria, Petronius, whose task it was to see that the imperial order was carried out.

ii) The statue of Gaius was to be prepared in Sidon (15), and the Jerusalem temple was from now on to be a temple to Gaius under the name of "Zeus Epiphanes Neos Gaios", another close parallel to Antiochus IV (16). It was to be of the colossal type, used in temples to the imperial cult, of bronze, covered by gold, picturing the Olympian with the features of Gaius himself (17).

Few historians and commentators on the episode dwell on what the imperial cult implies (18). A full scale cult at Jerusalem involved priesthoods, festivals, sacrifices, et al., as outlined in chapter 2. Bilde himself does not even outline the basic features of such a cult. Josephus does: "While all the subject peoples in the Roman empire had dedicated altars and temples to Gaius and had given him the same attention in all other respects as they did the gods, these people alone (viz. the Jews) scorned

to honour him with statues and to swear by his name" (19). This passage is valuable evidence for our purposes because it so clearly defines the **RIC** as a divine cult and gives focus to the practical implications as well.

Such a statue was extremely expensive, took a long time to produce and could only be made at a place where there were artists and craftsmen to produce the work. So they had to go outside **Palestine**, to **Phoenicia**. Anybody interested in a realistic display of the amount of workmanship involved is well advised to visit the museum at **Adana** in **Cilicia** where there is an excellent display of the art involved. The statue was presumably to be depicting the emperor as **Zeus** in the nude (if standing) or covered (if sitting).

One issue is never discussed: in the strict sense this would be a case of temple-sharing, but such theological niceties were lost on the **Jews**, understandably enough. "Subordinationism" in the imperial cult was beyond their understanding. But it may well have meant something like the cult of **Trajan** at **Pergamum**, for example. For all practical purposes such a rededication of the temple in **Jerusalem** simply meant that it was from now on a pagan shrine. The discussion never reached the issue of a shared cult. Nor did it - so it seems - for our commentators.

iii) **Petronius** is one of the central figures of this drama.

He was legate of **Syria** from **39** to **42**, and had had



an illustrious career as proconsul Asia (20).

He made his headquarters in Ptolemais where mass demonstrations followed. The procurator at Caesarea Maritima is left out of consideration in this strife, a higher official was called upon to perform the task.

Petronius is rather impressive. He sympathized with the Jews, talked with their leaders, and challenged Gaius to revoke his decision, probably realizing the danger of such an act (21). His first letter to Gaius was more careful: He tried to procrastinate the production of the statue till after the harvest, since the Jews threatened to go on strike en masse (22). The response to the first letter was to hasten up the production and allow no delay. The response to the second letter was to commit suicide. But before this arrived - it was delayed three months due to bad weather - the entire project was called off and, what is more, Gaius was dead.

Philo particularly underlines his role as active counter-movement and not merely as passive resistance (23). The action was clearly meant to be punitive, since Petronius had orders to kill those who resisted and sell the rest as slaves (24). He is invariably described in positive terms by modern historians, as for example Smallwood: "a humane and sensitive person, with considerable sympathies for Jewish feelings" (25). Our sources vary in describing Petronius' actions. Philo tells us that he had the same attitude from the beginning, suffered no sudden change of mind (26), while Josephus

(Ant.Jud.) gives us a picture of a man who radically changed his mind during these months as a result of meeting the Jewish leaders and seeing the opposition that met his eye everywhere (27).

The account in Josephus seems to be the most likely, since Philo operates along a scheme that puts the historical figures in roles that neatly fit the divine plan, something that is clearly brought out by Bilde in his article.

iv) The nature of the Jewish resistance is important in this context: was it merely passive or active? Bilde devotes much attention to this problem since our sources also here seem to differ in their evaluation of the episode. The outcome of the question will have a direct bearing on our understanding of Mark 13.

A Roman source, Tacitus, insists that the opposition was armed (28). Josephus says it was merely passive in Ant.Jud., involving an agricultural strike and seeking martyrdom (29), but says it was of a mixed kind in BJ (30). While Balsdon goes for the account in Ant.Jud. (31), Bilde thinks that Tacitus is closer to the historical reality (32). This means that the episode could have precipitated the crisis of 66, and would in fact have led to a revolt, something he finds enough evidence for in the Jewish sources (33).

The nature of the resistance thus illustrates the seriousness of this episode, as experienced by

contemporaries.

v) The role of Agrippa I is also unclear. Was he instrumental in averting the catastrophe, and in case he was: how decisive was his personal influence?

Agrippa had been granted Philip's tetrachy in 34 and Antipas' in 39. From that year he was king over the territory of his grandfather Herod the Great. He had been resident at Tiberias until he was appointed king, but was in Rome at the moment of the crisis. He later ruled in Jerusalem from 41-44. He was "the only man who had any hope of dissuading Gaius from his foolish policy, and he took his life in both hands to do so" (34).

Philo and Josephus explain his role differently.

The former indicates a certain distance between the king and the emperor when he states that Agrippa did write a petition to Gaius (35), while the latter (Ant.Jud.) states that the king presented his petition at a banquet under informal circumstances (36). To Josephus he is aristocratic and close to Gaius, to Philo he is basically the representative of the Jews who learns from Gaius himself about the project and does not get anywhere in his attempt to solve the problem. Philo lets God himself solve the dilemma by striking the impious infidel, though Agrippa is highly instrumental in averting the disaster (37). Josephus does not mention him in BJ (where God solves the case without mediation from the Jewish king), but the account in Ant.Jud. makes Agrippa's intervention the only reason for Caligula's abandoning of the project: - the

episode reads much like the story of **Antipas** and **Salome** in **Mk. 6**.

While many historians follow **Philo's** account (38), **Bilde** suggests a hypothetical reconstruction of his actual role, according to which **Agrippa** represents an intervention from the royal house at **Tiberias**, fearing lasting strife and finally a revolt where his kingdom was at stake. This intervention took place in cooperation with the authorities in **Jerusalem** (39). He further asks whether **Agrippa** actually bribed **Petronius**. Then the king goes to **Rome** and achieves his purpose. All of this earns him the description of being "a resolute and clever prince" (40). In other words, **Bilde** comes down in favour of **Josephus**, here as on other unclear issues during the episode.

In **Philo** we read of another plan of **Gaius'**: he wanted to go to the **East** himself and then see to it that a statue of himself was erected along the coast of **Palestine** somewhere (41). The statue from **Sidon** was to be left in place and another made in **Rome**, which he subsequently would have moved to **Palestine** "very quietly and secretly on shipboard and suddenly erected unobserved by the mass of the population" (42). In other words, **Gaius** soon regretted his favour towards **Agrippa** and prepared a renewed assault on **Palestine**. This, as well as the statue in **Rome**, was not carried out either (43).

**Philo** is, however, most useful for our purposes, for it is in this context that he discusses the difference between paying honours to **Gaius** and sacrificing for him:

"You have sacrificed, but to another, even if it was for me (**G**reek: "hyper emou"); What good was it then? For you have not sacrificed to me (**G**reek: "ou gar emoi tethukate")" (44). According to **P**hilo the ambassadors were dismissed in less unfavourable terms than they had feared: "**H**e (**G**aius) relaxed into a softer mood and said just this, "**T**hey seem to me to be people unfortunate rather than wicked and to be foolish in refusing to believe that **I** have got the nature of a god", and saying this he went off bidding us to be gone also" (45).

**F**ishwick - as does **P**rice (46) - brings in this famous discussion between the **J**ews and **G**aius when discussing sacrifices in the imperial cult, confirming against **N**ock, that to the ancients sacrifice on behalf of was viewed as a very different matter from sacrifices to , as discussed in the last chapter (47).

An edict of **C**laudius, dated **N**ovember 10. **A.D.41**, also refers to this episode. It is not the famous edict we know from **J**osephus, but another - otherwise unknown - about the same issue, which is copied in the verso of a papyrus roll (located since 1921 in the **B**ritish **M**useum).

Here we read: "**G**aius...who in his extreme folly and madness humiliated the **J**ews for refusing to transgress their ancestral religion by invoking him as a god...I decree that the **J**ewish people be deprived of none of their rights because of **G**aius' madness but that they retain the same privileges as before..." The problems related to its genuineness are discussed by **B**ruce (48).



The other edict referred to above settled the dispute at Alexandria. Bruce describes the text in Josephus as "substantially, though not absolutely accurate" (49).

## VI) GAIUS CALIGULA AND MARK 13

There is another echo in the **New Testament** that belongs to every discussion of this episode: the "**Little Apocalypse**" of **Mark 13**. Here is another possible reference to the episode under **Gaius**. Not everybody would agree with this, as in the case of the "anomos"-passage. But there are enough commentators that find the parallel striking.

The problem is this: **Mk. 13,14.20** needs a **Sitz im Leben** that can explain this kind of sudden outburst of traditional apocalyptic imagery, mostly from **Daniel**, where we find expectations of an end that is near but not yet, preceded by dramatic events as a result of the conspiracy of evil, consisting in an assault upon the temple in Jerusalem, which will be desecrated but not destroyed.

We will not go into a discussion of whether this is:  
1) a Jewish apocalypse integrated into the gospel text, or  
11) a primitive Christian document from **Palestine**. For this discussion one has to consult the commentaries (1). It makes, however, little difference to our argument since we treat **Mk.13** as integral part of the **New Testament**. But the parallel in **2 Thess.** strengthens the case for this being a primitive Christian text, **Palestinian** or not. The dating of the gospel as we know it is a matter of more interest, since a date after **A.D.70** - i.e. the destruction of the temple - does not make good sense,

precisely because of ch.13. The events of our chapter do not fit the category of being "vaticinia ex eventu" since the desecration could not possibly have taken place when the temple was in ruins. The situation is different in the parallel chapters in Matthew (ch.24) and Luke (ch.21) where it is not difficult to argue for a date after A.D. 70. In Mark it seems much more likely that the text in question received its final form well before the event.

Again we ask the question: Why does the apocalyptic language from Daniel, linked to the crisis under Antiochus, reappear in the last decades before the fall of Jerusalem? The question is the same as we put to the passage from 2 Thess. - and the answers are very similar. We will consider two of them:

1) it is all a question of an apocalyptic tradition, being in the air, so to speak, under this difficult period, and being joined to the gospel text at a time when revolt already was a fact in Judaea or was expected to break out (2). The memory of the sacrilegious act of Antiochus was perpetuated annually in the feast of Dedication, and no closer identification was intended (3). During years of increasing nationalism on the part of the Jews in Palestine during the decades following the short but highly successful and popular reign of Agrippa, a conflict with the Romans was drawing closer. Taylor is in favour of such a view, of Mk.13 with a reference to 2 Thess. (where he probably takes the same position) (4). So does Nineham, who considers the chapter to reflect the fall of Jerusalem (5),

while **A**nderson leaves the question open (6). The **N**ew **J**erome **B**iblical **C**ommentary leaves open the possibility of allusions to **C**aligula and therefore the possibility that it is part of a pre-**M**arcan source (7).

ii) **D**esire for a precise historical context for this passage has led scholars to consider the parallel to the **C**aligula episode and to **2** **T**hess. One of these attempts should be considered here, that of **S.G.F.****B**randon (8), who regards the document as originating from **C**hristians in **P**alestine as a result of **C**aligua's abortive attempt. The fact that he sees the **P**alestinian **C**hristians as closely associated with the fate of the nation - i.e. of a very nationalistic and revolutionary bent - need not occupy us here since it is a different problem. **B**randon offers an interpretation of these verses that links very well with what we found during the discussion of the **C**aligula episode and the previous discussion of **2** **T**hess.

"**N**o more fitting identification of the "**A**bomination of **D**esolation" can be found prior to **A.D.70** than that of the image which the **R**oman tyrant planned to place in the sanctuary of the **T**emple" (9). For it "must have been produced originally in response to some specific crisis in **J**ewish life in **P**alestine, and it is here suggested that there are cogent reasons for regarding it as an expression of the **J**ewish **C**hristian mind when the sanctity of the **T**emple was threatened by the sacrilegious project of the emperor **G**aius to erect his statue therein..." (10).

The cryptic reference to Daniel (9,27; 11,31; 12,11; cfr. 1.Macc.1,54) refers back to Antiochus, as in 2.Thess. But the rest is more specific than may first appear to the modern reader, and Brandon offers some interesting insights into these details.

He takes the advice to flee into the mountains (v.14) as an exhortation to follow the example of the Maccabean resistance, which is in accordance with the information from Tacitus that the Jews prepared for war, a tradition that Bilde supports.

The time element in the situation described is significant. Vv.14-19 indicate that the presence of the Abomination is a future contingency ("when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be...") and so likewise the advice and observations which follow apply to future action. But in v.20 the verb changes to the historic tense ("and if the Lord had not shortened the days...") and the intervention of God is depicted as having stopped a process of disaster.

The grammatical change from neuter to masculine in the participle "set up" (v.14) referring to the object causing desolation is normally discussed by our commentators and fits a possible reference to the cult statue of Caligula. Nineham offers a more accurate translation than the RSV: "When you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not", and concludes that Mark is thinking, not of some object, such as an altar or a statue, but of a personal being, perhaps anti-Christ or his living representative



(11). But this is going too fast, since Gaius well fits an anti-Christ role in this context, even if his attempt came to nothing, and the statue was far more than a "thing" or "object" to the ancients. An imperial statue was certainly "he" for all practical purposes, except to the philosophically minded, like Philo. The presence of the cult image meant the presence of Gaius in the temple - and this was the nature of the sacrilege.

If this apocalypse originated in the year 40 its non-fulfilment explains why it reappears in later Christian literature, for example 2 Thess., Mark, Matthew, Luke, albeit in new literary contexts. "Let the reader understand" of v. 14 is normally taken to be an editorial gloss (12). It certainly witnesses to the situation of the written gospel and not to the spoken discourse, and could easily be taken to mean a cryptic reference to the Caligula episode, as easily as the usual reference to Daniel and Antiochus (13).

Here our distinction between a first and second "level of context", used above, makes room for both interpretations and they do not therefore appear as mutually exclusive. "The parenthesis reads more like a dark hint, a clue to Christian eyes but an enigma to others, presumably the imperial authorities. The situation is like that to which 2 Thess. 2,6f. and Apoc. 13,18 (the number of the beast) belong. But it is more tense. The Temple which could be named in 2 Thess. 2,4 can now only be indicated by the cryptic phrase "hopou ou dei"... The explanation may

well be that, in **Rome** during a time of persecution, when **Christians** were crucified and burnt (**Tacitus, Ann. XV.44**), more precise language was politically dangerous" (14). **Taylor** takes, of course, the words to refer to the revolt of **66-70**, and the gospel to be written in **Rome**. **But** the readers would not need any cryptic reminder of this kind if the words were written during the years of persecution under **Nero**, which coincided with war in **Judaea**. **It** is far easier to take it to refer to an unrealized and unforgotten threat that occurred two decades earlier.

**Bruce** supports the interpretation suggested above: "**It** was very probably during the anxious days of **A.D.40** that some **Judaeen Christians** first circulated in written form certain collected words of **Jesus** which they thought had a direct bearing on the present crisis...**The** terror of those weeks...was not quickly forgotten, and in the mind of some apocalyptists **Gaius'** attempt, together with the outrage perpetrated by **Antiochus Epiphanes** in the second **c.B.C.** provided a pattern of what might be expected in the great distress of the end-time" (15). "**To** make the point even more unmistakable, he (the author of **Mk. 13**) violated **Greek** grammar so as to make the desolating sacrilege personal: it was not so much the statue that was to be worshipped as the emperor whom it portrayed" (16). "**In Mk 13,14** the participle 'hestekota' is masculine although it refers to the neuter substantive '**Bdelygma**' (the parallel in **Matt.24,15** makes the participle neuter)" (17). **The**

words "let the reader understand" in v.14 Bruce takes to mean that Jesus' prophecy now is on the eve of fulfilment, that is, the gospel is composed during the revolt of 66-70 (67?), in Rome according to tradition. If the gospel was written after the destruction of the temple the words were still relevant and not outdated, because: "These words were remembered afresh a generation later and given a new interpretation when idolatrous objects certainly were set up in the sacred precincts" (18).

The reference made by Taylor to the situation of the Christians in Rome under Nero, referred to above, brings us to our next topic: the book of Revelation. But before we take leave of the Caligula episode there remains to be considered a Christian protest against the very man who was famed and loved for averting the catastrophe.

## VII) AGRIPPA I AND ACTS 12

"Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and they came to him in a body, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and made an oration to them. And the people shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12, 20-23).

This passage is to be understood as a case of direct attack on ruler cult in its Greek form. It is directed against one of the many kings of petty kingdoms on the borders of the Roman empire. But this king happened to be king of the Jews - a very popular one as such - and therefore the incident was blasphemous: Agrippa was not entitled to the customary titles of Hellenistic or Oriental monarchs because he was a Jew and king of the Jews. The titles accordingly appear as blasphemous in the eyes of his Jewish subjects. From the point of view of the Greeks they were legitimate enough and the Romans would have tolerated them.

The political strength of Agrippa's reign was the political state-formula of Herod the Great. He represents an interlude between the procurators that was

highly successful from a Jewish point of view. The political weakness was his relations with the Greeks, his quarrels with Tyre and Sidon in Phoenicia, and his unfortunate visit to Alexandria where he was overtly pro-Jewish and anti-Greek (1). His intervention in the episode of Caligula's statue endeared him further to his Jewish subjects (2).

But his kingdom was culturally of a mixed nature, and operated accordingly with two religious systems that clashed frequently, as for example at Jamnia and Dora. His coinage reflects this situation: at Jerusalem he minted with Jewish symbols, at Caesarea with pagan symbols, to please the Greeks (3). He was actually the first Jewish ruler to have his own head struck on coins (4). Smith lists in his catalogue a marble head, now in Turin, that tentatively has been identified as being that of Agrippa I, and stands clearly in the tradition of Hellenistic royal portraits - in this case of a Roman client king - with diadem (5).

Client kings were normally granted divine honours by their subjects, and a famous example is the case of Commagene, mentioned in the preceding chapter. The monuments at Nimrud Dag are to this day a witness to how ruler cult continued to flourish under the Romans, along the Hellenistic lines. There are royal coin portraits from several kingdoms in the Greek East in the first century A.D.: Chalcis, Cappadocia, the priestly dynasts of Olba in Cilicia, Armenia, Judaea, not to speak of kingdoms like Bosphorus and Mauretania (6).



The Roman imperial cult was represented in Palestine in two places, both with pagan population: Sebaste and Caesarea Maritima, where Herod the Great had erected temples to Augustus (see Catalogue). Further cults are not attested, but there may have been many private ones.

We have two accounts of the death of Agrippa: in Acts and in Josephus (Ant.Jud.). There is considerable agreement between the two sources, and at the same time they supplement each other, telling the story from different points of view: a Christian and a Jewish.

1) According to Acts Agrippa was killed by an act of God of two reasons: a) he was a persecutor of the first Christians - b) he did not refuse the divine royal title "theos" when used by the Greeks.

a) The Christians did not love Agrippa, for the simple reason that he had persecuted the apostles and killed James, the son of Zebedee, in AD. 42: "About that time Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword; and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also" (12,1-3). Agrippa's motives may have been of a nationalistic nature: Luke states clearly that it pleased the Jews, indicating that there was unease in the high priestly circles in Jerusalem over the issue of Messianic Jews (7). This episode is not mentioned in Josephus.

b) Agrippa was hailed as "theos" by his Greek subjects at a given occasion in Caesarea while addressing

ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon. At this occasion he was taken ill and died a few days later, here both sources are in agreement (8). Schürer calls these Greeks from Phoenicia "flatterers" (9), but what is at stake is common enough, as we have seen, and not at all unexpected from the king's pagan subjects. Acts gives us the further information that the king was eaten by worms, a fitting punishment for a persecutor of the Church and a king of pagan inclinations.

The verses in Acts are clearly directed against Agrippa and against ruler cult: it was unforgivable to receive such honours in the case of a Jew. What substantiates this reading, even if it is obvious enough, is the fact that Josephus takes the same view.

11) The account in Ant. Jud. (XIX, 343-52) is more specific than Acts. Josephus specifies the "appointed day" of Acts 12,1 to be closely related to the imperial cult, "spectacles in honour of Caesar, knowing that these had been instituted as a kind of festival on behalf of Caesar's well-being" (XIX, 343). The Sitz im Leben was games related to the imperial cult. There are two possible occasions:

a) games in Caesarea in honour of Claudius, whose birthday was August 1.

b) quinquennial games in the emperor's honour instituted by Herod the Great, i.e. for Augustus, but the cult may probably have been applied to his successors as well, the "theoi Sebastoi" (cfr. ch. 2).

Bruce discusses the two possible historical settings, but does not arrive at any clear conclusion (10). Feldman takes the games to be - "presumably" - the quinquennial games of Herod (11). The issue is difficult to decide.

On the topic of divine titles Josephus is also very explicit: "His flatterers raised their voices from various directions...addressing him as god" (12): "We agree that you are more than mortal in your being" (13).

Josephus agrees that "the king did not rebuke them, nor did he reject their flattery as impious" (14). But later, on his death-bed, Agrippa makes this distinction: "I, a god in your eyes, are now bidden to lay down my life, for fate brings immediate refutation of the lying words lately addressed to me. I, who was called immortal by you, am now under sentence of death" (15). Bruce takes these words to mean that what happened to him was direct divine revenge because of his act of blasphemy (16).

The cause of death has commonly been diagnosed as peritonitis resulting from a perforated appendix (17).

The sequel to his death tells us much about the hatred the Greeks felt for Agrippa. There was a riot in Caesarea where they took revenge on his family: the statues of his daughters were captured from the royal palace and put up in brothels. The same occurred at Samaria (18).

Josephus himself had every reason to favour such an interpretation of Agrippa's death: he must have been very well acquainted with the imperial cult, living in

Rome at the time of writing, perhaps at the palace that Rabirius built for Domitian, the Domus Augusta, or "divina" as described by court flatterers in Rome (19). The references to ruler cult in Josephus are interesting and deserve a study of its own, though to my knowledge this has not yet appeared. He may turn out to as important for our knowledge of aspects relating to the cult as in the case of Philo.

The episode in question ought to be treated as a clear instance of polemic against ruler cult in the New Testament. But it would probably be going too far to claim that the Man of Lawlessness actually was Agrippa, all the time we have the episode of Caligula's statue a few years earlier - this was of far more serious dimensions as a threat to Jewry.

## VIII) CONCLUSIONS

What are our findings in this section? What is a correct assessment of the facts?

In the case of **Gaius** we have a precise historical context for an investigation, so also in the case of **Paul's** eschatological teaching after the failure at **Thessalonica**. In the case of **Mark 13** everything is more uncertain, since the dating of this document is unclear, as is the date of the composition of the gospel itself. With **Acts 12** we are again on firmer historical ground.

**Gaius'** attempt to erect his statue in the Jerusalem temple can certainly offer explanations for the references to the "man of lawlessness" and the reference to the abominations in **Mk.13**. This is an event that can be paralleled by **Antiochus'** desecration two centuries earlier. And not a few scholars find this context satisfactory and are willing to leave out **Caligula** altogether. This leaves us with the need to establish possibilities, probabilities and the like. Nothing whatever can be proved. I would estimate the likelihood of the correctness of such an exegesis as suggested above to **60-70** percent, nothing more. This is, of course, distressing, but typical of **New testament** scholarship.

What is interesting in relation to the study of the imperial cult in this context are the references to rulers making blasphemous claims and ruler cult being a degradation of all genuine religion. Christian literature that



unquestionably deals with the cult is to be looked for in sources from the second and third century. The New Testament can only offer some echoes. But these are interesting enough, since we are facing the cult in its initial stage. For Paul it could easily become one of the great stumbling blocks, perhaps also for Luke.

### 3) THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT

"When converts in Galatia and Asia spoke of "the Lord", it would hardly be possible for them to divest themselves wholly of the ideas which they had formerly associated with the title". (1)

"Während Domitian, in der Kolossal-Reiterstatue auf dem forum Romanum als Sieger und Herrscher der welt symbolisiert, von Statius und Martial als Gott der Schöpfung und der Ewigkeit, als Aion und Agathondaimon besungen wurde, haben die Christen in Kleinasien dem "archon tou kosmou toutou" als dem unter Gottes Gericht stehenden Teufel.. entgegengesetzt". (2)

"There arise a polemical parallelism between the cult of the emperor and the cult of Christ, which makes itself felt where ancient words derived by Christians from the treasury of the Septuagint and the Gospels happen to coincide with solemn concepts of the Imperial cult which sounded the same or similar... This polemical parallelism ... is a clear prophecy of the coming centuries of martyrdom". (3)

"Thus we see that the use of tools from the imperial cultus is of a marginal character: there is little or no direct introduction of vocabulary from that source... On the

official level it often determines the selection , but never intentionally the content of the vocabulary". (4)

"There are some obvious parallels between Imperial cult and early Christian worship, however superficial the similarities may be - to admit this in no way denies that the source of Christian terms and practices stems from the Jewish rather than the Hellenistic". (5)

The question of a possible polemic against the imperial cult in the Fourth gospel is hinted at by many modern scholars, as the quotations above will indicate. But no serious study of this issue has appeared to date, only minor soundings. And the reason for this may be found in the views stated above: here we have only the uncertain method of polemical parallelism to work from. Nowhere in this gospel do we find clear indications that the RIC is under attack, unlike what was the case with Revelation and the decoding of its beasts. Neither do we know for certain who the author was, nor the place or date of composition.

But most commentators accept the tradition from the ancient Church as sound regarding the life-setting of this gospel (6). This, in fact, makes it contemporary with Rev., as well as belonging to the same milieu, whether this be called "church" or "school". The critical scholarly tradition of modern times has insisted on regarding the Johannine writings as a unity, even if it operates with two or more authors (7).

If all this is correct - and we will not go into such questions here, but rather work from the traditional position, as we did in the case of **Rev.** - the situation of the **Johannine Christians** in **Asia** at the turn of the first century is the one we discussed in the section on **Rev.**

But the author seems to represent a different theological universe, especially in one important way: there is no apocalyptic perspective here, but rather an eschatology which can be described as "realized" rather than futuristic (8). This would normally indicate that the issue with the state is not crucial to the argument of this writer either. - This view, however, is open to serious doubt, as will be seen shortly.

The trouble is this: the language used is of a kind that evades precise historical contextualisation. It is conventionally held that no specific situation or episode seems to have caused these theolocial tracts to be written, i.e. the many sermons that form the backbone of the first part of the book according to some commentators (9). Likewise it is held that the **Passion** narrative reveals no certain historical context concerning the author, however interesting the historical information contained in the narrative may turn out to be (10). - This view we shall also challenge in the following pages.

The similarities of historical setting are not exactly difficult to work out. In fact we find the same war on two frontiers - against the "world" and the "Jews" - as we did

in the case of **Rev.** A picture of the **Johannine** community has therefore been painted on the basis of the **Farewell-discourse**, where scholars look for a **Sitz im Leben** of this local church (**11**). The audience of our author seems to live in a situation of threat from both synagogue and state. In short, they are exposed to the same pressures as those we found in **Rev.** The imperial cult may comfortably be included among these, even if it is an implicit rather than explicit polemic we are facing here.

An intriguing fact is that the **Christology** of the **Fourth** gospel is partly - not solely - expressed in a vocabulary that we recognize from the imperial cult. It does not derive from the cult - such a view has found no advocates. But it must have been both written and understood as an antithesis to the cult of the living emperor. If the **Jews** and **Greeks** at **Thessalonica** were able to detect a political polemic in the eschatological vocabulary used by **Paul**, so must also the **Greeks** and **Christians** of **Asia** have been able to do in the case of **John's** gospel some decades later.

But it is difficult for us today - to say the least - to reconstruct the kind of impact this gospel would have had on its first readers, particularly on a pagan audience. The proof of this case - i.e. a possible, or even probable, polemic against the imperial cult - ultimately lies with the pagans, because it is only their reading that can confirm such a reading. And this we do not possess. All we have is the **Christian** experience of this gospel, not that of



**A**siarchs, imperial priests or the citizens in **E**phesus at the time of writing.

**T**he language of a little group can easily be misinterpreted when we do not have such exterior criteria to control this language against. **A** particular community may have had its own jargons and traditions, as seems to be the case here according to some interpreters (12). **B**ut how do we know the correct decoding of these, when we do not have definitive keys from other ancient sources, **J**ewish or **C**hristian or pagan? **A** test-case would be precisely a pagan reaction to a possible polemic against the **RIC** in the **J**ohannine vocabulary.

**T**he theory of polemical parallellism in **J**ohn - as articulated in a classical way by **D**eissmann - is awkward as a tool or method. **T**his we have already seen to be the case with the hymnic material in **R**ev. **S**uch a thesis is possible, but hardly provable. **I**n the light of **P**aul's experience at **T**hessalonica, however, some of the words in question must have looked strange to a pagan audience: "kyrios", "hyios theou", above all "basileus". **W**hat made them dangerous was, of course, that they were applied to a person from history, whom the **C**hristians claimed to be alive somehow. **T**he lesson from **A**cts 17 is useful here.

**I**f our author does intend such a polemic, one way we can try to understand his efforts is by investigating two paths.

1) **H**e puts great emphasis on the kingship of **C**hrist in general - the **M**essiah is truly king; this is a pattern

that runs all through the gospel; polemic against the **RIC** is implicit in such an affirmation.

11) **H**e does even more: he dresses up the **G**alilean as a **H**ellenistic king - or, rather, as a **R**oman emperor according to the **G**reek models of the cult (e.g. 19,2).

What is obtained by performing this kind of theological investigation?

In the first place he puts the "blasphemous" titles where they belong, according to **C**hristian beliefs <sup>with</sup> - the **C**hrist.

In the second place he denies the same titles in the case of the ruler of this world.

In all this we are not far from the book of **R**evelation and its author's intent. **B**ut the gospel is doing this **C**hristocentrically rather than historically and eschatologically, not to say apocalyptically. **H**ere it is the agent - or regent - of the **K**ingdom that is being interpreted in a way antithetical to the imperial cult, not **G**od himself as was the case in **R**ev.

If this really be the case, what sort of a polemic is it we are discussing?

**C**an it be related to the situation in **A**sia as discussed above?

**I**s it another way of unmasking a parody, that of the imperial cult? - **I**n which case we have a parallel to the heavenly liturgy in **R**ev. which puts things right on several levels at the same time.

**I**t is, presumably, the awkwardness of this sort of an

undertaking that has prevented scholars from the attempt to work this out. Additionally it may have something to do with the fact that scholars who work on the gospel very seldom also write on the apocalypse. This tends to imply that works on the Fourth Gospel seldom have interesting insights to offer concerning the life of the Christians in Asia at the time of writing. Here the works on Revelation are usually more helpful.

We are therefore faced with the following questions:

- Does the author of the last gospel present his Christ in terms of divine kingship in a way that would fit the demands of the imperial priesthoods and be understood as polemical by Jews and pagans as well as the members of his flock?

- Does his Christological language have a double meaning: one Judaeo-Christian and the other pagan?

If there is a polemic at stake, the only approach seems to be an exploration along such lines. The seer at Patmos divested the emperor of his divine titles - the theologian of Ephesus seems to be doing the opposite: he invests Jesus with the same divine regalia.

The answer to these questions, I think, is in the affirmative.

What follows is a brief sounding of the possibility of such a reading. It is too brief for any lasting conclusions to be drawn. It is only meant to be suggestive, or just

outlining the problem in more detail than stated.

We will proceed by working in two stages:

i) a brief discussion of the state according to the Fourth Gospel and the pattern of divine kingship as present in the gospel,

ii) the vocabulary of the imperial cult itself compared with the Christological titles.

## I) DIVINE KINGSHIP IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### A) THE TRIAL

"Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?". (18,33-38)

"Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands". (19,1-3)

"The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God". (19,7)

"Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews



cried out, "If you release this man, you are not **Caesar's** friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against **Caesar.**" When **Pilate** heard these words, he brought **Jesus** out and sat down on the judgement seat at a place called **The Pavement**, and in **Hebrew**, **Gabbatha**. Now it was the day of **Preparation** of the **Passover**; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the **Jews**, "**Behold your King!**" They cried out, "**Away with him, away with him, crucify him!**" **Pilate** said to them, "**Shall I crucify your King?**" The chief priests answered, "**We have no king but Caesar.**" Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. (19,12-16)

"**Pilate** also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**" many of the **Jews** read this title, for the place where **Jesus** was crucified was near the city; and it was written in **Hebrew**, in **Latin**, and in **Greek**. The chief priests of the **Jews** then said to **Pilate**, "**Do not write, 'the King of the Jews', but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'**" **Pilate** answered, "**What I have written I have written.**" (19,19-22)

"I should find it difficult to imagine a **Christian** writer under **Domitian** (let us say) or even under **Nerva** or **Trajan**, going out of his way to introduce them (= challenging traits) into a relatively harmless account". (1)

"Certainly the teaching of the **Fourth Gospel** on the

kingship of **C**hrist would be admirably suited to conditions under **D**omitian". (2)

"It is not unlikely that the **F**ourth **G**ospel reflects a consciousness of the rivalry between **C**aesar and **C**hrist". (3)

"Jesus is king - according to John - in a sense which could conflict with the illegitimate aspirations of an **E**mperor". (4)

"We may perhaps overhear in this the defence of **C**hristians in the evangelist's own time accused of rebellion against the emperor". (5)

"John has with keen insight picked out the key of the passion narrative in the kingship of Jesus, and has made its meaning clearer, perhaps, than any other **N**T writer". (6)

If there is such a confrontation in **G**John we shall have to try to disentangle the present from the past in the **P**assion story and later in the **C**hristological vocabulary. We are again confronted with the question - or method - of two levels of context: that of Jesus and that of the author. The key to the world of the author - if the traditional place and date is accepted as a starting point - is the same as established in our previous discussion of **R**ev.

i) The trial and the titulus.

In the first place a few words about the trial are useful. We are not going to dwell on the question of historicity as such: it is John's use of his material that we want to focus

on. But John's version of the trial of Jesus has, actually, interested historians and commentators for some time, and this may be due to his obvious attempt to simplify and clarify the case, which is presented in a more complex manner by the Synoptics (7). John presents the case as being of a political nature, albeit misunderstood and mishandled: Jesus is here condemned as a Messianic pretender. The language used is intelligible to Romans and Jews alike.

From the point of view of secular history it has been defended as possibly correct by Sherwin-White (8). Dodd concludes that it may very well reflect a situation in Judaea before 70 A.D. (9). Harvey, who presents an interpretation of the entire gospel as a court-case, deals extensively with these questions and presents an interpretative key along the following lines: in John the case for or against is argued out at length, so that the reader has to make up his own mind and form his own judgement; we are dealing a case of a court-case from the past, reopened at the end of the first century (10).

In the Synoptics we have a presentation that is far less radical: the hearing of Jesus' case was performed so perfunctorily that it barely amounted to a juridical process at all. John may, in other words, very well bring us closer to the historical trial than the other evangelists. Brown (11) and Robinson are also attracted by the possible historicity of John's account: "Far from being a distortion of the primitive record there is, I believe, nothing in the

Johannine story that is palpably unhistorical and a great deal that makes the other accounts...intelligible" (12).

In the second place, from point of view of historicity, we would have to consider the question of the titulus on the cross. All four evangelists give the same title: "King of the Jews" (13). "Since it was vitally important to Christians to show that their Lord had not aspired to be a secular king they are most unlikely to have invented it, and indeed must have felt it to be embarrassing. It is therefore almost certainly authentic" (14).

The point made here is that this is the starting-point for John, historical questions aside. "Jesus went to his death under a title unintentionally but profoundly true" (15). "The fact that the charge is true gives John the chance for further irony. The title...can be taken to be a proclamation of the Messiaship of Jesus. Naturally, the chief priests object, and ask for it to be modified" (16).

ii) King Jesus.

It goes without saying that the title "king" sums up the entire divine vocabulary used by John: God, Son of God, Messiah, Lord and God, Saviour of the world, etc. (17). Here the emphasis is on the king, not the coming of the Kingdom (18). His presence brings <sup>in</sup> the Kingdom, this is a Leitmotif in the gospel.

But the term is qualified by our author, in order not to be misunderstood. Lindars offers a translation of 18,37 that is trying to make the point clearer than that

of the **RSV**: "You say that I am King in a political sense; but I say so in the sense that for this I was born..." (19). **Dodd** puts it like this: "He (Jesus) admits that he is king in a non-worldly sense" (20). While the **Synoptics** take the whole title to be mockery, as we find in the scene with the soldiers, **John** uses the charge from the **titulus** as a theological - and indeed forensic - tool. It proves to be a very useful way of proceeding.

iii) Pilate.

Commenting on 19,14 ("Here is your king") **Lindars** writes: "There is no mockery here: it is rather a taunt to the people, bringing the irony of the whole affair to a point. As far as **Pilate** himself is concerned, it is almost a confirmation of faith, for he cannot bring himself to deny that Jesus is King in a sense which impresses and frightens him" (21). Commenting on 19,22 (**Pilate's** refusal to the Jews to alter the wording of the **titulus**) he makes a similar statement: "It is certainly intended to imply that the title was true and unalterable, and can be regarded as a concealed confession of faith by **Pilate**" (22). **Harvey** could certainly have included **Pilate** in his list of witnesses in the case (23). - But this is, of course, not the same as to say that this is historical.

Jesus' answer to **Pilate's** question - "are you a king?" in 18,37 - is undoubtedly affirmative: "sy legeis" simply means "yes" (24).



The author has cleverly composed his trial, with a view to the Christological needs of his times. Is it precisely such needs that may account for the modification Jesus gives when accepting the title? Some scholars have supported such a reading. "La réponse de Jésus aux Romains soupçonnant les chrétiens de menacer le pouvoir de Domitien est à chercher dans le récit du procès de Jésus et dans le rôle singulier qu'il attribue et fait jouer à Pilate" (25). "It seems likely that here he (John) has intentionally put into the mouth of Pilate an unintended truth" (26). "Il s'agit pour Jean de souligner l'innocence politique de christianisme" (27).

Here is certainly something specific going on in relation to kingship: the term is accepted but immediately modified by Jesus himself - the term is probably accepted in this non-political way by Pilate according to our author. John badly needs this specification, as did Paul. But John makes sure that the Romans see his point as well. In this gospel they both see it and accept it. The responsibility therefore lies wholly with the Jews.

iv) The Jews.

If Pilate, according to John, accepts the truth of a higher kingdom - though not without hesitation (cfr. "What is truth?") - so does the Roman state whose representative he is (28). But this is not acceptable to the Jews, who threaten Pilate with not deserving his own title: that of being "amicus Augusti" ("philokaisaros"), a

title that was conferred on him by **Sejanus** in all probability (29).

This leaves us with the case of the **Jews**.

They claim that they have no king but **Caesar** (19,15). "In denying all claim to kingship save that of the **Roman Emperor Israel** abdicated its own unique position under the immediate sovereignty of **God**" (30). It is, in other words, the **Jews** that hand **Jesus** over to a concept of the state that **Pilate** just has disassociated himself from - the absolute **Roman** state, that of the divine emperor. Thereby they have judged themselves. Here is "a devastating dramatic irony, in which the **Jews** finally acknowledge **Caesar** to be their king, in order to be rid of **Jesus**, their true king" (31). "No **Jew** could say this with a clear conscience. Only **God** is **Israel's King**, and his anointed one is viceregent of **God** who is the true **King**. So with splendid irony **John** makes the **Jews** utter the ultimate blasphemy in the same breath as their final rejection of **Jesus**" (32).

**John's** case is ultimately against the **Jews**.

How does this relate to the situation of the **Christians** under **Domitian** in **Asia** at the, supposed, time of writing?

It fits beautifully with what we found in **Revelation**. Once the constant pressure from the synagogue is understood in the sense that **Christians** now became exposed to the state in a new way, it is their attitude that really matters. As long as the **Christians** were protected by

their mother-religion the state was no real problem, the episode under **Nero** aside. If the state has become a threat to the **Church** it is solely because of the **Jews** - and **John** loves to make this point part of the ongoing argument between **Jesus** and the **Jews**: in this gospel he refers to "your **Law**", etc. (33).

An understanding of the trial as outlined above - however briefly - is the best starting-point for any discussion about a possible polemical parallelism in **John**. But our author is subtle: it is the understanding of the state as advocated by the **Jews** that is dangerous. Even **Greeks** and **Romans** had in their different ways managed to put the emperor between gods and men.

v1) The mocking.

There is more evidence that **John** is dressing **Jesus** up as a divine king.

The crown of thorns has for some time been understood to be the crown we found in radiate coins of the **East** and **West** alike: in the **East** it comes with the **Hellenistic** kings - **Ptolemies** and **Seleucids** - in the **West** it is one of the innovations associated with **Nero**, to be seen from his dupondii, in the case of the living emperor, and **Tiberius** in the case of the deified ones, beginning with **Augustus**. The famous article by **Hart** (34) has probably put this matter right once and for all, and it should certainly be understood as evidence in favour of historicity of the account in the gospels. The crown of thorns

presents Jesus as a "divinus Jesus radiatus", who is "theos" and "basileus" (35). According to Mark 15,19 the soldiers also make "proskynesis", which would be appropriate at this stage of the imperial cult. But John has left this out for some reason or other. Various commentators seem to accept this identification: Bultmann (36), adding that it is "perhaps a caricature of hellenistic rulers"; Lindars (37); Mastin goes further: "This could be intended in the presentation of the Fourth Gospel as further polemic against the imperial cult" (38).

In G<sup>John</sup> this episode gains more weight in light of the preceding discussion on the nature of Jesus' kingship. It may, of course, be antithetical to the imperial cult - especially as it functioned in Asia - but in the sense expressed by the Jews: their statement opens up the possibility of a totalitarian understanding of the state. In their sense "kyrios Christos" and "kyrios kaisar" became antithetical (39).

John is wise enough to excuse Pilate and attack rather a wrong understanding of politics. But Pilate is wrong in yielding to the Jews: he accepts their interpretation in practise. "The state...in ostensible neutrality...delivers itself into the hands of this world which acknowledges Caesar and his rule as the ultimate salvation" (40). Pilate, in fact, "delivers the state to forces which abuse it to destroy truth and hand over all messianic hopes to Caesar...It lays the foundation of a "sacred" state which in its political, intellectual and metaphysical totality is

an embodiment of untruth" (41).

Actually, Schlier thinks that the view of the state as we find it in Rev. emerged from the account of Christ's trial in John's gospel (42). As such it could implicitly be directed against Domitian.

Be that as it may, what is more certain is that for Christians in Asia under Domitian the role of the Jews was crucial to their future life in the empire. They represented, in fact, the very mechanism that could transform the life in the churches to persecution and martyrdom.

## B) THE ROYAL CONFESSIONS IN JOHN

The pattern of the trial runs like a red thread throughout the fourth gospel. The divine Messianic identity of Jesus is confirmed as a climax to discourses and signs worked. Harvey speaks of "witnesses in the case", and this may be a useful expression for our purposes. We will list the persons and their confessions as they occur. The entire gospel is an ongoing discussion about the identity of Jesus, his true role in the history of Israel, and the confessions are conclusions to one episode or discourse after the other.

### i) John the Baptist.

- 1,20: "I am not the Christ"



- 1,29: "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"

- 1,34: "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God".

The lamb is taken to be a messianic symbol by Dodd, who sees the image as a symbol for the leader of the flock of God, "i.e. as king of Israel", this title therefore becomes a royal designation (43)

"Son of God" is unquestionably used as a messianic title here as in the other gospels. We will revert to this title later.

ii) Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

- 1,41: "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)".

iii) Nathanael.

1,49: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Brown is inclined to accept Son of God as a messianic title (44). But his interpretation is that the title must be understood as the king of those like Nathanael who believe (45). Lindars, regarding the two titles as synonyms, takes this to be the climax of the whole series of confessions of faith in the opening chapter, and "king" to be the most far-reaching of the messianic titles (46).

It is a parallel confession to that of Simon Peter's at Caesarea Philippi in Mk. 8, 29. Even if this title is not, strictly speaking, messianic, messianic titles seem subsumed under it.

iv) The Samaritan woman.

- 4, 29: "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"

- 4, 39: "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony".

- 4, 42: "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world".

These confessions highlight another aspect of the divine vocabulary: "soter". John uses as many terms as possible.

v) The Galileans who do not understand.

- 6, 15: "Perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself".

In its own way this is another testimony to Jesus' royal identity, albeit in a one-dimensional way. (Dodd defends its historical value, incidentally (47).) This tradition is Johannine only, and it clears up a misunderstanding that is very central to the argument of John. In fact, this verse should be related to the issue of the trial and the

right interpretation of kingship discussed there. "The fact that Jesus himself considered this political conception of his work of salvation an especially great temptation indicates how attractive it must have been to him" (48).

vi) Peter.

- 6,69: "We have believed, and we have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God".

This title is again taken to be a synonym to the preceding ones, as discussed, for example, by Barrett. The textual variants confirm this: "christos", "hyios tou theou", etc. (49).

vii) Anonymous voices.

- 7,41: "Others said, "This is the Christ."

- 7,43: "So there was a division among the people over him".

This confession is not specified further: is it of the Galilean sort or not? The division of v.43 may refer to both. Probably it is a genuine confession, of the same kind as that of the Samaritans.

viii) The man born blind.

- 9,35: "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

- 9,38: "He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshiped him."

The textual variant "Son of man" is interesting; John might here apply another title to his royal vocabulary. Barrett finds it improbable that the former should be changed into the latter (50). If this be the right reading, the proskynesis confirms its divine and royal connotations. This usage is only found in John. It is used in a different way in 12,34ff. "Proskynesen" "need mean no more than "did him reverence", but in the Johannine context there is no doubt that it bears a deeper meaning" (51). Barrett relates this to the Old Testament theophanies, but we have seen that it is certainly part of the royal rituals.

ix) Martha.

- 11,27: "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world".

"Kyrios" appears, subordinate to "hyios theou", but appropriately part of the divine vocabulary. This confession is one of the strongest one, following the raising of Lazarus.

x) The pilgrims in Jerusalem.

- 12,13: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

- 12,14: "And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it".

The **M**essianic title is balanced by **J**esus' action who puts out of the question any misunderstanding concerning the true nature of his kingship. It is the same situation as we found in **G**alilee. The audience may have been **G**alileans on this occasion too, since it is a throng of pilgrims that receive him in this way.

xi) **P**ilate.

- 19,19: "**P**ilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "**J**esus of **N**azareth, the king of the **J**ews."

- 19,22: "**P**ilate answered, "**W**hat **I** have written **I** have written".

In the light of the trial as a whole there can be little doubt that **P**ilate may comfortably be added to our series of witnesses. This is, of course, because he accepts a definition of divine kingship that is from above. **H**arvey does not list **P**ilate as a witness in the case - for obvious reasons, **P**ilate being the judge - but for our purposes he belongs to this category,

xii) **T**homas.

- 20,28: "**T**homas answered him, "**M**y **L**ord and my **G**od!"

Here comes the **D**omitianic expression "**kyrios kai theos**".



It will be discussed later. This confession is the last of them all, and functions in a similar way to the confession of the Roman officer in Mk. 15, 39.

The foregoing list of confessions and witnesses is only meant to highlight the presence of a royal theology in G<sup>o</sup>hn. It took its startingpoint in the trial and traced this line of thought throughout the gospel.

Many scholars have hinted at the implications of the vocabulary used here. But no one has to date worked out a case for seeing the divine vocabulary of kingship as a framework for interpreting the Christology of the gospel. But the possibilities of such an undertaking should be explored a bit further before we leave this book to the fate of future interpreters. After having consulted a fair number of recent commentators on the Fourth Gospel it seems that the possibility for such an undertaking actually exists.

## II) THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The vocabulary of the imperial cult occurs throughout John's gospel. We shall look again at some instances of this usage.

Nobody has seriously worked out a case for the view that the Christology of the fourth gospel is inspired by the cult and therefore borrowing from its language. Such a case would be a gross exaggeration. But a polemic may be detected, even if this is not the primary purpose or source of this Christological pattern. For many scholars the terms may be accounted for by recourse to the Greek Bible alone, as explored by Deissmann and Dodd (1). The only term that is not traditional from a Jewish Christian point of view is the Domitianic "kyrios kai theos", and probably also "Saviour of the world". All the others can be accounted for without recourse to the Greek vocabulary of the imperial cult.

But so was also the case with Paul and with the hymns in Rev. There may therefore be polemical parallelism once traditional Jewish terms are translated into Greek and there is a given context for such a polemic. This last point is extremely important. The empire and its royal theology certainly provided such a context, as we saw from Philo, Josephus, Paul, etc.

It is, however, very difficult to decide such a

question. We need both the Christian and pagan audience of John to test such an hypothesis. Paul's Jewish and pagan audience can offer some help.

My thesis is this: once traditional Jewish divine and royal language - in its Greek version - was applied to Jesus, there came into existence a parallelism with the vocabulary of the imperial cult that might easily be understood as polemical against the divine claims of the emperors, especially in the Greek version of this vocabulary. Both pagans, Jews and Christians would have detected this parallelism. But more is needed for this to be understood as a deliberate act of polemicizing, because much can be accounted for by sheer coincidence.

In the case of John there might be such a deliberate intention.

1) "theos"

1,1: "And the Word was God".

1,18: "The only Son" (var.: "God").

20,28: "Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"".

I John 5,20: "This is the true God and eternal life".

Deissmann does not think this title is borrowed from the imperial cult, but accepts the polemical overtones of these expressions (2). The statement in 2 Thess.2,4 is interpreted as antithetical to the imperial theology, where

Antichrist is claiming to be God.

Cullmann - accepting the *lectio difficilior* of 1,18, together with Bultmann (3) and Barrett (4) - thinks this designation to be of secondary importance (5), it is no key-word in the Christology of the fourth gospel, but an occasional designation, like Rom.9,5 (if that is the correct reading or punctuation of this verse).

Fuller follows the same line, but adds a reference to the imperial cult: "In a world which was used to the imperial cult the kind of scruples which the Jewish mind would have against it would be less operative. - What the emperor falsely claimed to be is true of Christ... That the emperor could be called a god would understandably facilitate the ascription of this appellation to Jesus" (6).

Mastins gives more weight to this appellation: "It is difficult to believe that these theological assertions were placed accidentally where they are. Rather, they are an important feature of the evangelist's Christology...each of these statements fits its context admirably" (7). "The term 'theos' represents the person of Christ as such: it does not describe his function, but indicates who he is" (8). But he thinks the cause for such language is to be found in disputes with the Jews. In the case of Ignatius such usage is, however, regarded as completely natural (9).

There is no certain conclusion to this discussion. If there is a pattern of royal theology in John the question of

Jesus being called **G**od ought to be related to a discussion of the pattern of the divine kingship of Jesus. Isolated investigations yield no satisfactory results.

ii) "kyrios kai theos mou".

20,28: "Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my **G**od!"

This is the concluding confession in the gospel, a climax of the whole line of confessions, and comes appropriately at the end. And this formula is not traditional, either in Jewish or primitive **C**hristian theology.

Commentators do not hesitate to focus upon this verse for a possible reference to the imperial cult. Their contributions consist mostly of brief comments here and there. Investigating the attitude to this verse among biblical scholars is interesting - they make sound comments while at the same time managing to avoid the issue of a pattern of kingship and a royal theology in John.

As an illustration of this we will give another chain of citations.

Deissmann regards this as the original culminating point of the gospel, and thinks that the expression is biblical, deriving from the **LXX** (Ps. 85,15; 87,1), but at the same time being a protest against the **C**aesars (10). Biblical roots do not rule out polemical intentions, as little as a parallelism guarantees that there is a case of deliberate borrowing. Deissmann thinks



it is possible to have it both ways.

Charles comments on the expression in the context of **Rev. 4,11**: "It is possible that the **Seer** has chosen this title in reference to **God** in contrast to **Domitian's** blasphemous claims to be called **Dominus et Deus noster**" (11). If this therefore is the case in **Rev.**, why should it not be so in **John**? A difference, of course, is that in **Rev.** the expression is used of **God the Father**, to whom it belongs, while in **John** it is applied to the **Son**. But this far from invalidates the statement of **Charles**'.

**Bultmann** thinks the expression is the evangelist's own formulation, but gives references to the **RIC** (12). In another place he thinks it must be a cultic title, quoting **Deissmann** (13).

**Hoskyns** finds the expression to be biblical and needs no recourse to the imperial cult (14).

**Taylor** thinks it is a devotional formula, derived from worship, and not integral to the gospel (15).

**Barrett**, on the other hand, sees the formula as the climax of **John**: "John's language is carefully chosen so as to be both biblical and **Hellenistic**" (16).

**Fuller** thinks the expression "could have been lifted straight from the imperial cultus", and gives references to **Deissmann** (17).

**Brown** admits that "it may very well be that the **Christian** use of such a confessional formula was catalyzed by **Domitian's** claim to the title "**Dominus et Deus**" (18), but does not elaborate on this theory (19).

Moule writes: "It is not unlikely that the **Fourth Gospel** reflects a consciousness of the rivalry between **Caesar** and **Christ**" (20).

Mastins gives the matter more attentions and offers what is at least a kind of discussion. He thinks the **RIC** "may well prove to be the determining factor" (21), and thinks that **Fuller's** conclusions about the impact of emperor worship do not to go far enough (22). In fact the formula is likely to be "a considered rebuttal of the claims made on behalf of the **Emperor** by the **Imperial Cult**" (23). To be more specific, he thinks the formula is a response to the development under **Domitian**, and here, for once, we have a suggestion that the immediate cause is the "significant developments in the practice of the **Imperial cult** at **Ephesus** during **Domitian's** reign" (24). He regards the gospel as likely to have been written at **Ephesus**, and the expression is "the climax up to which all that has been previously said about **Jesus** leads" (25). He is quite explicit in his demands for a precise context as the necessary key to such an understanding: "The actual situation (in so far as it can be reconstructed) which accompanied the writing of the **Fourth Gospel** must be treated seriously as a possible clue to the origin of this formula" (26). Alas, he does not discuss the real implications from the cult.

As we have seen, biblical scholars do comment on each other ~~as~~ much as on the text. Inevitable as this might be, it would be useful if they, like **Deissmann**, quoted more

classical sources, especially the epigraphic and numismatic ones.

But the main problem here is different: how are we to arrive at a means of resolving questions like these?

I have suggested above that one possible way is to explore the pattern of kingship in John and the development in the chain of royal confessions. If a plausible case can be worked out for the existence of a royal theology in John we are better equipped to undertake a comparison of the Christological tools of the evangelist with those of the imperial cult.

Concerning the comparison between the two sets of vocabulary Hemer devotes serious attention to the method of "polemical parallelism", and sums up - in relation to Rev. - the state of scholarship at the moment. "In this kind of subject questions of chronology and dependence are vitally important, but may be difficult to answer from fragmented evidence. Considerations must then be cautious. But the actual phenomena are striking... Several technical terms of the imperial worship are closely parallel with expressions used in the Revelation in a Christian sense, and some of the most telling evidence comes from some of the same cities of Asia" (27).

iii) "hyios theou"

1,34: "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God".

1,49: "You are the Son of God, you are the king

of Israel!"

10,36: "Do you say..." You are blaspheming," because I said "I am the Son of God"?"

11,27: "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."

19,7: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God."

20,31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"

This expression is the Greek equivalent to "divi filius", an innovation in Latin, but not so in Greek, since it is part of the vocabulary of divine men and agents of the gods (28). In Near Eastern religions it is a royal title (29). In John it is sometimes recognized to be a Messianic title, since it is a royal (30). It is certainly the most comprehensive term used to sum up the divine role of Jesus, in close connection with "christos", and as such it is likely to have messianic connotations.

It is a more consistent tool than "theos" and "kyrios kai theos". It may be discussed against a background of Hellenistic religion and Hellenistic Judaism without recourse to the imperial cult (31). But this would estrange John from his environment, which knew the title also as used of the emperors. And, nota bene, this is the official Roman title, unlike the particularly Greek and extravagant title "theos", not to speak of the Domitianic "kyrios kai theos". Domitian at Ephesus was officially

"hyios theou", while the other honorific titles were popular and particular to the **G**reeks. I have in my possession an **A**lexandrian tetradrachm - already referred to in ch. 1, but most relevant here - with the bust of **D**omitian and the official nomenclature "hyios theou" as legend. If there be polemical parallellism in **J**ohn this is surely one of the titles to look at.

**S**cholars have been unwilling to do so, on the whole, since the title easily might be explained from a **J**ewish background. **B**ut they do not hesitate to hint at the question, without, however, wanting to establish any pattern of divine kingship in **J**ohn as a possible interpretative framework. **S**ome references will highlight this state of affairs.

**D**eissmann sees this parallel expression to be of great significance to the **C**hristians, containing out of necessity a polemic against the cult, for **P**aul as for the other **N**T writers (32).

**D**odd writes: "There is no other writing known to me in which the idea of divine sonship is treated with anything like such fullness and precision...**S**on of **G**od might suggest to various classes of readers in the public to which the **F**ourth **G**ospel might appeal a wide variety of ideas" (33). **H**e adds an interesting note concerning ruler cult, claiming that the title is "intelligible, perhaps, to our generation from the surprising language which has been used about certain contemporary leaders" (34).

**B**arrett admits that the title sums up the **J**ohannine



view of Christ, as "the most general and comprehensive term used in John" (35). Still, the case for a pattern of kingship is never worked out.

Fuller is more interested in possible implications from the imperial cult, as was the case with "kyrios kai theos": "It is not for nothing that of the various Christological terms which Hellenistic Jewish missionaries brought to the Hellenistic world it was the two which were also prominent in the imperial cultus - Kyrios and hyios theou - which "stuck"...the imperial cultic use was in no way creative or constitutive for Christian use. At the same time we must suspect an influence on the popular level" (36).

Writes Cuss: "It is not likely that the term "Son of God" for Christ had been influenced by the imperial use or from the mystery religions. However, far from the Greek conception of "Son of God", the Christian title at least had the similarity of words, and this in itself could have led the Christians to look on the pagan use as blasphemous...For St. John especially, the title "Son of God" for Christ had a particular significance...When the author of the Apocalypse refers to the blasphemous titles, it may well be that he had this title of Divi Filius in mind, for it had a special place in Johannine thought and expression" (37).

Dodd is, surely, close to the mark when he admits that the Johannine language is an "open" kind of language, because of its symbolic nature. It may therefore well

accomodate a hidden polemic against the divinity of the Roman emperor, especially in the Greek vocabulary employed by the cult. What is even more intriguing is the fact that primitive Christology from the outset lacked the tools it needed in order to express the divinity of Jesus - due to the lack of clear categories in the Biblical language. They had to employ traditional divine language, by way of symbolic evocation, without arriving at such precise results as would be desirable. After Judaeo-Christianity one of the great tasks of the Greek theologians of the Great Church was to conceptualize this whole discussion and in this way free themselves of the limitations of the language of symbolic evocation.

While investigating this vocabulary one gets the suspicion that the "theologoi" of the imperial cult and John the Divine were struggling with much the same problems. "Between God and man" was the formula we used of the Greek vocabulary of the cult in chapter 2 - it might as well be used of Johannine Christology.

iv) "kyrios"

(4,1; 4,11; 6,34; 11,2; 11,3; 11,27; 12,21; 12,38; 13,6; 13,9 etc.)

The religious significance of this term has been discussed in relation with Paul's preaching. What is crucial is the religious connotations of the term, and here the documentation is vast. So are the polemical connotations of "kyrios Kristus".

Josephus mentions the case of the sicarii at Alexandria. Theirs was an anti-Roman movement and they were captured and tortured to make them confess that "caesar is lord" (38). The **Martyrium Polycarpi** makes the same statement (39). Tertullian discusses the significance of this confession in his **Apologeticus**, and makes the distinction between the religious and political sense clear (40). The trouble was, of course, that the Romans were unwilling - or unable - to make such a distinction. What we would call a merely secular reference is found in **Acts 25,25**, where **Festus** refers to the emperor in this way.

Deissmann has therefore good reason to see this early Christian confession as very polemical indeed, it "could not but sound politically dangerous to a Roman official" (41).

This usage occurs again in **Jude 4**, calling Christ "our only master and lord" ("despotes"... "kyrios") (cfr. **Phil. 2,10-11**; **1 Cor. 8,5-6**; **2 Tim 2,21**; **Jude 4**, **Rev. 6,10**). During the Christian centuries the emperors preferred to be called "despotes" rather than "kyrios" (42). Dodd writes: "It is a question whether we are to give political or religious priority to the use of kyrios" (43). "There can be little doubt that the various Hellenistic usages affected the development of Christ as "Kyrios" in early Christian theology or even in the New Testament itself" (44). Cullmann is aware of the fact that in the case of the Roman emperor this distinction is hard to make when the expression is used in a confessional

way: "When on one hand, the emperor was called **Kyrios** as a sign of his political power and, on the other hand, was revered as divine, the title **kyrios** must automatically take on a religious significance" (45). He regards the formula "**kyrios Christos**" as the original **Christian** confession in **Greek** (46). The point in question is, of course, that the formula "**kyrios kaisar**" approaches the confession "**theos kaisar**", and as such it is always full of religious meaning (47). Fuller follows **Cullmann** in this line of reasoning: "It would surely have been impossible to dissociate <sup>as</sup> **kyrios**, when used alone of the emperor, from its religious associations" (48). In this discussion they are, of course, closely following **Bousset** (49). **Moule** supports the same reading (50).

All in all there is good reason to read this formula as a primitive **Christian** confession with polemical overtones. The expression carries such a meaning even without the adding of "**theos**", as in 20,28. The evidence from 2.c. sources substantiates this view further.

v) "soter"

- 4,22: "We worship what we know, for salvation is from the **Jews**".

- 4,42: "We know that this is indeed the **Saviour** of the world".

- 1 John 4,14: "And we have seen and testify that the **Father** has sent his **Son** as the **Saviour** of the world".

The few occurrences of this term in John are interesting. It will be discussed in several stages: We will first go into the Biblical background of the Greek expression. Before dealing with the specifically Samaritan context it will be wise to repeat the use of the title in pagan usage.

In the first place it is another OT title of honour for God that is being transferred to Jesus, as, for example, "kyrios" (51). "Soter tou kosmou" is not common in the NT, it is only used here and in the quotation from 1 John. As such it is of a similar kind as "kyrios kai theos": not strictly a biblical formula, but understandable from a biblical background.

In the second place this is a term that was widely used in the imperial cult. Deissmann says that it is specially common in inscriptions from Hadrian's time, but it is widely attested to for the first century as well: especially for Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Trajan, o.a. (52). Cuss gives references to its use under Nero (53). Scott compares the Greek vocabulary with the Latin and finds many parallels with expressions like "rerum certa salus", "rerum felix tutela salusque", "rerum prima salus et una" from the court-flatterers under Domitian (54). It may certainly be regarded as a Domitianic expression. Hemer includes this term in his discussion of polemical parallelism (55). To Deissmann this is a case where the parallelism is "particularly clear" (56).

In short, this case is very similar to "kyrios kai



theos" and points towards a setting in a pagan environment where the imperial cult was strong, as would fit **E**phesus, for example. **E**xegesets have not hesitated to admit that there is something going on here that concerns the **S**itz im **L**eben of the gospel, but they hesitate to suggest what this might be in practical terms.

**D**ood thinks the expression is very significant, because "the **S**amaritans represent in some sort the **G**entile world over against the **J**ews", and he refers to **H**ellenistic usage as a possible source of origin, i.e. divine language later used of rulers (57) (perhaps **T**it. 2,13 may be both contemporary and polemical: "epiphaneia...tou megalou theou kai soterou"). **T**aylor thinks that this background can explain the provenance of this term in **N**T: "The use of the name in **G**reek religion and above all, in **C**aesar-worship, restricted and delayed its currency in the primitive tradition" (58). **B**ut he does not refer to a possible polemic against this contemporary background once the term occurs. **C**ullmann says that the formula "sounds formally quite like **H**ellenistic ruler worship", but whether this is conscious or unconscious he finds impossible to decide (59). **B**ut he stresses the possibility of such a conscious use: "In so far as the non-**C**hristian designation may be considered at all influential in the application of the title to **J**esus, we must think first of all of its use in ruler worship" (60). **L**ike "hyios theou" it occurs in the primitive credal formula linked to the acronym "ichtys" (61). **F**uller is aware that the title acquires religious

significance when used of rulers, without offering much context (62). Cuss gives more detail (63). Barrett refers to the imperial cult without being too specific (64). Lindars has little to offer by way of explanations (65). Brown goes a bit further: "Perhaps for Hellenized Samaria we should seek the meaning of the term in the Greek world when it was applied to gods, emperors and heroes" (66). On the occurrence in 1 John he admits that the struggle against emperor worship is clear in Rev. but not in 1 John or GJohn (67).

It is somewhat puzzling to find that these scholars do not generally refer to the existence of a temple to Augustus at Samaria, built by Herod the Great, and having a cult that must have survived until later times (68). There is, in other words, no lack of context for this formula in the case of the Samaritans, as little as is the case at Ephesus in the days of John.

vi) "archon tou kosmou toutou"

- 12,31: "Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out".

While most commentators see this expression as referring to the Devil - which resembles the Pauline outbursts in 2 Thess. - it may, of course, also be understood literally, in which case we are dealing with the emperors in general or Domitian in particular. The political and social understanding of angelic and diabolical beings has been

explored by **L**ing, **M**orrison and **C**aird - among others - and it is not difficult to make out a case for "the ruler of this world" meaning both the **D**evil and the emperor.

What is certain is that the word "kosmos" in **G**John is a fairly negative expression, especially as it is used in chapters 12 - 21. **B**rown discusses this usage in an appendix (69). The expression is certainly antithetical to the "soter tou kosmou toutou".

vii) "basileus"

The usage found in **N**athanael's confession and in the trial makes this term very central to the issue of the author, as explored briefly above. **C**ommentators are, generally speaking, aware of the antithetical use of this title: **S**chütz (70), **M**oulton and **M**illigan (71), **D**eissmann (72). The parallel from **A**cts 17 is relevant here. It is a term that sums up all the others.

vii) proskynesis.

- 9,38: "He said: "Lord, I believe"; and he worshipped him".

This term belongs to the royal rituals, and was mentioned in connection with the trial. **M**oule gives interesting references to the usage under **D**omitian (73). It certainly carried with it the idea of worship, and in John it is intimately linked to the divine identity of Jesus. There are interesting parallels in **M**att. 2,2 and 8,2.

vii) arche

- 1,1: "In the beginning was the Word".

This term is important in the imperial cult, since it is chronological and soteriological at the same time. The birth of the emperor was the beginning of a new age: the dies natalis of the sebastos was for the entire world the beginning (arche) of good news (euaggelion) that came forth because of him (74). The Asian year began on the emperor's birthday (75). In Asia it was celebrated monthly, as explained earlier in this chapter. Again we are left with an expression that carries a double meaning: one from the Jewish tradition (Gen. 1,1) and one from the pagan.

viii) isotheos

- 5,18: "This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God".

"Isotheoï timai" is the terminus technicus for the entire vocabulary of the imperial cult, assimilating the Roman emperor to the traditional gods. For a pagan audience this expression would immediately be understandable, and most likely also for the Christians at Ephesus. It is only relevant in this context, if there is a pattern of divine kingship in John and the Christological vocabulary has a double meaning. "Isotheos" can easily be translated

"imperial" or "royal".

### III) CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this brief survey of titles used by John we are left with the following conclusions.

Once the framework of a Christology that in some way or other can be linked to the imperial cult is missing - i.e. a pattern of divine kingship in John - hints like these are only vague pointers. Once the opposite procedure is tried, the same hints will form a consistent polemic.

My point is not that scholars have never tried to link the expressions to the cult: on the contrary, they do this all the time, but without a method that can yield the desired results. And the method needed is: first to establish a possible pattern of divine kingship in the case of Jesus, secondly to relate the titles to this. An investigation of the trial and the pattern of the confessions must, surely, be the right starting-point. Next a context of imperial cult in Asia is needed in order to make such a polemic meaningful, and this can easily be supplied from our sources, as we saw in the case of Revelation.

If there is a polemic against the cult of the emperors in Asia at the time of writing going on, it is by way of a vocabulary that is at one and the same time biblical and



pagan. John's language is most likely open to both interpretations. But it seems difficult to establish the exact nature of this polemic until a case is properly worked out for a pattern of kingship in the gospel as such. What is certain, however, is that a context for such a polemic is omnipresent in our sources, especially in the case of Ephesus.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The question of a polemic against the **Roman Imperial Cult** in the **New Testament** proves to be an interesting one, both from the point of view of history and theology - which the preceeding chapter hopefully has illustrated. Our findings are of a varied kind: we have classified them as being i) certain (in the case of **Rev.**) ii) probable (in the case of the **Thessalonian** correspondence) and iii) possible (in the case of **GJhn**). Actually, the last case can be held to be probable rather than possible once it is worked out in more detail.

Passages like **Mk.13** and **Acts 12** also commend themselves as cases of such a polemic. More cases may be found scattered around in various books, but we have not tried to deal with them here.

By way of concluding this study there are two aspects of this debate that may call for a final comment.

In the first place the explicit references in **Rev.**, **2 Thess.2** and **Mk.13** are of a cryptic nature.

Along the line of interpretation followed above this would link the **New testament** writers to the **Old Testament** writers and to the authors of the **OT Pseudepigrapha**. In other words: they write within a tradition that had used cryptic language in similar cases and for some time. Decoding references to the **RIC** in the **New Testament** is therefore a similar task to interpreting the book of **Daniel**, **4 Ezra**, **II Baruch**, o.a. In each case a decoding

depends upon the contextual material and knowlege of the **B**iblical tradition.

In the cases of **P**aul and **J**ohn of **P**atmos such contexts are abundant and there is no reason for being deterred from finding a plausible historical identification of the various symbols employed in their writings. The problem with **R**evelation is - according to some commentators - that we have several possibilities of historical identification, and the evaluation of the evidence is therefore of paramount importance for the interpreter. - **A** solid background in classical studies is a necessary prerequisite for such an undertaking.

In the second place our study has focused upon another kind of polemic, that of a parallellism of vocabulary - in the case of **G**John. Here are no cryptic symbols or images to be decoded, but rather an intricate interplay between two sets of language that seem to overlap: the one **J**udaeo-**C**hristian - the other **G**raeco-**R**oman. Here is a methodological problem since a parallel in itself does not imply polemizing. Therefore a much needed criteria would be a pattern of kingship in the **F**ourth gospel: if it be the case that **J**ohn the **D**ivine is investing **J**esus with royal insignia (**G**reek **H**ellenistic and **R**oman **I**mperial) such a parallelism would be open to a polemical interpretation.

**O**ur brief investigation indicates that such a case can be argued for without too much difficulty. **A** consistent interpretation of the entire gospel of **J**ohn along such lines

would seem both possible and very tempting, but lies outside the scope of the present study.

Naturally an old question presents itself concerning the parallels discussed above: what is borrowed (from a pagan environment) and what is merely adaptation and translation (from the Hebrew or Aramaic)? Our topic touches directly upon this question as concerns the discussion as a whole, in particular in relation to the possibility of a "polemical parallelism" in G<sup>1</sup>hn. We have quoted a variety of views from different authors on this topic, and there seems to be no agreement so far whether the terms (e.g. "kyrios kai theos", "soter kosmou", et al.) are taken from the vocabulary of the cult or were already in use in Jewish and Christian circles.

We did not try to answer this question in chapter 3, and will not do so here. Our findings indicate that we are facing a complex issue with regard to the origins of this vocabulary both in the case of the Greek and Latin version. Complex are also the origins of the Johannine Christological vocabulary. Nothing prevents us from presuming that the newly established cult of Domitian in Ephesus may have given an important impetus in the working out of its theological fabric in the case of certain expressions. But most of the Johannine vocabulary is derived from Hellenistic Judaism. Even so, it did happen to coincide with vital symbols used in the Imperial cult.

Considering both aspects of this vocabulary together - the translated and the borrowed: a case of parallelism

like this can surely not be mere coincidence. What is more: history itself gives us reason to believe that John the Divine had a very good motive for such an invective, as did John of Patmos.



## NOTES: INTRODUCTION

(1) Cfr. W. H. Meeks: "The first Urban Christians" (Mass. 1984). This kind of approach inevitably leads one to think of the major works by W. M. Ramsay, cfr. Also J. Murphy-O'Connor: "Corinth at the Time of St. Paul" (Wilmington 198), and C. J. Hemer (1986). A long list of modern works by exegetes could be added.

(2) Cfr. The works by G. Theissen on Pauline Christianity at Corinth: "The Social setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth" (ET Philadelphia 1982) in comparison with his work on the Jesus-movement in Palestine: "The first Followers of Jesus" (ET London 1978).

(3) Dio: LII, 1

(4) Syme (1982) p. 138

(5) Charlesworth (1935) p. 12

(6) op. cit. p. 41

(7) Price (1984)

(8) op. cit. pp. 59-60

(9) op. cit. p. 60

(10) This will be discussed further below; cfr. Charlesworth (1935) and Scott (1936)

(11) This is the conclusion of W. H. Frend in his two important works of 1965 and 1984 (see Bibliography)

(12) For a full discussion of this problem, see: Brown (1966), Cullman (1976), Lindars (1972) et. Al.

(13) H. Cadbury: "The Book of Acts in History" (London 1958)

(14) For a dating of **M**ark to 68/69, see: NJBC II, p. 596 ff.

## NOTES: CHAPTER 1

### 1) SCHOLARSHIP

- (1) Taylor (1931) Preface
- (2) L'Orange (1947) p. 137
- (3) see the review of Price (1984) by Liebschuetz in JRS LXXV (1985) pp. 262-264, and by Herz in Gnomon 58 I (1986), pp. 38-43
- (4) Fox (1986) p. 8
- (5) Contra Gentes 9
- (6) Price (1984) pp. 23-24
- (7) Nilsson (1948) p. 178
- (8) Dodds (1951) p. 242
- (9) Mattingly (1966) p. 69
- (10) see the articles in den Boer (1979)
- (11) Benko (1971) p. 247
- (12) Nock (1933) p. 229
- (13) Nock (1957) p. 120
- (14) op. cit. p. 121
- (15) CAH vol. X, p. 481
- (16) Price (1984) p. 18
- (17) op. cit. p. 57
- (18) op. cit. p. 9
- (19) op. cit. pp. 7-8
- (20) op. cit. p. 11
- (21) Pliny: Historia Naturalis, Prefatio 11
- (22) Paneg. 35, 4

- (23) for a discussion, see: **Scott (1932,II)**
- (24) **Paneg.11:1-4**
- (25) for a general discussion, see: **Altman (1938)**
- (26) **Vita Apoll.8**
- (27) **Suet. Vesp.23**
- (28) **Scott (1932,I)**
- (29) **Price (1984) p.115**
- (30) **Festugière (1954) Introduction**
- (31) **Nock (1957) p.120**
- (32) **Suet. Aug.6**
- (33) **Scherrer (1984); Tacitus: Hist.4,81:4;**  
**Suet. Vesp.5; cfr. SHA Hadrian 25,1-4**
- (34) **VII, 29**
- (35) **Scott (1931,I) p.112**
- (36) **Ep.X,8**
- (37) **Ep.X,7**
- (38) **Aug.7; ET Penguin Classics (by Robert**  
**Graves, revised by M.Grant)**
- (39) **Vit.2**
- (40) **Annales 4,2:4**
- (41) **Tib.48**
- (42) **Ex Ponto 1,1:8**
- (43) **Scott (1932,I) p.107**
- (44) **Price (1984) p.120**
- (45) **Fox (1986) p.419**

## 2) OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE RIC

**I) THE FOUNDING  
OF DIVINE MONARCHY IN ROME**

- (1) Taylor (1931) p.1
- (2) Gardner (1967) pp.21-22
- (3) Syme (1939) p.59, p.56, p.55, p.141
- (4) Syme, op.cit.p.54
- (5) Ehrenberg (1953) p.153
- (6) Suet. Caesar 79
- (7) Weinstock (1971) p.28
- (8) idem loc.cit.
- (9) Suet. Caesar 76; ET Penguin Classics
- (10) Suet. Caesar 26 and 52; Dio 51,22:3
- (11) L'Orange (1947) p.53
- (12) Scott (1931,I) p.107
- (13) Weinstock (1971) p.54 ff.
- (14) Dio 43,4:6; cfr. Weinstock p.54ff.
- (15) Cicero: Ad Att. XII,45; Weinstock p.40ff.
- (16) Ehrenberg (1953) p.151
- (17) Dio 43,45:3
- (18) Dio 43,45:2
- (19) Dio 44,6:1
- (20) Suet. Caesar 78; cfr. Plutarch: Caesar 60
- (21) Weinstock (1971) p.28
- (22) Suet. Caesar 79
- (23) see: Ehrenberg (1953) p.155
- (24) Suet. Caesar 80



- (25) Suet. Caesar 81
- (26) Suet. Caesar 85
- (27) Dio 44,5:4; Plutarch: Caesar 57
- (28) see: L'Orange (1947) p.54
- (29) Ehrenberg (1953) p.153
- (30) Syme (1939) p.54 ff.
- (31) idem p.56
- (32) Dio 50,25
- (33) Plutarch: Antonius 26; Syme (1939) p.274
- (34) I.G.R.I. 1054; O.G.I.S 195
- (35) Dio 50,15
- (36) 50,5
- (37) Plutarch: Antonius 75
- (38) Syme (1939) ch.9, esp.p.263ff.
- (39) Weinstock (1971) p.12ff.
- (40) see: op.cit.ch.3: "The Rise"
- (41) op.cit.p.19
- (42) op.cit.p.10ff.
- (43) op.cit.pp.22-23
- (44) op.cit.p.15ff.
- (45) Suet. Caesar 44
- (46) Ehrenberg (1953) p.157
- (47) Weinstock (1971) p.14ff.
- (48) L'Orange (1947) p.54
- (49) op.cit.p.54
- (50) op.cit.p.49
- (51) op.cit.p.53
- (52) p.53

- (53) op.cit.p.54
- (54) Weinstock (1971) p.17
- (55) Sutherland (1986) ch.1
- (56) L'Orange (1947) p.54
- (57) Ehrenberg (1953) p.158; Weinstock op.cit.  
p.42
- (58) Ehrenberg (1953) p.156
- (59) L'Orange (1947) p.53
- (60) Dio 45,7
- (61) see: Price (1980)
- (62) Price (1984) ch.1
- (63) Weinstock (1971)
- (64) Syme (1939) p.263
- (65) Weinreich (1971) p.53; Syll.760
- (66) C.I.A. III, 428
- (67) I.G. VII, 1835
- (68) Ditt.Olympia 365
- (69) I.G. XII, 5,556
- (70) I.G. XII, 5,557
- (71) I.G. XII, 2,35b; IV 33
- (72) Ditt.Syll.760; Syme (1939) p.263
- (73) 1978 vol.I,1
- (74) op.cit.vol.I, 1, p.67ff.
- (75) p.72
- (76) p.56
- (77) pp.70-71
- (78) p.57
- (79) op.cit.p.47; cfr. Taylor (1931)

pp. 267-69; Weinstock (1971) p. 296ff

- (80) p. 54ff.
- (81) p. 58-60
- (82) Phil. 2, 110
- (83) op. cit. p. 64ff.
- (84) p. 69
- (85) pp. 62-63
- (86) p. 56
- (87) pp. 64 and 66
- (88) idem loc. cit.

## II) AUGUSTUS

- (1) Suet. Aug. 13, ET Penguin Classics 1979
- (2) Suet. Aug. 17
- (3) Tac. Ann. I, 10, ET Penguin Classics 1977
- (4) Pliny HN 7, 46
- (5) Price (1984) p. 58
- (6) Taylor (1929) pp. 90-91
- (7) see: RICBM, vol. 1 for the numismatic evidence
- (8) see: Dio 51, 19ff. for the honours granted to Julius after his death
- (9) Scott (1931, II) p. 107
- (10) Dio 52, 1; ET Penguin Classics, 1986
- (11) Res Gestae 34 (LCL)
- (12) Dio, Introduction, ET Penguin Classics, p. 10, Carter
- (13) Dio 51-54
- (14) loc. cit.; cfr. Taylor (1931) p. 244

- (15) Dio 53,16
- (16) Dio 49,15:5; Suet. Aug.29
- (17) Suet. Aug.52
- (18) Res Gestae 24; Scott (1931,II) p.108
- (19) Dio 53,22:3; cfr.52,35:3
- (20) for a general discussion, see: Scott (1931,II);  
cfr. Pliny: Historia Naturalis 23,151
- (21) Scott, op.cit.p.111
- (22) 52,35:5
- (23) Taylor (1931) p.204; ad "genius" see: OCD  
art. "Genius"; Lewis and Short, art. "Genius"; for the  
Greek equivalent, see: Liddell and Scott, art."daimon"
- (24) p.193
- (25) p.190
- (26) p.184
- (27) p.167
- (28) Dio 51,91:1
- (29) John Carter: The Age of Augustus, Intr.p.14,  
Penguin Classics
- (30) Taylor (1931) p.218
- (31) Dio 55,10
- (32) Dio 55,6:6
- (33) Res Gestae 2 and 11
- (34) Dio 57,24:7
- (35) Price (1984) p.186
- (36) L'Orange (1947) p.54
- (37) p.55
- (38) p.12; for a recent survey, see: Walker (1981),

Zanker (1987), Heilmayer (1988)

(39) p.16; see also: Davies: Hellenistic Ruler Portraits (1973) and R.R.R.Smith (1989)

(40) p.34

(41) Weinstock (1971) p.47ff. esp.p.51; the globe is thoroughly discussed by L'Orange (1949) and (1953)

(42) Weinstock (1971) p.55ff.

(43) Vergil: Eclogue IV

(44) idem

(45) Eclogue I,6; see: Syme (1939) p.233

(46) Taylor (1931) p.111

(47) Aeneid VI,641

(48) Taylor (1931) p.235

(49) Tristitia III,1:35ff.

(50) see: M.Grant: Roman History from Coins (1958) ch.1

(51) Ann.1,10

(52) ET Penguin Classics

(53) Suet. Aug.53; ET Penguin Classics

(54) Dio 56,34-46; Suet. Aug.100

(55) Dio 59,4:4; Scott (1931,II) p.105

(56) Dio 56,46

(57) idem loc.cit.

(58) Suet. Aug.94

(59) ch. 6

(60) ch.7

(61) Taylor (1931) p.241



- (62) Price (1984) p.62, where he calls the RIC  
"a creation of the reign of Augustus".
- (63) Dio 51,20; ET Penguin Classics
- (64) Charlesworth (1935) p.26
- (65) Dio 55,10:9; Suet. Aug.98;
- (66) Inscription from Priene, ET given in Price  
(1984) p.54
- (67) Nicolaus of Damascus FGH 90, F 125
- (68) see: Price (1984) Introduction
- (69) Price (1984) p.58
- (70) Syme (1939) pp.473-4
- (71) Ephesus: catalogue no.24; Nicaea: catalogue  
no.34
- (72) Pergamum: catalogue no.39; Nicomedia: catalogue  
no.24
- (73) catalogue no.24; see Price: catalogue no.29
- (74) catalogue no.30
- (75) catalogue no.43
- (76) catalogue no.46
- (77) catalogue no.57
- (78) catalogue no.2
- (79) catalogue no.32
- (80) catalogue no.19
- (81) catalogue no.44
- (82) Price (1984) catalogue nos.5-7
- (83) catalogue no.4
- (84) catalogue no.14; cfr. Jos. BJ I,414; Ant.Jud.  
15,359

- (85) Taylor (1931) p.144
- (86) Price (1984) p.58
- (87) Herodian Book IV, 2:1

### III) TIBERIUS

- (1) Suet. Aug.101
- (2) Taylor (1929) p.91
- (3) idem p.93
- (4) idem p.92
- (5) Suet. Tib.58; ET Penguin Classics
- (6) Tib.40
- (7) Suet. Tib.74; Seyrig (1929), pp.84-106
- (8) Taylor (1929) p.92; cfr. Suet. Tib.37;  
Tacitus: Annales 4,36
- (9) Taylor (1929) p.101; cfr. Dio 58,2:23
- (10) Taylor op.cit.pp.90-91
- (11) Suet. Tib.26, ET Penguin Classics
- (12) Scott (1931,II) p.114
- (13) Tac. Ann. 2,87:2
- (14) for the text of this correspondance, see: Jones  
(1970) p.321ff.; Smallwood (1976) p.87ff.
- (15) see: catalogue no.49; cfr. Tac. Ann.  
4,55-56
- (16) Tac. Ann.3,70,2

- (17) **Suet. Tib.26**
- (18) **Jacob (1985<sup>2</sup>) ch.2 for an interesting discussion on the issue**
- (19) **Taylor (1929) pp.93-95; cfr. Dio 57,8:3**
- (20) **Tac. Ann.4,2,4; Scott (1931,II) p.113**
- (21) **Taylor (1929) p.95**
- (22) **Dio 58,4:4**
- (23) **Dio 58,12:6; Taylor (1929) p.95**
- (24) **op.cit.p.99**
- (25) **op.cit.n.43; cfr.p.95**
- (26) **Price (1984) p.72**
- (27) **Taylor (1929) p.97**
- (28) **idem loc.cit.**
- (29) **Price (1984) p.58**
- (30) **Tac. Ann. 4,55-56**
- (31) **Ann. 4,37-38; see: Taylor (1929) p.97**
- (32) **Price, catalogue no.26**
- (33) **op.cit.no.92**
- (34) **Taylor (1929) p.28**
- (35) **for the inscription, see: note (14); see also: Rostovtzeff (1930); Taylor (1929); Price (1984) pp.210-11**
- (36) **Taylor (1929) p.99**
- (37) **op.cit.p.96**
- (38) **I.G. XII, 3:339**
- (39) **I.G.R. III, 1344**
- (40) **Price (1984) p.105, n.31**

- (41) see: **D.R.Sear: Greek Imperial Coins, London 1982**
- (42) **Ditt. Syll. 791**
- (43) **Taylor (1929) p.96 = C.I.L. 9,652; 10,688**
- (44) **Taylor (1929) p.98**
- (45) **idem loc.cit.**
- (46) **Sydenham (1968) p.32**
- (47) **p.33**
- (48) **see: Balsdon (1934)**

#### **IV) GAIUS**

- (1) **Jones (1980) p.1026**
- (2) **Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.149**
- (3) **Suet. Gaius 50**
- (4) **Philo, Legatio 76**
- (5) **Balsdon (1934) p.208**
- (6) **ET Penguin Classics**
- (7) **Suet. Gaius 12**
- (8) **Tac. Ann.4,50**
- (9) **L'Orange (1947) p.62**
- (10) **Dio 59,3; ET Sutherland (1987) p.71**
- (11) **Price (1984) p.68**
- (12) **Suet. Gaius 22; cfr.Dio 59,28**
- (13) **Aurelius Victor, De Caes. 3,13**
- (14) **Suet. Gaius 27; Dio 59,4:4; 16,10**
- (15) **59,4:4**

- (16) Suet. Gaius 34
- (17) Sutherland (1987) p.72
- (18) op.cit.p.68
- (19) op.cit.67
- (20) idem loc.cit.
- (21) Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.149
- (22) Suet. Gaius 24
- (23) Dio 59,11:2; Scott (1931,II) p.105
- (24) De Consolatione ad Polybium 17,5
- (25) Sutherland (1987) p.74
- (26) Vitellius 2
- (27) see: Taylor (1931) Appendix
- (28) De Beneficiis 2,12-13; see: Altman (1938)  
p.198
- (29) cfr. Price (1984) p.184
- (30) Suet. Gaius 22; Dio 59,28:1-8; Scott  
(1931,II) p.105
- (31) Ant.Jud. 19,4
- (32) Leg. ad Gaium 74-114
- (33) op.cit.43
- (34) Balsdon (1934) pp.157-163
- (35) op.cit.p.171
- (36) op.cit.p.166
- (37) the literary sources are: Suet. Gaius 1,57;  
Dio 59,28:3; Jos. Ant.Jud. 19,8-10
- (38) BJ II,184-87; Ant.Jud. 18,262
- (39) Legatio ad Gaium 29-30
- (40) op.cit. 34-67; Price (1984) p.209



- (41) BJ II, 205
- (42) BJ II, 408-21
- (43) p.162
- (44) see: Price, catalogue nr.40
- (45) Dio 59,28:1
- (46) Suet. Gaius 21
- (47) Balsdon (1934) p.46
- (48) see: Bilde (1978)
- (49) Jerome, In Abbauc III,14 (PL XXV 1329);  
ET Price (1984) p.194
- (50) Suet. Claudius 11; Dio 60,4:5; Price  
(1984) p.193-4

#### V) CLAUDIUS

- (1) from the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrinians,  
ET in H.I.Bell: Jews and Christians in Egypt, London  
1924
- (2) Suet. Claud.12
- (3) *idem* 11
- (4) see: Jones (1980)
- (5) Price (1984) p.72, n.70
- (6) Suet. Vitell.2; cfr. Scott (1931,I) p.116
- (7) Dio 60,5; cfr. Scott, op.cit.p.116
- (8) Taylor (1929) p.100
- (9) *see*; Nock (1957)
- (10) Price (1984) p.72
- (11) op.cit. catalogue no.3

- (12) no.43
- (13) no.103; Pliny: Ep.X,70
- (14) Tac. Ann.12,17; see: Scott (1931,I) p.106
- (15) Price (1984) catalogue no.85
- (16) op.cit.no.139
- (17) Suet. Claud.45
- (18) Altmann (1938) p.119,n.8
- (19) Price (1984) p.115
- (20) Ann.15,31; Agricola 13,5; see: Charlesworth (1937)
- (21) Price (1984) pp.61-62

#### VI) NERO

- (1) Suet. Nero 30
- (2) Scott (1931,I) p.116
- (3) Suet. Nero 31
- (4) Tac. Ann.12,10; ET Penguin Classics; cfr. Sib.Or. 4,138-39; 5,9-110; 143-149; 361-385
- (5) Ann. 12,8
- (6) Scott (1931,I) p.116
- (7) Tac. Ann.12,12, ET Penguin Classics
- (8) see: Cuss (1974) for a discussion of the language used by the Augustani
- (9) Jones (1980) p.1030 ff.
- (10) e.g. Consolatio ad Polybium 16,4:12
- (11) Altman, op.cit.p.202
- (12) op.cit.p.203

- (13) **Apoc. 4**
- (14) **Apoll. 4; cfr. L'Orange (1947) p. 29**
- (15) **Tac. Ann. 14, 12**
- (16) **Tac. Ann. 16, 6; L'Orange (1947) p. 57ff.**
- (17) **L'Orange (1947) p. 57**
- (18) **idem loc. cit.**
- (19) **op. cit. 61**
- (20) **for a general discussion, see: E. A. Sydenham:**  
**The Coinage of Nero, London 1920; see also: Grant**  
**(1970) p. 162ff. D. W. Mac Dowall: The Western Coinages of**  
**Nero, NY 1979**
- (21) **L'Orange (1947) p. 60**
- (22) **op. cit. p. 59**
- (23) **Suet. Nero 51; Dio 63, 9**
- (24) **Apoc. 4**
- (25) **L'Orange (1947) p. 60**
- (26) **Suet. Nero 31**
- (27) **Dio 62, 18**
- (28) **Tac. Ann. 15, 74**
- (29) **Grant (1970) p. 191; see ch. 6 for details**
- (30) **Dio 63, 20; cfr. Tac. Ann. 15, 5; 16, 4;**  
**Suet. Nero 20; Grant (1970) p. 191**
- (31) **Caesar 79, 1-2; Aug. 53, 2**
- (32) **Seneca, Apoc. 4**
- (33) **Sear (1982) Nero**
- (34) **Scott (1936) p. 20, n. 4/ = BMCg I p. 183**
- (35) **Ditt. Syll. 814, 31**
- (36) **Price (1984) p. 249**
- (37) **Tac. Ann. 15, 29; Dio 62, 23**

- (38) Scott (1931) p.118
- (39) 63,14
- (40) Suet. Nero 47; Dio 63,27
- (41) Dio 64,9
- (42) Suet. Nero 57; Tac. Hist.2,8
- (43) Tac. Hist.2,9
- (44) Suet. Otho 12
- (45) Suet. Otho 2; Dio 64,8
- (46) see: Griffin (1984)

## VII) VESPASIAN

- (1) Tac. Hist.1,10
- (2) Scott (1936) p.3
- (3) op.cit.p.18
- (4) op.cit.p.10
- (5) op.cit.p.2
- (6) op.cit.p.1ff.; Suet. Vesp.12
- (7) Charlesworth (1975) p.2
- (8) Suet. Dom.12,3; Dio 65,14
- (9) Charlesworth (1975) p.4
- (10) op.cit.p.5
- (11) Scott (1936) p.22
- (12) Hist. 2,77
- (13) Charlesworth (1975) p.6
- (14) Suet. Vesp. 5, ET Penguin Classics
- (15) Scott (1936) p.2
- (16) Chalesworth (1975) p.4

- (17) *idem loc.cit.*
- (18) **Scott (1936) p.6ff.**
- (19) **Suet. Vesp.7; Tac. Hist.4,81**
- (20) **BJ III,403 ff.**
- (21) **(1936) p.18**
- (22) *op.cit.p.11*
- (23) *op.cit.p.17*
- (24) *op.cit.p.19*
- (25) **Vita Apoll.5,28**
- (26) **Suet. Vit.15ff.**
- (27) **Suet. Vesp.4**
- (28) **Sydenham (1968) p.74**
- (29) **BMC vol.II, Introduction**
- (30) *idem; cfr. Scott (1936) p.31; Mattingly BMC*  
**II p.99**
- (31) **Charlesworth (1975) p.8**
- (32) **Scott (1936) p.88**
- (33) **Suet. Vesp.25**
- (34) **for this institution in general, see: Waters**  
**(1969)**
- (35) **Charlesworth (1975) p.3**
- (36) **Nock (1928,II) p.155**
- (37) **Scott (1936) p.32**
- (38) *op.cit.p.90*
- (39) **BJ 7,160**
- (40) **Charlesworth (1975) p.9**
- (41) **Scott (1936) p.37**
- (42) **Suet. Vesp.9**



- (43) **Charlesworth (1975) p.19**
- (44) **idem loc.cit.**
- (45) **Dio 65,14**
- (46) **Vesp.16**
- (47) *idem ch. 23*
- (48) **Scott (1936) p.19**
- (49) **op.cit.p.2**
- (50) **op.cit.p.33**
- (51) **H1st.2,80**
- (52) **Scott (1936) p.20**
- (53) **Price (1984) catalogue no.150**
- (54) **no.101**
- (55) **no.89**
- (56) **catalogue no.146**
- (57) **Cuss (1974) p.61**
- (58) **BJ III,112-13; 459; *cfr.* Scott (1936) p.20**

#### VIII) TITUS

- (1) **Pliny HN 8,56; Scott (1932,II) p.157**
- (2) **Pliny HN 2,18**
- (3) **Scott (1936) p.44**
- (4) **op.cit.p.45**
- (5) **idem loc.cit.**
- (6) **idem loc.cit.**
- (7) **Beurlier (1891) Appendix A, p.325**
- (8) **BMC II, Introduction**
- (9) **Scott (1936) Ch.3; cfr. Sydenham (1968)**

p.77, no.133

- (10) op.cit.p.45
- (11) BMC II p.312, no.68
- (12) Scott (1936) p.45
- (13) op.cit.p.46
- (14) op.cit.p.51
- (15) op.cit.p.53; cfr. Suet. Titus 7
- (16) op.cit.p.88
- (17) Suet. Titus 2
- (18) Scott (1936) p.55
- (19) Hist. 2,1; cfr. 5,1
- (20) Charlesworth (1975) p.19
- (21) op.cit.p.11;20
- (22) op.cit.p.21
- (23) idem; cfr. Sib.Or.4,125; 5,38, 408ff.;

12,117-23

- (24) Paneg.35,4; Scott (1936,II) p.163
- (25) Scott (1936) p.61
- (26) BJ IV,112-13
- (27) no.66, p.261

#### IX) DOMITIAN

- (1) Pliny, Paneg.11,1-4
- (2) Scott (1936) p.89
- (3) Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) pp.225-26
- (4) HE 3,13-20
- (5) see: Charlesworth (1975), Waters (1964),

Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>), etc.

- (6) see: Frend (1968) and (1984)
- (7) (1975) pp.43-44
- (8) see: Waters (1964)
- (9) see: Syme (1983) p.125, and Syme (1958)
- (10) Scott (1936) p.88, n.2
- (11) op.cit.pp.88-89
- (12) Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.223
- (13) op.cit.p.230
- (14) (1975) pp.33-45
- (15) op.cit.p.29
- (16) op.cit.p.36
- (17) idem loc.cit.
- (18) Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.232
- (19) Syme (1930) p.63
- (20) Sib.Or. 12,124-42; cfr.5,40
- (21) Charlesworth (1975) p.40
- (22) Syme (1983) p.129
- (23) idem loc.cit.
- (24) Charlesworth (1975) p.26
- (25) see: Syme (1983)
- (26) Suet. Dom.20
- (27) Charlesworth (1975) p.39; Syme (1983)  
p.89
- (28) Syme, op.cit.p.138
- (29) Charlesworth (1975) p.34
- (30) Scott (1936) p.90
- (31) op.cit.p.92

- (32) Charlesworth (1975) p.22
- (33) Suet. Dom.15
- (34) Dio 67,116
- (35) BMC II, Introduction; see: Hill (1989) on Domitian and the monuments of Rome as coin types
- (36) Pliny: Paneg.49,8
- (37) Salmon (1944) p.229
- (38) Tac. Hist.3; Scott (1936)p.91
- (39) Scott, op.cit.p.92
- (40) Suet. Dom.5; Tac. Hist.3,74
- (41) Mart. Epigr.6,10
- (42) Salmon (1944) p.225
- (43) Charlesworth (1975) p.31
- (44) Scott (1936) p.62
- (45) for a general study, see: Sauter (1934)
- (46) Pliny, Paneg.33,4
- (47) (1975) p.42
- (48) Scott (1936) p.100
- (49) op.cit.p.61
- (50) Suet. Dom.13
- (51) Dio 67,5,7
- (52) Scott (1936) p.89
- (53) 67,5
- (54) Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.230
- (55) (1936) p.102
- (56) Dom.13
- (57) p.109
- (58) idem loc.cit.

- (59) see: **Scott (1936)** ch.8 for a full discussion,  
and **Sauter (1934)** pp.6-40
- (60) **Dio 67:13,4; Scott, op.cit.p.111**
- (61) **Scott, op.cit.p.71**
- (62) e.g. **Epigr. 5,5; 7,2; 7,5; etc.; Scott**  
**op.cit.pp.105-6**
- (63) **idem loc.cit.; cfr. Epigr.9,93**
- (64) **op.cit.p.99; cfr. Epigr.8,66**
- (65) **Epigr.8,15**
- (66) **9,70; 9,101; 14,34**
- (67) **Weinstock (1971) p.63, n.1**
- (68) **Statius: Silvae 1,1:62**
- (69) **Book II, Praefatio; Book III, Praefatio**
- (70) **Book I, Praefatio**
- (71) **5,2:177**
- (72) **5,2:44-45; see: Scott, op.cit.p.100**
- (73) **4,3:128 ff.**
- (74) **Book V, Praefatio**
- (75) **Sat. 13,46-49**
- (76) **Scott, op.cit.p.68 ff.**
- (77) **Inst.Or. III,7:9**
- (78) **Oratio 45,1**
- (79) **Book IV, Praefatio; 10: 1,91**
- (80) **Paneg. 2 and 52**
- (81) **Paneg. 2,3; cfr. Scott (1936) p.110**
- (82) **Paneg. 88**
- (83) **Paneg. 54**
- (84) **Paneg. 2,3**



- (85) **Waters (1969)**
- (86) **op.cit.p.397 ff.**
- (87) **Salmon (1968<sup>6</sup>) p.230**
- (88) **Philostratos, Vita Apollonii 8,7**
- (89) **Dio 67,8:1**
- (90) **Charlesworth (1975) p.34**
- (91) **Dio 67,8:1**
- (92) **idem loc.cit.**
- (93) **Mart. Epigr.1,70:5-6**
- (94) **Scott, op.cit.p.98,n.9**
- (95) **Pliny, Paneg.52**
- (96) **Dom. 13; Scott (1931)**
- (97) **Suet. Dom.4,4**
- (98) **(1931,I)**
- (99) **Price (1984) p.183**
- (100) **Sydenham (1968) p.81**
- (101) **L'Orange (1947) p.64; cfr. Suet. Dom. 18**
- (102) **op.cit.p.64 ff.**
- (103) **idem loc.cit.**
- (104) **op.cit.p.65**
- (105) **idem loc.cit.**
- (106) **op.cit.p.63**
- (107) **idem loc.cit.**
- (108) **idem loc.cit.**
- (109) **Scott (1936) p.67**
- (110) **op.cit.p.62**
- (111) **op.cit.p.63**
- (112) **op.cit.p.60**

- (113) op.cit.pp.61-62
- (114) op.cit.p.79
- (115) op.cit.p.81
- (116) Suet. Dom.4
- (117) Scott, op.cit.p.74
- (118) Suet. Dom.3; Scott, op.cit.p.74
- (119) BMC II,311, nos.61 and 63
- (120) Scott, op.cit.p.74
- (121) Epigr. 6,3; Scott, op.cit.p.75
- (122) Punica, 3:629; Scott, op.cit.p.72
- (123) Suet. Dom.15
- (124) see: Titus 2
- (125) Scott, op.cit.p.77
- (126) Scott, op.cit.p.76, n.1; BMC II, Intr.  
p.134
- (127) Suet. Dom.22; Charlesworth (1975) p.25
- (128) Sat.2,29-31
- (129) Ep.4,11
- (130) Dom.22
- (131) Scott, op.cit.p.75, n.4
- (132) Epigr. 9,1:6-7
- (133) Scott, op.cit.p.77; BMC II p.313, no.69
- (134) op.cit.p.51; BMC II p.353, no.258
- (135) Scott, op.cit.p.75; Statius, Silvae I
- (136) op.cit.p.78
- (137) Suet. Dom.3; Dio 67,3; Scott, op.cit.  
p.83
- (138) Juvenal Sat. 6, 118; 132

- (139) **Vita 429, Praef.**
- (140) **op.cit.p.87**
- (141) **op.cit.p.86**
- (142) **Suet. Dom.13**
- (143) **Statius: Silvae 3,4:18**
- (144) **Scott, op.cit.p.86**
- (145) **idem loc.cit.**
- (146) **op.cit.p.84, n.8**
- (147) **Price (1984) p.264**
- (148) **idem loc.cit.**
- (149) **op.cit.p.271**
- (150) **Scott, op.cit.p.84, n.9**
- (151) **op.cit.p.85**
- (152) **Sear (1982)**
- (153) **Scott, op.cit.p.85 = Ditt.Syll.3,819**
- (154) **Scott, op.cit.p.87, n.7**
- (155) **BMC II p.311; see also Introduction**
- (156) **Dom. 1**
- (157) **Platner and Ashby (1929) p.247; Scott, op.cit.p.67; Charlesworth (1975) p.34**
- (158) **cf. Scott, op.cit.p.64**
- (159) **Mart. Epigr.9,1:6-10**
- (160) **op.cit.pp.64-65**
- (161) **op.cit.p.66**
- (162) **BMC II, Introduction; op.cit. p.66**
- (163) **Suet. Dom.12**
- (164) **see: Schürer I (1973) pp.512-13 for references**

(165) For a modern discussion of the present state of the discussion over the "god-fearers", see: **C.J. Hemer**: "The **Book of Acts** in the **Setting of Hellenistic history**" (1989), **Appendix 2**; this statement of **Suetonius**' is actually one of several indications in literature that such a group did actually exist.

(166) Dom. 12 < (167) Dom. 15

(168) 68, 14:1-3

(169) see for example: the monograph by **Bilde** (1983)

(170) **Charlesworth** (1975) pp. 40-41, see: **Case** (1925)

(171) **Scott** (1936) p. 89

(172) **Charlesworth**, op.cit. p. 27

(173) **Syme** (1983) p. 124

(174) **Scott**, op.cit. p. 89

(175) **Syme**, op.cit. pp. 123-26

(176) **Ep. VII, 27**

(177) op.cit. pp. 27-29

(178) op.cit. p. 32ff.; **Syme**, op.cit. p. 32ff.

(179) **Suet. Dom 23**

(180) op.cit. p. 137

(181) idem loc.cit.

(182) **Suet. Dom. 23; Pliny, Paneg. 52**

(183) idem loc.cit.

(184) **Ep. X, 72**

(185) **Scott** (1933) p. 156

(186) op.cit. p. 88ff.

(187) See: **Waters** (1964) and (1969)

- (188) Scott, op.cit.p.98
- (189) op.cit.p.96
- (190) Charlesworth, op.cit.pp.39-40
- (191) Scott, p.96; Price (1984) p.255
- (192) Scott, op.cit.p.97; Price, op.cit.p. 255
- (193) Scott, op.cit.p.98; Price, op.cit.p.264
- (194) Scott, op.cit.p.272
- (195) Scott, op.cit.98, n.3; not listed by Price,  
p.271
- (196) p.98, n.4
- (197) Price, op.cit.p.250
- (198) op.cit.pp.97-98
- (199) p.101, n.3
- (200) p.108
- (201) Price, op.cit.p.161 ; see: Appendix 4

#### X) NERVA

- (1) Waters (1969) p. 391
- (2) Dio 68,2:1
- (3) Ep. X,72; Scott (1932,II) p.156
- (4) Sydenham (1968) no.148, p.81
- (5) Ant. Jud. VIII,2
- (6) Bruce (1934) p.34 ff.
- (7) Paneg. 8,4
- (8) Paneg. 10,4-6
- (9) Ep. X, 8



**XI) TRAJAN**

- (1) Pliny: Paneg.11,1-4; ET Scott (1932,II)  
p.69**
- (2) Stephenson (1889) p.800; Waters (1969)  
p.396**
- (3) Paneg.80-90**
- (4) Waters (1969) p.398**
- (5) Paneg.1,3; Ep. Book X**
- (6) Syme (1983) pp.141-42**
- (7) Waters (1969) p.390**
- (8) op.cit.p.391ff.**
- (9) op.cit.p.394**
- (10) Pliny, Paneg. 35,4**
- (11) Scott (1932,II) p.159**
- (12) Scott, op.cit.p.62; Pliny: Paneg. 52**
- (13) Paneg. 55,6-11**
- (14) I.L.S. 1374**
- (15) Catalogue no.39; Price, no.20**
- (16) Price (1984) p.183, catalogue no.153**
- (17) Price, catalogue no.149**
- (18) no.148**
- (19) no.122**
- (20) no.114**
- (21) Ep.X,9**
- (22) see: LCL, vol I, Introduction**
- (23) see: Appendix 4, no.19**
- (24) no.24**

- (25) no. 49
- (26) see: Price, catalogue, no. 70
- (27) no. 52
- (28) Price, no. 142
- (29) Appendix 4 no. 50; Price, nos. 95 and 155
- (30) Price, op.cit.p. 183
- (31) cfr. Dio 69,13:4; SHA Hadrian 14,7;  
Pausanias 8,9:7
- (32) L'Orange (1947) p. 66ff.
- (33) Price, catalogue no. 67
- (34) no. 57
- (35) no. 22
- (36) no. 129
- (37) Dio 72,31
- (38) L'Orange (1947) p. 68
- (39) SHA Verus 10,7
- (40) Dio 63,15; cfr. Scott (1931,II) p. 120
- (41) SHA Commodus 8,9
- (42) L'Orange (1947) p. 68
- (43) SHA Commodus 8; Dio 72,22
- (44) Price, catalogue no. 8
- (45) Price, op.cit.p. 161
- (46) L'Orange (1947) p. 75
- (47) op.cit.p. 82
- (48) Dio 77,7; 78,19
- (49) L'Orange, op.cit.p. 39; cfr. SHA Caracalla 2
- (50) op.cit.p. 39
- (51) Price (1984) p. 256

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(52) Price, catalogue no. 23

(53) no. 55

(54) no. 61

(55) no. 88

**NOTES: CHAPTER 2**

**1) RULER CULT AMONG THE GREEKS -  
HISTORICAL OUTLINE**

**I) ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

- (1) **Ferguson (1987) p.153**
- (2) **Bevan (1901) p.638**
- (3) **Nock (1928) p.38**
- (4) **see: Taylor (1928)**
- (5) **e.g. Ferguson (1987) p.154ff.**
- (6) **see: Bevan (1901)**
- (7) **see: Nock (1928)**
- (8) **Bevan (1901) p.626**
- (9) **op.cit.p.630**
- (10) **e.g. Plutarch: Alexander 27**
- (11) **Ferguson (1987) p.157** where he gives the references; *see also: Fox (1973)*
- (12) **Polybius 12,12**
- (13) **Arrian: Anabasis 7,23:2; cfr. Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.9**
- (14) **cfr. Ferguson (1987) p.158**
- (15) **Taylor (1927) p.53**
- (16) **op.cit.p.62**
- (17) **op.cit.p.55**
- (18) **op.cit.p.57**
- (19) **idem loc.cit.**

- (20) op.cit.p.61
- (21) **Arrian 4,12; Curtius Rufus 8,5; Plutarch: Alexander 54**
- (22) **Taylor (1927) p.58**
- (23) op.cit.p.60
- (24) op.cit.pp.60-61
- (25) **Bevan (1901) p.629; see: Green (1974<sup>2</sup>) ch. 7 and Fox (1973) ch.14**
- (26) **Nock (1928) p.29; cfr. Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.8ff.**
- (27) **L'Orange (1947) p.36**
- (28) op.cit.p.35
- (29) op.cit.p.36
- (30) **Bevan (1901) p.632**
- (31) **Nock (1930) p.250**
- (32) **Habicht (1956) p.8; it has unfortunately been impossible for me to consult the second edition of Habicht's work, from 1970, and I have accordingly had to cite the first edition.**
- (33) op.cit.p.7
- (34) op.cit.p.3
- (35) op.cit.p.6
- (36) **Nock (1930) p.249**
- (37) **Plutarch: Lysander 18,4; ET I.Scott-Kilvert, Penguin Classics**
- (38) **Nock (1930) p.204**
- (39) **Price (1980) p.37**
- (40) **Nock (1930) p.204; Plutarch: Demetrius**



10,12; cfr. **Bowersock (1965) p.113**

(41) **Nock, op.cit.p.204**

(42) **Bowersock (1965) p.4, cfr. Tacitus: Annales**

**6,18**

(43) **Habicht (1956) pp.40-41**

(44) **op.cit.p.40**

(45) **op.cit.p.39**

(46) **op.cit.pp.38-39**

(47) **op.cit.p.37**

(48) **Price (1984) pp.32-40**

(49) **Nock (1928) p.38**

(50) **Habicht (1856) p.36**

(51) **op.cit.p.17**

(52) **idem loc.cit.**

(53) **op.cit.p.18**

(54) **op.cit.p.19**

(55) **op.cit.p.20**

(56) **idem loc.cit.**

(57) **op.cit.p.21**

(58) **idem loc.cit.**

## **II) PTOLEMIES**

(1) **For a general study, see: H.Frankfort: Kingship and the gods, Chicago 1978<sup>2</sup>**

(2) **Ferguson (1987) p.160**

(3) **Bevan (1901) p.629**

(4) **Price (1980) p.40**

- (5) **Bevan (1901) p.636**
- (6) **op.cit.p.639**
- (7) **see: D.R.Sear (1975<sup>2</sup>) vol.2, p.731ff.**
- (8) **Nock (1930) p.215; cfr. Fishwick (1978)**

**I,1 p.14**

- (9) *Nock* **op.cit.p.214**
- (10) **Bevan (1901) p.636**
- (11) **op.cit.p.635**
- (12) **Habicht (1956) p.123**
- (13) **op.cit.pp.114-115**
- (14) **op.cit.pp.109-110**
- (15) **op.cit.pp.111-114**
- (16) **Nock (1930) p.207**
- (17) **op.cit.p.206**
- (18) **Nock (1930) p.204**
- (19) **op.cit.p.209**
- (20) **idem loc.cit.**
- (21) **op.cit.p.213**
- (22) **op.cit.p.211**
- (23) **op.cit.p.216**
- (24) **op.cit.p.217**
- (25) **Habicht (1956) pp.122-123**
- (26) **op.cit.pp.121-122**
- (27) **op.cit.pp.116-121**
- (28) **Bickerman (1980<sup>2</sup>) pp.128-129**
- (29) **Nock (1928) p.39ff.**
- (30) **op.cit.p.39**
- (31) **ET of the Rosetta Stone in Bowman (1986)**

p.30, discussed in the following pages

- (32) Nock (1928) p.40
- (33) idem loc.cit.
- (34) op.cit.p.38
- (35) op.cit.p.40
- (36) Nock (1930) p.207
- (37) Nock (1928) p.26ff.
- (38) op.cit.p.33
- (39) op.cit.p.33
- (40) Nock (1930) p.215

### III) SELEUCIDS

- (1) Hymn to Demetrius Poliorcetes; ET Nock (1933); see: *Appendix 5*
- (2) see: Fishwick (1978) I,1 Introduction p.16ff.
- (3) Bickerman (1980) p.129
- (4) Bevan (1901) p.636ff.
- (5) op.cit.p.639
- (6) idem loc.cit.
- (7) idem loc.cit.; for Antiochus IV and his rule in general, see: Mørkholm (1966)
- (8) Nock (1928) p.40ff.; cfr. Mørkholm
- (9) op.cit.p.41
- (10) idem loc.cit.
- (11) Habicht (1956) pp.105-108
- (12) op.cit.pp.103-105
- (13) idem loc.cit.

- (14) op.cit.p.93
- (15) op.cit.pp.91-93
- (16) idem loc.cit.
- (17) op.cit.pp.89-90
- (18) op.cit.pp.88-89
- (19) op.cit.pp.87-88
- (20) op.cit.pp.85-87
- (21) op.cit.pp.82-85
- (22) L'Orange (1947) p.35

#### IV) ATTALIDS AND MACEDONIANS

- (1) Bickerman (1980<sup>2</sup>) p.130; for Attalids in general, see: Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.17; Cerfaux-Tondriau (1956) pp.247-254
- (2) Bevan (1901) p.628
- (3) Nock (1930) p.219
- (4) Habicht (1956) pp.125-126
- (5) op.cit.pp.124-125
- (6) idem loc.cit.
- (7) Nock (1930) p.220
- (8) op.cit.p.221
- (9) idem loc.cit.
- (10) see: Appendix 4 (Catalogue) no. 39 Pergamum
- (11) op.cit.p.250
- (12) Habicht (1956) pp.11-16
- (13) see: Andronikos (1989); cfr. Hammond and Griffith (1979) pp.152-58; cfr. Fishwick (1978)

I,1 p.13; cfr. **Hammond (1990)**

(14) cf. **Andronikos (1989)**

(15) **Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.18ff.**

## **V) HELLENISTIC RULER CULT - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

(1) From a child's exercise book, see: **Nock (1933)**

p.31

(2) **Price (1980) p.39**

(3) *idem loc.cit.*

(4) **L'Orange (1947) pp.39-41**

(5) *op.cit.p.42*

(6) **Price (1980) p.39**

(7) *op.cit.p.37*

(8) **Price (1984) p.163**

(9) *op.cit.p.162*

(10) see: **Nock (1930)**

(11) **Price, op.cit.p.165 n.7a**

## **2) THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS**

### **I) THE CULTS OF INDIVIDUAL ROMANS**

(1) **Bowersock (1965) p.113**

(2) *op.cit.p.12*

(3) *op.cit.p.113*

(4) *op.cit.p.13*



- (5) op.cit.p.12
- (6) op.cit.p.11
- (7) op.cit.p.112
- (8) op.cit.p.12
- (9) op.cit.p.113
- (10) op.cit.p.114
- (11) op.cit.p.115
- (12) Price (1980) p.28
- (13) idem loc.cit.
- (14) Tacitus: *Annales* 4,56; Bowersock (1965) p.113; see, however, the recent discussion in Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.48ff.
- (15) Bowersock (1965) pp.113-14
- (16) Plutarch: *Flaminius* 16; Bowersock, op.cit.p.113
- (17) Cicero: *In Verrem* 2,2:50-51; Nock (1951) p.723
- (18) Plutarch: *Cicero* 24,7
- (19) Cicero: *Ad Atticum* 12,45:3
- (20) Nock (1930) p.204
- (21) Nock (1951) p.725
- (22) Nock (1930) p.244; for a more recent discussion see: Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.46ff.

## II) THE ROMAN EMPEROR AND THE GREEKS

- (1) Syme (1939) p.373
- (2) Frend (1968) p.21

- (3) Nock (1930) p.245
- (4) Nock (1928) p.94, n.84
- (5) Ferguson (1987) p.160
- (6) Price (1980) p.39; cfr. Fishwick (1978)

**Introduction**

- (7) O.G.I.S. 458; ET Nock (1964) p.37;  
cfr. Price (1984) p.54
- (8) Ant.Jud. 15,339; cfr. BJ 1,414; ET  
H.StJ. Thackery, LCL
- (9) Bowersock (1965) p.115, n.1
- (10) op.cit.p.119
- (11) see: Appendix 4 (Catalogue) no.5 Aphrodisias,  
no.13 Bubon, no.36 Olympia; cfr. Taylor (1931)  
p.270ff.
- (12) Bowersock (1965) p.119
- (13) Magie (1950) vol.II p.1613; cfr. Balsdon  
(1934) p.158 ff.
- (14) Nock (1930) p.224
- (15) Bowersock (1965) p.115
- (16) cfr. Price (1984) p.75
- (17) Price (1980) p.36; (1984) p.233
- (18) Price (1980) p.42
- (19) idem loc.cit.
- (20) Nock (1930) p.241
- (21) idem loc.cit.
- (22) op.cit.p.237
- (23) op.cit.p.239
- (24) Price (1980) p.42

- (25) op.cit.p.34
- (26) Nock (1930) p.224
- (27) idem loc.cit.
- (28) op.cit.p.233
- (29) see: W.M.Ramsay, Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia I,p.54
- (30) Nock (1930) p.225
- (31) Price, Catalogue: Ephesus
- (32) op.cit.p.226; see: Appendix 4 (Catalogue)
- (33) idem loc.cit.
- (34) Pausanias 1,24.7
- (35) Dio 69,16.1
- (36) Nock (1930) p.227
- (37) op.cit.p.229
- (38) op.cit.p.230
- (39) idem loc.cit.
- (40) idem loc.cit.
- (41) idem loc.cit.
- (42) op.cit.p.231
- (43) cfr. Price (1984) p.233
- (44) Nock (1928) p.34
- (45) Nock (1930) pp.23-24
- (46) Nock (1928) p.37
- (47) Philo: Legatio ad Gaium 43, 346
- (48) Nock (1928) p.41
- (49) Nock (1930) p.234
- (50) idem loc.cit.
- (51) idem no.188. p.218

- (52) Price (1984) pp. 70-74, p. 226
- (53) op.cit. p. 66
- (54) Millar (1977) pp. 420-34
- (55) Price (1984) p. 67
- (56) idem loc.cit.
- (57) op.cit. p. 68
- (58) op.cit. pp. 70-71
- (59) Pliny: Epistulae X, 96
- (60) see: Martyrium Polycarpi, ed. Musurillo  
(1972)
- (61) the Book of Daniel

### 3) THE RIC - A RELIGION

- (1) Nicholas of Damascus, FGH 90f 125; ET  
Price (1980) p. 28
- (2) (1984) and (1980) *and (1984, II)*
- (3) (1980)
- (4) Price (1980) p. 28
- (5) p. 207
- (6) (1973)
- (7) (1956, 1970<sup>2</sup>)
- (8) (1980) p. 29
- (9) (1980) p. 36
- (10) (1984) p. 209
- (11) op.cit. p. 211
- (12) (1980) p. 37
- (13) Price (1980) p. 34

- (14) **Price (1984) p.216**
- (15) **Price (1980) p.34**
- (16) **O.G.I.S. 456 (= I.G.R. IV 39)**
- (17) **Price (1980) p.35**
- (18) **Price (1984) p.211**
- (19) **Price (1980) p.34**
- (20) **idem loc.cit.**
- (21) **I.G.R. IV 11398 (Smyrna); ET op.cit.p.30,**  
**n.27**
- (22) **Price (1980) p.30**
- (23) **op.cit.p.33**
- (24) **Price (1984) p.213**
- (25) **Price (1980) p.34**
- (26) **op.cit.p.35**
- (27) **Schürer I (1973<sup>2</sup>) p.486**
- (28) **Legatio ad Caium 349-67; ET LCL**
- (29) **idem 357; cfr. Price (1980) p.30**
- (30) **Price (1980) p.30**
- (31) **op.cit.p.34**
- (32) **op.cit.p.33**
- (33) **idem loc.cit.**
- (34) **op.cit.p.37**
- (35) **Price (1984) p.208**
- (36) **Pliny: Epistulae X, 96**
- (37) **S.E.G. XL 923; Price (1980) p.31**
- (38) **op.cit.p.35**
- (39) **Price (1984) p.211**
- (40) **op.cit.p.212**



- (41) idem p.207
- (42) (1980) p.29
- (43) idem loc.cit.
- (44) op.cit.p.38

## II) IMAGES

- (1) Wisdom 14, 12-21
- (2) Smith (1987) p.89
- (3) Price (1984) p.201
- (4) op.cit.pp.180-81
- (5) Scott (1931) p.105
- (6) Price (1984) p.177
- (7) idem p.178
- (8) idem p.156
- (9) idem p.177
- (10) idem p.186
- (11) idem p.183
- (12) idem loc.cit.
- (13) idem p.184
- (14) see also: K.T.Erim, Aphrodisias, London 1986
- (15) Scott (1931); p.104; Price, op.cit.p.187
- (16) Dio Cassius 52,35:3-6
- (17) Menander: Rhetor 337; ET Price, op.cit.  
p.175
- (18) Price, op.cit.p.172
- (19) op.cit.p.173
- (20) op.cit.p.174

- (21) op.cit.p.177
- (22) op.cit.pp.166-67
- (23) op.cit.p.156
- (24) op.cit.p.155
- (25) op.cit.p.136
- (26) op.cit.pp.188-89
- (27) **Acta Pauli et Theclae**, ch.27 ff.,  
**Hennecke/Schneemelcher II**, pp.360-61
- (28) **Historia Augusta** 5,7
- (29) (1984) p.193; cfr.**I.G.R. IV** 807
- (30) **Vita Apollonii** 5,15
- (31) **Epistulae** X, 74
- (32) op.cit.p.192
- (33) **Ulpian: Digest** 21,1.19
- (34) **Annales** 3,63
- (35) see: **Price**, op.cit.p.192 for references
- (36) op.cit.p.193
- (37) **Wisdom** 14,12-21; though this does not prove  
the date of the work in any way
- (38) **Daniel** 3, 1-8; cfr.**Price** op.cit.p.199
- (39) **Price**, op.cit.p.199, n.154
- (40) **Charles** (1920) comm. ad loc; **Price** op.cit.  
p.196
- (41) op.cit.p.198
- (42) op.cit.p.194
- (43) op.cit.p.178
- (44) op.cit.p.193-94
- (45) In **Abacuc** 3,14; **PL** 25,1329

- (46) see: **Pleket (1965)**
- (47) **Price, op.cit.p.190**
- (48) **Pilny, Ep.X, 8**
- (49) **Price, op.cit.p.174**
- (50) **Plutarch: Moralia, ch.11, 170, ET Penguin Classics**
- (51) **cfr.Wisdom chs.12 and 14**
- (52) **Oratio III; PG 31, 607**
- (53) **Price, op.cit.p.203**

### **III) PRIESTHOODS**

- (1) **Tacitus: Annales 3,64:3**
- (2) **Cuss (1974) pp.96-104**
- (3) **Suetonius 76,2**
- (4) **Cross: The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (1974<sup>2</sup>), art. Elvira**
- (5) **Hefel: Histoire des concils I, p.221ff.**
- (6) **Price (1984) p.114**
- (7) **op.cit.p.58**
- (8) **Price (1980) p.32**
- (9) **Scott (1936) p.79, n.4**
- (10) **Price, op.cit.p.31**
- (11) **idem loc.cit.; cfr. (1984,II)**
- (12) **Acta Pauli et Theclae ch.27ff.**
- (13) **Price (1984) p.170; p.171, n.7**
- (13) **op.cit.p.129; cfr. Dio Chrysostom: Oratio 35,10**

- (15) **Price**, op.cit.p.65, n.47
- (16) op.cit.p.63
- (17) **Bowersock** (1965) p.118
- (18) op.cit.p.122
- (19) **Ep. VI, 31.3**; cfr. **Price**, op.cit.p.123 for further identification
- (20) see: **Price**, op.cit.p.64

#### IV) FESTIVALS

- (1) see for example **Cuss** (1974)
- (2) **Price** (1980) p.32
- (3) **Price** (1984) p.104
- (4) **Tacitus: Annales 15,3**
- (5) **Price** (1984) pp.54-55, 106
- (6) op.cit.p.105
- (7) op.cit.p.102
- (8) **I.G.R. IV 1608 c = I. Ephesus VII 2,3801**;  
cfr. **Price** (1984) p.104, n.31
- (9) **Price**, op.cit.p.106
- (10) op.cit.p.104
- (11) op.cit.p.113
- (12) op.cit.p.112
- (13) p.128
- (14) e.g. **Martyrium Polycarpi**, ed. **Musurillo** (1972)
- (15) cfr. **Price** (1984) p.101 ff.
- (16) **Bevan** (1901) pp.267-68
- (17) = **S.E.G. XI, 923**; see: **Taylor** (1929);

cfr. **Price** (1980) p. 31

(18) **Price** (1984) p. 106

(19) **I. Pergamum 374 = I.G.R. IV, 353;**

cfr. **Price** (1980) p. 30

(20) **Apostolic Tradition XVI, 14;** cfr. **Cuss**  
(1974) p. 103

(21) **Apologia 35**

(22) **Acts of John 38;** ed. **Hennecke/Schneemelcher**  
**II** p. 236

(23) **ch. 26 ff., idem** p. 360

(24) **Musurillo** (1972) p. 2 ff.

#### **V) THE POPULARITY OF THE RIC**

(1) **Nock** (1930) p. 250

(2) **Price** (1984) p. 206

(3) **op.cit.** p. 77

(4) (1965) p. 117

(5) **Plutarch: Titus and Gaius Gracchus 39**

(6) **Plutarch: Marius 27, 1**

(7) **Diodorus Siculus XVIII, 28:4**

(8) **Price** (1984) p. 165

(9) **Akurgal** (1990<sup>7</sup>); cfr. **Price** p. 164 ff.

(10) **Ferguson** (1987) p. 153

(11) (1984) p. 114

(12) **op.cit.** p. 62; p. 112

(13) **op.cit.** p. 119 ff.

(14) **Apuleius: Metamorphoses III, 29**

- (15) **Price, op.cit.p.118**
- (16) **op.cit.p.118**
- (17) **idem loc.cit.**
- (18) **op.cit.pp.88-89**
- (19) **op.cit.p.89, n.54**
- (20) **op.cit.p.83**
- (21) **op.cit.p.84**
- (22) **op.cit.p.83, n.25**
- (23) **op.cit.p.86**
- (24) **Millar (1977) pp.394-97**
- (25) **Price, op.cit.p.81**
- (26) **14,11-12; cfr.Price, op.cit.p.92**
- (27) **op.cit.p.95**
- (28) **op.cit.p.93**
- (29) **Hemer (1986) p.157**
- (30) **Price (1984) Catalogue**
- (31) **pp.249-74**
- (32) **op.cit.p.59**
- (33) **p.162**
- (34) **for the Sebasteion and temple, see: Smith**  
**(1987)**
- (35) **Price, op.cit.p.83**
- (36) **Suetonius, Claudius 2**
- (37) **Tacitus: Annales 1,57**
- (38) **Dio Cassius 55,10**
- (39) **for a learned traveller's account, see: W.M.**  
**Ramsay: Impressions of Turkey, London 1897**
- (40) **see: Bean: "Journeys in Rough Cilicia", London**



(1977)

- (41) Price, op.cit.p.147
- (42) Pausanias V,20:9; see Price, op.cit.p.160
- (43) p.161, Price
- (44) pp.60-61, op.cit.
- (45) I.Olympia 53; ET Price op.cit.p.55

#### 4) THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT

- (1) Cuss (1974)
- (2) for easy comparisons of vocabulary, see indices in  
Beurlier (1901), Cerfaux (1956), Cuss (1974),  
Price (1984), Hemer (1986)
- (3) cfr. Virgil: Eclogue I,5
- (4) cfr. C.I.L. I,2 p.180: of Octavian 40 B.C.
- (5) Taylor (1929) p.90
- (6) Scott (1936) p.107
- (7) Charlesworth (1935) p.35
- (8) Sauter (1934) pp.11-16
- (9) Taylor (1927) p.59
- (10) Thesaurus Linguae Latinae II, p.1393
- (11) For a more exhaustive list, see: Cerfaux  
(1956), p.505ff.
- (12) for more evidence, see: Nock (JHS XLV)
- (13) cfr. Price (1984) p.87, n.42
- (14) Nock (1928) p.36

I) THEOS

- (1) Tertullian: **Apologia** 34,4
- (2) Nock (1928) p.31
- (3) Balsdon (1934) p.158
- (4) Price (1984,II) p.75
- (5) op.cit.p.85
- (6) op.cit.pp.81-82
- (7) O.G.I.S. 90,10; cfr. Deissmann (1927) p.349
- (8) cfr. O.Mørkholm: **Studies in the coinage of Antiochus IV of Syria**, Copenhagen 1963
- (9) Ditt.Syll.2 no.347, 3 no.760; Deissmann (1927) p.344
- (10) Taylor (1929) p.29
- (11) idem loc.cit.; for first publication of the inscription, see: S.K.Kougas: **Hellenika I** (1928), pp.7-44; 152-57
- (12) O.G.I.S. 655,2
- (13) Sear (1982)
- (14) Deissmann (1927) p.349 = I.Cos 92,7
- (15) loc.cit. = I.Priene 105,40f.
- (16) e.g. nos. 865, 867, 890, 895, 898
- (17) (1984,II) p.81,n.18; cfr. (1984) p.183
- (18) Nock (1928,I) p.31
- (19) Deissmann (1927) p.351
- (20) Price (1984) p.246
- (21) Scott (1936) p.101, cfr. Ditt.Syll. 3, 881

**D-E**

(22) **Stephenson (1964<sup>2</sup>)**

(23) **op.cit.p.338**

**II) HYIOS THEOU**

(1) **Deissmann (1901) p.166**; my own copy of this valuable work did indeed once belong to **R.H.Charles...**

(2) **Moulton and Milligan (1930/1963) p.649**

(3) **I.G.R. III 183; ET Price (1984,II) p.84**

(4) of **Caesar: I.G.R. IV 201 = I.Ilion 81**

(5) **Price (1984,II) p.84,n.7**

(6) **I.G.R. IV 1302 = I.Kyme 19**

(7) **Price, loc.cit.**

(8) **Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Sammlung von Aulock, Berlin 1957-68**

(9) **Sear (1982)**

**III) KYRIOS**

(1) See the article in **RE**, the work of **Nock**, and, for example, the studies in **New Testament Christology** by **Cullmann**, **Fuller** and **Moule**, or the articles in **Moulton-Milligan (p.365ff.)**, **Deissmann (LAE p.353ff.)**, and in **Kittell** (a not very satisfactory treatment).

(2) **pp.365-66**

(3) **LAE p.356**

- (4) see: article in **Moulton-Milligan**, **LAE** p.355
- (5) p.357
- (6) p.365
- (7) 25:25
- (8) **Meyer** (1916) pp.137, 141, 159
- (9) see: **Pliny: Epistulae** X
- (10) (1936) p.32
- (11) **B.G.U.** 1197, I, 15
- (12) **Abbott-Smith** p.261ff.; **Bauer - Arndt-Gingrich**  
p.459ff., cfr. **Deissmann LAE** p.341
- (13) **Bellum Judaicum** VII, 407ff.
- (14) **Apologia** 34,2
- (15) **Martyrium Polycarpi** 8
- (16) **Martyrium Scillitanorum** 8
- (17) **Moulton-Milligan** p.366
- (18) **LAE** p.355
- (19) (1936) p.21, n.3
- (20) **Cuss** (1974) pp.53-63
- (21) (1965) p.87
- (22) **Deissmann LAE** p.366ff.
- (23) (1936)
- (24) **Deissmann LAE** pp.358-61, cfr. **Revl.1,11**; see  
also: **Deissmann BS** pp.217-19
- (25) **LAE** p.361

#### IV) SOTER

- (1) **Price** (1980) p.38

- (2) (1978) I,1 Introduction; cfr. Nock (1951) p.271ff.
- (3) Hemer (1986) pp.85-86
- (4) Nock (1951) p.129
- (5) 37,26:1
- (6) Plutarch: Demetrius 9,1
- (7) Plutarch: Titus Flaminus 10,5
- (8) Plutarch: Camillus 10,6
- (9) In Verrem II, 2:154
- (10) *op. cit.* II, 2:51-51
- (11) II, 50:114
- (12) (1951) p.723
- (13) Syll.759; cfr. Cuss (1974) p.67, n.2
- (14) O.G.I.S. 458
- (15) Balsdon (1934) p.7, p.158
- (16) 4,1
- (17) III, 459 and V, 112-13
- (18) Annales XV, 71:3
- (19) Nock (1951) p.724
- (20) cfr. Scott (1956) p.97
- (21) LAE pp.368-69
- (22) Epigr. II, 91
- (23) V, 1:7
- (24) III, 66
- (25) for example the works by Cullmann, Fuller and Mould referred to above.
- (26) LAE p.342ff.
- (27) (1986) pp.86-87

**V) OTHER TITLES**

- (1) **Fishwick (1978) I,1 p.34**
- (2) **idem loc.cit.**
- (3) **Cerfaux (1956), see. chapter 1**
- (4) **Nock (1951) p.725**
- (5) **idem loc.cit.**
- (6) **(1965) p.12**
- (7) **idem p.13**
- (8) **Nock (1951) p.724**
- (9) **Bowersock (1965) p.13**
- (10) **Dio Cassius 67,13:4**
- (11) **see: Taylor (1927) pp.53 and 57**
- (12) **see: discussion by Deissmann in LAE p.370ff.;**  
**cfr. Price (1984) p.54**
- (13) **idem loc.cit.**
- (14) **Nock (1928) p.33ff.**
- (15) **Scott (1936) p.101**
- (16) **p.378**
- (17) **see: Scott (1936) for parallels in court poetry;**  
**cfr. Schütz (1933) for the same**
- (18) **LAE p.377**
- (19) **see: vol. I-V in BMCRE**
- (20) **LAE pp.375-76**
- (21) **Moulton-Milligan p.105**
- (22) **LAE p.367**
- (23) **see: Appendix 4**



- (24) see: note (12)
- (25) Price (1984) p.55
- (26) idem loc.cit.
- (27) Deissmann LAE pp.369-70
- (28) Scott (1936) p.79

(29) idem loc.cit.

(29) LAE p. 348 f.

(30) op.cit. pp. 369-70

**NOTES: CHAPTER 3**

**1) NERO, DOMITIAN AND THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION**

- (1) Ward Gasque in Yamauchi (1980) p.9
- (2) Sweete (1907) p.ccxviii
- (3) Charles (1920) vol.I, p.clxxxiii
- (4) e.g. Ramsay, Charles, Giet, Hemer, et al.
- (5) Hemer (1989)
- (6) see: Daniel

**II) THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

- (1) e.g. J.L.McKenzie (1965) p.41
- (2) see: Hemer (1986) p.27ff.
- (3) e.g. Meinardus (1979) p.4
- (4) Historia Naturalis 4,12:69
- (5) 18,4:2184-79
- (6) op.cit.pp.27-29
- (7) HE 3,19-20
- (8) Caird (1984<sup>2</sup>) pp.21-23
- (9) op.cit.p.28
- (10) vide n.(7)
- (11) e.g. Clement of Alexandria: Quis Dives 42
- (12) Robinson (1976) pp.221-53
- (13) Bell (1978/79) p.102
- (14) see: Robinson op.cit. for references
- (15) p.1045

- (16) (1.ed. 1968) vol.II, p.467
- (17) Boismard (1949) pp.507-41; se also Charles (1920)
- (18) see: Hillers (1963)
- (19) Suet. Nero 2,1
- (20) Historiae 2,1
- (21) Nero 57,2
- (22) 66,19
- (23) Sib.Orac. 4,119-124; also: 5, 93-110, 137-161, 224-227, 361-380
- (24) Smallwood (1967) pp.52-53
- (25) Grant (1973) p.229
- (26) Cuss (1974) p.153
- (27) see: Catalogue
- (28) e.g. Pleket (1965) and Prigent (1974) and (1975)
- (29) cfr. Schlier (1968) pp.215-238
- (30) e.g. as discussed by Eusebius: HE 7,25ff.

### III) THE FIRE OF ROME AND THE CHRISTIANS

- (1) Suet. Nero, 16; ET Robert Graves, Penguin Classics
- (2) Tacitus: Annales 15,44; ET M.Grant, Penguin Classics
- (3) 1 Clement 5-6; ET Lightfoot, London 1891
- (4) Eusebius: HE 2,25; ET Williamson, Penguin

**Classics**

- (5) **Freud (1965) p.32**
- (6) **Grant (1970) ch.9, p. 134; cfr. Freud (1984) p.109**
- (7) **Grant, op.cit.p.129**
- (8) **(1965) ch.4: "Rome and Foreign Cults"; cfr. R.McMullan "Enemies of the Roman order",**
- (9) **39,18:7**
- (10) **Dio 53,2:4**
- (11) **Suet. Tiberius 36,1; Josephus: Ant.Jud.: XVIII, 65-80**
- (12) **Freud (1984) p.109**
- (13) **Josephus: Ant.Jud. XVIII,3:5; cfr.Freud (1965) p.21; Suet. Tiberius 36,1; Dio 57,18:5**
- (14) **traditional date, discussed earlier in this chapter**
- (15) **Suet. Claudius 25,11**
- (16) **Grant (1970) p.133f.**
- (17) **cfr. Phil. 4,22**
- (18) **Grant, op.cit.p.134**
- (19) **Acts 27,22**
- (20) **Grant, op.cit.pp.133-34**
- (21) **see: Lightfoot (1891) and Kirsopp Lake, LCL, Introduction**
- (22) **Freud (1965) pp.31-32**
- (23) **Annales 15,44:2-5**
- (24) **Historiae 5,4-5**
- (25) **cfr.Grant (Penguin Classics) p.365, n.2**
- (26) **(1965) p.32**

- (27) **Epistulae X, 96**
- (28) **Nero 16, 2**
- (29) **Nero 38, 2**
- (30) **Annales 2, 69; 4, 21**
- (31) **Pro Flacco 67**
- (32) **Historiae 4, 54; Annales 12, 59**
- (33) **Annales 13, 32**
- (34) **Grant (1970) p. 135**
- (35) **idem loc. cit.**
- (36) **Apologia 7, 1**
- (37) **Freund, op. cit. p. 33**
- (39) **(1972) p. lix**
- (40) **see (1963)**
- (41) **Freund, op. cit. p. 33**
- (42) **(1972) p. lviii**

#### **IV) THE BEAST FROM THE SEA**

- (1) **Charles (1920) vol. I, p. 337 ff.**
- (2) **e.g. 7, 24; 8, 3**
- (3) **cfr. Charles, op. cit. p. 347**
- (4) **cfr. Sweet (1979) p. 260**
- (5) **Sweet, op. cit. p. 207**
- (6) **e.g. Caird (1984<sup>2</sup>); Beasley-Murray (1978<sup>2</sup>)**
- (7) **17, 4-5**
- (8) **op. cit. p. 209**
- (9) **vol. II, pp. 70-71**
- (10) **(1984<sup>2</sup>) pp. 218-19**

- (11) **Beasley-Murray, op.cit.pp.256-57**
- (12) **Sweet, op.cit.p.257**
- (13) **op.cit.p.259**
- (14) **op.cit.p.258**
- (15) **Acts of John ch.38f. (Hennecke-Schnemelcher, vol.II, p.236f.)**

#### **V) THE BEAST FROM THE LAND**

- (1) **e.g. Charles (1920) I, p.357ff.**
- (2) **(1984) p.196ff.**
- (3) **(1986)**
- (4) **60,7ff.**
- (5) **6,49ff.**
- (6) **29,4ff.**
- (7) **(1984<sup>2</sup>) p.171ff.**
- (8) **(1956) pp.81-82**
- (9) **(1974) p.96**
- (10) **op.cit.p.216**
- (11) **e.g. p.195**
- (12) **op.cit.p.198**
- (13) **op.cit.p.216**
- (14) **vol.I, p.361**
- (15) **op.cit.p.216**
- (16) **Sweet, op.cit.p.257**
- (17) **Caird, op.cit.p.173**
- (18) **Price, op.cit.p.113**
- (19) **cfr. Caird, op.cit.p.171; Yamauchi (1980)**



p.109f.

(20) Price, op.cit.p.197

(21) Sweet, op.cit.p.34

## VI) THE BLASPHEMOUS NAMES

(1) Charles, vol.I, p.348

(2) idem, p.351

(3) Aune (1983) p.5

(4) (1947)

(5) Aune, op.cit.p.11

(6) (1935) pp.100-103

(7) Deissmann, LAE pp.348-49

(8) op.cit.p.348

(9) (1984) p.191

(10) cfr. Yamauchi (1980) p.42

(11) (1967) and (1961)

(12) BMC Jonia; Sear (1982)

(13) LAE

(14) (1984,II)

(15) (1974)

(16) cfr. ch.1

(17) LAE pp.357-59

(18) op.cit.vol.I, p.23; cfr. Sweet, op.cit.p.67

(19) LAE pp.361-62

(20) LAE p.363

(21) Charles, op.cit.p.351

(22) Charles, p.352

- (23) loc.cit.
- (24) cfr. Charles vol. II, p. 67
- (25) p. 68
- (26) cfr. Charles II, p. 75
- (27) LAE p. 363
- (28) cfr. Touilleux, op.cit. pp. 102-3
- (29) Schütz (1933)
- (30) op.cit. p. 33
- (31) p. 35
- (32) op.cit. p. 102
- (33) Boring, op.cit. p. 258
- (34) cfr. Collins (1977) p. 247
- (35) op.cit. p. 248
- (36) pp. 242-43
- (37) e.g. Sweet

## VII) THE RIC AND THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- (1) I. Ephes. VII 2, 3801 (restored); ET Price (1984) p. 105
- (2) I. Priene; ET Price, op.cit. p. 54
- (3) Tertullian: Apology 35; ET LCL
- (4) Price, op.cit. p. 107
- (5) (1986)
- (6) Price, op.cit. p. 102
- (7) op.cit. p. 105
- (8) see: Chronology
- (9) Price, op.cit. p. 104

- (10) op.cit.p.103
- (11) This was explained to me by Dr.Price during a conversation on the issue at Oxford in 1990.
- (12) op.cit.p.113
- (13) p.112
- (14) idem loc.cit.
- (15) pp.54-55
- (16) p.106
- (17) p.123
- (18) p.123f.; cfr. Bickermann (1968) and Eusebius HE 4,8-9
- (19) op.cit.p.124
- (20) cfr. Price, op.cit.p.102

#### 1) EPHESUS

- (1) e.g. Altzinger (1972) p.46
- (2) e.g. Yamauchi (1980) p.86
- (3) Altzinger, op.cit.p.39ff.
- (4) see: Appendix 4; cfr. Magie (1950) vol.I, p.470
- (5) cfr. Fishwick (1978) I, 1.p.77
- (6) Akurgal (1990<sup>7</sup>) pp.167-68; I.Ephes. III. 902
- (7) Price, op.cit.p.139; catalogue no.29
- (8) as in n.(6)
- (9) Price, op.cit.p.169
- (10) Bammer (1974)

- (11) Price, op.cit.p.140
- (12) op.cit.p.196
- (13) op.cit.p.197
- (14) op.cit.p.192; cfr.I Ephes. II, 231-42
- (15) op.cit.p.169
- (16) Magie, op.cit.vol.II, pp.1432-34
- (17) Price (1977) pp.127-32
- (18) Sear (1982) nos.823-24
- (19) Stauffer (1952)
- (20) Touilleux (1935)
- (21) (1933)
- (22) Akurgal, op.cit.p.166
- (23) Vermeule, op.cit.p.18
- (24) Akurgal, op.cit.p.166
- (25) Price (1984) p.255
- (26) loc.cit.
- (27) Altzinger (1962) p.204
- (28) Price, op.cit.p.255
- (29) op.cit.p.178
- (30) loc.cit.
- (31) op.cit.p.187
- (32) p.18
- (33) Schutz (1933) p.19; Forschungen in Ephesus  
II (1912) nos. 35 and 47
- (34) see: chapter 2
- (35) see: Vermeule, op.cit.p.18
- (36) op.cit.p.24
- (37) cfr. Magie (1950) p.584ff.

- (38) op.cit.p.583
- (39) op.cit.p.580f.
- (40) op.cit.p.576
- (41) op.cit.p.579
- (42) op.cit.p.579
- (43) p.583
- (44) Akurgal, op.cit.pp.164-65; Price (1984)  
p.256
- (45) Price, op.cit.p.256
- (46) Altzinger (1972) p.116ff.
- (47) Price, op.cit.p.198
- (48) Hemer (1986) p.40
- (49) Caird (1984<sup>2</sup>) p.30
- (50) Beasley-Murray (1974) p.74
- (51) 2 Cor.12,11ff.; cfr. Caird, op.cit.p.30
- (52) Ignatius, Ephesians 6,2; 9,1; cfr. Caird,  
op.cit.p.31
- (53) Hemer, op.cit.p.41
- (54) Charles (1920) vol.I, p.50
- (55) Caird, op.cit.p.31
- (56) Gen.2,9; 3,22-24; cfr. Ezek.31,18;  
48,12; Test.Levi 18,11; I Enoch 24,4
- (57) op.cit.pp.41-47
- (58) see: BMC Jonia, Ephesus, where 56 instances  
are recorded, esp. no.232
- (59) cfr. Caird, op.cit.pp.32-33
- (60) cfr. Sweet (1979) p.80
- (61) Hemer, op.cit.p.55

## 2) SMYRNA

- (1) see: **Appendix 4 (Catalogue) no.49**
- (2) see: **Vermeule, op.cit.: Catalogue no 468**
- (3) see: **Price, op.cit.: Catalogue nos.45-47**
- (4) **Price, op.cit.p.64**
- (5) **op.cit.p.66**
- (6) **op.cit.p.185**
- (7) **Price-Trell (1977) p.215, no.455**
- (8) **Vermeule, op.cit.p.468**
- (9) **Sweet, op.cit.p.84**
- (10) **Caird, op.cit.p.36**
- (11) **Mart.Polyc. 13,1**
- (12) **Acta Pion. 3**
- (13) **Charles, op.cit.vol.I, p.57**
- (14) **op.cit.p.66**
- (15) **cfr. Hemer, op.cit.p.68**
- (16) **op.cit.pp.69-70**
- (17) **op.cit.p.72**
- (18) **Hemer, op.cit.pp.72-73**

## 3) PERGAMUM

- (1) **Sweet, op.cit.p.87; cfr. Hemer, op.cit.p.82-83**
- (2) **Hemer, op.cit.p.83**
- (3) **Price, op.cit.p.118ff.**



- (4) op.cit.p.109
- (5) op.cit.p.61
- (6) Adv.Haer. 1,26:3 and 3,11:7
- (7) op.cit.p.88
- (8) Hemer, op.cit.p.91
- (9) cfr. Sweet, op.cit.p.32-33
- (10) op.cit.p.92
- (11) op.cit.p.88
- (12) e.g. Sweet
- (13) vol.I, p.64
- (14) op.cit.p.34
- (15) e.g. Beasley-Murray (1974)
- (16) cfr. Yamauchi (1980) p.32; Hemer, op.cit.  
p.85
- (17) Hemer, p.85
- (18) op.cit.p.87
- (19) e.g. Sweet, op.cit.p.88
- (20) Hemer, op.cit.p.86
- (21) loc.cit.
- (22) so Yoma 52b
- (23) Hemer, op.cit.p.95
- (24) op.cit.p.98
- (25) op.cit.p.99
- (26) idem loc.cit.
- (27) p.100

#### 4) THYATIRA

- (1) p.260
- (2) see: **Catalogue of Vermeule (1968)**
- (3) cfr. **Yamauchi, op.cit.pp.51-54**
- (4) **Hemer, op.cit.p.106**
- (5) op.cit.p.106
- (6) op.cit.p.108 ff.
- (7) cfr. **Hemer, op.cit.p.110**
- (8) loc.cit.
- (9) loc.cit.
- (10) op.cit.p.128
- (11) op.cit.p.123

#### **5) SARDIS**

- (1) **Vermeule (1968) p.461**
- (2) **Price (1984), p.66**
- (3) op.cit.p.214
- (4) **Vermeule p.461**
- (5) **Price, op.cit.pp.151-52**
- (6) **Price, catalogue no.58**
- (7) cfr. **Hemer (1986) p.147**
- (8) op.cit.p.151

#### **6) PHILADELPHIA**

- (1) **Hemer, op.cit.pp.157-58**
- (2) **Ign. Philadel. 6,1; 8,2**
- (3) **Hemer, op.cit.p.169**

- (4) op.cit.p.175

## 7) LAODICEA

- (1) BMC Phrygia 307, nos.181-82; 185; von Aulock 3846  
(2) Price, op.cit.p.183  
(3) Price, op.cit.Pl.3b, p.185  
(4) Hemer, op.cit.p.182f.

## VIII) THE SO-CALLED PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN

- (1) Frend (1968) p.44  
(2) Jones (1978) p.1033  
(3) Cuss (1974) p.152  
(4) op.cit.p.154  
(5) op.cit.p.149  
(6) Last (1937) p.90  
(7) Barnard (1963) p.258  
(8) Philostratos: Vita Apollonii 8,5; 7  
(9) Dio 67,14  
(10) Nero 16,2  
(11) Ep. X,96  
(12) cfr. Frend (1968) p.43  
(13) Salmon (1944) p.226  
(14) Pliny, Ep.X 97  
(15) e.g. Syme (1983)

- (16) cfr. Lightfoot (1891) pp.105-15
- (17) HE 3,21
- (18) (1963) p.258
- (19) e.g. Speigl (1970) p.19ff.
- (20) 59,2-61,3
- (21) Barnard, op.cit.p.260
- (22) HE 3,19-20
- (23) cfr. Speigl, op.cit.p.32
- (24) HE 4,26
- (25) Apol. 5,3-4; HE 3,20
- (26) Apol. 35,1
- (27) HE 3,17
- (28) Cuss, op.cit.p.153
- (29) see ch.1 X: Nerva
- (30) see ch.1 X: Nerva for references
- (31) Grant (1973) p.225
- (32) cfr. Jos. BJ VII, 66:218; Ant.Jud.  
XIV,7:2; Dio 66,7; Suet. Dom.12,2
- (33) Epigr. 4,4:7; 7,55:7-8; 7,82,6;  
12,57:13
- (34) cfr. Bruce (1969) p.390
- (35) Suet. Dom.15,1
- (36) Dio 67,14
- (37) CAH XI, p.31ff.; cfr. Agricola 6,3; 3,1;  
cfr. Tacitus: Annales 16,21
- (38) Suet. Dom 15,1
- (39) Dio 67,14
- (40) 67,14

- (41) HE 3,18
- (42) see: Stevenson (1978)
- (43) Grant (1973) p.227
- (44) op.cit.p.225
- (45) Bruce (1969) p.414; Frend (1968) p.43
- (46) 3,2
- (47) 1,6; 2,8
- (48) 10
- (49) Judaism I, pp.291-92
- (50) Hemer, op.cit.p.8
- (51) Bell (1978) p.96; see also: Barnard (1963) p.254
- (52) Ep. X,96
- (53) Grant (1973) p.228
- (54) see: Syme (1983)
- (55) Barnard, op.cit.p.252
- (56) cfr. Frend (1968)
- (57) Acta Pionii 8; Acta Apollonii 7

## 2) GAIUS CALIGULA AND THE THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) I accept the authenticity of II Thess with e.g. Meeks (1972); for a discussion, see: Whiteley (1969); for the argument against authenticity see: New Jerome Biblical Commentary (1989), p.871ff.
- (2) for dating see: New Jerome Biblical Commentary, p.872

- (3) see section 3 of this chapter for details

## II) ST. PAUL AND THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT IN THE GREEK EAST

- (1) Meeks (1972) for a modern and well documented account of Paul's movements and work in the Greek East. For an older account see Ramsay (1897).
- (2) see: chapter 2, V: "kyrios"
- (3) see: Caird (1956)
- (4) especially Cullmann (1946) and (1956), but also MacGregor (1956), Ling (1961), Morrison (1960) and Santayana (1951)
- (5) see: Meinardus (1979)
- (6) see: Meinardus (1973)
- (7) see: Murphy O'Connor (1983)
- (8) see: Kelso (1970)

## III) ST. PAUL AT THESSALONICA

- (1) Cfr. the works by Rackham (1901), Gasque (ed.) (1970), Epp (1966), Ehrhardt (1969), Bruce (1952<sup>2</sup>) and (1977<sup>2</sup>), especially Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (1920-33) V vols., Hengel (1979), Keck and Martyn (eds.) (1968), Hemer (1989), Hanson (1967), Cadbury (1958)
- (2) Edson (1948), Donfried (1985)
- (3) Price-Trell (1977) p.215, fig.458



- (4) op.cit. p.346; cfr. Meeks (1972) p.46 ff.
- (5) Sear (1982) Amphipolis no.29
- (6) cfr. Beginnings of Christianity, vol.V, p.205 ff.
- (7) (1897) p.231
- (8) Grant (1976) p.181ff.
- (9) loc.cit.
- (10) (1897) p.229f.
- (11) (1963) p.103
- (12) Hemer (1989) p.167, cfr. Judge (1971)
- (13) Donfried (1985) p.344
- (14) cfr. Donfried, op.cit.p.343
- (15) op.cit.p.344
- (16) (1973) p.28
- (17) (1977<sup>2</sup>) p.345ff.
- (18) op.cit.p.344
- (19) LAE p.362ff.
- (20) cfr. LAE p.338ff., esp.p.349
- (21) op.cit.p.344
- (22) op.cit.p.116, n.36
- (23) (1972) p.31
- (24) Bruce (1977<sup>2</sup>) p.345
- (25) (1897) pp.229-31

#### IV) ST. PAUL AND THE "LAWLESS ONE"

- (1) Meeks (1972) p.108 for a modern discussion
- (2) (1969) and (1974<sup>2</sup>)

- (3) (1972)
- (4) op.cit.pp.107-8
- (5) op.cit.pp.108-9
- (6) (1969) p.14
- (7) op.cit.p.107
- (8) op.cit.p.108
- (9) op.cit.p.347
- (10) loc.cit.
- (11) cfr. Bruce (1954<sup>2</sup>) p.345
- (12) Meeks (1972) pp.108-9
- (13) (1974<sup>2</sup>) pp.234-40
- (14) op.cit.p.110
- (15) Meeks, op.cit.p.108
- (16) (1974<sup>2</sup>) p.237, n.9
- (17) p.237
- (18) Whiteley (1969) p.100
- (19) op.cit.p.101
- (20) op.cit.p.110
- (21) De resurrectione carnis 24
- (22) Whiteley (1974<sup>2</sup>) pp.237-38
- (23) (1962<sup>2</sup>) p.165
- (24) Whiteley (1969) p.102
- (25) idem loc.cit.
- (26) (1974<sup>2</sup>) p.237
- (27) Mørkholm (1969)
- (28) op.cit.p.144
- (29) idem loc.cit.
- (30) p.145

- (31) p.146
- (32) p.147
- (33) p.156
- (34) p.157
- (35) pp.158.59
- (36) (1984) p.199
- (37) idem, n.156 for references
- (38) op.cit.p.200
- (39) *cf.* loc.cit.

#### V) THE EPISODE OF GAIUS CALIGULA'S STATUE IN THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

- (1) Bilde (1978)
- (2) Schürer I, p.397, n.180, and the article by Bilde
- (3) see Bilde for a discussion of this point.
- (4) (1934)
- (5) (1989)
- (6) see: Catalogue
- (7) (1987) p.333
- (8) Bruce (1969) p.253
- (9) op.cit.p.70f.
- (10) Schürer I, p.394
- (11) Jos. Ant.Jud. XIX, 300ff.; Bruce, op.cit.  
pp.261-62
- (12) Jones (1967) p.197
- (13) Leg.334

- (14) Bilde, op.cit.p.75
- (15) Schürer I, p.394
- (16) Leg.346; cfr. 197,281
- (17) Leg.203
- (18) e.g. Bruce, op.cit.
- (19) Ant.Jud. XIX, 258
- (20) Schürer I, pp.394-95
- (21) cfr. Bruce, op.cit.p.254
- (22) idem loc.cit.
- (23) Bilde, op.cit.p.78
- (24) BJ. II, 185
- (25) "The Jews in the Roman World", p.180; cfr.  
Bilde, op.cit.p.76ff.
- (26) Leg. 209,213; cfr. Bilde p.77
- (27) Ant.Jud. XVIII, 276ff.
- (28) Hist. 5,9
- (29) XVIII,271
- (30) II, 184-203
- (31) (1934) p.137
- (32) op.cit.p.82ff.
- (33) op.cit.p.61
- (34) Bruce (1969) p.254
- (35) Leg. 621ff.
- (36) cfr. Bruce, op.cit.p.255
- (37) Bilde, op.cit.p.83ff.
- (38) e.g. Jones (1967) and Smallwood (1976)
- (39) op.cit.p.85
- (40) op.cit.p.86

- (41) Leg. 337-38
- (42) loc.cit.
- (43) Schürer I, p.394
- (44) Leg. 357, ET LCL
- (45) Leg. 367
- (46) cfr. Price (1984) pp.209-10
- (47) (1978) I, p.35
- (48) ET Bruce (1969) p.291
- (49) Bruce, op.cit. pp. 291-95; cfr. Ant,Jud.  
XIX, 279ff.

#### VI) GAIUS CALIGULA AND MARK 13

- (1) e.g. Taylor (1966<sup>2</sup>), Nineham (1963)
- (2) e.g. Beasley-Murray (1986) p.329
- (3) loc.cit.
- (4) (1966<sup>2</sup>) p.511
- (5) (1963) pp.345,353
- (6) (1976) p.295
- (7) (1989) p.624
- (8) (1957<sup>2</sup>)
- (9) op.cit.p.107
- (10) loc.cit.
- (11) op.cit.p.352
- (12) cfr. Nineham, op.cit.p.354; Beasley-Murray,  
op.cit.p.329
- (13) Taylor (1966<sup>2</sup>) pp.511-12
- (14) idem loc.cit.

- (15) op.cit.p.256
- (16) p.257
- (17) idem, n.28
- (18) loc.cit.

## VII) AGRIPPA I AND ACTS 12

- (1) Grant (1973) p.141
- (2) Bilde (1978) p.89
- (3) Meshorer (1967) p.79
- (4) op.cit.p.80
- (5) Smith (1988) p.174, no.102
- (6) op.cit.pp.139-143
- (7) Bruce (1969) p.261, n.15
- (8) see: Schürer I, p.452f.
- (9) op.cit.p.453
- (10) op.cit.pp.262-64
- (11) LCL vol.433, p.377, n.e
- (12) XIX, 345
- (13) 346
- (14) loc.cit.
- (15) 347
- (16) op.cit.p.263
- (17) Bruce, op.cit.p.263, n.25 for medical  
opinions
- (18) cfr. Grant (1973) p.141
- (19) see chapter 1, IX: Domitian



### **3) THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE RIC**

- (1) Ramsay (1888) p.108ff.**
- (2) Schütz (1933) p.36**
- (3) Deissmann, L ~~AE~~. p.342**
- (4) Fuller (1965) p.89**
- (5) Cuss (1974) p.69**
- (6) e.g. Kysar (1975) pp.166-68**
- (7) cfr. Brown (1979), Cullmann (1976)**
- (8) cfr. Dodd (1953), Brown (1966) p.cxvff.**
- (9) cfr. Lindars (1971) and (1972)**
- (10) cfr. Dodd (1963)**
- (11) e.g. Brown (1979)**
- (12) cfr. the works by Brown, Cullmann and  
Schnackenburg**

### **I) DIVINE KINGSHIP IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

- (1) Dodd (1963) p.115**
- (2) Mastins (1975) p.46**
- (3) Moule (1977) p.117**
- (4) Mastins (1973) p.363**
- (5) Dodd (1963) p.97**
- (6) Barrett (1972<sup>2</sup>) p.443**
- (7) vide parallels**
- (8) (1963) pp.24-47**

- (9) (1963) p.120
- (10) (1970) p.6ff.
- (11) John II, p.861
- (12) Robinson (1985) p.275
- (13) vide parallells
- (14) Harvey, op.cit.p.2
- (15) Barrett, op.cit.p.457
- (16) Lindars, op.cit.p.576
- (17) cfr. Cullmann, op.cit. ch.5; Dodd (1953)  
p.228
- (18) Harvey, op.cit.p.11
- (19) op.cit.p.559
- (20) Dodd (1963) p.229
- (21) op.cit.p.571
- (22) op.cit.p.576
- (23) op.cit.ch.2
- (24) cfr. Bultmann (1971) p.654, n.6
- (25) Vouga (1977) p.109f.
- (26) Barrett, op.cit.p.454
- (27) Vouga, op.cit.p.110
- (28) Schlier (1968) p.219
- (29) Cuss (1974) pp.48-49; Tacitus: Annales  
6,8
- (30) Barrett, op.cit.p.454
- (31) Lindars, op.cit.p.554
- (32) op.cit.p.572
- (33) e.g. 8,17
- (34) Hart (1952)

- (35) Hart, op.cit.p.74
- (36) op.cit.p.658, n.5
- (37) op.cit.p.564
- (38) Mastins, op.cit.p.363
- (39) Cullmann, op.cit.p.110
- (40) Schlier, op.cit.p.233; cfr. Bultmann, op.cit.  
p.507,n.8
- (41) Schlier, op.cit.p.225
- (42) p.233
- (43) (1953) p.236
- (44) discussed in John I, pp.81-88
- (45) op.cit.p.87
- (46) op.cit.p.119
- (47) (1963) pp.213-16
- (48) Cullmann (1957) p.122f.
- (49) op.cit.p.253
- (50) op.cit.p.302
- (51) Barrett, op.cit.p.303

## II) THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

- (1) Deissmann, BS (1901); cfr. Dodd (1935)
- (2) LAE pp.347-51
- (3) op.cit.p.81ff.
- (4) op.cit.p.141

- (5) op.cit.pp.306-314
- (6) op.cit.p.88
- (7) op.cit.p.43
- (8) op.cit.p.50ff.
- (9) Rom. 3,3; 6,3, Smyrn. 1,1; Ephes. 1,1;  
Polyc.8,3.
- (10) LAE p.361
- (11) Charles (1920) I, p.133
- (12) op.cit.p.538, n.7
- (13) op.cit.pp.694-95
- (14) (1947) p.548
- (15) (1961) pp.116-18
- (16) op.cit.pp.476-77
- (17) op.cit.p.88
- (18) (1967) p.28
- (19) II, pp.1046-48
- (20) op.cit.p.117
- (21) (1973) p.265
- (22) p.264
- (23) p.263
- (24) (1975) p.46
- (25) (1973) p.363
- (26) (1975) p.46
- (27) (1986) pp.86-87
- (28) cfr. Dodd (1953) p.251ff.
- (29) cfr. Cullmann (1956) pp.272-75
- (30) Dodd, op.cit.p.253
- (31) see: Bousset, Hahn et al.

- (32) LAE p.346ff.
- (33) (1953) p.253
- (34) op.cit.p.251
- (35) op.cit.p.155
- (36) op.cit.pp.88-89
- (37) Cuss (1974) p.74
- (38) BJ VII, 407-19
- (39) 8,2; cfr. Mart. Scillorum
- (40) 34,2; cfr. Cuss, op.cit.p.56
- (41) LAE p.359ff.
- (42) op.cit.p.357
- (43) (1935) p.9
- (44) (1952) p.120f.
- (45) (1963) p.196
- (46) (1966<sup>2</sup>) p.105
- (47) (1963) p.197f.
- (48) op.cit.p.88
- (49) (1913)
- (50) (1977) p.105, n.1
- (51) cfr. Cullmann (1963) ch.8, esp.p.241
- (52) LAE p.369
- (53) op.cit.p.62 (= Syll.814,31); cfr. Wenland  
(1904) p.335
- (54) (1954) p.97
- (55) (1986) p.85ff.
- (56) LAE p.368
- (57) (1953) p.239
- (58) (1953) p.108ff.

- (59) op.cit.p.244
- (60) p.240
- (61) p.245
- (62) op.cit.p.89
- (63) op.cit.pp.63-71
- (64) op.cit.p.204
- (65) op.cit.p.198
- (66) I, p.175
- (67) (1982)
- (68) Schürer (1973<sup>2</sup>) p.307ff.
- (69) I, App.I, p.508ff.
- (70) (1933) pp.22,29ff.
- (71) p.105
- (72) LAE p.367
- (73) op.cit.p.116
- (74) Price (1984) p.54
- (75) op.cit.p.55



**APPENDIX 1:**

**LISTS OF 'SYNNAOI THEOI' AMONG  
GREEKS AND ROMANS ACCORDING TO  
A.D. NOCK (NOCK 1930, PP. 235-36)**

The following are the best known examples of the cult of rulers by form of "temple-sharing". In the view of Nock the list is exhaustive according to the information possessed at the time of writing (1930).

**I) INCORPORATION**

- Theoi Adelphoi in life by 271 B.C. and their successors in the cult of Alexander at Alexandria
- Arsinoe II (posthumous) in all temples of Egypt in 270 B.C.
- Ptolemy Euergetes, Berenice, and their daughter Berenice in all temples of Egypt in 239/8 B.C.
- Ptolemy Philopator and Arsinoe in all temples of Egypt in 217 B.C.
- Ptolemy Epiphanes in all temples of Egypt in 196

**B.C.**

- **Cleopatra**, his wife, in all temples of **Egypt** in **185/4 B.C.**

- **Theoi Adelphoi**, **Arariathes V**, and **Emperors** with **Dionysus** in titulature, **Arariathes V** in cult of actors' guild

- **Attalus III** in temple of **Asclepius** at **Elaea** (in lifetime): sacrifices, possibly to him on altars of **Zeus Boulaios**, **Hestia Boulaia**.

- **Julius Caesar** in the temple of **Quirinus** at **Rome**, **45 B.C.** His statue in all temples at **Rome** and in (Italian) cities, **44 B.C.**

- **Augustus** (posthumous) in cult of **Hercules** at **Tibur**

- **Augustus** possibly in cult of **Artemis Kindyas** at **Bargylia** in **Caria**

- **Livia** (in lifetime) in temple of **Athena Polias** at **Cyzicus**.

- **Successors of Augustus** in his temples at **Alexandria**, **Philae**, etc.

- **Livilla** in temple of **Athena Nikephoros** at **Pergamum** between **A.D. 37** and **39**.
- **Drusilla** (posthumous) in temple of **Venus** in forum at **Rome**, **A.D. 38**.
- **Claudius** possibly with **Dionysus** at **Aphrodisias**.
- **Nero** in temple of **Mars Ultor** at **Rome** in **A.D. 54**.
- Successors of **Hadrian** in his temple at **Alexandria**.
- **Julia Domna** (in lifetime) in **Parthenon**.
- **Caracalla** possibly in a temple of **Asclepios** at **Pergamon**.

## **II) NEW JOINT FOUNDATIONS**

- **Ptolemy Soter** and **Philopatores** with later modifications, at **Ptolemais** ca. **215-214 B.C.**
- Private temple of **Berenice** and **Arsinoe Aphrodite** in **Fayum** by **215-214 B.C.**

- Private temple of Syrian goddess and Aphrodite Berenice at Pelusium by 222 B.C.
- Antiochus I of Commagene with Zeus Oromasdes, Mithras, Artagnes, and Commagene, not much earlier than 31 B.C.
- Julius Caesar and Clementia at Rome in 44 B.C.
- Roma and Divus Julius at Ephesus and Nicaea in 29 B.C.
- Roma and Augustus at Pergamum and Nicomedia in 29 B.C. and passim later.
- Tiberius, Livia and the Senate at Smyrna in A.D. 26 (voted by province in A.D. 23)
- Trajan (in lifetime) and Zeus Philios at Pergamum, existing by A.D. 113.

In view of wider possibilities (as seen in Appendix 4) this list is restrictive, i.e. a definite minimum of known cases of "temple-sharing". It nevertheless represents a valuable key to two of the most important forms of the imperial cult among Greeks and Romans.

**APPENDIX 2:**

**ROMAN MAGISTRATES WITH A CULT**

From **G.W.BOWERSOCK**: "Augustus and the Greek world", Appendix I, pp.150-51, Oxford, OUP 1965; see also : **Fishwick** (1978) I, 1 p.46ff. and **Cerfaux-Tondrieau** (1956) pp.279-282.

**M.Claudius Marcellus**

**T.Quinctius Flaminius**

**M.Aquilius**

**Q.Mucius Scaevola**

**L.Valerius Flaccus**

**L.Cornelius Sulla**

**L.Licinius Lucullus**

**C.Verres**

**Cn.Pompeius Magnus**

**Ap.Claudius Pulcher**

**Q.Tullius Cicero**

**M.Tullius Cicero**

**P.Servilius Isauricus**

**C.Julius Caesar**

**M.Junius Silanus**

**Cn.Domitius Calvinus**

**M.Vipsanius Agrippa**

**Paullus Fabius Maximus**

**L. Munatius Plancus**

**M. Vinicius**

**C. Marcius Censorinus**

**Cn. Vergilius Capito**



### APPENDIX 3:

#### LISTS OF DIVI ET DIVAE

The following lists are meant to show both the consistency and the degree of variety in the cult of the divi et divae. Different sources have been chosen: the official cult of the arval brethren, the numismatic evidence, the literary evidence in combination with other sources. They are as follows:

1) The "Liste des divi" from Beurliers classical study.

2) The list of consecrated persons according to Stephenson's numismatic dictionary.

3) The Divi commemorated on coins by Decius.

4) The lists of divi et divae commemorated by the arval brethren in Rome in 183 and 224 A.D.

5) Lists of divi and divae from imperial room and temples at Aphrodisias, Bubon, Olympia, Cestrus and Thera.

#### 1) THE "LISTE DES DIVI" FROM A. BEURLIER (1891), App. A, p. 325 ff.

I) The Julio-Claudian dynasty (7 members deified):

Divus Julius

Divus Augustus

Diva Drusilla (= Julia Drusilla)

**Diva Augusta (= Livia Drusilla)**

**Divus Claudius**

**Diva Claudia Virgo**

**Diva Poppaea Augusta**

**II) The Flavian dynasty (5 members deified):**

**Divus Vespasianus**

**Diva Domitilla**

**Divus Titus**

**Divus Caesar**

**Diva Julia Pia Augusta**

**III) The Adoptive emperors (9 members deified):**

**Divus Nerva**

**Divus Trajanus Pater**

**Diva Marciana**

**Divus Trajanus**

**Diva Matidia**

**Diva Plotina**

**Diva Sabina**

**Divus Hadrianus**

**Diva Faustina**

**IV) The Antonine emperors (8 members)**

**Divus Antoninus**

**Divus Verus**

**Diva Faustina**

**Divus Marcus Antoninus**

**Divus Pertinax**

**Divus Commodus**

**Divus Severus Pius**

**Divus Antoninus Magnus (Caracalla)**

**V) The Severian Dynasty (5 members):**

**Diva Julia Augusta**

**Diva Maesa Augusta**

**Divus Alexander**

**Diva Paulina**

**Divi Gordiani**

**2) THE NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE:**

**1) A COMPLETE LIST OF DIVI ET DIVAE.** From S.W. Stephenson : **A Dictionary of Roman Coins** (London 1889/1964), p.249, art.: **Consecration.** This list identical with that of another numismatic authority: **F. Gnechi: Monete Romane** (Milano 1935) pp.301-302. Both lists comprise **46** names.

**Julius Caesar**

**Augustus**

Julia, wife of Augustus = Livia Augusta

Claudius

Poppaea

Claudia, daughter of Nero

Vespasian

Domitilla, wife of Vespasian

Titus

Julia, daughter of Titus

Caesar (anonymous), son of Domitian

Nerva

Trajan, the father

Trajan, the emperor

Plotina, wife of Trajan

Marciana, sister of Trajan

Matidia, grand daughter of Trajan

Hadrian

Sabina, wife of Hadrian

Antoninus Pius

Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius

M. Aurelius

L. Verus

Commodus

Pertinax

Severus

Julia Domna, wife of Severus

Caracalla

Julia Maesa

Alexander Severus

**Paulina**, wife of **Maximinus I**  
**Mariniana**, wife of **Valeriaan**  
**Gallienus** (identity uncertain)  
**Saloninus**  
**Victorinus**  
**Tetricus** (probably)  
**Claudius Gothicus**  
**Carus**  
**Numerianus**  
**Nigrinianus**  
**Maximianus Hercules**  
**Constantius Chlorus**  
**Galerius Maximianus**  
**Romulus**, son of **Maxentius**  
**Constantine the Great**

**2) THE SERIES OF COINS ISSUED BY  
DECIUS IN A.D. 250, COMMEMORATING  
THE DIVI OF THE PAST (From F. Gneecchi:  
Monete Romane, Milano 1935/1986, p. 303ff.).**

**Augustus**  
**Vespasian**  
**Titus**  
**Nerva**  
**Trajan**  
**Hadrian**

**Antoninus Pius**  
**Marcus Aurelius**  
**Commodus**  
**Septimius Severus**  
**Severus Alexander**

**4) THE DIVI OF 183 AND 224 A.D.**

**From: R.O. Fink, A.S. Hoey, and W.F. Snyder:**  
**"The Feriale Duranum", Yale Classical Studies**  
**VII, 1940, pp. 1222.**

**1) The sixteen divi of 183 A.D.:**

**Augustus**  
**Claudius**  
**Vespasian**  
**Titus**  
**Nerva**  
**Trajan**  
**Marciana**  
**Matidia**  
**Plotina**  
**Sabina**  
**Hadrian**  
**Faustina the Elder**  
**Antoninus Pius**  
**Lucius Verus**  
**Faustina the Younger**  
**Marcus Aurelius**



ii) **The twenty divi of A.D. 224:**

**Augustus**

**Claudius**

**Vespasian**

**Titus**

**Nerva**

**Trajan**

**Marciana**

**Matidia**

**Plotina**

**Sabina**

**Hadrian**

**Faustina the Elder**

**Antoninus Pius**

**Lucius Verus**

**Faustina the Younger**

**Marcus Aurelius**

**Commodus**

**Pertinax**

**Septimius Severus**

**Caracalla**

**5) THE DIVI AND DIVAE FROM  
VARIOUS IMPERIAL SHRINES:**

**(Aphrodisias, Bubon, Olympia, Cestrus, Thera).**

**1) APHRODISIAS: Sebasteion excavated by**

**K.T.Erim** from 1970 onwards (see: **R.R.R.Smith**: "The imperial reliefs from the **Sebasteion** at **Aphrodisias**", **JRS** 77, 1987, pp. 88-138; **Price** (1984) pp.159-61. The following reliefs - not sculptures - belong to an imposing portico to the **Gens Julia** with a temple to **Aphrodite** and the **Sebastoi** (a case of temple-sharing):

- **Augustus**
- **Claudius**
- **Germanicus**
- **Nero** (head chiseled from the relief when **Nero** fell from power in **A.D.68**, personal name erased from base)
- **Tiberius** (?)
- **Two princes** (**Lucius** and **Gaius**?)
- **Livia** (as priestess)
- **Nero** (not erased)

It is important to note that **Caligula** is missing as well as the one relief of **Nero** is damaged. The city of **Aphrodisias** was particularly close to the **Julio-Claudian** house, having been declared **Octavian's** favourite city already in **29 B.C.**

ii) **BUBON**: **Imperial Room** ("sebastos oikos") with statues; see: **Price** (1984) pp.159-60 and pp.263-63. This impressive series is witnessed by the statue bases which have all survived, two of the

statues - of **Lucius Verus** and **Septimius Severus** - and two heads of **Caracalla**. Here it is the idea of continuity of the **Roman** emperors rather than a single dynasty that is focused. This is an important witness to the later stages of the cult.

- **Nero**
- **Poppaea**
- **Nerva**
- **Antoninus Pius**
- **Lucius Verus**
- **Commodus**
- **Septimius Severus**
- **Julia Domna**
- **Caracalla**
- **Gordian III**
- **Gallienus**
- **Cornelia Salonina**

iii) **OLYMPIA**: an imperial room at the old **Metroon**, to **Augustus**, **Claudius** and the **Gens Flavia** (see: **Price (1984)** pp.160-61).

- **Augustus**
- **Domitian**
- **Claudius**
- **Titus**
- **Domitia**
- **Agrippina II**

- Julia Titi(?)

It is most interesting to note that Domitian is not excluded after his "damnatio memoriae" - here it seems that continuity is the stronger motive, typical enough of the Greek attitude to the RIC.

iv) **CESTRUS**: an imperial temple with statues, the bases of which have survived (see: Price (1984) p.161).

- **Vespasian** (centre)
- **Titus**
- **Nerva**
- **Trajan**
- **Hadrian** (twice)
- **Sabina**

It is important to note that here - unlike at Olympia - Domitian is missing; his statue was probably replaced by that of Nerva. This temple is a small one, when full (as when containing these statues) a new one was constructed.

v) **THERA**: an imperial room in a portico (see: Price (1984) p.159. This "basilikos oikos" was dedicated to the Antonine dynasty. Statues of the following members of the imperial family were represented:

- **F**austina
- **M**arcus **A**urelius
- **L**ucius **V**erus
- **A**ntoninus **P**ius (?)

## APPENDIX 4:

### CATALOGUE

The Catalogue gives three kinds of information:

I) Imperial temples and shrines in Asia Minor and Greece (illustrating the cities of the Pauline and Johannine world)

II) Works of art and inscriptions of various kinds

III) Numismatic evidence.

This highlights the RIC among Greeks from different points of view. The order of the cities is alphabetical; there is no distinction between geographical areas as such. Some cities are listed that do not strictly belong to the Pauline or Johannine map (Olympia, Cestrus, Bubon, etc.). By following such an inclusive way of counting, geographically speaking, the picture becomes richer, needless to say. But we are not straying too far from our path: these cities (e.g. Side, Aspendus) may very well have been visited by Paul or John.

The cities listed are the following ones:



- 1) Amphipolis (Macedonia)
- 2) Ancyra
- 3) Antioch (Pisidia)
- 4) Antioch (Syria)
- 5) Aphrodisias
- 6) Apollonia (Pisidia)
- 7) Aspendus
- 8) Assos
- 9) Athens
- 10) Attaleia
- 11) Beroea
- 12) Brycus
- 13) Bubon
- 14) Caesarea Maritima
- 15) Cestrus
- 16) Claros
- 17) Corinth
- 18) Cos
- 19) Cyzicus
- 20) Delphi
- 21) Derbe
- 22) Didyma
- 23) Dorylaeum
- 24) Ephesus
- 25) Hierapolis
- 26) Iconium
- 27) Ilium
- 28) Laodicea

- 29) **Lystra**
- 30) **Miletus**
- 31) **Myra**
- 32) **Mytilene**
- 33) **Neapolis (Macedonia)**
- 34) **Nicaea**
- 35) **Nicomedia**
- 36) **Olympia**
- 37) **Paphos**
- 38) **Pella**
- 39) **Pergamum**
- 40) **Perge**
- 41) **Philadelphia**
- 42) **Philippi**
- 43) **Priene**
- 44) **Salamis**
- 45) **Samos**
- 46) **Sardis**
- 47) **Selge**
- 48) **Side**
- 49) **Smyrna**
- 50) **Tarsus**
- 51) **Teos**
- 52) **Termessus**
- 53) **Thasos**
- 54) **Thera**
- 55) **Thessalonica**
- 56) **Thyatira**

**57) Tralles**

**Ad I):** the numbers in brackets preceded with the letter **P** indicate the catalogue-number from **Price (1984)**.

**Ad II):** the number preceded by the letter **V** stand for the catalogue-number in **Vermeule (1968)**, and lists two kinds of material: works of art and epigraphic dedications.

**Ad III)** the numbers preceded by **PT** indicate the work by **Price and Trell (1977)** and refer to figures or pages, as indicated; **F** stands for **Franke (1968)**, while names of emperors at the end indicate the date of the series in question. The numbers in brackets give the references to the standard work on **Greek Imperialism: H. von Aulock: Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum (Berlin 1957ff.)** For the numismatic section under each heading the catalogue functions in the following way: **PT** gives the neocorates, **F** gives the legends of coins related to the imperial cult, number in brackets to von **Aulock**.

The following list is in no way exhaustive, and should be understood as illustrative. For imperial temples and shrines - as for some of the numismatic evidence - some second and early third century evidence is included. Otherwise the catalogue is concentrating on first century evidence.

**1) AMPHIPOLIS**

II) V p.421 gives a variety of information, but nothing definite on the **RIC**; the site is only partially excavated. No imperial monuments are visible today.

## 2) **ANCYRA**

I) The capital of **Galatia** had a provincial temple to **Rome** and **Augustus** - still standing - which is world-famous for the preserved inscription of the testament of **Augustus** ("**Monumentum Ancyranum**") : **P 108**.

II) V p.491 for various details, mentioning the imperial temple to **Augustus**.

III) **PT** fig.378 for numismatic evidence, **Caracalla** = **F 59** "thea **Roma**" (8326), 2.c.

## 3) **ANTIOCH** in **Pisidia**

I) **P 123** mentions a temple on the **Platea Augusta**, identified as that of **Augustus** and **Men** by older scholars, discussed by **Price** (p.270), who suggests **Jupiter Optimus Maximus**, not **Men**, quoting **Levick** and **Magie**.

II) V p.382 and 501ff. gives various details, referring to the imperial temple. An oversized head of **Augustus**, a version of the **Primaporta** type, was found near the **Augustus** temple, p.382 (stands now in the **Istanbul Museum**). V p.485 mentions a triple arch to **Augustus**. V 485 gives a reference to a statue of **Drusus** and one of **Domitian**.

#### 4) ANTIOCH in Syria

II) V states that Agrippa was honoured in a new bath, p.501, and mentions an "eastern gate" of Tiberius, likewise evidence for a statue on a column. Vespasian had the canal cut, connecting the Orontes with Seleucia, where there - at a well known place in the middle - is a dedication to "Tito and Divo Vespasiano" (also in V 501). The latter is a favourite point of excursion among visitors to Seleucia. Domitian, under whom the dedication was cut, is held to have presented a bath to Antioch, V 501.

#### 5) APHRODISIAS

I) Price lists a sebasteios naos in the city center, from the Julio-Claudian dynasty (P 64). Statues on display in the museum show imperial priests as well as imperial portraits, demonstrating that the RIC was strongly rooted in this important city. The portico has been located and restored, but the temple is not yet excavated (P pp.137 and 261).

II) V p.477 for cults of Augustus, Livia, Claudius, Titus and Nerva (perhaps also Domitian?). He lists: a votive to Augustus as a divine patron; an inscription of a Chief Priest of the Divine Augustus Caesar, a dedication to Livia; to Tiberius on top of a marble base; a head of Claudius (now in the local Museum), V 408; a

portrait of **Claudius**, erected by the people and **Chief** priest of **Claudius** and **Dionysus**, **V 477** ; a statue of **Nero**, **V 477**; an inscription mentioning priests or priestesses of the **Augusti**, **Livia**, **Claudius**, the god **Titus**, the god **Nerva**, **V 477**; a dedication of a lintel to **Aphrodite** and **Domitian** from the priest of **Helios** and the **Chief** priest of **Vespasian**, a statue of **Domitian** from a temple of the **Sebastoi**, **V 477**.

**III) F 140 (8062)** "iera syncletos" with bust of the **Senate**, **3.c.A.D.**

#### **6) APOLLONIA in Pisidia**

**I) P 124** and **125** gives uncertain evidence, discussed on p.270. **P 125** is an imperial temple of uncertain date depicted on coins of **Marcus Aurelius**.

**III) PT fig.393** gives an imperial temple, **Gallienus**.

#### **7) ASPENDUS**

**I) P 137** shows the city as neocorate, from the time of **Gallienus**, dedicated to **Gallienus** and **Salinona**, **P 138** shows a colonnaded hall with statues in niches, possibly belonging to the imperial cult (p.271).

#### **8) ASSOS**

**II) V 457** lists a temple to **Augustus**, but **P 13**



describes this identification a figment (p.250). V 383 lists a head of Caius Caesar from the Agora, may be the same as from a statue set up by Roman merchants between A.D. 1-4, is a much finer copy than the ones at Corinth and Philippi (see below) - is possibly of Germanicus (now in Istanbul Museum). V 457 lists: a stoa to "theos" Caesar Augustus, by Q. Lollius Philetairus; a statue of the goddess Livia as new Juno; the temple to Augustus (disputed by Price); baths dedicated to Livia. V 457 also lists a stoa dedicated to Claudius, Agrippina, their children, the Senate, etc., and a head from the agora.

## 9) ATHENS

I) Ruler Cult in Athens began with Demetrius Poliorcetes as "saviour god" in 307 B.C. The last temple to be erected on the Acropolis was the small round temple to Augustus and Roma. An imperial shrine in the main square is discusse by Price (p.144 ff.).

II) V p.380 lists: overlifesized head of Augustus (Nat.Mus. no.3753), a head from the Tower of Winds (Primaporta-type), a head from the Acropolis Museum (of individual Greek style). V 383 lists a youthful head of Lucius Caesar from the Royal Gardens (Nat.Mus. no.3606). V 429 lists a statue base by the Demos honouring C.Caesar as New Ares, likewise a seat in the theatre of Dionysus for a priestess of Hera on the

Acropolis and of Livia and Julia; a base of a statue of Augustus as Founder ("ktistes"), base of a double statue of Augustus and Tiberius, statue of Marcus Agrippa, statue of Julia Augusta. V 430 lists a group of statues near the Parthenon: of Augustus, Germanicus, Drusus Junior and Tiberius, as well as evidence for a statue of Augustus in the Agora and a colossal statue from 27 B.C.; a lofty monument to Agrippa at the left of the entrance to the Acropolis (replacing statues of Attalus and Eumenes - by changing heads). Germanicus is honoured by a statue from A.D.18 when he was on a visit to Athens, this base being reused, V 430. Agrippina Senior is portrayed with a head (Louvre no.311) and Antonia with fragments of a head (replica perfectly preserved in Berlin), now in the Agora Museum, V 386. Drusus, son of Tiberius, had a statue, known from a base, near the Erechtheum, V 430.

V 384 lists: a head from a statue of Tiberius, from A.D.14-15, is in the Berlin museum; a gold statuette, a votive image of Tiberius as Hermes, is in the National Museum; a head of Tiberius is in the National Museum. A Pergamene monument in front of the stoa of Attalus was rededicated to Tiberius, divine honours having been offered to him near the beginning of his reign, V 429. A dedication for the welfare of Tiberius as Augustus is listed, V 430. Tiberius was honoured at Eleusis by a statue of heroic size: a togate, veiled statue of Tiberius sacrificing, from colonnaded building, near the

**Telesterion** (now in the **Eleusis Museum**), **V 384**.

**Claudius** had a bronze statue in the agora - as **Apollo Patroos** - overlifesized and with a wreathed head, **V 430**. A building or base inscription honours **Claudius** west of the **Parthenon**, **V 430**. The **Agora Museum** has a head, colossal and wreathed, with hairstyle symbolizing divinity, from a marble statue, possibly replica of the bronze in the agora, **V 387**. **Piraeus Museum** also has a head from the harbour, **A.D.50-54**, possibly belonging to cuirrassed bust in the same museum, **V 388**.

**Nero** has a dedication to the **North** of the eastern architrave of the **Parthenon**, and his name was found on a column near by, **V 340**. At **Eleusis** there is an overlifesized statue of the young **Nero**, ca.**A.D.54**, togate, **V 389**. **Domitian** has a head from **Athens** at the **National Museum** (no.345), **V 408**.

**III) PT** figs.130-31 shows monument on the **Acropolis** and at the theatre of **Dionysus**. The temple to **Zeus Olympios** begun by **Peisistratos** was only realized under **Hadrian** (cfr.**Suet. Aug. 59**). **Price** lists this as one of the most famous instances of temple-sharing, the statue of the emperor (with an altar) standing behind the statue of the **Olympian** god himself (p.147). **Price** mentions the cult of **Julia Domna** as the fullest account existing of a direct imperial sacrifice (p.217).

#### 10) **ATTALEIA**

**II) V p.488** records a priestess to **Julia Augusta** (i.e.

Julia Titi) and Roma. Claudius is honoured by a large bilingual milestone from A.D. 50, and a statue-base (possibly Nero?), V 488. V 488 lists a statue of Julia Titi and a priestess to this Julia Augusta.

#### 11) BEROEA

II) V 387 lists a head of the ageing Claudius, 3 times lifesized, with an oak wreath, probably made in Greece (Beroea Museum).

III) PT lists a column and two neocorate temples on a coin from Severus Alexander (fig. 451)

#### 12) BRYCUS

III) This city knew, according to Scott, a cult of diva Domitia (witnessed from an inscription) (Scott, 1936, pp. 141-42 and 159), and also a cult of Domitian, likewise only known from an inscription (p. 97).

#### 13) BUBON

I) Here we find more or less the entire history of the RIC represented in an imperial room, where the bases of statues with inscriptions reveal the cult of imperial persons from ca. A.D. 50-260: Nero, Poppaea, Nerva, Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus, Commodus, Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, Caracalla, Gordian III,

Gallienus, Cornelia Salonina (P 82), (Price 1984 p.160). The eight male statues were naked and thus clearly modelled on the divine cult of the traditional gods (op.cit.p.183).

#### 14) CAESAREA MARITIMA

I) The temple that Herod the Great constructed to Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima is not listed by Price. The cult-statue of Augustus was of the colossus-type, in fact Josephus states that the statue was no smaller than that of Zeus at Olympia (BJ I,414; Ant.Jud. XV, 339). V p.503 gives further details.

#### 15) CESTRUS in Cilicia

I) P 146 lists an imperial temple with statues of Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian and Sabina. The absence of Domitian is interesting. P 147 lists a temple with statue of Antoninus pius.

#### 16) CLAROS

I) P 26 mentions a cult-place for Tiberius at the famous temple of Apollo. The temple figures on a coin of Valerian from Colophon, PT fig.440.

#### 17) CORINTH

I) The material here is very rich, **Corinth** being a **Roman** colony, founded by **Julius Caesar** in **44 B.C.** Most important is the temple to the **Gens Julia**, erected under **Augustus**, ca. **A.D.25**.

II) A head of **Julius Caesar** and a statue (or altar) to **Divus Julius** in the theatre is listed in **V 433**.

**Augustus** had a statue in toga and tunic of the civil kind, version of the **Via Labicana** type, from the **Julian basilica**, **V 380**. **Augustus**, **Diva Julia (Livia)** and **Tiberius** are honoured from a reused inscription in connection with games, **V 433**. **V 433** also lists: a slab/plaque to **Divus Augustus** from the **South stoa**; a plaque to **Divus Augustus** - by a local priest - on a building in the **Southeast** area of the **agora**; a cylindrical base to **Divus Augustus** from the **Augustales**, in the **agora**; a base dedicated to **Augustus**; a building (?) dedicated to **Livia**, by **Claudius**, in **A.D.42**. **V 383** lists a heroic statue of **Caius Caesar** from the **Julian basilica**, nude and with cloak on the left shoulder (in two repilcas, **Corinth Museum**); a heroic statue of the divine body of **Lucius Caesar** as **Theseus**, possibly from the **Julian basilica (Corinth Museum)**.

**Caligula** is honoured by a dedication to the family of **Caligula** in **A.D.37**, from the temple to the **Gens Julia**, and an imperial statue from **A.D.40**, **V 433**.

**Claudius** was honoured on a slab from a monument dedicated to **Claudius** and **Britannicus**, by the **Colony**, ca. **A.D.47-50**, **V 433**.



Nero had a dedication, from the time of Claudius, V 433, and a head (possibly of Lucius Caesar) stands in the Museum, V 411. At Isthmia there were statues of Nero and Dionysus in the theatre, and a Neronian relief - a votive one - by one of the builders of the abortive canal, in the rock along the canal's face (cfr. Vespasian's canal at Seleucia), V 434.

III) PT fig.143 shows the temple to the Gens Julia on a coin (other interesting coins from Corinth show the Acrocorinth, PT fig.135, as well as the restored Capitolinum under Domitian). The Julian-Claudian dynasty was thus richly represented at Corinth.

#### 18) COS

I) Price lists: a temple to Claudius (P 3) and a location of the sebastoi theoi in the sanctuary of Asclepios, which includes a niche to Nero Asclepios (P 4).

#### 19) CYZICUS

I) Price lists:

1) Temple to Augustus (P 16)

2) Temple to Hadrian (P 17).

The temple to Augustus was partially financed by the whole province. This temple is mentioned by both Dio and Tacitus. Originally a free Greek city, Cyzicus

actually had its freedom removed by Tiberius, partly because the inhabitants showed neglect of the worship of Augustus by failing to finish the temple (Price 1984, pp.66 and 83).

Hadrian shared his temple with Zeus Olympios, according to Price (P 17), which naturally reflects the fact that Hadrian financed the temple to Zeus Olympios at Athens (p.154ff.), though Price expresses the view that this is a clear case of the subordination of the emperor to Zeus (p.153). PT fig.448 lists a coin with two neocorate temples.

II) A dedication of a statue of Domitian, by the archons, from A.D.84 is listed in V 454.

III) PT fig.198: temple to Hadrian, Caracalla; F 215 (7382) "kyzike neoko", Maximinus Thrax.

## 20) DELPHI

II) V 428 lists various dedications.

## 21) DERBE

II) V 492 gives various inscriptions.

## 22) DIDYMA

I) Price - like Balsdon - does not believe the story that Gaius Caligula wanted the temple of Apollo at Didyma made into a temple to himself. But he may have intended to

help the completion of the magnificent structure (Price 1984 p.257).

## 23) DORYLAEUM

II) V 472 gives information on evidence from various epigraphic sources.

III) PT fig.78 shows the Roman aqueduct.

## 24) EPHEBUS

I) Ephesus had the richest collection of imperial monuments in Asia, due to the fact that it was the actual capital of this province, the city where the Roman administrator lived, even if Pergamum was the nominal capital - at what date the transfer to Ephesus of the nominal aspect took place is uncertain. The principal monuments are the following ones:

- 1) Temple of Rome and Julius Caesar, in the city (P 27).
- 2) Temple of Rome and Augustus, at the Artemisium (P 28).
- 3) Temple of Rome and Augustus, in the city (P 29).
- 4) Royal portico (P 30).
- 5) Temple to Domitian (P 31).
- 6) Temple of Hadrian (P 32).
- 7) Antonine altar (P 34).

In his catalogue Price lists several other imperial shrines

at Ephesus, as well as the presence of innumerable inscribed statues. But those mentioned above are the most important ones, and certainly the least disputed as concerns identification. Price says that the name or image of the emperor "met the eye at every turn" (1984, p.136), a statement that a first visit to Ephesus will confirm even today. The upper Agora and the "Kuretenstrasse" - so called by the Austrian archeologists ("Kuretes-street" is used by some English-speaking authorities) - are both full of monuments to the RIC.

The organizer of the RIC in Asia was Octavian, when he visited the province after Actium. The year 29 saw, therefore, the first organization of the cult in Ephesus. The first act was to grant a temple to Roma and Divus Julius (Dio:51,20). It was placed at the upper agora - nothing remains of it today - and Price sees this as significant: "The accomodation of the ruler within the city could bring about a restructuring of the city" (p.145), that is, by accomodating the ruler within the old framework. As such Ephesus may be the best example of the siting of imperial temples. Octavian is, of course, not rising the emperor to the level of Artemis, but founding separate buildings, in the city-center (Price, p.147). But there were also imperial temples on either side of the Artemision, as shown on coins (op.cit.p.183), one of them certainly being a temple of Augustus, although Augustus later had his own temple next to that of Julius in the upper agora (P 28); in reality they functioned as a

double-temple.

The Flavian age added the magnificent temple to Domitian to the western side of the central square, thereby giving a further transformation of the civic space (op.cit.p.145). It was demolished in Christian times and only the foundations of the building remains, as does the large platform. The alter in front of the temple is preserved, as are parts of the cult statue (now on display in the Selçuk Museum).

The Temple to Domitian must have been financed by numerous contributions from smaller cities (op.cit.p.129), and acquired a neocoros as office ("temple-warden"), whereby the city began to call itself "twice neocoros" (op.cit.p.65, n.47), even if this was its first imperial neocorate. The temple was shared with other members of the Flavian pantheon: Domitia, Titus and Vespasian. After the "damnatio memoriae" of Domitian the cult was transferred to Vespasian only (Scott 1936,p.96). - The actual cult-statue of Domitian was probably kept while the cult was transferred, the statue from now on being taken to be that of Vespasian. As such it was allowed to stay until late antiquity (Price, p.194). Its fragments were discovered in the vaults under the temple platform in 1933 and was on display in the new archeological museum at Izmir until 1990, when it was transferred to Selçuk.

The fountain dedicated to Trajan does not belong to the imperial temples, but was nevertheless a very important

monument to the imperial cult, and important fragments are reconstructed on its site along the **Kouretes-Street**. It was, in the words of **Price**, "tucked away on one side of the main street, its ground plan ignominiously determined by the baths behind" (op.cit.p.140).

The **Temple to Hadrian** - the second neocorate at **Ephesus** - is by **Price** taken to be an example of temple-sharing, and not a temple to **Hadrian** as such: "modern scholars have universally misunderstood the temple" (op.cit.p.150). Permission for its erection was strangely obtained by an individual **Ephesian** directly from the emperor himself, and not from the **Senate** (**P 33**).

The **Antonine altar** - from the time of **Marcus Aurelius** - has a frieze depicting the life and apotheosis of **Lucius Verus** and is described by **Price** as being "probably the finest sculpture to survive from the **Greek** world in the imperial period", though only fragments survive.

The **Asian assembly** approached **Caracalla** in order to achieve its third neocorate, but the title was by him transferred to the **Artemisium**. As such **Ephesus** was in the **3.c.** twice neokoros of the emperors and once of **Artemis**. A fourth request was later presented to **Julia Domna** (op.cit.p.162, n.65).

**Ephesus** is perhaps the best example in the province of **Asia** of how the **RIC** came to dominate the city-center, as any visitor can see for himself even today. In addition to the buildings mentioned above there were statues all over



the place, these being life-size statues (not the more-than-life-size of the cult-statues in the temples). Examples of the private imperial cult have also been discovered in rich houses, viz. the cult of Tiberius and the Augusta - i.e. Livia (op.cit.p.120).

The RIC was incorporated into the cult of Artemis since statues and important busts were kept in the porch of her temple (op.cit.p.189). A dramatic protest against the cult itself is found in the apocryphal Acts of John, where the apostle is reported to have attended the festival dressed in black (all the participants were dressed in white). The festival would have involved all the members of the city itself and the surrounding cities as well as the countryside. The atmosphere at the imperial festivals is described by Price as being carnival-like (op.cit.p.102). It certainly put great pressure on the inhabitants, as the story of John proves. For a Christian minority this must have been a difficult day. The Jews enjoyed privileges that granted them dispensation from such festivals. Their community was large at Ephesus and they had possessed citizenship since Seleucid times (Jos. Contra Apionem 2.4.39; Ant.Jud.14.7.2.112).

II) Julius Caesar had a statue at Ephesus, from after the Pharsaleia, V 463.

A head of Augustus (Selçuk Museum), close to the Primaporta type is listed in V 381, likewise overlifesized heads of Germanicus and Agrippa. At the

agora a (now restored) triple-arched, double-winged gate was dedicated to: **Augustus, Agrippa, Livia and Julia, V 464**. An inscription to **Augustus** on the **Peribolos** wall of the **Artemision** is listed in **V 463**. **Germanicus Caesar** had a statue and an inscription on a building, **V 464**.

A battered head of **Tiberius** in the **Selçuk Museum** is from the **Kuretes** street, of the coronation type, described as a "masterpiece" in **V 385**.

A head of **Caligula**, now in **Copenhagen**, was made in Italy, closely to **Roman** models, and is in **V 387** described as the "best of all the definite **Caligula** portraits known".

**Claudius** had two statues, one in the agora. **Ephesus** knew also of a statue of **Messalina, V 464**. **Nero** is honoured in a municipal building - in the fishmarket? - by a dedication to **Nero and Agrippina, V 464**.

A statue of **Vespasian** is attested, likewise one of **Titus**, and **Domitian** had another in addition to the colossal one in the imperial temple, **V 464**.

**III) PT** lists various illustrations from coins:

- fig.243: four neocorate temples, **Elagabal (Artemision, Hadrian, Caracalla, Elagabal)**
- fig.412: neocorate temple - **Nero?**; here is something wrong: it may simply refer to the **Italic** temple of **Rome and Julius** in the upper agora from **19 B.C.**
- fig.122: **Domitian's** restoring of the **Capitolinum** in

Rome.

- various local temples: figs. 412 and 438.

F 40 (1924) "ephesion proton d neokoron", Valerian

F 224 (7873) "ephesion tris neokoron", Caracalla

F 350 (7880) "ephesion neokoron", Alexander  
Severus

F 358 (7878) "ephesion proton asias", Macrinus

F 489 (6578) cistophorus: "ceas divi f domitianus  
cos VII"

F 493 (6591) cistophorus: "domitia augusta".

## 25) HIERAPOLIS

I) Price lists a temple to the imperial family (P85),  
witnessed on Claudian coins, and an Elagabalan temple and  
neocorate (P86).

III) PT fig. 389 gives an imperial temple on a coin  
from Caracalla.

## 26) ICONIUM

II) V 492 lists a provincial version of a bust of  
Augustus in the Museo Capitolino, possibly from Iconium;  
a dedication connected with the rebuilding of the theatre; a  
possible Chief priest of Tiberius.

## 27) ILIUM

I) Antiochus I Soter had already a golden equestrian statue in the temple of Athena during his lifetime (Scott 1931, I p.102). Scott also quotes evidence for a temple to the Gens Flavia (op.cit.p.98, n.4), which Price only refers to as the "alleged Flavian sanctuary" (1984, p.250) and expresses doubts as to its actual realization (P 14), but V simply takes the identification for granted (p.458).

II) V 457 lists: a statue of Augustus, a dedication to Augustus on the temple to Athena Ilias, another statue from 12-11 B.C., a portrait (now in Berlin). V 458 lists a statue of Caius Caesar, from ca.1 B.C.

Tiberius had a statue in a building near the theatre, from local officials, another statue from A.D.32-33, and a portrait of the young Tiberius (now in Berlin), V 458.

A dedication to Claudius and Agrippina II in the stoa, and a dedication to the children of Claudius are listed in V 458.

The Flavian dynasty is honoured by an imperial temple (see above), and V 458 gives a list of donors who gave toward building the temple.

At nereby ALEXANDRIA TROAS Claudius had a statue from a local military commander, ca. A.D.37-41; Nero had a statue, ca. A.D.55-57, V 457.

I) The city had an imperial temple from the time of Domitian, dedicated to Domitian and Domitia (Scott 1936, p.86 ff; Price 1984 p.183), coins showing that it later was dedicated to Trajan and then to Caracalla. Price states that the city was neocorate from the time of Commodus and Caracalla (P 87).

II) V 473 lists: an inscription to Titus on the mouldings of the stadium; a statue base to Titus - in the stadium? - from A.D.79; a votive to Titus from the same year. V 474 lists an triple-arched gateway dedicated to Domitian, ca.A.D.88-90, here it is interesting to note that Domitian's name has been erased.

III) PT fig.23: the Roman forum with what is probably an imperial temple, Caracalla.

F 87 (3858) "laodikeon neokoron to pe" (pe=88=A.D.211/12) Caracalla

F 421 (3845) "domitianos kaisar sebastos germanikos domitia sebastē", Domitian

F 419 (3865) "laodikeon neokoron", Philip II.

## 29) LYSTRA

II) The site was finally located in 1885 by Sittington. A cult of Divus Augustus in this Roman colony is suggested by V, p.493, and epigraphic evidence indicates a possible temple to Augustus (See: Levick (1968)).

### 30) MILETUS

I) This is is one of the richer sites for the early days of the RIC. Price lists the following monuments:

- 1) Temple of Augustus (P 38)
- 2) Imperial altar in the council house (P 39)
- 3) Temple of Caius (P 40)
- 4) Neocorates under Elagabal (P 41)
- 5) Temple to Apollo Didymeios and the Sebastoi (P 42)

The exact location of the temple of Augustus is not known (Price, p.138), but it is usually located in the portico by the council house, where a large and magnificent imperial altar also was. Gaius had his temple in Milet - and its construction was perhaps ordered by Caius himself (see: Dio 59,28).

II) V 466 gives an honorary inscription to Augustus on the wall of the north Hall, and an honorary inscription in the theatre.

### 31) MYRA

II) V 408 lists a head of Augustus, now in the Antalya Museum. V 482 lists an inscription to Divus Caesar Augustus, corresponding to the colossal head in the Antalya Museum, from after A.D.14; a dedication to Augustus as "soter kosmou"; a statue to Tiberius.



### 32) MYTILENE

I) Mytilene on Lesbos knew a temple to Augustus (P 7), and later a possible temple to Commodus (P 8). The city of Eresus on the island knew a sanctuary and temple to the sons of Augustus, a sanctuary and temple to Livia, and a temple to Augustus (P 5). This city sent an embassy to Augustus in Rome, who granted them the cult (Price, p.257).

II) V 384 lists a head of Tiberius, from the gymnasium at Lesbos, from late in the reign of Augustus.

### 33) NEAPOLIS in Macedonia

II) V 421 gives only information from the second and third century.

### 34) NICAEEA

I) Nicaea had a temple of Rome and Julius Caesar (P 99), principally for the use of Roman citizens (Dio 51:20).

III) PT fig.189: sanctuary with imperial statues of Severus, Geta and Caracalla - Septimius Severus.

### 35) NICOMEDIA

I) This city, the capital of the province of **Bithynia** - where **Pliny** was proconsul - had a provincial temple to **Roma** and **Augustus**, to which **Hadrian** later was added (**P 100**). It also had a room for an association to **Vespasian** (**P 101**). **Pliny** himself was a keen collector of imperial busts and statues; he built a shrine to house them (**Ep. X,8**). **PT fig.390** gives a neocorate temple (from a coin of **Geta**), **fig.446** two neocorate temples, and **V p.453** lists a shrine to **Vespasian** from **A.D.70/71**.

II) **V 453** lists a shrine and temple to **Vespasian** from **A.D.70/71**, erected by **M.Plancius Varus**. **V 453** lists a cult of **Augustus** at the nearby **Prusa**.

III) **PT fig.390**: imperial temple, **Caracalla**;  
**fig.446**: galley with two neocorate temples, **Commodus**;  
**fig. 456**: temple of **Demeter** and two neocorate temples, **Severus Alexander**;

**F 109 (7141)** "nikomedeon tris neokoron", **Valerian**,  
**A.D. 154/55**

**F 110 (845)** "nokimedon dis neokoron", **Philip II**,  
**A.D. 244-46**

### 36) OLYMPIA

I) **Olympia** was very rich in monuments to the imperial race, as became a sanctuary to the **Olympian** gods. **P p.160** deals with the statues in the old **Metroon** which was turned into an imperial temple. They are: **Augustus**, **Agrippina I**, **Claudius**, **Domitia**, **Domitian**, **Julia Titi**

(all known from the statue bases, but some of the actual statues have been found). They are mentioned in **Pausanias V 20:9**. Here the imperial cult went further than the earlier ruler-cult in **Asia**. **Price**, p.55, quotes a famous inscription (**I Olympia 53**): "Since **Emperor Caesar**, son of **God**, god **Sebastos**, has by his benefactions to all men outdone even the **Olympian gods...**" (cfr. the hymn to **Demetrius Poliorcetes** in **Appendix 6**). **Price**, p.161, mentions that the temple to the **Olympian Zeus** also had an imperial statue.

**II) V 18-19** lists these monuments, and **V 415** describes the fragments of the cult statue of **Augustus** from the **Metroon** (now in the **Olympia Museum**). **V 434** lists: an inscription on an architrave block of the **Metroon** to **Augustus**, he places the statue base to **Augustus** at the **East** front of the temple to **Zeus**; a large base to **Tiberius**, **Nero Drusus**, **Drusus Junior**; statues of **Tiberius**; base to **Germanicus** and **Drusus Junior**, from **A.D. 14-19**; a statue of **Claudius** as **Zeus**, from the **Metroon**; a statue base to **Nero** as emperor; a **Latin** inscription to **Nero**, **A.D. 67**, from a commemorative structure with a fountain basin; a monument to **Nero** as **Princeps Iuventutis**, the cuirrassed statue of **Titus**, from the **Metroon**; **V 415** lists another cuirrassed statue of **Titus** and a civic statue; **V 434** lists a plaque - or statue base - to **Vespasian**; a draped statue of **Julia Titi**, from the **Metroon**; a plaque to **Domitian**; and the statue of **Domitia** in the **Metroon** (see: **V 19**); the statue of

Domitian from the Metroon (cfr.v 19).

### 37) PAPHOS

II) V 498 lists a statue to Livia and a statue of Julia "thea sebaste", a statue of Agrippa, and a dedication to Caius Ceasar from a pedestal holding his statue, a dedication to Tiberius in the temple of Aphrodite; a pedestal with a dedication to Caius Caligula, from the temple?; a statue of Domitian, with his name erased, in the temple of Aphrodite.

III) PT fig.266 shows the sanctuary of Aphrodite.

### 38) PELLA

III) PT fig.522 shows the walled city with some of its most important monuments.

### 39) PERGAMUM

I) The RIC has also left a profound imprint on the profile of the ancient capital of the Attalid kingdom which was bequeathed to Rome in 133 BC when Attaus III died. The city was among the very first to receive neocorates in Asia Minor. The relevant monuments are the following ones:

1) Temple to Rome and Augustus, in the upper city (P 19)

- 2) Temple of **Trajan** and **Zeus Philios**, on the acropolis (P 20)
- 3) Imperial room at the **Asclepieum** (P 21)
- 4) Temple to the younger **Faustina** ? (P 22)
- 5) Ionic temple of **Caracalla**, neocorate (P 23)

The temple to **Rome** and **Augustus** was the first imperial temple in the province of **Asia** (Price, p.133; Dio 51:20-21), decreed in 29 B.C. With this temple went festivals, especially a 3-day festival on the birthday of **Livia** and **Augustus** (Price, p.118), a custom which lasted into the early second century. **Pergamum** also knew a private association to **Augustus** and **Rome**.

The large temple to **Trajan** on the acropolis is the greatest monument to the imperial cult at **Pergamum**. As Price points out (p.137) it is an example of temple-sharing, the temple being principally a naos to **Zeus Philios**. This magnificent building in Roman architectural style is in the process of being restored by German archeologists. During my first visit to **Pergamum** in 1987 it consisted mainly of bits and pieces lying on the ground ready for erection. The year after it was already beginning to take shape, and can be seen from afar as one approaches this wonderful site. The temple was not finished before the death of **Trajan**, so, in fact, it became the temple principally for **Hadrian**. The two cult-statues have both been discovered and are on display at the museum of **Bergama**.

At the **Asclepieum** there was an imperial room off to one side of the large colonnaded court that formed the sanctuary. The base of a cult-statue of **Hadrian** has survived with the inscription theos adrianos (**Price**, op.cit.p.183). The **Ionic** temple taken to be a temple to **Caracalla**, who visited **Pergamum** and was healed at the **Asclepieum**, is originally a temple to **Zeus Asclepios**, visited by **Caracalla**, where he sacrificed and where there was a statue of a seated **Asclepios (Zeus Asclepios)**. No cult-statue of **Caracalla** has been found and **Price** doubts that the temple was a case of real temple-sharing.

**II) V 381** lists a **Pergamene** copy of the **Primaporta** type statue (now in the **Istanbul Archeological Museum**). **V 455** lists: a statue of **Julius Caesar** from **63 B.C.**; a dedication after **Pharsalia**, **48 B.C.**; a statue in the **Gymnasia**, from the same year; a dedication in the temple of **Athena**, also from **48 B.C.**; a statue of **Julius**, and a dedication; a statue of **Augustus**, after **29 B.C.**; a statue in the temple of **Athena**; a statue in the gymnasium; a statue, from the demos, another statue or dedication; a dedication to **Augustus**, **Livia** and the gods; heads of **Augustus**, **Agrippina I** and **Germanicus**; a dedication to **Livia**; a head of **Agrippina I** (now in **Istanbul**): a statue of **Tiberius**, before his adoption, a statue of **Tiberius** as **Caesar**; a statue of **Drusus Junior** from the temple of **Athena**; a statue of **Germanicus**, **A.D.18-19**; the same from the demos; head of **Tiberius** of a youthful kind (**Istanbul**). **V 456** lists: statue of



Julia Livilla - sister of Caligula - as Nea Nicephoros, having had a priestess in common with Athena Nicephoros and Athena polias; a statue of Claudius, as well as another statue or dedication. V 416 lists: a head of Vespasian (in the Museum) Domitian, formerly in the Pergamum Museum, now lost!

III) PT fig.3 shows the temple of Zeus Philios (sitting) and Trajan (standing), Trajan. Figs.30 and 454 show three neocorate temples: to Augustus, Trajan and Caracalla. Fig.349 shows the first of the neocorate temples, to Augustus, Augustus. Fig.439 shows a sacrificial scene before the temple of Caracalla. Fig.450 shows a column and two imperial temples, Commodus.

#### 40) PERGE

II) V 489 lists a dedication from a statue of Caligula; a statue to Claudius from the demos; a bilingual inscription from the gymnasium. The site is extremely rich in monuments to the later emperors of the second century. This city was neocorate under Valerian and Gallienus (Price 1984, p.271).

III) PT fig.338 shows an imperial eagle in a shrine.

#### 41) PHILADELPHIA

I) The city had an imperial temple and a neocorate from

the time of **Caracalla (P55)**.

#### 42) PHILIPPI

II) **V 383** lists: a head of **Caius Caesar** (in the **Philippi Museum**). **V 421-22** lists a dedication to **Tiberius and Drusus**, recut with titles of **Vespasian and Titus**.

III) **PT fig.416** shows a temple held by **Apollo** and the emperor.

#### 43) PRIENE

I) The following two works are the most important monuments to the imperial cult:

- 1) Temple to **Athena Polias** and **Augustus (P 43)**.
- 2) Sacred portico (**P 44**).

**Price** points out that the statue of **Athena Polias** was surrounded by imperial statues, the bases having survived with the inscriptions, as well as the head of **Claudius**. But there was no imperial cult statue of **Augustus** of the size of **Athena** herself, as the dedication might suggest. "**Priene** thus represents one way in which a traditional honorific practice could be extended to include the imperial family" (op.cit.p.150). The sacred portico, with a room sacred to **Augustus**, ran along one side of the main square (p.141).

II) **V 467** lists: an altar to **Athena Polias** and

**Augustus** on front of the temple of **Athena Polias**; a statue of **Julia**, from **12 B.C.**; a small statue of **Lucius Caesar** near the temple of **Athena**.

**V 468**: a dedication to **Tiberius** from a statue base; base to **Diva Drusilla**; a statue of **Domitian** from a small shrine in the court of the upper gymnasium. **V 388**: head of **Claudius** from a statue, from the temple of **Athena Polias**, from ca. **A.D. 50** (now in **London, Brit. Mus.,**).

#### 44) SALAMIS

**II) V 384** lists a head of **Lucius Caesar** (now in **Cyprus Museum**). **V 411** lists a limestone head of **Caligula** (**Cypr. Mus.**). **V 498** lists: altar to **Augustus**, rededicated to **Tiberius**, from a local **High Priest**; statue to **Livia**, during the lifetime of **Augustus**; dedications to **Caius** and **Lucius Caesar**; a dedication to **Nero**, from **A.D. 60**.

#### 45) SAMOS

**I) Samos**, the place where ruler cult began among the **Greeks** (the cult of **Lysander**, see: **Plutarch: Lys. 18, 4**), knew a temple of **Rome** and **Augustus** before **6 B.C.** (**P 10**). Its location is unknown, but it must have been separate from the **Heraeum**.

#### 46) SARDIS

I) Sardis knew three principal monuments to the RIC:

- 1) Temple to Augustus (P 56)
- 2) Temple of Artemis divided in two: cult-statues of Antoninus and Faustina (P 57)
- 3) Three neocorates under Elagabal

For the division of the Artemis temple Price states that there is "no obvious parallel for the reworking of a temple for the addition of another god" (Price 1984, p.152). Sardis is known to have decreed a festival and the consecration of a cult statue of Gaius Caesar (the adopted son of Augustus, deceased when young) in the temple of Augustus: an embassy went to Rome - and the request was granted.

III) PT fig.242 shows the three neocorate temples of the imperial cult, as well as the temple of Artemis/Kore, Elagabal. PT fig.328 shows two neocorate temples, Septimius Severus. F 1 (3143) gives Drusus and Germanicus: "droisos kai germanikos kaisares neoi theoi philadelphoi. F 393 (8259) gives the same coin as PT 424 with the legend "sardianon tris neokoron", Elagabal.

#### 47) SELGE

I) P 131 lists a temple to Aelius Verus.

#### 48) SIDE

I) **P 141** lists an imperial temple on a coin of **Salonina**, identical with the first neocorate from **Gallienus**, the temple having an imperial cuirrassed statue. This city had three neocorates under **Aurelian**.

II) **V 382** lists a head of **Augustus** from a draped 13 statue (civil), now in the **Side Museum**. **V 418** gives another head of **Augustus**. **V 489** lists: a statue of **Claudius** and a building dedicated to the emperor (or to **Nero?**). **V 490** lists a monument to the **Flavian** dynasty, with the statue of **Vespasian** in centre.

III) **PT fig.453** gives a temple to **Apollo** and two imperial temples. **Fig. 407** lists an unidentified temple, possibly imperial.

#### 49) SMYRNA

I) **Smyrna** had the following three monuments to the **RIC**:

- 1) Temple to **Tiberius**, **Livia** and the **Senate** (**P 45**)
- 2) Temple to **Hadrian** (**P 46**)
- 3) Portico in the main square (**P 47**)

On the imperial temple to **Tiberius**, **Livia** and the **Senate**, **Price** offers the interesting suggestion that, since **Tiberius** here is depicted in toga with veiled head, it is possible to interpret this as his functioning as imperial priest for his own cult (op.cit.p.185). The

main monument to the **RIC** is definitely the temple to **Hadrian**, which gave the city a second neocorate.

**II) V 383** gives an overlifesized head of **Caius Caesar**, from the date of **Claudius**, which "seems to be a cult head of **Caius Caesar**". **V 385** lists a head of **Tiberius**, of the youthful type (now in **Copenhagen**) and a head with wreath. **V 468** lists a statue of **Tiberius**, **A.D.4-14**, from the demos: a dedication to **Claudius** after his rebuilding of the theatre. **V 388** lists a head of **Claudius**, naturalistic, with crown and wreath (**Athens, Nat.Arch.Mus.**), and a head of the young **Claudius**, from before **A.D.41**, now on the art market. **V 418** lists a head of **Domitian**, but this is the cult statue from the **Flavian temple at Ephesus**, now in the **Archeological Museum at Selçuk**. **V 468** lists a bronze statue of **Domitian**.

**III) PT fig.455** shows the three temples of **Tiberius**, **Roma** and **Hadrian - Caracalla**.

**F 173 (8005)** "smyrnaion proton g neokoron ton sebaston", **Caracalla**

## **50) TARSUS**

**I) Tarsus** had several provincial temples, the first of which may go back to **Augustus (P 154)**, but the city counted its first neocorate temple from the time of **Hadrian**, the second from **Commodus**. **P 155** lists a temple to **Antinous(?)**, and **P 156** an aedícula of **Julia**



Domna.

II) V 497 gives, among other objects, a statue of Augustus, from the demos. An imperial bronze statuette in the Adana Museum is not listed by V. I saw this object, a remarkably fine one, during a visit to the site. It must have been in private possession, and as such belonging to the private sector of the cult. Such objects are extremely rare.

III) PT fig. 96-97 lists various shrines in the city, though not imperial ones.

#### 51) TEOS

I) Teos had a temple to Augustus, P 48.

III) PT fig. 356 shows the temple, with the portrait of Augustus in the centre.

#### 52) TERMESSUS

I) P 132-36 lists the imperial monuments at Termessus, the important ones being to Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

#### 53) THASOS

I) Price (op.cit. p.72, n.72) states that Thasos was refused imperial cult by Claudius, but nevertheless the city did have a priest to Claudius.

III) V 383 lists: a head of Lucius Caesar, and the

bits of a statue of **L**ucius as **H**ermes, with an inscription, from a heroon to the deceased, **A.D. 2-4** (now in **T**hasos **M**useum). **V 387** gives: a head of **C**laudius, with a jewelled corona civilis (now in the **L**ouvre); a head or bust (**T**hasos **M**us.). **V 450** lists: inscription to **R**oma and **A**ugustus, mentioning the construction of a marble shrine in the agora; a statue of **A**ugustus; an altar to **A**ugustus, found near the odeion; an inscription to **L**ivia, **J**ulia and her daughter **J**ulia, involving portraits, probably busts, from **12 B.C.**; a dedication to **C**laudius, from the agora.

#### 54) THERA

**I)** The city of **T**hera (on the site of the classical, doric city at **M**esa **V**ouno) knew, according to **P**rice (**P 11**), both a stoa basiliké and a oikos basilikos (an "imperial room") with statues of the following **A**ntonines: **F**austina, **M**arcus **A**urelius, **L**ucius **V**erus, **A**ntoninus **P**ius.

The city was attached to the province of **A**sia. The famous vulcano which has made this island one of the natural wonders of the earth had minor eruptions in **A.D. 60**, under **N**ero, as witnessed by **P**liny the **E**lder. **P**rice suggests a connection between this eruption and the marine phenomena in **Rev. 6:14; 8:8-9; 16:3, 20**.

**II)** **V 450** lists: an altar to **O**ctavianus **C**aesar, found near the temple of **D**ionysos; statue head of **A**ugustus; marble head of **A**ugustus; marble base of **T**iberius as patron

of the gymnasium; base of a statue to **Claudius** in orchestra of the theatre; statue of **Claudius** found near by.

## 55) THESSALONICA

I) The site has, naturally, never been properly excavated. It is one of the richest sites in **Greece**, also in relation to the **RIC**. The evidence is therefore scarce and far from satisfactory.

II) **V 380** lists: a heroic statue of **Augustus**, head of the **Primaportatype** (**Thess.Mus.**). **V 471** lists a heroic statue of **Augustus** (**Thess.Mus.**), an overlifesized front of a head of **Julius Caesar** (**Thess.Mus.**). **V 422** lists a relief from the socket of a gate with **Vespasian** and **Titus** (or: **Titus** and **Domitian**) portrayed as the **Dioskouri**.

III) **PT fig.458** shows four neocorate temples on a coin, **Trajan Decius**.

## 56) THYATIRA

I) This city did not have any imperial temples, but the **RIC** was nevertheless represented, by a "royal room" - basilikos oikos - a special room in a larger public complex, and not a temple (**P 59**). The city would also have known statues and shrines in stoas and squares.

II) **V 462** lists a dedication to **Augustus**, a bilingual milestone to **Vespasian**, the same to **Domitian** - from

**A.D.92 - and Nerva.**

**III) PT fig.368** shows a temple to **Roma, Severus Alexander.**

### **57) TRALLES**

**I) According to Price** Tralles knew of a temple to **Augustus (P 60)** and a neocorate from the time of **Caracalla (P 61)**, the latter attested from coins. The temple to **Victoria** had a statue of **Caesar**, probably reflecting the tradition that there was an important portent at the battle of **Pharsalos**, where **Victoria** was doing homage to the statue of **Caesar (Caesar: Bell.Civil: 3:105; Plut.Caesar, 47).**

**II) V 463** lists: a statue to **Julius Caesar**, a priestess to **Agrippina I**, a statue of **Claudius**, a headless inscribed statue (cuirrassed) of **Nero** (now in **Istanbul**). **V 386** lists a bust of **Antonia**. **V 389** lists another headless statue of **Nero**, cuirrassed, and identified by the inscription: "nerona klaudion theou klaudoiu kaisaras yiou".

**III) PT fig.477** shows an imperial temple next to the temple to **Zeus, Caracalla.**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The strength of **Price's** work is his systematic way of demonstrating that the **RIC** in the **Greek east** was based on the divine cult - i.e. the cult of the traditional gods -

and not of hero-cult. This is his model all through the work, and his catalogue - from which we have given many examples above - shows how this works from an architectural point of view. The architecture of the imperial temples appears very traditional - Greek or Roman - and are not externally distinguishable from other temples. Price's insistence on temple-sharing in most of these cases - that of the emperor sharing the cultic space with one of the traditional gods - indicates a rather complex relationship between the emperor and the gods, the one discussed by Nock (see: Appendix 1). The emperor is thus not on the same level as the Olympians and their associates, but nevertheless belongs to their sphere and enjoys their protection. But temple-sharing is not the only model in use. Many of the listed temples and shrines are devoted solely to the emperor.

We have seen from the catalogue that the emperor moves into the most important space of the Greek city and transforms it, as e.g. seen at Ephesus and Pergamum. The imperial temples and sanctuaries are thus generally located in the most prominent and prestigious positions available within the city. There are two models: the inclusion of the emperor within the traditional religious space of a city - and civic space proper to the RIC only. - This catalogue has attempted to illustrate both.

Such a double possible solution of the problem posed by the RIC indicates a special kind of relationship between the emperor and the city, which was discussed in

Chapter 2. Under Roman rule the Greek city saw a structural change (e.g. at the Ephesian quare) which Price refers to as "formalization" (p.140ff.). The RIC was an attempt by the city to find a position for the ruler - within the civic space rather than in a separate one. Price sees this "ordering of space" as a representation of socia ideas and as a part of the fabric of reality.



**APPENDIX 5:**

**THE HYMN TO DEMETRIUS  
POLIORCETES**

We have only one liturgical text, so to speak, from ruler cult in antiquity: the hymn to **Demetrius Poliorcetes** - on behalf of the **Athenians**, the occasion being **Demetrius'** return from **Corcyra** to **Athens** in **291** - which offers remarkably explicit evidence on the psychology of ruler worship. The opposition to his cult at **Athens** was due, not to religious grounds, but to political rivalries. The text is preserved thanks to **Duris of Samos**, who in **Book 22** of his "**Histories**" (**FGH 76 F 13**) quotes the actual ithyphallic hymn, as it is preserved by **Atheneus** in his "**Deipnosophistae**" **VI.253 b-f**.

The following English translation is taken from:  
**M.M.Austin: The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman conquest. A selection of ancient sources in translation, Cambridge, CUP 1981, pp.64-65.**

"How the greatest and dearest of the gods have come to the city! For the hour has brought together **Demeter** and **Demetrius**; she comes to celebrate the solemn mysteries of her **Daughter Persephone**, while he is here full of joy, as befits the god, fair and laughing. His appearance is majestic, his friends all around him and he in their midst,

as though they were the stars and he the sun. Hail son of the most powerful god Poseidon and of Aphrodite! For the other gods are either far away, or they do not have ears, or they do not exist, or do not take any notice of us, but you we can see present here; you are not made of wood or stone, you are real. And so we pray to you: first bring us peace, dearest; for you have the power. And then, the Sphinx that rules not only over Thebes but over the whole of Greece, that Aetolian phinx sitting on a rock like the ancient one, who seizes and carries away all our people, and I have no defence against her (for it is an Aetolian habit to seize the property of neighbours and now even what is far afield). Most of all punish her yourself; if not find an Oedipus who will either hurl down that sphinx from the rocks or reduce her to ashes".

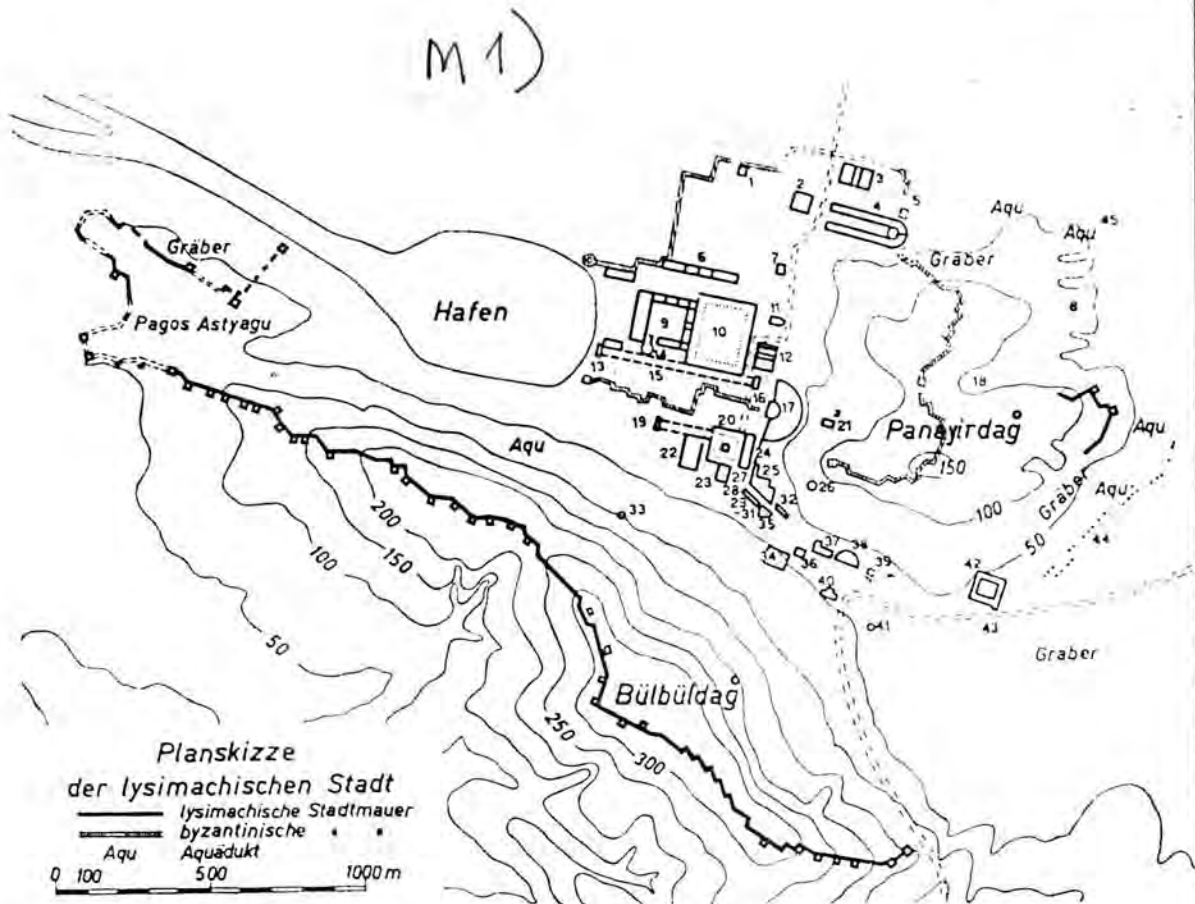
**APPENDIX 6:**

**MAPS**

- M 1) Map of Ephesus (Altzinger 1962, p.249)**
- M 2) Map of historical strata of buildings at Ephesus (Bammer 1988, p.160)**
- M 3) Ephesus: Gebäude an der oberen Agora (Bammer 1988, pp.48-49)**
- M 4) Ephesus: Gebäude an der Kuretenstrasse (Bammer 1988, pp.46-47)**
- M 5) Ephesus: Domitiantempel (Altzinger 1972, p.46)**
- M 6) Ephesus: Obere Agora, Detail aus dem Modell der Ephesosausstellung im Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien (Bammer 1988, Pls.27-28)**

W. Altzinger: Die Stadt des siebenbürgischen  
Weltwunders, Wien 1962  
P. 248

Anhang

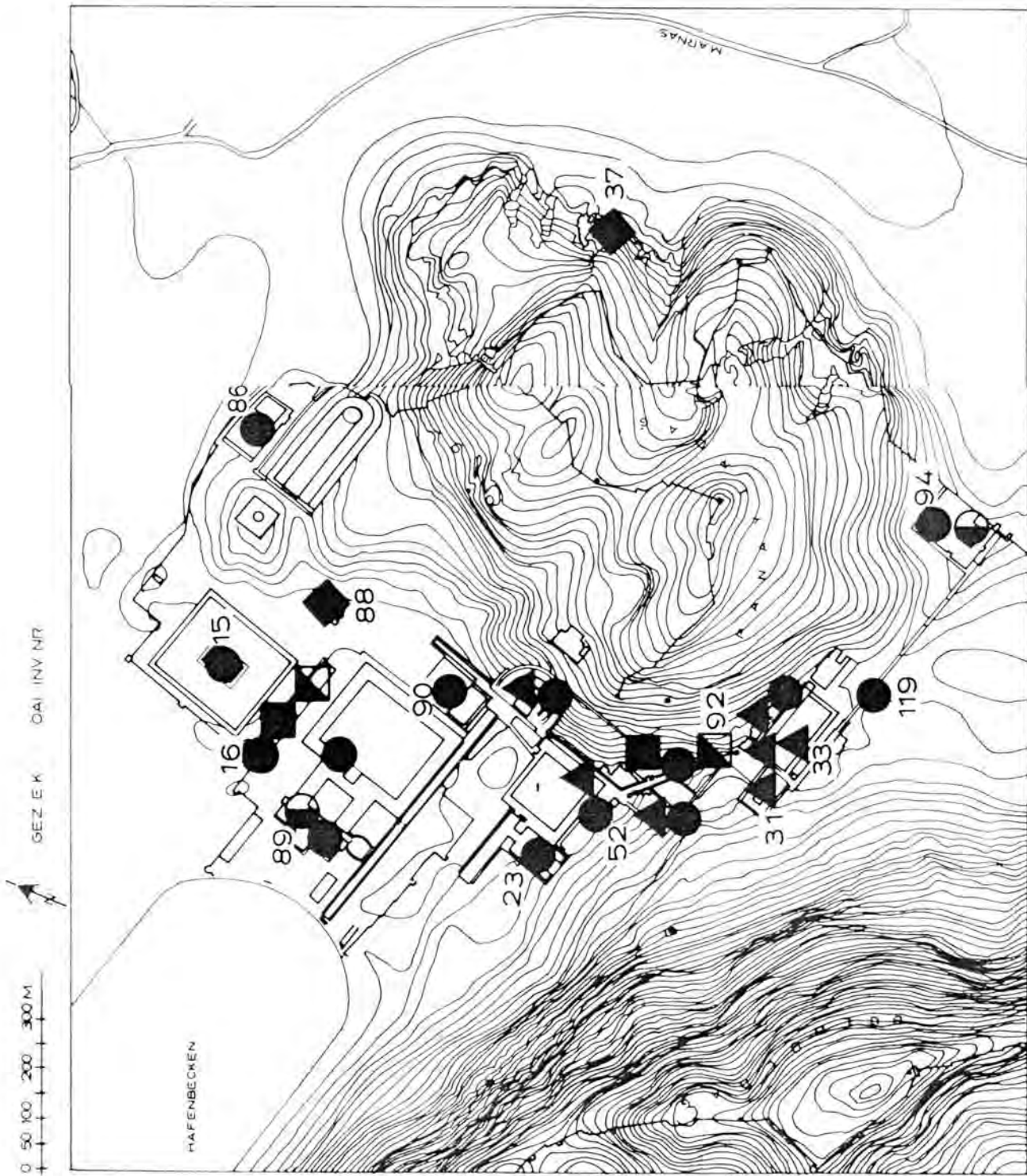


1. Sogenannter Apollotempel, S. 194
2. Rundbau (Macellum?), S. 195
3. Vedio gymnasium, S. 179 ff.
4. Stadion, 158 f.
5. Korinthisches Tor (?), S. 16, 144 f. u. 167 ff.
6. Marienkirche, S. 129 ff.
7. Sogenanntes byzantinisches Bad, S. 216 ff.
8. Siebenschläferbezirk, S. 171 ff.
9. Hafenthermen und Gymnasium, S. 53 ff.
10. Sogenannte Verulanushallen, S. 63
11. Apsidenbau beim sogenannten Taufbecken des Johannes, S. 169
12. Theatergymnasium, S. 195 ff.
13. Hafentor der Arkadiane, S. 66 ff., südlich davon Kaibau, S. 51 f.
14. Kolonnaden, S. 64
15. Arkadiane, S. 65 f.
16. Torbau, S. 66
17. Großes Theater, S. 72 ff.
18. Armenische Kirche, S. 44 f.
19. Tor, S. 92
20. Agora, S. 92 ff.
21. Wohnhaus — Banketthaus, S. 197 ff.
22. Serapeion, S. 159 ff.
23. Celsusbibliothek, S. 108 ff.

24. Marmorstraße und Dorische Halle, S. 105 ff.
25. Scholastikiatherme, Hadriantempel und Pheidiaskeion (Freudenhaus), S. 218 ff. u. 230 ff.
26. Rundbau auf dem Panayir dag, S. 84 ff.
27. Auditorium und hellenistisches Rundmonument, S. 128 ff.
28. Propylon, S. 122 f.
29. Nymphäum (Heroengrab), S. 123 f.
30. Oktogon, S. 124 ff.
31. Heroon, S. 121 (Planskizze)
32. Nymphäum Traiani, S. 235 ff.
33. Frühkaiserzeitliches Kuppelgrab
34. Domitiantempel, S. 202 ff.
35. Hainhaus, S. 240 u. 245 f.
36. Sockelbau, Polihobau und Pollonynphäum, S. 240 ff.
37. Rathaus und Wohnhaus, S. 221 ff. u. 246
38. Sogenanntes Odeion u. Stierkopfhalle, S. 152 ff.
39. Variusbau, S. 197
40. Fontane, S. 155 ff.
41. Sogenanntes Lukasgrab, S. 156 ff.
42. Ostgymnasium, S. 199 ff.
43. Magnesisches Tor, S. 21 f.
44. Damianus-Stoa, S. 23 f.
45. Meter-Heiligtum, S. 168 f.

- 17 Römischer Ringhallentempel
- 16 Marienkirche
- 23 Serapeion
- 11 „Domitianstempel“
- 13 Tempel auf der Agora
- 17 Siebenschläferkirchen
- 52 Grab des Celsus
- 86 Vedusgymnasion
- 88 sog. byzantinisches Bad
- 90 Halenthermen (Constantiusthermen)
- 92 Theatergymnasion
- 94 Scholastikaetherme (Bad des Varius)
- 119 Ostgymnasion
- Straßenbrunnen

M 2)



- ▲ 1. JH. N. CHR.
  - 2. JH. N. CHR.
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  - 4. JH. N. CHR.
  - ◻ 5. JH. N. CHR.
  - ◆ 6. JH. N. CHR.
- Z 31 Verteilung datierter Bauwerke in Ephesos, zur Anschauung

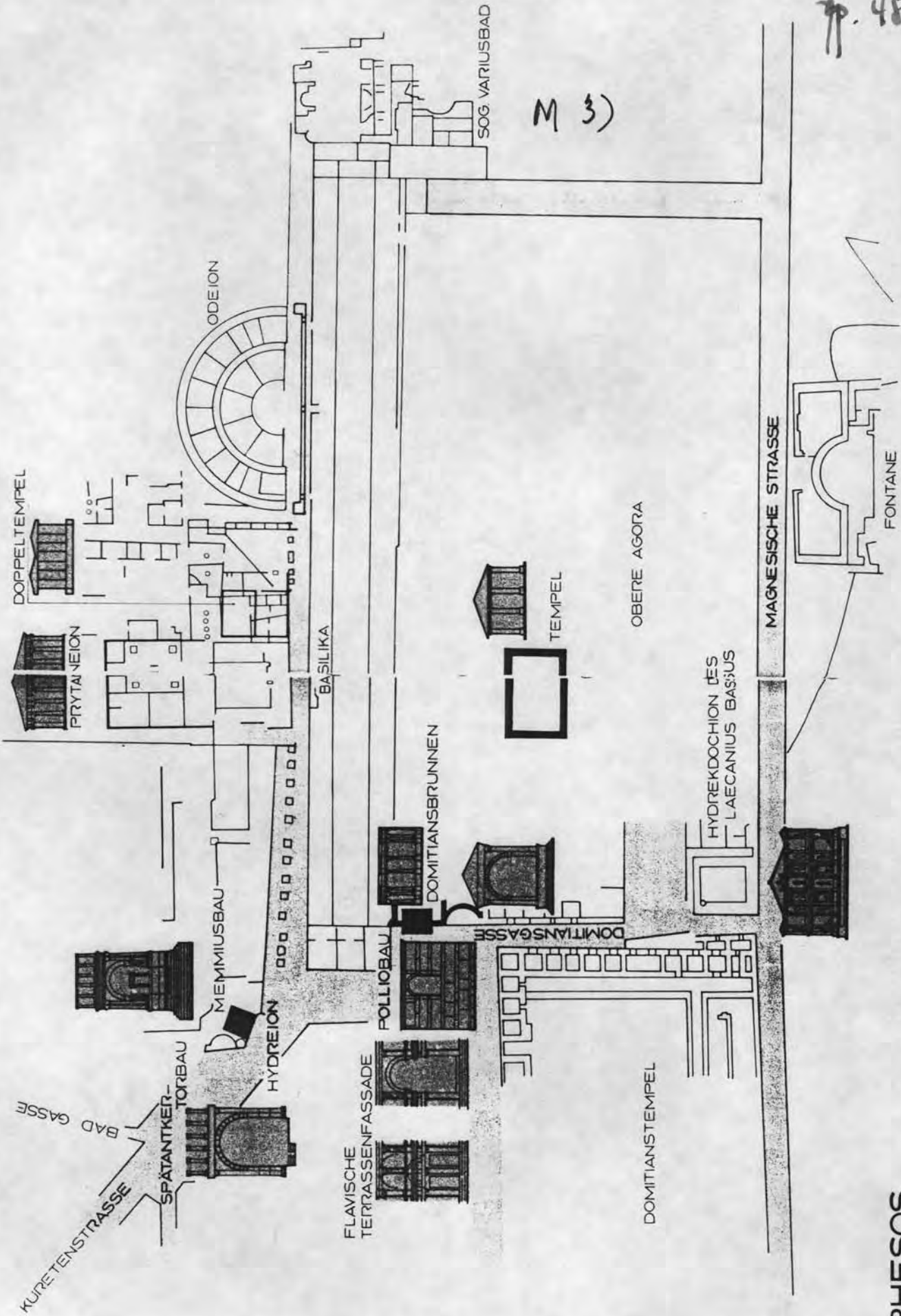


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A. Bammer (1988)

pp. 48-49

M 3)

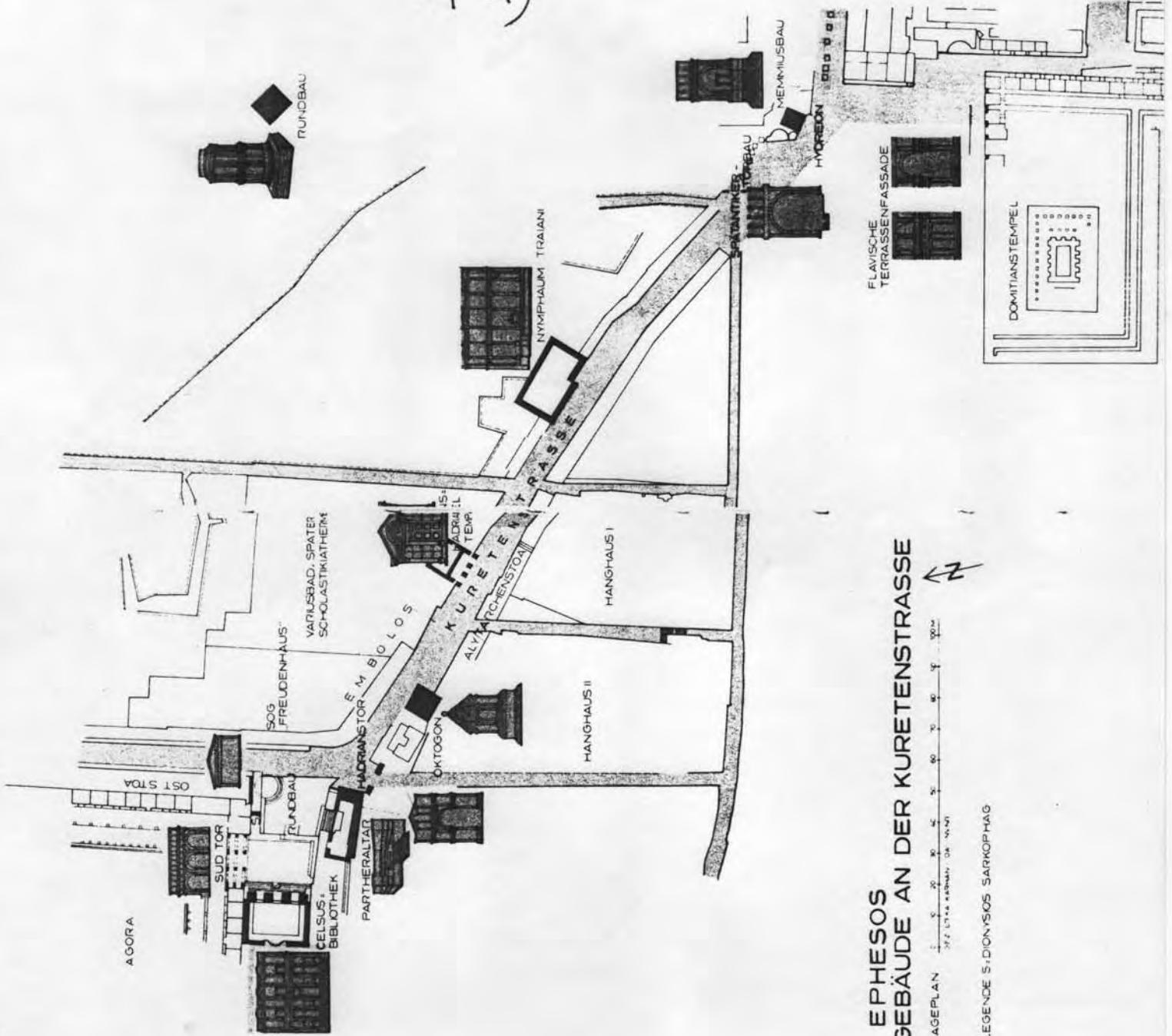


# EPHESOS GEBÄUDE AN DER OBEREN AGORA

LAGEPLAN



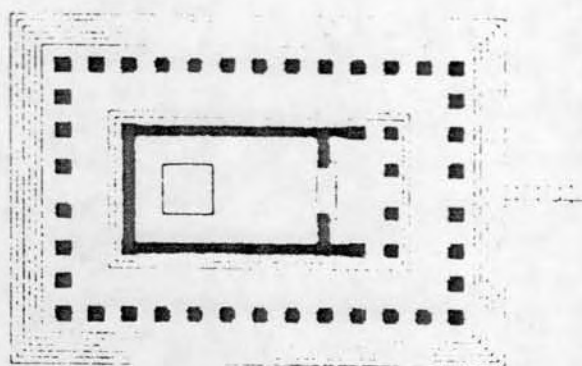
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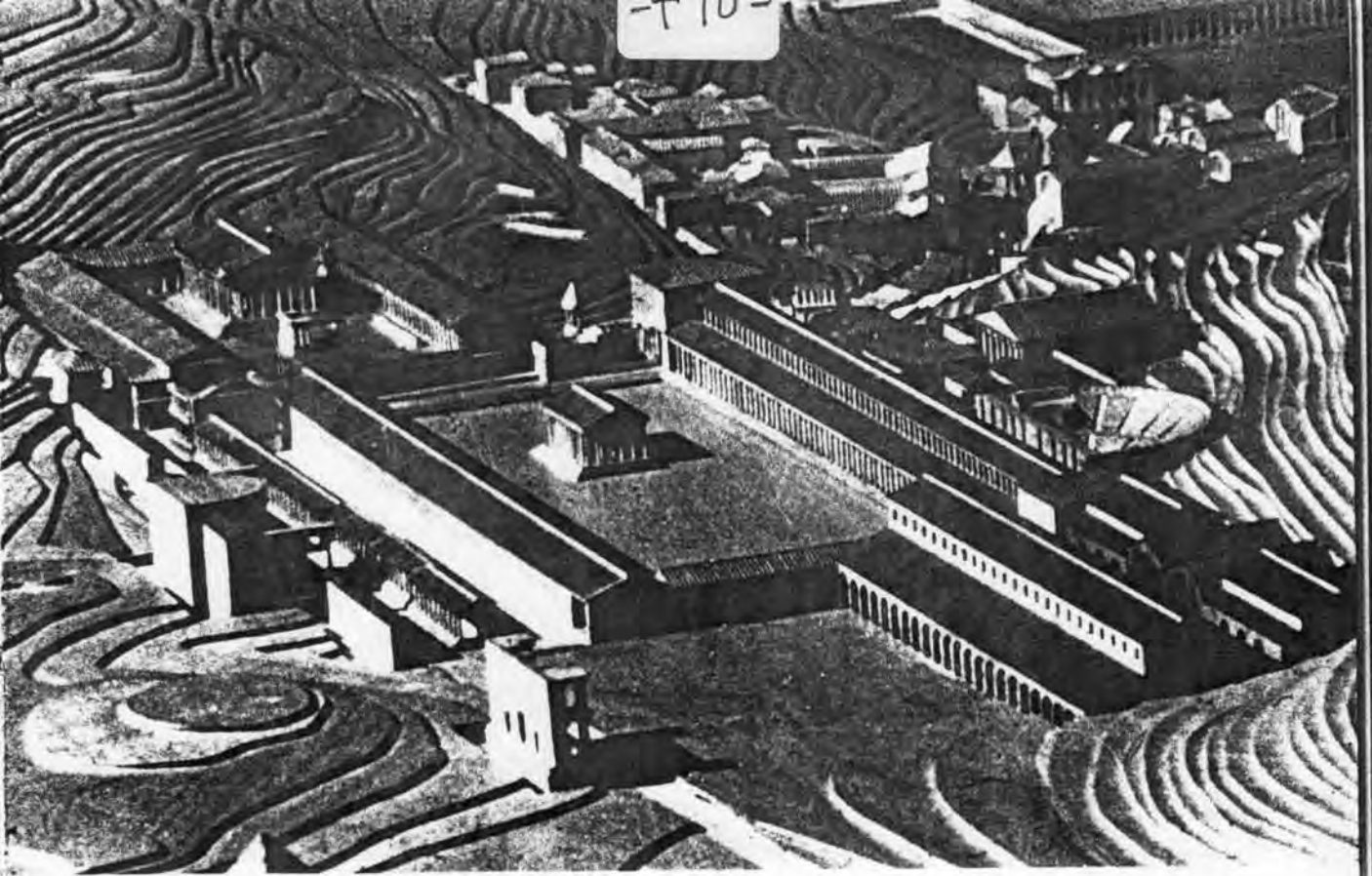
Domitiantempel



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Rekonstruierter Grundriß des Domitiantempels  
(M. Theuer)

W. Atzinger (1972) 7.46



- 6)
- 27 Obere Agora, Detail aus dem Modell der Ephesosausstellung im Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien, Photo Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
  - 28 Domitiansplatz, Blick von der Domitiansgasse auf die Architekturcollagen des Domitiansbrunnens und des Polliobaues



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The bibliography consists of two parts: ancient writers and modern writers. For the second part I have used the name-date system, and this part of the bibliography includes monographs, articles and some works of reference, though most of these are quoted in the **ABBREVIATIONS**.

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