

BOOK REVIEW

The Divination of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequence, Implications. By MICHAEL KOORTBOJIAN. Cambridge University Press, 2013. \$90.00. ISBN 978-0-521-19215-6.

In this work, Koortbojian examines the new institution of divinization that emerged as a political phenomenon at the end of the Roman Republic with the deification of Julius Caesar. He begins with Cicero's discussion in the *de natura deorum* and elsewhere of the theories of Euhemerus' conception of the gods—as former mortals who have been deified because of their accomplishments—and his objection to the application of such ideas to support Julius Caesar's deification. Koortbojian then examines the substance of these arguments.

Koortbojian's special interests include Roman Art and Architecture, and, accordingly, his interpretations are colored by these interests. As he acknowledges, he has "tried to offer a wide-ranging investigation of several specific historical phenomena, and in so doing was compelled to enter fields that are hardly my own" (xvi). He has, however, made many valuable observations on the Roman attitude toward deification and manifestation of it, beginning with Cicero's discussion (*De Legibus* 2.17, etc., p. 2) of Euhemerus' "conception of the gods as former men and women who had been elevated to the heavens." In discussing Cotta's attack on Epicureanism (*De natura Deorum* 1.119), Koortbojian points out Cicero's own desire to "build a monument, not a tomb, for his dead daughter—which would incur a fine" (2-3). He also cites "Seneca's description of the honors for Gratidianus" <the grandfather of M.T. Cicero ...which would correspond to> "a standard form employed by the Romans for Divine Worship...none of these episodes suggests that any of the actions *made* the objects of such acts into gods—that was a matter for the state to decide, and would only come to pass with the case of Caesar" (4).

Koortbojian maintains that the honors given to Caesar in his lifetime did not make him a god: "It was in the aftermath of C's assassination that the true topicality of Euhemerus' doctrines emerged." Koortbojian proceeds to discuss the process

and repercussions of the new 'divinization' process that attended Caesar's, and then Augustus' elevation to this status. Koortbojian then focuses on the imagery representing Divus Julius, which he argues was amalgamated from a series of models, followed by the gradual development of the monuments elaborated following the apotheosis of Augustus. This new institution then became conventional, and this in turn undermined its significance, but it ultimately transformed Roman society and its relationship to the gods, first articulating "a new status first for the dead, and eventually for the living, *Caesares*" (10).

In each chapter, Koortbojian examines particular aspects of this process, focusing on Julius Caesar, but then considering the repercussions on the representations of Augustus. Examining the three possible predecessors of Divus Julius—Hercules, Aeneas, and Romulus—Koortbojian observes that "not all three ... actually received <a> cult at Rome ... an Aeneas cult is firmly attested at Lavinium and possibly at Alba Longa. And for Romulus, although a long tradition places his hut on the Palatine, his tomb in the Forum Romanum, and a statue at the *Ficus Ruminalis* erected by the Ogulnii in 296 ... the sources offer no evidence of cult; it was Quirinus—Romulus' divinized form—who would receive a cult and a temple. Thus, of the three it was Hercules alone who was to have a sanctuary and altar at Rome." He argues that "none of these three mythic figures ... could provide a true precedent when, in 42 B.C, the Romans of historical times first resolved to make a man a god." (20-21) He maintains that "cult, not *gloria*, transformed" (22) Caesar and Augustus.

Koortbojian subsequently examines the minutiae—the statues, the symbols, the images (especially the numismatic imagery), and the structures—of their cults, particularly that of Divus Julius, but also of his imperial descendants, especially Augustus. The details of the emperor's clothing and implements (such as Quirinus' *lituus*) undergo striking modifications (e.g., 92, 150-1, etc.). He shows how the living emperors continually supplanted their predecessors as the primary object of the cult, and the symbols of the emperor's power "were a matter of perennial reconception" (235).

This is a useful examination of the physical evidence, more than of the philosophical and literary evidence and interpretations of their divinations, although Koortbojian does venture some interesting insights here, too. This book which, in keeping with its topic, has numerous illustrations, is attractively produced. Aside from a few minor typos, the one improvement I would suggest would be consistency in including identification of ancient sources cited (e.g., on 19 one has to

dig deeply into a very long footnote to identify the quotes from *Aen.* 2, 8, etc.). (At other times the identification is included in the text, as on page 1.)

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