

BETWEEN MAN AND GOD: SACRIFICE IN THE ROMAN IMPERIAL CULT*

By S. R. F. PRICE

Because men addressed 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.

This passage from a biography of Augustus by a contemporary writer, Nicolaus of Damascus, gives a rare picture of the way in which the emperor was honoured in his lifetime throughout the provinces of the empire.¹ The temples and sacrifices to which it refers formed part of a nexus of cultic honours, classified by the Greeks as *isotheoi timai*, honours equivalent to those given to the gods, which also included priests, festivals and games. This form of royal ritual stretched back in the Greek lands three hundred years to the time of Alexander the Great and beyond and constitutes a fundamental aspect of the relationship between subject and ruler in the ancient world.²

An immense amount has been written about ruler cult in antiquity, including over 1,500 items about the imperial cult in the past twenty years, but it would generally be agreed that the subject has reached an impasse. Little advance has been made in our understanding of the imperial cult since the fundamental studies by Nock and Taylor fifty years ago. Various factors have militated against progress in this field. Scholars have in general operated with a sharp distinction between politics and religion, which has not been helpful. Historians of religion, recognizing the *prima facie* claims of ruler cult to be classed as a religion, have in fact tended to argue that it is actually a manifestation of the decline of the cult of the gods. Nilsson, for example, talking of the fifth century B.C., argued that 'the origin of the cult of men in Greece is to be sought in the convulsions of the dying religion'.³ The allegedly moribund religion had a mere seven centuries to run before its final extinction at the hands of Christianity; but this argument, if in a more moderate form, has long been the orthodoxy. In fact, the idea of the decline of traditional cults needs to be entirely rethought,⁴ and with it the relationship of ruler cult to these traditional cults.

The corollary of the refusal to see ruler cult as a meaningful religion is to treat it as essentially political. Thus Taylor argued that it was 'more a matter of practical politics than of religion'.⁵ Two reasons are given for this. Some argue, particularly in the context of the western provinces of the Roman empire, that the cult was centrally promoted and exploited, others that the subjects manipulated it for their own diplomatic advantage. These are rationalistic arguments that tend to imply a cynical model of human motivation, with an unacceptable gap between consciousness and ideology.⁶

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. It is symptomatic of the state of scholarship that little attention is given to imperial ritual proper in the majority of the papers in a volume which constitutes the most recent major contribution to the subject.⁷ Here I want to look in detail at sacrifices, which formed one element of the religious system of *isotheoi timai* described by Nicolaus of Damascus. These have not so far been given sufficient attention in studies of ruler cult. Habicht's fundamental work on Hellenistic ruler cult did include some pages on sacrifices but without much analysis.⁸ The evidence in Latin has been collected,⁹ but the material from the Greek part of the empire has not been

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¹ *FGH* 90 F 125.

² C. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte*² (1970), cited as Habicht.

³ M. P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*² (1952), 288 (and 285); also *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* II² (1961), 182, 'Verfallerscheinung', cited as Nilsson.

⁴ J. A. North, 'Conservatism and Change in Roman Religion', *PBSR* 44 (1976), 1.

⁵ L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (1931), 35, 237, 238, cited as Taylor.

⁶ L. Althusser, *For Marx* (1969), 231-6.

⁷ *Le culte des souverains dans l'empire romain* (ed. W. den Boer, Entretiens Hardt XIX (1973)).

⁸ Habicht, 138-9, 147 n. 34; R. J. Mellor, *ΘΕΑ ΠΩΜΗ* (1975), 156-8.

⁹ A. S. Hoey in R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, W. F. Snyder, 'The *Feriale Duranum*', *YCS* 7 (1940), 1 ff., esp. 173-202.

systematically studied. As it is important not to produce a hasty amalgam of elements from different periods and places, I shall limit myself primarily to this area, covering roughly the two hundred and fifty years from Augustus to the time when civic ritual petered out in the third century.

This material does however have some shortcomings. We are not fortunate enough to possess a complete ethnographic account of any one imperial sacrifice. There is indeed only one extant prose description of any Graeco-Roman sacrifice.¹⁰ The bulk of the evidence consists of inscribed descriptions of and prescriptions for the sacrifices, and these are patchy and fragmentary. The regulations for the privileges of a priestess at Athens show that care was taken over the division of the sacrificial animal, but they merely specify those aspects concerning the priestess (below p. 34). More informatively, regulations from Mytilene show that parts of the victims were to be placed on the cult table, presumably beside the cult statue of Augustus, but, tantalizingly, they then break off (below p. 34 f.). Thus in no case do we know the full details of the slaughtering of the animal and the division of the parts between emperor, priest and others, an aspect of the process which could have been crucial evidence for ideas about the sacrifices. The problem is that such regulations specify only what was open to doubt, not what was taken for granted. What we have to work with are essentially the formulae used to describe the sacrifices. It is not possible to penetrate beyond them to the actual event to see if the actions and words were coherent with their public descriptions, but the ways that the sacrifices were described are vitally important evidence for the underlying conceptions of the sacrifices.

My aim is to demonstrate that sacrifices were a way of articulating a large body of unformulated thought concerning the emperor by means of subtle modifications of the practices of divine ritual. In other words the sacrifices formed an important part of a cognitive system, which should be seen as hovering on the border between preconscious and conscious. This approach to ritual avoids the common tendency of searching for the anachronistic, Christian value of *religio animi* and of assuming that it is the feelings of individuals that provide the sole test of significance for the ritual. The spirit in which a ceremony is carried out is important, but emotions should not be seen as primary phenomena generating and validating the ritual. Religion should be treated not as an emotional but as an intellectual enterprise which attempts to provide a way of interpreting and ordering reality.¹¹

My argument will run counter to two standard positions. One holds that the Greeks were 'sincere' in giving the divine honours, but did not mean to imply by them that the emperor was a god; they were just honours. The other position thinks that this implication did follow. For instance, a recent textbook of imperial history says that by the mid-second century the emperor had been 'long an unquestioned god in the East'.¹² Similarly Taylor wrote that Augustus, in succession to the 'divine kings of the Hellenistic monarchies', in the Asiatic provinces and the Greek lands was 'frankly worshipped by cities and leagues of cities as a deity incarnate'.¹³ My analysis differs from these in terms of what the honours actually were, and to this factual disagreement is added a different methodological approach to the implications of the honours. I intend first to analyse the different types of imperial sacrifices (I-III), then to discuss their role in a Christian context (IV) and the changing nature of ruler sacrifice in the Hellenistic period and under Roman influence (V), and finally to set imperial sacrifices in the context of Greek religion (VI).

Imperial sacrifices were made on a variety of occasions, public and private, by individuals or by representatives of city or province. Sometimes libations¹⁴ or ritual cakes¹⁵ were offered but the burning of incense, perhaps on special altars,¹⁶ or the killing of an animal, normally

¹⁰ Dion. Hal. VII, 72, esp. 15-18. Nor is it clear how much more would be added if we had more of Varro's account of Roman public rites (Bk. XIII). For general reconstructions of Greek sacrifices see W. Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', *GRBS* 7 (1966), 87, esp. 102-13; *Homo Necans* (1972), 8-20; and *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (1977), 101-15.

¹¹ e.g. C. Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (ed. M. Banton (1966)), 1 = *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), 87.

¹² A. Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines* (1974), 468.

¹³ Taylor, 244.

¹⁴ *Clara Rhodos* VI-VII, 435 no. 54 = *Annuario* 27-9 (1949-51), 224 no. 87a (Camirus); below n. 18.

¹⁵ *I. Pergamum* 374 = L. Ziehen, I. de Prot, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae* I, 27 = *IGR* IV, 353 (Pergamum). *Popana* could be offered to both gods and heroes: F. Sokolowski, *LSCG*, 52; L. Ziehen, *RE* XI, 2094-9; H. W. Pleket, *HThR* 58 (1965), 342.

¹⁶ *SEG* XI, 923 (Gytheum); *IGR* IV, 353 (n. 15). For altars see p. 34.

a bull, were the standard offerings at public festivals.¹⁷ We are fortunate to possess some representations of these scenes of sacrifice, both of libations¹⁸ and of the sacrifice of a bull before an imperial statue or temple.¹⁹ While I shall try to bring out something of the nature of these public imperial festivals in the course of my discussion, a vivid picture of a private celebration is given by the regulations of the hymnodes of Rome and Augustus at Pergamum.²⁰ The hymnodes constituted an association involved in provincial imperial cult but they also performed their own ritual within the association, meeting on a variety of occasions in their own building, the hymnodeion. The various officials had to provide wine, money, bread, garlands and other accoutrements for the hymnodes. New members who did not inherit their father's position had to pay a fixed sum 'towards the sacrifices of Sebastos and Roma'. Hymns were sung beside the altar during sacrifices, which perhaps consisted of wine. Ritual cakes, incense and lamps were offered to Augustus, the last perhaps for illuminating the images of Roma and the emperors. The inscription gives a very intense picture of the practice of imperial ritual and sacrifices.

But distinctions must be drawn between types of sacrifices. It was possible to differentiate between heroic and divine sacrifices (*enhagismata* and *thysiai*), and it is of great importance that heroic sacrifices were never specified as the appropriate form of cult for Hellenistic kings or Roman emperors. Thus the sacrifices included in the *isotheoi timai*, whose propriety Arrian says was debated at the court of Alexander, were not heroic but divine.²¹ However, within this category of sacrifices a crucial distinction existed between sacrifices to and sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. Philo, who went on an embassy of Alexandrian Jews to the emperor Gaius, says that when they finally succeeded in gaining an audience with Gaius in connection with the troubles in Alexandria, they were greeted by an emperor who accused the Jews of being god-haters who refused to acknowledge his divinity.²² The opposing embassy of Alexandrian Greeks then accused the Jews of not having offered sacrifices of thanksgiving for Gaius. The Jews denied this vehemently, pointing out that they had done so three times. 'All right', Gaius replied, '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?' The problems of the source, which is the only one to make this distinction explicitly, are obvious: the Jewish Philo may have been more sensitive to religious nuances than the Greeks, while Gaius was hardly a typical emperor. But the distinction is in fact latent elsewhere.²³ Sacrifices were never made on behalf of the gods, with one exception,²⁴ and literary sources sometimes make it clear that to sacrifice to a man was to treat him as a god.²⁵ The distinction is also crucially presupposed by imperial pronouncements on sacrifices for, according to Dio, Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius all prohibited sacrifices to themselves (or their *tyche*), though Gaius of course later reversed his policy.²⁶

This distinction was clearly important at a very obvious level, but I want to go on to argue that there was a whole range of nuances and hesitations about the closeness of the emperor to the gods, which we can approach by a careful study of the language used to describe such sacrifices. The emphasis in the sources is on sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. Thus a contemporary could imagine that 'the whole world sacrificed and prayed on behalf of the emperor's eternal duration and unconquered rule'.²⁷ Before turning to other forms of imperial sacrifices, I want to explore in some detail the contexts in which the sacrifices were performed in order to prove their importance and to show how they served to modify the *isotheoi timai*.

¹⁷ IGR IV, 555 = L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*² (1971), no. 133, in part (Ancyra, Phrygia. Twelve bulls); SEG XVIII, 491 = ZPE 14 (1974), 77 ff. (Smyrna. Up to twelve); IGR III, 157 = OGIS 533 = Bosch 51 (Ancyra. Hecatomb, not necessarily very large, P. Stengel, RE VII, 2786-7; Kultusaltertümer³ (1920), 119); I. Cret. I, 11 no. 9 (Arcades. Heifer); IG VII, 2712 (Acraephiae. Taurothysia); also below nn. 19, 29, 70, 72.

¹⁸ J. Keil, A. von Premerstein, *Zweite Reise*, 107 no. 209 (= IGR IV, 1372. Ajas Euren); Arch. Anz. 1903, Beib. 39 no. 3 (Prusa).

¹⁹ H. von Fritze, *Die Münzen von Pergamum* (1910), 76-7, pl. VIII, 15; below p. 33.

²⁰ Above n. 15.

²¹ *Anab.* IV, 11, 2.

²² *Leg.* 349-67, esp. 357.

²³ Nilsson II², 116-17, 141, followed by L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriaux, *Le Culte des souverains* (1957), 413, denies this but his evidence is otherwise explicable (below p. 38).

²⁴ Nilsson II², 182 and below p. 40.

²⁵ e.g. *Plut.*, *Lys.* 18; Dio XLIV, 51, 1; App., *BC* I, 17; *SHA, Comm. Ant.* 9, 2.

²⁶ Dio LVIII, 8, 4 (cf. *ibid.*, 7, 2; II, 2); LIX, 4, 4 (cf. *ibid.*, 26, 10); LX, 5, 4.

²⁷ IGR IV, 1398 (Smyrna).

I

The fullest description of, or rather prescription for, a local imperial festival is provided by an inscription from Gytheum near Sparta, which is often felt to be a perfect example of imperial divine honours.²⁸ A procession made its way from the temple of Asclepius and Hygeia to the Caesareum where a bull was sacrificed. The significance of the starting point, which is not otherwise known to have been important in the religious life of Gytheum, was probably that it symbolised that the purpose of the festival was to secure the health and long rule of the emperor. The sacrifice in front of the Caesareum was not made, as one might have expected, to the emperor but 'on behalf of the rulers and gods and the eternal duration of their rule', that is on behalf of the emperors present and past.²⁹ Another sacrifice was offered in the agora and from there, probably, the procession passed to the theatre where sacrifices of incense were made in front of the images of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius which had been placed there. The format was comparable to the Roman *lectisternium* in which the people besought the gods for their favour, but in fact the sacrifices were again offered 'on behalf of the preservation of the rulers'.³⁰ 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.

The officials who performed the sacrifices at Gytheum were purely civic ones in spite of the existence of a priest of Augustus there. Nothing is known of his ritual functions, but priests of the emperor are very widely attested and one might have expected that they, like priests of the gods, would have sacrificed to the emperor whom they served. Unfortunately evidence for their religious functions is scanty, as the priests are mainly attested through honorary inscriptions which merely record their office, but when their ritual functions are revealed these are rather surprising. In only one case is a sacrifice to the emperor known to have been performed by an imperial priest.³¹ In all the other cases their sacrifices were on behalf of the emperor. For instance, a high priest of the Sebastoi at Aphrodisias 'sacrificed to the ancestral gods offering prayers himself on behalf of the health, safety and eternal duration of their rule'.³² In the same city a woman who held, among other offices, a priesthood of the Sebastoi 'sacrificed throughout all the years on behalf of the health of the Sebastoi'.³³ 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.

This suggestion is supported by the existence of an official in the imperial cult called the *prothytes*. There was a *prothytes* of Sebastos at Pednelissus (?),³⁴ a *prothytes* 'of the imperial emperor and of the priests of the city' on Lesbos,³⁵ and a man is recorded as having *prothysas* 'of the imperial images' at Adada.³⁶ The only other known *prothytes*, from Nicaea,³⁷ may also have served the imperial cult. The prefix *pro-* can indicate priority, the right of first sacrifice, or location, sacrifice in front of the images.³⁸ But it is difficult to see, if either of these meanings applies, why there was an official called a *prothytes* and why he appeared only in the imperial cult. A better explanation is that the *prothytes* sacrificed on behalf of the emperor, which is another standard meaning for the verb *prothyo*.³⁹ Though the post is only found infrequently, its very existence demonstrates the importance of sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. Their power to generate this office supports the idea that some at least of the other imperial priests only performed sacrifices on behalf of the emperor.

Imperial priests then, despite the expectations which they arouse in us, prove to have a

²⁸ *SEG* XI, 923 with M. I. Rostovtzeff, 'L'Empereur Tibère et le culte impérial', *Rev. hist.* 163 (1930), 1. Also S. Eitrem, *Symb. Oslo* 10 (1932), 43-8.

²⁹ *Ll.* 28-9; $\theta\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\omega\sigma\alpha\upsilon\ \delta\iota\ \xi\epsilon\rho\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha\ \tau\alpha\upsilon[\rho]\omicron\nu\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}\nu\ \sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\iota\delta\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\omicron\nu\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \delta\iota\alpha\mu\omicron\nu\eta\varsigma$. Nilsson II², 387-8 takes the *theoi* as the gods but *Ll.* 18 ($\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega\nu\ \eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$) rules this out.

³⁰ *Ll.* 6: $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega\nu\ \sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha[s]$.

³¹ A. Maiuri, *Nuova silloge* . . . (1925), no. 462 (Cos).

³² *REG* 19 (1906), 100 no. 14.

³³ *MAMA* VIII, 492b. Cf. also C. Habicht, *Alt. von Perg.* VIII, 3, pp. 164-5 and L. Robert, *Et. Anat.*

20 ff., esp. 33-5 = F. Sokolowski, *LSAM*, 28 (Teos), where the priest of Tiberius may have sacrificed on behalf of Tiberius to Dionysus.

³⁴ *SEG* II, 717-18.

³⁵ *IG* XII (2), 484 = *IGR* IV, 116.

³⁶ *IGR* IV, 371: $\pi\rho\omicron[\theta]ύ\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\ .\ .\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}\nu\ \epsilon\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega\nu$.

³⁷ *BCH* 24 (1900), 386 no. 41. Cf. Robert, *REA* 62 (1960), 324 n. 4 = *Op. Min. Sel.* II, 840 n. 4.

³⁸ J. Casabona, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en grec* (1966), 103-8. C. Habicht, *Alt. von Perg.* VIII, 3, 142 n. 1 and H. W. Pleket, *Talanta* 2 (1970), 72 n. 39 take *IGR* IV, 371 as locational but this does not account for the other examples.

³⁹ As Casabona shows.

different function from priests of the gods. It is clear also that the massively attested imperial festivals, in spite of being derivative from divine festivals, did not necessarily include sacrifices to the honorand, though our evidence makes it difficult to generalize. Sometimes an old festival received the addition of an imperial title such as *Sebasta*, but the new name often passed away and may only indicate that the emperor gave permission for additional expenditure at the festival.⁴⁰ Though the joint name *prima facie* implies equality between the old god and the emperor, it would be rash to assume that sacrifices were made to both. Practice may have varied even at one festival. At Thyatira in one case the sacrifices at the *Sebasta Tyrimnea* were made only to the god, that is *Tyrimnus*, but in another the prayers and sacrifices were offered to the god and the lord emperors.⁴¹ At imperial festivals proper the sacrifices were sometimes only offered on behalf of the emperor, as by the ephebes at Athens and, presumably, in a civic festival at Chios.⁴²

An analysis of the standard imperial celebrations also indicates the predominance of sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. At the accession of a new emperor the language that was used often assimilated the accession to the epiphany of a new god: the emperor was a new sun that had risen.⁴³ This is important but the ritual seems to have been more cautious, with the sacrifices being offered in thanksgiving to the gods rather than to the emperor. Thus Decius and Herennius thanked *Aphrodisias* for performing sacrifices and prayers (to the gods) at the beginning of their rule.⁴⁴ The Ephesians decided to express their joy at the accession of Antoninus Pius by celebrating his birthday by a festival; he had received the empire in accordance with the prayers of the whole world and the Ephesians wanted as far as possible to requite the benefactions received from the gods.⁴⁵ The sacrifices which are mentioned will presumably have been to the gods. The celebrations at Athens for the accession of Geta, though they are less clear, may have included a sacrifice to the imperial house but not to Geta himself.⁴⁶

Much the same is true of the arrival of the emperor in a provincial city as of his arrival at the throne. Magistrates would recall the day of their glory on which they displayed their munificence,⁴⁷ while the city might decide to commemorate the day in perpetuity, perhaps with a festival.⁴⁸ The details of the ritual at the actual arrival of the emperor in a Greek city are slightly obscure, but such evidence as there is conforms to a pattern known from the Hellenistic period and from other parts of the Roman empire.⁴⁹ The emperor might be greeted by the citizens carrying the images of the gods and sacrifices were made to the gods themselves, sometimes actually by the emperor. While this ceremonial is a good illustration of the basic ideology of imperial power, we should note that in no case is it known that sacrifices were made to the emperor at his arrival.⁵⁰ The language employed sometimes assimilated the emperor to a god, but ritual held back.

The most important imperial events in the course of the reign were marked by sacrifices to the gods, whether the news was of imperial victories or other matters.⁵¹ At Eresus the news of the safety and victory of Augustus led to sacrifices to all the gods and goddesses.⁵² The same inscription also records, in a fragmentary context, sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. That these were the only sacrifices to which reference survives is surprising because they were performed by a patriotic local citizen who was responsible for establishing a whole series of imperial temples and sanctuaries. At Sardis the inhabitants decided to commemorate the coming of age of Augustus' son Gaius Caesar with sacrifices to the gods and prayers on behalf

⁴⁰ L. Robert, *Arch. Ephemeris* 1969, 49-58.

⁴¹ *IGR* IV, 1270, 1273 with Robert, *Hell.* VI, 47, 72-9, who notes that the formula differs in the two cases.

⁴² J. H. Oliver, 'Roman Emperors and Athenian Ephebes', *Hist.* 26 (1977), 89; *IGR* IV, 947 with Robert, *BCH* 57 (1933), 518 ff. = *Op. Min. Sel.* I, 486 ff. Cf. also Le Bas-Waddington 1620c (*Aphrodisias*) and pp. 31, 39.

⁴³ *Syll.*³ 797 = *IGR* IV, 251 = *I. Assos* 26; *IG* VII, 2711 = *ILS* 8792 (*Acraephiae*); Pfister, *RE* Supp. IV, 310; G. Chalon, *L'édit de Tiberius Julius Alexander* (1964), 97-9.

⁴⁴ *MAMA* VIII, 424.

⁴⁵ *OGIS* 493 = *Forsch. in Eph.* II, 19 = *SEG* XV, 695.

⁴⁶ *IG* II², 1077 = *Hesp. Supp.* XIII, 109 no. 23.

⁴⁷ *ἸΟΑΙ* 44 (1959), Beib. 257, no. 3, *Forsch. in*

Eph. III, 72 (*Ephesus*); *IGR* III, 208 (*Ancyra*); cf. *I. Didyma* 356.

⁴⁸ *F. Delphes* III (4), 307; *I. Didyma* 254. *IGR* IV, 1542 = *I. Erythrae* 60.

⁴⁹ E. Peterson, 'Die Einholung des Kyrios', *Zeit. für syst. Theol.* 7 (1930), 682; S. MacCormack, 'Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*', *Hist.* 21 (1972), 721.

⁵⁰ The iconographical arguments to the contrary of I. S. Ryberg, *Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art* (1955), 134-40, 160-2 are not convincing; see R. Turcan, *ANRW* II. 16. 2 (1978), 1039.

⁵¹ F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1977), 416; Robert, *BCH* 60 (1936), 187 = *Op. Min. Sel.* I, 198 n. 2. Cf. sacrifices on behalf of the emperor by embassies on the Capitol, *IGR* IV, 33, 251, 1028, 1124.

⁵² *IG* XII Supp. 124. Cf. Robert, *BE* 1979, no. 320.

of his safety.⁵³ They also decided to dedicate a cult statue of him in his father's temple, and to offer sacrifices to the gods in the future on the day the good news came and the decree was passed. There is no sign that sacrifices were offered to Gaius Caesar himself or to Augustus, despite the fact that a cult statue had been dedicated and that the Sardians had noted that all men were pleased at the sight of prayers being raised to Augustus on behalf of his children. There are other cases of the celebration of particular imperial events, but the interest of these two examples is the way that sacrifices on behalf of rather than to the emperor appear even in contexts which would otherwise have implied his divinity. They perform interesting and important modifications of the ritual structure.

Another regular occasion for sacrifice in an imperial context was that of the annual vows to the gods undertaken on the emperor's behalf.⁵⁴ We have evidence for them both from Rome and from various provinces. But the days for prayers which are attested in Asia Minor and which have been associated with these vows may simply be the occasion of prayers for benefactors, which are well attested.⁵⁵ There is however some numismatic evidence. Coins of Ephesus from the reign of Macrinus in the third century show a sacrifice in front of a temple containing Macrinus' statue.⁵⁶ I assume that the temple was an imperial one, though the brevity of Macrinus' rule makes it likely that his statue was simply put in an older temple. The two versions of the coin differ in the number of figures shown at the sacrifice and also in the positioning of the legend; the legend itself is clearly a transcription into Greek of the Latin word *vota*. The use of this transcription, which does not appear again before the sixth century,⁵⁷ is an attempt to indicate the modification of the traditional functions of a temple. As at Gytheum, this imperial temple was used for sacrifices on behalf of the emperor.

II

So far something has been shown of the fundamental importance of sacrifices on behalf of the emperor, even in contexts where other forms of sacrifices might have been expected. This avoidance of treating the emperor exactly as a god also finds expression in the deliberate blurring of the boundaries between the types of sacrifice. Some inscriptions simply say that the sacrifices were 'of' the emperor and thus do not specify the relationship between emperor and god.⁵⁸ Though sacrifices involving the gods alone can be described in the same manner, the phrasing may still be significant. Certainly in many cases the formulae of sacrifices 'on behalf of' the emperor do not specify to which if any of the gods sacrifice was actually made. This might be because the particular god was too obvious to need stating in the context of a particular festival. Or the sacrifice might have been made to the gods in general,⁵⁹ a procedure which was possible and which was again likely to drop out of the description. But a third possibility is that this was a way of evading precision as to the relationship between the emperor and the gods. However, even where the gods are mentioned it was still possible to make the sacrifices ambiguous. Sacrifices were made 'to' the gods and the Sebastoi 'on behalf of' the eternal perpetuation and security of their house.⁶⁰ As the Sebastoi include the living emperor this sacrifice to the Sebastoi on behalf of their house necessarily involves an ambiguity between the two types of sacrificial act. The ambiguity becomes a direct contravention when annual sacrifices were made to Artemis and to Commodus 'on behalf of his eternal continuance'.⁶¹ Emphasis is again given to the ambiguous status of the emperor.

⁵³ *IGR* IV, 1756 = *Sardis* VII (1), 8, 6-21. Cf. *Ath. Mitt.* 75 (1960), 70, no. 1 (Samos).

⁵⁴ J. M. Reynolds, *PBSR* 30 (1962), 33-6; 33 (1965), 52-4; L. Mārghitan, C. C. Petolescu, *JRS* 66 (1976), 84-6. Note also Ael. Arist., *Or.* I, 26 (with a suggested reading by C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (1968), 63 n. 14, 104, 283 n. 79).

⁵⁵ *IGR* IV, 915c (Cibyra); *IGR* IV, 1302 = *I. Kyme* 19, 31. For benefactors see *IGR* IV, 293a II, 23-4 (Pergamum); *BCH* 24 (1900), 415 no. 112 with Robert, *BCH* 52 (1928), 412-13 = *Op. Min. Sel.* II, 883-4 (Bithynia); *BCH* 7 (1883), 485 = *SGDI* III, 3501 (Cnidus); *I. Kyme* 13.

⁵⁶ *BMC Ionia*, 89 no. 293 = Babelon, *Rev. Num.* 1891, 129 f. (pl. IV 3) (= *Mél. Numismatiques* I (1892), 29 f. (pl. II 3)) = M. J. Price, B. L. Trell,

Coins and their Cities (1977), fig. 438; *BMC Ionia*, 89 no. 294.

⁵⁷ John Lydius, *de Mens.* IV, 10; J. Maspero, *Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine* I, 67057, 32. S. Karwiese, *RE* Supp. XII, 247 curiously refers the term to the temple. For relations between Ephesus and Macrinus see J. Keil, *SB Bay. Ak. München* 1956 (3) (= *SEG* XVII, 505).

⁵⁸ *IGR* IV, 1615 (Philadelphia); *BCH* 10 (1886), 420 no. 28 (Selendi); *SEG* XXIII, 208 (Messene); nn. 15, 131.

⁵⁹ F. Jacobi, Πάντες θεοί (Diss. Halle 1930); K. Ziegler, *RE* XVIII, 3, 697 s.v. Pantheon.

⁶⁰ *BCH* 11 (1887), 306 (Cys).

⁶¹ *Forsch. in Eph.* II no. 20 = *Hesp. Supp.* VI, no. 12.

III

Sacrifices were also made to the emperor but these were less common than the sacrifices already discussed, and they too could be made ambiguous in certain contexts. There were occasional sacrifices to the living emperor alone⁶² but sacrifices were not instituted to the deceased emperor. The focus of the Greek system, unlike the Roman, was on the ruling emperor. There was no Greek ritual of apotheosis at the death of an emperor and attention passed to his successor. There were however sacrifices to the Sebastoi, alone or with the gods, even on an imperial birthday when one might have expected the emperor to be the centre of attention.⁶³ The Sebastoi, who consisted of an indeterminate number of members of the imperial house, past and present, seem to have served as an important way of avoiding the bluntness of direct sacrifice to the emperor himself. The path could also be smoothed by the collocation of god and emperor, which permitted important nuances of gradation between the recipients.⁶⁴

There might be more evidence for direct sacrifices if we took into account the large number of imperial altars.⁶⁵ Most of these were dedicated to Hadrian with Augustus and the Sebastoi coming in second and third places. It may however be dangerous to assume that sacrifices were made to the dedicands inscribed on the stone. One altar was dedicated jointly to the Olympian gods and to Septimius Severus, but the sacrifice which the dedicator chose to record was one on behalf of the emperor.⁶⁶ A joint dedication of this sort is different from a dedication to the emperor alone but it does cast some doubt on the use of the other imperial altars. However, if sacrifices were generally made to the dedicands, the picture has to be slightly altered for the reigns of Hadrian and Augustus.

A picture of a direct imperial sacrifice emerges from the long and detailed regulations for the games in honour of Augustus at Naples, which specify that the competitors and officials were to process on the day of the Caesarea to the Caesareum and were to sacrifice to Augustus.⁶⁷ It has been argued that the second part of the festival, which included this sacrifice along with the musical and dramatic competitions, was only added after the death of Augustus.⁶⁸ It is true that this part of the festival is not heard of before then, but this may be chance and little weight should be given to the traditional argument that Augustus was not worshipped in Italy in his own lifetime.⁶⁹ The fullest account of direct imperial sacrifices comes from Athens and dates from the late second century.⁷⁰ The inscription is fragmentary and the alleged sacrifices to Julia Domna Athena Polias are based on an uncertain assumption that piety towards Julia Domna, with which the text is concerned, could be shown by sacrifices to Athena Polias only if the two were identified.⁷¹ But there were certainly sacrifices to her as 'mother of the camps', her official title, on the first day of the Roman year. The priestess of Athena Polias was to preside over the sacrifices and was to receive part of the meat as her honorarium, which is an important indication of care for traditional forms of sacrifice at this late date and in this context (cf. p. 29). 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 (n. 62) may have seemed anomalous to the Greek city.

The way that the imperial cult could be very closely based upon a pre-existing cult of a god, resulting in direct sacrifices, is seen very clearly in a regrettably fragmentary text from

⁶² *IBM* 892, 28–32 (Halicarnassus, Augustus and Gaius (?) Caesar); *TAM* II, 549 with Robert, *J. Savants* 1978, 35–48 (Tlos, Livia); below pp. 35.

⁶³ *JGR* IV, 1608 (Sebastoi theoi, restored); *YOAI* 23 (1926), Beib. 263–4 = *SEG* IV, 521 = *AE* 1928, 94 (Ephesus, Asclepius and Sebastoi); *Syll.*² 820 (Ephesus, Demeter and divine Sebastoi); *BCH* 9 (1885), 336 no. 19 = L. and J. Robert, *La Carie* II (1954), 170 no. 58 (Heraclea Salbace, ancestral gods and Sebastoi); A. Maiuri, *Nuova silloge*, no. 462 (Cos, Sebastoi and other gods); *IG* VII, 2712 with J. H. Oliver, *GRBS* 12 (1971), 225–36 (Acraephiae, Sebastoi, alone or with gods); n. 41.

⁶⁴ *SEG* xv, 330 (Acraephiae).

⁶⁵ A. S. Benjamin, A. E. Raubitschek, 'Arae Augusti', *Hesp.* 28 (1959), 65; A. S. Benjamin, 'The Altars of Hadrian in Athens and Hadrian's Panhellenic Program', *Hesp.* 32 (1963), 57; M. Le Glay, 'Hadrien

et l'Asklépieion de Pergame', *BCH* 100 (1976), 347, esp. 359–64.

⁶⁶ *SEG* xxv, 680. For subtleties in dedications see P. Veyne, 'Les honneurs posthumes de Flavia Domitilla et les dédicaces grecques et latines', *Latomus* 21 (1962), 49.

⁶⁷ *I. Olympia* 56 with *ZPE* 15 (1974), 192–3. Cf. *REG* 17 (1904), 212–13 = *AE* 1904, 224 with Robert, *Rev. Phil.* 1 (1927), 128 = *Op. Min. Sel.* II, 1083 (Cerynia).

⁶⁸ R. M. Geer, *TAPA* 66 (1935), 208–21.

⁶⁹ Note the *immolatio Caesari* at Cumae, *ILS* 108 = *Inscr. It.* XIII (2), 44.

⁷⁰ J. H. Oliver, 'Julia Domna as Athena Polias', *Athenian Studies* . . . *Ferguson, HSCP* Supp. 1 (1940), 521 (and cf. *Hesp.* 10 (1941), 84 no. 36 and *Hesp.* 40 (1971), 200 no. 53).

⁷¹ *SEG* VII, 825 = *I. Gerasa* 192 tells against this assumption.

Mytilene.⁷² Quadrennial games in honour of Augustus were founded towards the beginning of his reign, with prizes for victors to be as laid down in the law relating to the cult of Zeus. There were to be annual sacrifices at the temple of Augustus and perhaps at that of Zeus. On Augustus' monthly birthday he was to be offered the same sacrifices as were offered to Zeus. The Mytileneans promised that if any more distinguished honours were later discovered their zeal and piety would not fail to carry out anything which further deified (*theopoiein*) Augustus.⁷³ It would seem that here at least the conventional wisdom is correct that Augustus was 'an unquestioned god'.

The text is certainly excellent evidence for the affective power of ritual. There is however one crucial way in which the sacrificial ritual was probably adapted for Augustus. Precise regulations were laid down concerning the sacrificial animals which were to be raised by various officials, but unfortunately the text is fragmentary and difficult to interpret. The vital adjective concerning the animals, *ephēliomenous*, occurs only here but Dittenberger and the etymological dictionaries suggest that it comes from *ephēlis* and means speckled or marked in some fashion.⁷⁴ One has to assume a lapicide's error or a change of pronunciation over the second syllable. The only alternative is a derivation from *hēlikia*, youthfulness. But this raises exactly the same problem over the second syllable and further conflicts in sense with the demand that the animals should be as large as possible.

If then the word is derived from *ephēlis*, as the philologists propose, the animals were clearly characterized by their markings. It was standard practice to offer white victims to Olympian deities and dark ones to chthonic deities, heroes and the dead, and one might think that the Mytileneans were playing with these two categories.⁷⁵ There is certainly other evidence to show the use of sacrifice to express the complex nature of a deity. Two victims, for example, were sacrificed to Achilles, one white, one black, which relates to the ambiguous status of Achilles between man and god.⁷⁶ If the victims at Mytilene were mottled it would mean that fundamental doubts were being expressed about the fully Olympian nature of Augustus. However there is no parallel for the mottling of animals in the Greco-Roman world, and the public institutionalization of this uncertainty is surprising and very difficult to reconcile with the overt parallelism of the ritual and the expressed intention of the Mytileneans to deify Augustus as much as possible.

Another meaning can however be ascribed to *ephēliomenous*, which is suggested by parallels for animal markings. If one goes back to the archaic sacrifices to the Grabovian triad recorded in the Iguvine tablets one finds that the third member of the triad, Vofionus, received sacrificial bulls with a white mark on the forehead.⁷⁷ Because of the obscurity of the deity the purport of this is not clear, except that the sacrifices served to distinguish him from the other two. Another parallel appears in an ode of Horace (IV, 2) where the poet elegantly refuses to write a poem in honour of Augustus but promises to join in the celebrations at his return and to fulfil his vow by sacrificing a dun calf with a white spot on its brow.⁷⁸ It is particularly interesting to find this use of colour markings in the context of imperial sacrifices, and this suggests that at Mytilene too the animals were marked on the brow to distinguish them from ordinary sacrifices to the gods.

Other means might be employed to mark off direct sacrifices from a certain range of sacrifices to the gods. There seems to be no instance where the middle rather than the active voice of the verb to sacrifice was used, and this linguistic fact is itself of interest as the middle voice stresses the possible benefits to be gained from the sacrifices.⁷⁹ This may however not be of great weight as the middle seems in general to be rare in inscriptions, which tend to stress the objective nature of the relationship centring around the sacrificial act. But it is not an accident that there are no cases of sacrifices to the emperor on behalf of anything or anyone

⁷² OGIS 456 = IGR IV, 39.

⁷³ cf. Habicht 172-9.

⁷⁴ Dittenberger, ad loc.; P. Chantraine, *Dict. étym. de la langue Grecque* (1968), 390; *LSJ* Supp. (1968); H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* III (1972), 97.

⁷⁵ P. Stengel, 'Die Farbe der Opfertiere', *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (1910), 187; idem, *Kultusaltertümer*³ (1920), 151-2; K. Krause, *RE* Supp. v, 244-6; L. Ziehen, *RE* XVIII, 594; E.

Kadletz, *Animal Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religion* (Diss. Univ. Washington, Seattle, 1976).

⁷⁶ Philost., *Her.* XIX p. 741.

⁷⁷ I A, 20, VI B, 19 with J. W. Poultney, *The Bronze Tablets of Iguvium* (1959), 240, 259-60, 308.

⁷⁸ Krause, *RE* Supp. v, 246 claims that this is merely an echo of Moschus II, 84 ff., but the context, the rape of Europa, does not encourage this.

⁷⁹ P. Stengel, *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (1910), 9-12; Casabona, op. cit. (n. 38), 85-94.

else, with the exception of the two anomalous cases already discussed (p. 00), where they are in fact ultimately in favour of the emperor himself. The point is that the sacrifices were carefully limited to one of the types of divine sacrifice whose classification is given by Porphyry in the third century A.D.⁸⁰ This is the only ancient text on the subject but its value is enhanced by the fact that Porphyry is here drawing on Theophrastus' work on piety. According to this there are three reasons for sacrificing to the gods, in order to honour them (*dia timen*), to express gratitude to them (*dia charin*) or to obtain some benefits (*dia chreian ton agathon*). In practice it is difficult to find sacrifices described on inscriptions as being offered in thanksgiving,⁸¹ though there are many literary passages from Homer to Heliodorus.⁸² The reason is again that motives are not necessarily given by inscriptions. The distinction anyway between the first two categories is less clear cut than between them and the third, and it is from this category that sacrifices to the emperor were excluded by the fact that they were not performed 'on behalf of' anything or 'in order to obtain some benefits'.

The omission of any such petitionary requests tended to sharpen the focus of the honours on the emperor alone and to leave unstated the relationship between subject and ruler. Similarly the types of sacrifice which simply said that they were 'of' or 'on behalf of' the emperor failed to specify the relationship between the emperor and the gods. These two tendencies combined to produce a largely autonomous system centred on the emperor. In the Greek world the offering of direct sacrifice remained however a troublesome activity because of the failure to create a clear intermediate category for the emperor between man and god. In the Roman world there was no problem over straightforward sacrifice to the deified emperor. The crucial difference is that the category of *Divus* emerged to distinguish emperor from *deus* and *homo*, and within that category direct sacrifices were unproblematic. In the west as in the east, the institution of the imperial cult could produce a system whose relationship to both gods and men was ambiguous.⁸³

IV

In the light of this evidence on the standard practices of imperial sacrifices it is of some interest to see their operation in the context of the early Christians. The Jews, against whose system the Christians reacted, were, as we have seen, happy to sacrifice on behalf of the emperor as they had done on behalf of earlier rulers.⁸⁴ Their system of sacrifice easily accommodated the emperor, so long as he was not Gaius, until, that is, the start of the great revolt in A.D. 66 was symbolized by the cessation of such sacrifices. For Christians, however, the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross had in principle totally superseded Jewish sacrifices, and the only possible sacrifice was the repetition of this ultimate sacrifice in the form of the eucharist. This resulted in real problems for Christians in their contacts with pagan sacrifices. They were happy to pray for the state but not to sacrifice for, let alone to, the emperor.⁸⁵ It was this rejection of the contemporary sacrificial system which was one of the major reasons behind the persecution of the Christians, which I propose to re-examine briefly.

It has been shown that the cult of the emperor played a lesser role than the cult of the gods in the persecutions.⁸⁶ Emperors and others were mostly concerned to enforce sacrifices to the gods. These sacrifices might be made on behalf of the emperor but it was only exceptionally that sacrifices to the emperor were demanded. There are in fact among the genuine martyr acts only four references to such demands. In two of these cases the imperial sacrifice is required as a lesser alternative after the Christians had refused to sacrifice to the gods.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ *De abstinentia* II, 24 (Budé) = W. Pötscher, *Theophrastos Peri Eusebeias* (1964), fr. 12, lines 42-4. On sources see also E. Forster, *Die antiken Ansichten über das Opferwesen* (Diss. Innsbruck, 1952). Cf. also Iamblichus, *de myst.* v, 5 ff.

⁸¹ *IGR* IV, 292, 17 (Pergamum); *IGR* IV, 566 (Aezani).

⁸² e.g. Homer, *Od.* III, 178-9; Pol. v, 14, 8; Diod. Sic. xx, 76; Heliod., *Aeth.* v, 12-15.

⁸³ See *ILS* 112 where a vow was made to the *numen* of Augustus on behalf of Augustus.

⁸⁴ E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar), I, 486, II, 360-2.

⁸⁵ Schürer II, 362 n. 83. Cf. L. Biehler, 'Das litur-

gische Gebet für Kaiser und Reich', *Veröff. der Görres-Gesellschaft, Rechts- und Staatswiss. Abt.* 75 (1937).

⁸⁶ F. Millar, 'The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions', *Ent. Hardt* XIX (1973) (n. 7), 145. The objection of K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (1978), 227 n. 37 misunderstands Millar's point that the divinity of the emperor was rarely invoked. The texts of the martyr acts are in Knopf, Krüger, Ruhbach, *Ausgewählte Martyr-Akten*⁴ (1965) and, less reliably, H. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (1972).

⁸⁷ *Acta Pionii* 8; Eus., *MP* I, 1. The other cases are Eus., *MP* I, 54, Syriac and Eus., *HE* VII, 15.

It is recognized as different in kind. One of these Christians gave as his reason for refusing to sacrifice even to the emperor that the emperor was merely a man, which is a perfect illustration of the way that the ontological implications of direct sacrifice could be brought out. His persecutor, however, had carefully not drawn out these implications and had actually implicitly denied the validity of the entailment by offering the sacrifice as a lesser alternative. The other sacrifices involving the emperor are either on his behalf (*pro salute*) or involve an imperial acclamation, or are directed towards his image. The use of the image is very interesting as it allowed a distinction between sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor. This is visible in the earliest evidence, Pliny's letter to Trajan, when Pliny says that he ordered the accused to call on the gods and to supplicate Trajan's image with incense and wine, the image (*imago*) having been brought in specially and placed among the cult statues (*simulacra*) of the gods.⁸⁸ The differentiation of terminology is here vitally important. Similarly Apollonius was told to sacrifice to the gods and to the image (*eikon*) of the emperor (§ 7). Pionius drew the same distinction when he stated that 'we do not worship your gods and we do not venerate the image of gold' (§ 5). This 'image of gold' is a reference to the story in *Daniel* of the three youths who refused to venerate the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, which was, later at least, taken to be an image of the king. The imperial image, perceived in biblical terms, is clearly distinguished from the gods and seems to take on some importance independent of the emperor himself.

So in the context of the persecutions there were again various ways of distinguishing the emperor from the gods, by sacrificing to the gods on his behalf, by sacrificing to his image, or by maintaining a difference in significance between sacrifices to the gods and sacrifices to the emperor. The difficulty with using the Christian martyr acts as an historical source has always been to know what degree of warp has taken place in the shift to a Christian context. The implication of my brief reconsideration of this aspect of the martyr acts is that very little has been changed. In this interaction between the two sacrificial systems it is interesting to see that the supporters of the old system were perfectly aware of the importance of drawing distinctions between the emperor and the gods, but it took the critics whose understanding had been sharpened by the Christian transvaluation of sacrifice to attempt to enforce some degree of logical systematization.

V

I have so far treated these imperial sacrifices in the Greek world in isolation from their historical context. I wish now to locate them at the end of a development that may be discerned in the course of the Hellenistic period and then to discuss the possible influence of Rome on Greek practice. When ruler cult began there were considerable uncertainties about the propriety of treating men as gods. General accusations of impiety were levelled against promoters of cults⁸⁹ and this hostility might be focused in particular on the offering of sacrifices to men.⁹⁰ These objections to ruler cult are hardly surprising. Not only was the efflorescence of divine ruler cult at the end of the fourth century largely unprecedented, but the cults themselves at the outset went further than they did later. Ambassadors to the king could initially be called *theoroi*, the technical term for envoys to a god, though this was not formalized and is never found in epigraphical sources.⁹¹ The cult of Demetrius at Athens was extremely elaborate and a hymn sung to him even included a denigration of the gods, which is again not found later in the ruler cult.⁹² In the sphere of sacrifice there is an amount of direct sacrifice to specific, living Hellenistic kings which is very striking in comparison to the Roman material. I have noted a dozen or more epigraphical examples, in addition to passages from literature, which extend from the late fourth century B.C. through to the early second and even, for the Attalids, to the first century B.C.⁹³ Great care could be given to the forms of the sacrifices, as with those to Arsinoe Philadelphus at Alexandria in which the assimilation of Arsinoe to Aphrodite seems

⁸⁸ Pliny, *Ep.* x, 96, 5-6.

⁸⁹ Habicht 213-21.

⁹⁰ Hyp., *Epit.* col. VIII with E. Bickerman, 'Sur un passage d'Hypéride', *Athen.* 41 (1963), 70.

⁹¹ Arr., *Anab.* VII, 23, 2; Plut., *Dem.* 11.

⁹² Athen. VI, 253b ff. (*FGH* 76 F 13).

⁹³ Refs. in Habicht 138-9. Add *Syll.*³ 390 (Nesiotai); F. Durrbach, *Choix d'inscriptions de Délos* 21 (Delos); *SEG* I, 366 (Samos); *F. Delphes* III (4), 357 and *Hesp.* Supp. XVII (1978), lines 55-64

and pp. 33-5 (Athens) for cult of Ptolemy I at Alexandria; *P. Oxy.* 2465 for Arsinoe (below n. 94); *Chiron* 5 (1975), 59 (near Denizli); *IG XII Supp.* 122 (Eresus); Antiochus III at Teos (below n. 96) and Iasos (*Annuario* 45-6 (1967-8), 445 no. 2 with esp. *BE* 1971, no. 621; *OGIS* 305; *IGR* IV, 293b, 7-9 and 294, 19-20, 39, 47-8 (Pergamum, with down-dating of C. P. Jones, *Chiron* 4 (1974), 183 ff); *I. Cos* 35 (Nicomedes I?); *Pol.* XVIII, 16, 1 (Attalus, Sicyon).

to be articulated through the prohibition on sacrifices of birds and goats.⁹⁴ Not only are there more direct sacrifices in the Hellenistic period but some of the sacrifices, unlike the imperial ones, were directed towards the king on behalf of the city or other institution.⁹⁵ One does not want to exaggerate the contrast, because it is clear that direct sacrifices were compatible with an awareness that the king was being thanked for the political and economic benefits he had bestowed on the city.⁹⁶ But it is important that changes in royal sacrifices seem to have taken place in the course of the Hellenistic period.

This is traceable in the context of a single city, Athens, where the initial sacrifices at the end of the fourth century to the Macedonian rulers were to them as Saviours (*Soterēs*).⁹⁷ These continued through into the 230s but later sacrifices that were instituted for Antigonos were all on his behalf.⁹⁸ When the final break with Macedon came this second class of inscriptions was erased and, in place of sacrifices on behalf of Antigonos, curses were called down on him, a perfect inversion.⁹⁹

This shift can be detected more generally, firstly in the emergence of ambiguities. One of the late-fourth-century Athenian inscriptions seems to prescribe sacrifices both on behalf of Antigonos and Demetrius and to Demetrius Soter.¹⁰⁰ The restoration is not secure, but it is presumably significant that the direct sacrifices characterized Demetrius with a title often applied to the gods. But apart from this, and one case in the 260s,¹⁰¹ the next cases of ambiguity do not come until the second century B.C. Thus at Cyrene a Ptolemaic festival in the late second or early first century B.C. included two sets of sacrifices.¹⁰² One set was on behalf of Ptolemy and his family, giving thanks for benefits received. The other was to the king and his family, to each the customary sacrifices, on behalf of the city. By the second century festivals named after the ruler need not include sacrifices to him. The Attaleia and Eumeneia at Delphi only had sacrifices on behalf of the honorands.¹⁰³ Similarly with festivals of Roma at Delphi and Oropus which had sacrifices not to Roma but on behalf of the Romans,¹⁰⁴ or with many of the other sacrifices on behalf of the Romans that we find playing a prominent part elsewhere.¹⁰⁵ Two further cases of careful modification of cult appear in the same century. The *techmitai* honoured Ariarathes V of Cappadocia at Athens by erecting his cult statue beside that of Dionysus and by honouring it with crowns and incense, but the sacrifices associated with this cult were on behalf of the king, though others were made to him.¹⁰⁶ A deliberate ambiguity within the sphere of sacrifice itself may be seen in the honours given to Attalus III at Pergamum.¹⁰⁷ An equestrian statue of him was set up beside the altar of Zeus Soter in the agora and each day the *stephanephorus*, the priest of the king, and the agonothete were to sacrifice on the altar of Zeus Soter *toi basilei*, that is either *to* the king or *for* the king. The dative seems to have been used in this context, as Nock saw, to create fundamental unclarity as to the status of the king and the purpose of the sacrifices.

Parallel to the increase in ambiguities, there may also be seen an increase in the number of sacrifices on behalf of the king.¹⁰⁸ The earliest of these dates from between 280 and 260,

⁹⁴ L. Robert, 'Sur un decret d'Ilion et sur un papyrus concernant des cultes royaux', *Studios* . . . C. B. Welles (1966), 175.

⁹⁵ *SEG* xxv, 141 (Athens); *SEG* ix, 5 (Cyrene). However Plut., *Arist.* 19, 8 and *Syll.*³ 398, 20 show, against Kirchner ad *IG* ii², 2086, that such sacrifices could be retrospective rather than petitionary.

⁹⁶ *Anadolu* 9 (1965), 29 ff. (with *BE* 1969, no. 495-6) esp. II, 9-63.

⁹⁷ *Hesp.* 17 (1948), 112 ff. (with *BE* 1949, no. 51) = *SEG* xxv, 141 (c. 305); *The Athenian Agora* (1974), xv, 108 no. 111 (c. 240) and 109 no. 115 (235/4); *IG* ii², 1291 (mid-third century). Cf. Habicht 44-8 and 189-90.

⁹⁸ *Agora* xv, 97 no. 89 (254/3); *IG* ii², 780 = *Syll.*³ 466 (c. 246/5); *SEG* xviii, 19 (244/3); *IG* ii², 776 (240); *Agora* xv, 107 no. 110 (c. 243-37); *Agora* xv, 112 no. 119 (230s).

⁹⁹ *Livy* xxxi, 44, 4-8.

¹⁰⁰ *YOAI* 35 (1943), 160 with *BE* 1948, no. 47 = *SEG* xxv, 149.

¹⁰¹ *OGIS* 222 = *I. Priene* 507 = *I. Erythrae* 504.

¹⁰² *SEG* ix, 5 (cf. XIII, 616, XVI, 865).

¹⁰³ *Syll.*³ 671-2 = *F. Delphes* III (3), 238-9 = Sokolowski, *LSCG*, 80 and Supp. 44. Cf. G. Daux,

REG 48 (1935), 53-61 and Nilsson, above n. 23.

¹⁰⁴ *Syll.*³ 611 = Sherk 38 (cf. *F. Delphes* III (1), 152; *SGDI* 2680); *IG* VII, 413 = Sherk 23, 47 ff.

¹⁰⁵ *I. Delos* 1498 (161/0); 1499 (153/2); *SEG* xxi, 469 = Sokolowski *LSCG* Supp. 14, 57 (Athens, 129/8); *LSCG* Supp. 121 (Ephesus, third-century A.D. copy of ancestral law).

¹⁰⁶ *IG* ii², 1330 with Robert, *Et. épigr.* 38 ff. and *Hell.* XI-XII, 121-2, 129.

¹⁰⁷ *OGIS* 332. Cf. A. D. Nock, *HSCP* 41 (1930), 23 = *Essays* 1, 219-20 and H. S. Versnel, *Lampas* 7 (1974), 148-50.

¹⁰⁸ *OGIS* 219 = *I. Ilion* 32 (c. 280-60); *IG* XII (8), 156 = *Syll.*³ 502 = P. M. Fraser, in *Samothrace* (ed. K. Lehmann) II, 1, pp. 39-40 (c. 240-30 ?); *SEG* XII, 375 with Habicht 122-3 (242, Ainos); *OGIS* 55 = *TAM* II, 1 (c. 240, Telmessus); *Anuario* 39-40 (1961-2), 578 with Robert, *Op. Min. Sel.* III, 1503 and *BE* 1973, no. 439 (190s, Iasos); *I. Labraunda* I, 6 A (220s); *PdP* 27 (1972), 182 (180s, Cos); *I. Magnesia* 86, 15-17 and *IG* XII Supp. 250 with Robert, *Hell.* XI-XII, 116 ff (Andros, before 160/59); *OGIS* 315 v = Welles, *RC* 59 (Pessinus, 163-59); *SEG* xviii, 727 (Cyrene, between 140 and 116); *OGIS* 332 (Pergamum, 138-33).

the next from the 240s and they become numerous in the second century B.C. It is true that there are not many relevant inscriptions from before the 290s, but the change which is demonstrable in Athens is significant and supports the idea of a shift of emphasis in the course of the third and second centuries. It is obviously difficult to generalize about long term changes of this sort over such a wide area and such a long time span, and of course local variations and political changes affecting one part of the area are important. But it does seem that there were changes and that these changes took place quite widely, even though in places the old forms could continue.

The reasons for this shift may be sought in the changing nature of the relationship between ruler and city in the course of the Hellenistic period. Ruler cult arose in the Greek world with the imposition of monarchy over the flourishing and proudly autonomous Greek city. It was part of the complex process of negotiation between the city and king; or, more precisely, the cities attempted to come to terms with royal power by representing it to themselves in the forms long used for the gods. At first the 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. In general by the second century B.C. cities had begun to accept their reduced sphere of activity towards other cities and towards the ruler, as is visible, for example, in some of the second-century treaties between cities.¹⁰⁹

A new factor entered the situation with the arrival of the Romans. While Hellenistic kings had promoted the cults of their relatives and had supported the cults established by cities,¹¹⁰ some Romans in the period of the Republic declined divine honours, whether these were offered in Rome or the Greek East,¹¹¹ and this continued as the typical response of Roman emperors from Augustus onwards.¹¹² Roman permission was often sought for provincial cults, and cities sometimes informed the emperor of their intention of offering him cult, which clearly allowed a considerable degree of Roman influence on Greek practice. The difficulty is to see at what level modifications were effected. None of the letters of imperial refusal specifically reject sacrifices but there was, as we have seen, attempted imperial control of sacrifices and in general the official attitude will have been clear. It was obvious when Nero refused a high priest and a temple that this rejection *a fortiori* included sacrifices.¹¹³ It is significant that the ritual of provincial assemblies, which were under closer Roman control than the cities, shows none of the occasional sacrifices to the emperor found elsewhere. All the imperial sacrifices of which we hear were on his behalf.¹¹⁴ At the civic level the response to a letter such as that from Tiberius to Gytheum, which refused divine honours in general terms, is difficult to judge. Modifications of the sacred law have been suspected for the nomenclature of Tiberius¹¹⁵ and it is also possible that the forms of the sacrifices have been changed.

The Roman attitude in fact provides a partial confirmation of the original hypothesis about the relationship between cult and monarchy. In contrast with the untraditional and innovatory nature of the Hellenistic monarchies the Roman emperor emerged as the ruler of a pre-existent empire. The stabilization which this alone tended to create was increased in Rome by the enormous success of Augustus in cloaking his position in a variety of constitutional forms. It is thus understandable that for the most part the emperors did not feel the need to promote their own cults and indeed tended to discourage offers made to them. This Roman attitude coincided with independent and prior developments in the Greek perception of monarchical rule.

The thesis is further supported by the evidence from Egypt. With one minor exception the only imperial sacrifices which appear in the Greek evidence from that country were on behalf of the emperor.¹¹⁶ That this is no accident of survival is suggested by the fact that some

¹⁰⁹ e.g. *Ath. Mitt.* 72 (1957), 242 no. 65.

¹¹⁰ There are possible exceptions. The refusal of divine honours by Alexander (*Hist. Alex. Magni*, ed. W. Kroll, I, 22, 12, p. 97, 24 ff.) is presumably a retrojection from imperial practice, but the refusal by Agesilaus of Sparta (Plut., *Apoph. Lac. Ages.* 25 = *Mor.* 210D), though it is rejected by Habicht 179-84, occurs in a context which is not obviously contaminated.

¹¹¹ Cic., *ad Qu. fr.* I, I, 26; *ad Att.* v, 21, 7, who may be taken as normative if not typical. Note the sacrifices on behalf of the Romans (p. 38).

¹¹² M. P. Charlesworth, 'The Refusal of Divine

Honours, An Augustan Formula', *PBSR* 15 (1939), 1. The latest in date is now Caracalla, Robert, *Rev. Phil.* 41 (1967), 44-64 esp. 56-7.

¹¹³ O. Montevecchi, *Aegyptus* 50 (1970), 5-33.

¹¹⁴ e.g. *I. Olympia* 57. The other evidence I have collected conforms.

¹¹⁵ Rostovtzeff, op. cit. (n. 28), 24.

¹¹⁶ F. Blumenthal, 'Der ägyptische Kaiserkult', *Archiv. für Pap.* 5 (1913), 317 ff at pp. 328, 336-7; C. Kunderewicz, *JJP* 13 (1961), 128. *BGU* II, 362 iv 6, 11-13; II, 646 = Wilcken, *Chrest.* 490 = *Sel. Pap.* II, 222; IV, 1197; IV, 1200; *P. Bad.* IV, 89; *P. Oslo* III, 77; *P. Oxy.* 2553, 2782, 3164.

of the evidence comes from a calendar of imperial sacrifices. In this respect there seems to have been no change from the Ptolemaic period, when sacrifices were generally performed on behalf of the king.¹¹⁷ Egypt offers a good illustration of the fact that an essentially unproblematic monarchy has no need of full divinization of the ruler.

The final stage of this process came under Constantine. Towards the end of his reign he was asked by a group of towns in Umbria to allow them to set up their own imperial cult.¹¹⁸ He permitted them to celebrate games and to have a temple to his family, the *gens Flavia*, but he stipulated that this building 'should not be polluted by the deceits of any contagious superstition'; that is, he entirely abolished sacrifices. This represents the final stage in the interaction between the Christian tradition which we have already looked at and the fully established imperial institutions.

VI

The further context in which imperial sacrifices must be set is the traditional sacrificial system of Greek religion. Animal sacrifice, which had occupied a central place in Greek religion from the beginning, continued to maintain its importance. Thus in the third century A.D. coins feature the sacrifice of a bull in front of the temple at Claros,¹¹⁹ and the *libelli* of the Decian persecution show that animal sacrifices were demanded of the Christians.¹²⁰ In the fourth century Christian emperors from Constantine to Theodosius had to issue repeated prohibitions of sacrifices, perhaps with little success, for animal sacrifices continued in Christian contexts.¹²¹

Greek philosophers had long been engaged in a complex attempt to articulate their relationship to popular religious traditions.¹²² Their criticisms of these traditions included criticisms of animal sacrifices, but on the whole the philosophers supported traditional institutions. Critique and apologetics went hand in hand. The influential Stoic school was particularly conservative in its tendencies. Thus Dio of Prusa could argue that images and sacrifices might not be strictly necessary but that they had point as manifestations of man's goodwill and disposition towards the gods.¹²³ The crucial point is that the criticisms of the philosophers, though searching, were not innovative in the field of ritual and that, as a result, traditions were upheld.

There were however modifications in sacrificial practice in the course of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It became more common to offer daily cult to the gods and the use of incense increased.¹²⁴ Ruler cults shared in these innovations, but the difficulty is that previous work on the subject has treated them simply as significant precursors and parallels to Christian cult. However it is a failure of perspective to separate incense from animal sacrifice as being of totally different significance. Incense generally played a part in animal sacrifices and was offered in isolation on occasions of lesser importance. Further, the fact that the same type of formula could be used of sacrifices both of animals and of incense at the same festival, as at Gytheum, shows that the complex nature of the formulae of animal sacrifice cannot be explained as the product of negligence. Nor can one write off the formulae of both types as a manifestation of decline. The inscriptional evidence for sacrifices to the gods shows that, while the formulae were not always given in full, they do not betray the same difficulties as imperial sacrifices. The only exception known to me is the sacrifices performed in the course of a year at Lagina 'on behalf of the imperial house and on behalf of Hekate'.¹²⁵ The parallel formula-

¹¹⁷ *BGU* VIII, 1768; *P. Amh.* II, 35; *SB* IV, 7457 = *SEG* VIII, 529; *SEG* VIII, 531; Wilcken, *Chrest.* 70. Note however sacrifices to Arsinoe in the city of Alexandria (n. 94).

¹¹⁸ *JLS* 705 with J. Gascou, 'Le rescrit d'Hispe-lum', *Mel. d'arch. et d'hist.* 79 (1967), 609 ff., esp. 647-56.

¹¹⁹ *SNG, Von Aulock*, 2024. Cf. J. G. Milne, *Kolophon and its Coinage* (Num. Notes and Mon. 96 (1941)), 15, 100 no. 255, 102 no. 263, 107-8.

¹²⁰ J. R. Knipfing, 'The Libelli of the Decian Persecution', *HThR* 16 (1923), 345.

¹²¹ *CTh* XVI, 10. For sacrifices in Christian contexts see Robert, *Hell.* x, 197-200 (by St. Nicholas) and

S. Georgoudi, 'L'égorgement sanctifié en Grèce moderne', *La cuisine du sacrifice* (ed. M. Detienne, J. P. Vernant (1979)), 271.

¹²² D. Babut, *La religion des philosophes grecs* (1974); also H. W. Attridge, 'The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire', *ANRW* II, 16, 1 (1978), 45.

¹²³ *Or.* XXXI, 15.

¹²⁴ M. P. Nilsson, 'Pagan Divine Service in Late Antiquity', *HThR* 38 (1945), 63.

¹²⁵ *Arch. Epig. Mitt.* 6 (1882), 164-5 = *BCH* 62 (1938), 263-4. Cf. Robert, *Ét. Anat.* (1937), 524 and A. Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (1958), 396-7.

tion may be explained as resulting from influence from the imperial sacrifices, whether merely at a stylistic or at a deeper level.

It is true that there are in general fewer inscribed sacrificial regulations from the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, but this does not entail that the cults and sacrifices were in decline.¹²⁶ The main function of many cult regulations had been not to give all the details of the cult but to specify the privileges of the priests.¹²⁷ This continued in the imperial cult but, as the role of private munificence increased in the Hellenistic period, it became less important to inscribe the prerogatives of such officials.

But it is argued that there was a shift in attention during this period from the heart to the stomach; a decline in religious significance from the mid-third century B.C. is marked by an increase in the importance of the accompanying feasts.¹²⁸ Sacrifices became merely an excuse for a good dinner. It is certainly true that many of the inscriptions of this period do lay great stress on the feasts¹²⁹ and even allow those absent to receive money in place of food. The class of beneficiaries was also enlarged to include women and non-citizens. These general points apply equally to imperial sacrifices. Sometimes the feast alone is mentioned, as for an imperial birthday in Lydia or at the provincial celebrations at Ancyra.¹³⁰ This might include *artokreas*, the Greek equivalent of the Latin *visceratio*, a combination of bread and meat, the meat presumably being obtained from the 'sacrifice of the Sebastoi' which is mentioned.¹³¹ The sacrifice of a bull to the gods and the Sebastoi at Acraephae was followed by the distribution of the meat, but the text goes on to specify *arista*, *glykisma* and *deipna* as being of equal importance.¹³² Feasts for the whole population after sacrifices are also given great prominence by the Eresian who sacrificed on behalf of the emperor (p. 32).

However, despite this stress on feasts, it would be a mistake to think that all banquets at this period were secular in tone. The series of invitations from Zeus at Panamara to a variety of communities to share in his feasts proves that they were not.¹³³ In fact to argue that sacrifices receded in importance as against feasts is to create a false problem. Modern scholars wrongly tend to divide what was a single Greek semantic field into two and to distinguish between religious and secular aspects.¹³⁴ The Greeks did not do this, though an imperial priest might stress that he had fulfilled the dual aspects of his office, having displayed piety towards the emperor and munificence towards the people.¹³⁵ The idea of decline is inappropriate in this context, and it is in fact possible to show that as early as Homer the name of the deity need not be expressed and that emphasis could be placed on the banquet. A rich benefactor might stress the feasts he had given the city, but the emphasis on feasts in that context is perfectly compatible with the idea that sacrifices formed a system in which the relationship with the god remained important and would be stressed at certain stages. The changes in sacrifice that did take place show the way in which the institution reflected changes in society, such as the widening definition of membership of the community and the increasing sphere of public action allowed to individuals vis-à-vis the city. Sacrifice, rather than being moribund, was integrated into the life of the city.

Imperial sacrifices form one part in a series of overlapping systems of classification which constituted the *isotheoi timai*. Scholars in a number of disciplines have indeed devoted much attention to sacrifice in a variety of cultures¹³⁶ but to focus on sacrifices in this way, even producing comparative studies of sacrifice, is to abstract sacrifice from its social and religious

¹²⁶ As Nilsson II², 372.

¹²⁷ F. Puttkammer, *Quo modo Graeci victimarum carnes distribuerint* (Diss. Königsberg, 1912), 28-9.

¹²⁸ Puttkammer, 51-6; L. Ziehen, *RE* XVIII, 623; P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque* (1976), 286, 363 n. 299, 364 n. 306.

¹²⁹ e.g. I. Kyme 13, ll. 47, 73; *TAM* II, 54b (Tlos). Cf. Robert, *BCH* 59 (1935), 442-4 = *Op. Min. Sel.* 1, 283-5 and *Arch. Ephemeris* 1969, 12-14.

¹³⁰ *IGR* IV, 1666 (Teira); *OGIS* 533 = Bosch 51.
¹³¹ *IGR* IV, 1348 (?Tmolus) with Robert, *Hell.* XI-XII, 480-1.

¹³² *IG* VII, 2712, 66 with n. 63 above.

¹³³ P. Roussel, 'Les mystères de Panamara', *BCH* 51 (1927), 123.

¹³⁴ Casabona, op. cit. (n. 38), esp. 22, 30, 32, 80-1, 129-34.

¹³⁵ e.g. *IGR* IV, 1155 (Sandaina).

¹³⁶ Notably W. Outram, *De sacrificiis libri duo* (1677; Eng. tr. 1817, second ed. 1828); W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (1889, second ed. 1894); H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Sacrifice: its Nature and Function* (1898; Eng. tr. 1964); R. Money-Kyrle, *The Meaning of Sacrifice* (1930); R. de Vaux, *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice* (1964); R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (1972; Eng. tr. 1977); E. R. Leach, *Culture and Communication* (1976), 81-93.

context.¹³⁷ It was in fact only the emergence of Christianity from its Jewish context that made sacrifice a particularly problematic phenomenon. Sacrifices are however an important part of the *isotheoi timai*, and particularly interesting because of their complexity and variability. My study of them is obviously partial but is intended to promote further discussion both factual and methodological.

The evidence presented here proves the falsity of the picture sometimes presented of the emperor as an unquestioned god in the east. I have tried to show that the imperial honours were in general not fully parallel with those of the gods, and this argument poses the problem of imperial ritual in a new light. Nor can the position be re-established by dividing the cult honours into two distinct classes. We have seen how sacrifices on behalf of the emperor sometimes served to counterbalance more divine honours. There was a series of honours leading from the banal to the sublime. It is, however, useful to maintain a narrow definition of the 'imperial cult' as those honours which associated the emperor with the gods.

But there were also some cases where the ritual, including sacrifices, was indeed the same as that of the gods, which does raise real problems for our understanding. It is clearly inadequate to minimize these cases and treat them as a residual category not to be taken too seriously. At a very obvious level the need is to produce an account which can accommodate the full range of variations in the types of ritual. The picture which I propose is of the two categories of human and divine ranged along a vertical scale. One set of imperial honours, such as statues and arches, placed the emperor within the human category, if in a very special position. Another set, such as most of the sacrifices, placed him in a privileged position very close to the gods, while a third group, such as the rest of the sacrifices, classified him at the lower end of the divine category.

The importance of these nuances which I have attempted to establish has been partly realized by historians of religion. Nock in particular has pointed to the general absence of prayers to the emperor¹³⁸ and shown that cases of full temple sharing between god and ruler are very rare.¹³⁹ For example, in the temple dedicated to Zeus Philios and Trajan at Pergamum the figure of Trajan was shown, according to the coins, respectfully approaching the seated figure of Zeus.¹⁴⁰ The study of such nuances should not be dismissed impatiently as niggling but be seen as an important way of penetrating the understanding of the Greeks.

Sacrifice can in general be seen as a crucial way of articulating the relationship between man and god, as Vernant has shown of Hesiod's works¹⁴¹ and Vidal-Naquet in a brilliant discussion of the *Odyssey*.¹⁴² If these texts represented the orthodoxy, or orthopraxy, of the Greek city, others have traced the reactions of dissident groups to this orthodoxy.¹⁴³ Pythagoreans, at their most extreme, rejected the system outright while Orphics can, most interestingly for our purposes, be seen to have combined outright rejection with a subtle inverted parody of sacrificial procedure. My account of imperial sacrifices shows how the system was modified to accommodate the ambiguous figure of the emperor within the traditional division between god and man.

I have attempted to show how this makes sense in terms not of the decline of Greek religion, but of its vitality and flexibility. An explanation offered itself through an examination of the Hellenistic period in terms of the stabilization of monarchy. Politics obviously lies at the root of ruler cult, but to impose a distinction between politics and religion, as is conventionally done, is to make it impossible to see how ruler cult consisted in the accommodation of power in traditional religious terms. A similar case has been brilliantly argued by Burrige as regards the so-called cargo cults, and if power is built into one's definition of religion, as Burrige

¹³⁷ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (1956), ch. x-xi; M. Detienne, 'Pratiques culinaires et esprit de sacrifice', *La cuisine du sacrifice* (n. 121), 7 (translated, in part, as 'Il coltello da carne', *Dialoghi di archeologia* 12 (1979), 6).

¹³⁸ A. D. Nock, 'Deification and Julian', *JRS* 47 (1957), 115 = *Essays* II, 833. Cf. Nilsson II², 182 on dedications. The case is however more complicated than Nock allowed.

¹³⁹ Nock, 'ΣΥΝΝΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ', *HSCP* 41 (1930), 1 = *Essays* I, 202 which includes an important passage on the dative and *hyper* (above n. 107). See also now L. Cracco Ruggini, 'Potere e carismi in età imperiale',

Studi storici 3 (1979), 587 for the emperor as a failed holy man.

¹⁴⁰ Von Fritze, op. cit. (n. 19), 54-5, 84-5 (pl. VIII, 12, 18).

¹⁴¹ Most recently, J.-P. Vernant, 'À la table des hommes', *La cuisine du sacrifice* (n. 121), 37.

¹⁴² P. Vidal-Naquet, 'Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l'*Odyssee*', *Annales ESC* 25 (1970), 1278 = *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne* (ed. M. I. Finley (1973)), 269.

¹⁴³ W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (1972), 180-3; M. Detienne, *Dionysus Slain* (1979).

suggests, it is easier to see the continuities rather than the discontinuities between ruler cult and the traditional cult of the gods.¹⁴⁴

It might be objected that the Greeks did not really believe that the emperor was even a 'second-class' god. This type of objection is often raised and the fact that we can never discover what a Greek really believed tends to produce a feeling that the meaning of the imperial cult must always elude us. However it is not that we are lacking some crucial piece of evidence which would enable us to answer the question, but that the question is wrongly posed. It tends to imply a crude model of belief as 'the ghost in the machine'.¹⁴⁵ But an anthropologist studying a contemporary ritual would have as much difficulty in answering the question. There may be no mental state beyond the ritual to which he can appeal for 'the' answer.

The search for belief as a mental state tends to imply a rationalistic psychological model whereby the empirical modes of classifying the emperor are privileged ('The ancients of course knew perfectly well that the emperor was in Rome, could be visited and would die'). The alleged mental states are then assumed to correspond to the empirical mode of classification, thus leaving any incompatible ritual modes of classification in limbo. I prefer rather to follow Foucault's lead in the analysis of modes of discourse¹⁴⁶ and to take ritual not simply as 'honours' but as part of a cognitive system through which the actors organized and perceived the world.

My concern is with the collective rather than the individual, but the range of the cult shows the variety of different options that were taken in an attempt to formulate the position of the emperor. It is perhaps worth stressing the advantages of this method over the search for Durkheimian collective representations which tend to be free-floating in society. Ritual on the other hand is firmly located in society and is one important channel for the articulation and reinforcing of the ideas of society. The investigation of cognitive structures has the merit of allowing one to handle the range of expressed attitudes from scepticism to commitment, and to allow for the existence of incompatible perceptions within one society or even one individual. One thus avoids the pitfall of privileging such works as Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* or Vespasian's famous death bed remark, 'Vae puto deus fio',¹⁴⁷ which are taken to show that people did not believe in the imperial cult. Poems of Ovid¹⁴⁸ or panegyrics addressed to the emperor¹⁴⁹ also become comprehensible as the other extreme (rather than simply as 'flattery'). The silence of Greek intellectuals on the imperial cult has been taken to show that they did not take it seriously.¹⁵⁰ Rather the reason for their silence is that they were engaged in a different mode of discourse governed by its own rules, and this does not entail their neglect of ritual in other contexts.

The demand for the real beliefs of the Greeks springs from a proper concern about the relationship of ritual to other areas. Ancient historians have not been as prone as some anthropologists, for whom the savage was trapped in a world of superstition, to forget the range of empirical knowledge available to the ancients. It is clear that the awareness of the actors was not articulated solely through ritual,¹⁵¹ but more thought needs to be given to the relationship between different areas. If one places the political and ritual spheres on a par, I would argue for an interplay between the two such that the imperial cult to some extent succeeded in mystifying political reality. But that is for another occasion.

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¹⁴⁴ K. O. L. Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth. A Study of Millenarian Activities* (1969).

¹⁴⁵ See on understanding ritual G. Lewis, *Day of Shining Red* (1980), esp. p. 26.

¹⁴⁶ M. Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (1971).

¹⁴⁷ Suet., *Vesp.* 23, 4. For other protests see A. D. Nock, *Sallustius* lxxxix n. 210.

¹⁴⁸ e.g. *Tristia* III, 8; V, 2; *Pont.* II, 8; IV, 9.

¹⁴⁹ e.g. *Pan. Lat.* XII, 6.

¹⁵⁰ G. W. Bowersock, 'Greek Intellectuals and the Imperial Cult in the Second Century A.D.', *Ent. Hardt* XIX (1973) (n. 7), 179.

¹⁵¹ M. Bloch, 'The disconnection between power and rank as a process: an outline of the development of kingdoms in central Madagascar', *The Evolution of Social Systems* (ed. J. Friedman, M. J. Rowlands (1977)), 303.