GREEKNESS AND UNIQUENESS: THE CULT OF THE SENATE IN THE GREEK EAST

ANDREW ERSKINE

ROMAN POWER GENERATED many different cults in the Greek east during the Republic, for instance of the goddess Ῥώμη,[1] of the Romans as benefactors and of the Roman *demos*. But there is one noticeable absence. Although there was a cult of the Senate in the imperial period, there is no evidence at all for it during the Republic. Thus when the power of the Senate is at its height it generates no cult honours but, paradoxically, once it has little significant power it does become the object of cult. This needs explanation. The following examination of cults of Roman power will suggest that they focus on those aspects of Rome that are recognisably Greek and familiar, such as the *demos*. The Greeks select these aspects in order to make Rome intelligible to themselves, but, because Rome's power renders them abnormal, they are elevated to cult status. The Senate, on the other hand, is unique; there is no parallel to it in the Greek world. This gives it immunity to cult, at least until the period of the empire. But, as the Senate becomes more familiar to the Greeks and the Greek *boule* more like a senate, so that immunity wears off. Although the Senate may not be as powerful as it once was, it can still have the aura of power through association. Furthermore, the development of the cult in the East coincides with the emperors' attempts to promote the prestige of the Senate.

ROME AND RULER CULT

In the second and first centuries B.C., as Roman influence increased in the eastern Mediterranean, Greek cities there established cults which in some way treated Rome as divine. There is an impressive variety of such cults, the most common being the cult of the goddess Ῥώμη.[2] This cult is frequently found alone, but at times it is combined with another aspect of Roman power, such as the cult of the Demos of the Romans and Ῥώμη which is found at Miletos.[3] In Thessalonica there was a priest of Ῥώμη and the Roman benefactors (εὐεργέται),[4] while elsewhere the Dionysian artists of the Isthmus offer sacrifices to the Romans

[1] The goddess Ῥώμη is frequently and misleadingly latinised as Roma, thus losing that essential Greekness which is so important to the study of the cult.

[2] Evidence for cults of Ῥώμη, Mellor 1975; Fayer 1976.

[3] Miletos, see below, n. 14; for cults of Demos of the Romans, Fayer 1978: 461–477; Fears 1978: 274–286; Habicht 1990: 259–268.

[4] Clearly a cult as early as 95 B.C., *IG* X 2.1, 4, line 11, on which *Bull. Epig.* 1949, no. 92, but priests not attested until the time of Augustus, *IG* X 2.1, 31, 32, 133, 226, cf. Robert 1937: 448, n. 3; Edson 1940: 127–136.

PHOENIX, VOL. 51 (1997) 1.

the Common Benefactors.[5] Sometimes these cults are combined with local deities, for instance in the festival of Hecate and Ῥώμη at Stratoniceia in Caria.[6] Ῥώμη appears with various epithets, such as Εὐεργέτις (benefactress), Σωτήρ (saviour), Ἐπιφανής (manifest), and of course Θεά (goddess), all of which serve to highlight different aspects of the ruling power.[7] Even individual Roman magistrates could be the object of cult, as T. Quinctius Flamininus and C. Iulius Caesar discovered, but the cult of an individual need not be related to his political importance at Rome. In 119 B.C. the small city of Lete in Macedonia honoured an obscure quaestor, M. Annius, with a festival for saving the city from marauding Gauls.[8] These cults were all centred on Rome but there was no one form which they had to take. Indeed even the way individual cults might be organised could vary greatly. Most common were festivals and sacrifices, but some cities had priests and some, though the evidence is poor, may even have had temples.[9]

Ruler cults, such as these and the cults of the Hellenistic kings and the later imperial cult, have frequently been interpreted as diplomatic manoeuvres on the part of the Greeks.[10] Thus they are essentially political in content; the Greeks obsequiously fawning in order to obtain favour. The political aspect is apparent in the way cults reflect political allegiance, often ceasing with a change of ruler. When the Athenians broke with Philip V of Macedon in 200 B.C., they passed a decree ending all festivals, rituals, and priests associated with Philip or his dynasty, the Antigonids. His statues and those of his ancestors were to be overthrown and his name was to be erased from inscriptions. In addition to all this the priests of the people were to include a string of curses on Philip, his family, and the whole nation of Macedonians in any prayer for the city of Athens (Livy 31.44). This represents a major political change, but it is one which still seeks to express itself in religious terms. Instead of a cult of Philip there are now priests cursing him. While politics clearly played a part in such cults, this religious dimension must not be ignored.[11] Greeks could have chosen some other way of expressing their relationship with the ruling power, but they chose to express it in religious terms. Politics alone cannot explain the case of the Attalids. The dynasty came to an end in 133 B.C., and the kingdom became a Roman province, but the cult of the

[5] *Syll.*[3] 705B.45–46; on Romans as common benefactors, Robert 1969: 57–61; Ferrary 1988: 124–132; Erskine 1994a.

[6] *IStratonikeia* 507, lines 4–7 (*OGIS* 441, lines 132–134); Laumonier 1958: 358–359; on such joint cults, Laumonier 1958: 30–31.

[7] On epithets, Mellor 1975: 111–119, to which may be added Balland 1981: 37–39, no. 19, cf. also no. 18.

[8] Flamininus: see below, n. 13; Caesar: *IG* XII 5, 557 from Ceos, *Syll.*[3] 760 (*IEphesos* 251); Annius: *Syll.*[3] 700.

[9] In general, Price 1984: 40–47. The proposed ἱερόν in Miletos may have been a temple (below, n. 14).

[10] Mellor 1975: 21–22; Mellor 1981: 957–958; Bowersock 1965: 12; Liebeschuetz 1979: 74–79; Habicht 1970: 235–236; Fishwick 1987: 44–51.

[11] Price 1984.

now non-existent Attalids continued at Pergamum until at least the 60s B.C.[12] Similarly the Roman commander Flamininus received cult honours at Gytheion in Laconia in the 190s B.C. and the festival there continued until at least the reign of Tiberius, when it is mentioned in an inscription over 150 years after Flamininus' death.[13] The seriousness with which Greek cities took these cults can be gauged from the extraordinary detail of a sacred law of Miletos. Here there is a priest, athletic competitions, and a planned holy place, but what is striking is the frequency and regularity of the sacrifices to the Demos of the Romans and the goddess Ῥώμη.[14]

Places such as Miletos needed to find a way to represent the exceptional power of Rome to themselves. It was like no other city they knew. Their solution was to treat Rome as divine and thus fit this extraordinary city into their religious framework. This is just what had been done earlier with Hellenistic kings, men whose power was impossible to comprehend. The only satisfactory models for understanding such powerful and anomalous men or cities were gods.[15] Yet Rome exceeded even the divine kings. Rather than being subject to the kings, Rome actually defeated the kings in battle.

THE SENATE AND CULT WORSHIP

All the examples of cults of Roman power[16] which I have cited in the last section are from the second and first centuries B.C. In other words, they are from the period of Roman expansion and the time before the development of the imperial cult, the worship of the living emperor. Nowhere is there any sign of a cult of the Senate. This a significant absence, because the Senate was the embodiment of Roman power; it was the key decision-making institution of the Roman state at the time of Roman expansion. This is all the more surprising because it does eventually attract cult status but not until the period of the Principate. There is no evidence for such a cult under the Republic at all.[17]

The evidence for the imperial period comes almost exclusively from the Roman province of Asia,[18] which may reflect the fact that the governor of this province

[12] *IGRR* 4.294, on which Jones 1974; also Robert 1950: 18–19.

[13] *SEG* IX.923, lines 11–12, *Syll.*[3] 592, cf. also Plutarch *Flam.* 16 on Chalcis in Euboea.

[14] *Milet* I.7, no. 203 (Sokolowski 1955: no. 49); Mellor 1975: 53–54; Fayer 1976: 47–48.

[15] Cf. Price 1984, esp. chap. 2.

[16] To borrow a phrase from Price 1984: 40.

[17] So L. Robert, *Bull. Epig.* 1954, no. 54, and Robert 1967: 73–78; cf. Price 1984: 42, Nilsson 1961: 177–178.

[18] Forni (1982) stresses that the evidence is largely limited to Asia, bringing up to date his earlier study, Forni 1953, which contains a fairly comprehensive collection of evidence for the cult. It is important to note the distinction between θεὸς (or θεὰ) σύγκλητος, which attributes divinity to the Senate, and ἱερὰ σύγκλητος, which does not: see Forni 1982, esp. 14–15, and Oliver 1941, esp. 31–41. It is the phrase θεὸς (or θεὰ) σύγκλητος, priesthoods, and information on temples that provide the evidence for the cult. Kienast (1985: 253–83) by ignoring this distinction gives the cult a much greater geographical distribution than the evidence justifies. For limitation to Asia, cf. also Price 1984: 42.

was appointed by the Senate rather than directly by the emperor.[19] The Senate is honoured on coins from throughout the province but the cult involved more than this. In at least five cities a priest of the Senate is found, in some places of the Senate alone, elsewhere of the Senate in combination with some other deity such as the emperor.[20] Unusually, the cult also makes an appearance in our literary record; Tacitus reports that in A.D. 23 the cities of Asia decreed a temple to Tiberius, his mother, and the Senate in gratitude for Tiberius' handling of administrative corruption in the province. This decision by the provincial assembly may help to account for the way the cult is so widespread within the province of Asia. The competition between the cities of Asia for the right to build this temple is a sign of the degree of interest it generated. Eleven cities are said by Tacitus to have argued their case in Rome, where Smyrna triumphed over rivals such as Ilion, Halicarnassos, Miletos, and Ephesos.[21] Already in A.D. 30/31 a priest of Tiberius, Julia Augusta, and the Senate is mentioned in a letter from the governor of Asia, P. Petronius, to the Ephesian *gerousia*.[22]

This situation is puzzling. During the Republic, when the power of the Senate was at its height, this distinctive feature of the Roman state elicited no cult honours. Yet, at the very point when the Senate ceased to be politically significant, it appears to have become the object of cult. The imperial evidence demonstrates that there could be a cult of the Senate; so why did it not occur earlier?

There are incidents in the second century B.C. which suggest that such a cult was possible in that period. There is, for example, the grossly obsequious attitude of the Bithynian king Prusias to the Roman Senate in the 160s. At the entrance to the Senate Prusias "prostrated himself before the threshold, uttering the words, 'Greetings, Saviour Gods,' in an unsurpassable performance of unmanliness, womanishness and fawning" (Polyb. 30.18.5). This salutation of the Senate as Saviour Gods (Θεοὶ Σωτῆρες) would have referred to the senators as individuals, but may be seen as verging on treating the Senate itself as divine. But the establishment of a cult is something more formal and long-term than Prusias' expression of inferiority. A rather battered inscription from Delos records a crown offered to the Demos of the Romans and the Senate, in effect the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*.[23] This offering from the second century B.C. implies no divine honours, but it does indicate that the Senate could be honoured as an entity in itself, though perhaps it is the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, which is the entity or collective being honoured rather than the Senate itself. Yet in the period when Rome was conquering the world of the Greek east this move towards a formal cult was never made.

[19] On the distinction between "senatorial" and "imperial" provinces, note Millar 1966: 156–166 and Millar 1989: 93–97.

[20] On priests, Robert 1967: 73–78 and now *JÖAI* 62 (1993) 117–118.

[21] Tac. *Ann.* 4.15, 4.55–56.

[22] *JÖAI* 62 (1993) 117–118.

[23] *IDélos* 465c, line 20; Mellor 1975: 65, 160.

The absence of a cult of the Senate during the Republic is recognised as odd by modern scholars. G. Forni suggests that it is not the cult that is absent but the evidence.[24] But if we are to accept the probability that there was no such cult during the Republic, then its absence does appear to pose a serious problem for anyone arguing, as Simon Price does, that the establishment of a cult should be interpreted as a way of making great power intelligible. Because then, it is felt, there really ought to be a cult of Rome's most powerful institution. Price recognises the problem and tries to solve it by arguing that the Greeks did not think that the Senate was particularly powerful; rather it was individual Romans who made the impact.[25] If the Senate was not perceived as powerful, then the problem disappears. No cult need be expected. Such an argument, however runs counter to the available evidence; it is very clear that the Greeks did think that the Senate was powerful.

Valuable contemporary evidence for such perceptions of the Senate is provided by the Greek historian Polybius. In the sixth book of his history he describes the Roman constitution, which he believed to be a mixture of monarchy (the consuls), aristocracy (the Senate) and democracy (the People). After listing the many functions of the Senate he concludes (Polyb. 6.13.6–9):

> If it is necessary to send an embassy to places outside Italy, whether it is to settle differences, or to make suggestions, or even by Zeus to issue instructions, or to receive submission or to declare war, then the Senate takes care of this. Similarly, when embassies have come to Rome, it is the Senate which handles all decisions about how the embassies should be received and answered. The aforementioned matters have absolutely nothing to do with the People. Consequently if you were resident in Rome when the consuls were absent, the constitution would appear completely aristocratic. And many of the Greeks, and likewise many of the kings, do in fact believe this, because in virtually all their dealings with Rome it is the Senate which takes the decisions.

So Polybius believed that the Greeks recognised the importance of the Senate. Certainly it could hardly have escaped their notice as they sent countless embassies to Rome to plead their case before the Senate. Numerous of these are recorded in the pages of Polybius and the phenomenon is confirmed by many Greek decrees honouring hardworking ambassadors.[26] Moreover, the Senate need not have been seen as a distant body that had to be visited. Throughout the east Greeks inscribed on stone the *senatus consulta* that were sent to them. Over thirty are known, several of which were actually erected on sacred precincts, such as in the temple of Zeus at Panamara in Caria and the temple of Athena Polias in Priene.[27]

[24] Forni 1982: 16–18.

[25] Price (1984: 42) adduces I Maccabees 8.15–16 in support of this claim, but this text is hardly representative of mainstream Greek opinion.

[26] Polyb. 30.30, 30.32, 31.1, 31.4, 32.9; *Syll.*[3] 591 (Lampsacus), 656 (Abdera), on which Erskine 1994b; Robert 1989.

[27] Sherk 1969: nos. 6, 10 (Priene), 18 (Stratoniceia), 27 (Panamara).

So the *senatus consultum* brought a Greek city into contact with the power of the Senate and the inscription of it helped to publicise that power.

An incident which occurred in Achaea in the early 180s gives some insight into the Greek assessment of the role of the Senate. The distinguished Roman senator Q. Caecilius Metellus was in Greece on an embassy to Philip V of Macedon, a king who had recently been subjected to humiliation at Rome's hands. On his return Metellus stopped at Argos in order to resolve a dispute between Sparta and the rest of the Achaean League. Unable to make much headway with the Achaean magistrates, he demanded that a meeting of the assembly be called. The magistrates responded by demanding to see his instructions from the Senate. Their laws (presumably their treaty with Rome) did not permit them to call a meeting of the assembly unless there was a written request from the Senate. Metellus had no such instructions and made a prompt and angry departure (Polyb. 22.10). Here the focus is not on the individual Roman magistrate but on the Senate. The magistrate is perceived as powerless without the backing of the Senate.

The Senate could be seen as a constant and therefore suitable for divine honours, whereas individual magistrates were transitory—and in fact for much of the second century B.C. there would have been no long-term presence by Roman magistrates in the east. Indeed there is no evidence that these magistrates were inundated with offers of divine honours.[28] Those who received them, such as Flamininus, seem to have been exceptional. The rest had to be contented with more mortal honours, such as a statue in a public place, a crown, or the right to buy land in the state.[29]

So the Senate was perceived as powerful, but it still did not generate a cult among the Greeks. This suggests that, although power is an important determinant in the development of a ruler cult, it is not the only relevant factor. It is useful here to consider a distinction between the cult of a monarch and the cult of a ruling city. A city is more multi-faceted than an individual ruler. The king or the emperor is a single entity and is worshipped as such. It would be absurd to worship parts of him. But a city is more complex; there are many parts or aspects of a city and in the case of Rome many of them are the objects of cult. In a sense these different aspects of a city would acquire power in the eyes of their subjects because of their intimate association with Rome, but not all of them attain cult status. So the question is: what have the existing cults of Roman power got which the Senate lacks? And a further question: why is it that the Senate eventually does come to be the object of cult, albeit on a limited scale and only once it has ceased to have significant power? Attempting to answer this question should help

[28] Bowersock (1965: 150–151) gives a list of Roman magistrates who received cult honours in the east. Before Pompey's forceful appearance in the 60s B.C. only nine are known (including two from Sicily).

[29] For those honoured with statues in Asia Minor, Tuchelt 1979; P. Scipio Africanus offered crown at Delos: *IG* XI 4, 712; Cn. Octavius given right to buy land at Argos: Moretti 1967: no. 42.

to illuminate not just the subject of cults of the Senate, a relatively minor subject in itself, but also the broader question of cults of Roman power.

GREEKNESS AND UNIQUENESS

These cults took many forms, differing from place to place. What appears at first sight to be a unified Greek response to Rome is in fact the combined response of hundreds of "independent" Greek cities, all celebrating their own cult in their own way. Different factors would have influenced different cities, for instance, local traditions or the nature of the city's contact with Rome.[30] Yet, in spite of all this variety there is no cult of the Senate. The answer lies not in a Greek failure to perceive the power of the Senate, but in the uniqueness of the Senate as an institution. The various cults of Roman power all focus on things for which there are Greek parallels: the *demos*, different forms of benefactors, the personification of a city or simply on men. But the Senate, rather than being familiar, is something alien. The Greeks understand that the Senate is powerful and they know something of how it works, but they are unable to match it with an equivalent institution in the Greek world.

This alien, non-Greek character of the Senate is apparent in the difficulty the Greeks have in finding a suitable term to denote the Senate. The Greeks are even uncertain what to call the Senate.[31] In official documents it is regularly σύγκλητος, something called together.[32] This is assumed to be a βουλή (council), although the phrase σύγκλητος βουλή is not actually known with reference to Rome until the second century A.D. and its use then may reflect the Atticism of the period.[33] Nor is βουλή without qualification a common word for the Senate in the centuries B.C. Polybius tends to prefer σύγκλητος alone, but he also makes frequent use of συνέδριον, a word used of the advisory councils of kings.[34] It was this term συνέδριον that Dionysius of Halicarnassus tended to favour. Γερουσία, a word used of the council of elders at Sparta, might also seem an appropriate term, but this, although used, is not common. Least common of all is the straightforward transliteration of Senate.[35] It is clear from all these examples that the Greeks did not feel that they could easily equate the Senate with any existing Greek institution. It is a σύγκλητος officially, casually it is a συνέδριον, a γερουσία, and a βουλή, or even combinations of these.

[30] Cf. Erskine 1994b.

[31] Full discussion of Greek terms for Senate, Mason 1974: 121–124.

[32] As early as a decree from Lampsacus, *Syll.*[3] 591, line 51 (196/195 B.C.), perhaps the term was picked up from the Greeks of south Italy, Mason 1974: 122.

[33] Mason 1974: 122.

[34] σύγκλητος: Polyb. 6.16.1, 18.44.1, 22.4.16; συνέδριον as Senate: Polyb. 1.11.1, 6.15.8; συνέδριον as advisory council: Polyb. 4.23.5, 8.12.2.

[35] Dionysius uses συνέδριον at *Ant. Rom.* 4.8.2, 4.38.3, but at 6.9.1 he uses συνέδριον τῆς γερουσίας, thus combining both. For γερουσία alone: Dio 53.21.5; transliteration: Plut. *Rom.* 13.

It might seem that the Senate could obviously be paired with the *boule*, but, as Polybius realised, it was not so easy to match the complex Roman constitution with the Greek system of *boule* and *ecclesia* (council and assembly).[36] There were significant differences. Membership of the Senate was for life, whereas members of the *boule* were always changing, for instance in Rhodes and Argos as often as twice yearly. Strictly speaking the Senate was an advisory body, advising magistrates; in practice its decisions had the force of law. Unlike the *boule* it had no direct relationship with the assembly—indeed Rome had a plethora of assemblies (Comitia Curiata, Comitia Centuriata, Comitia Tributa, Concilium Plebis). In Greek cities, on the other hand, while legislation would normally be arranged in the *boule*, the final decision would be a decree "enacted by the *boule* and the *demos*."[37] Consequently the Greeks were reluctant to go too far in identifying the *boule* and the Senate and hence the variety of terms applied to the Senate to try and encapsulate its rôle.

So, for the Greeks the Senate is an alien institution, but when those aspects of Rome which are the objects of cult are examined, it will be seen that they are all familiar Greek concepts.

Cults of the Demos of the Romans appear in Miletos and other cities.[38] All cities had a *demos*, although one might doubt whether the Greek conception of the *demos* had much in common with the Roman conception of the *populus* or *plebs*. But the point is that a constitutional city was felt to have a *demos* and Rome was a constitutional city; it certainly was not a monarchy.[39] For many in Greek states that were democratically inclined the *demos* and the state were virtually indistinguishable. Such states might choose to emphasise the Demos of the Romans. Thus it is not surprising that the cult of the Demos of the Romans is found in states with a more democratic ideology, such as Rhodes. In Rhodes a 15-metre-high statue of the Demos of the Romans was set up in the temple of Athena in the 160s B.C. (Polyb. 31.4). But, of course, a *demos* that has the extraordinary power that the *demos* of the Romans wielded would be suitable material for divinity. Such an abnormal *demos* could only be intelligible if it was divine.

Other cults focus on the Romans as benefactors in some way: the Roman benefactors, Ῥώμη Euergetis, the Romans the Common Benefactors, or magistrates such as Caesar as benefactor. Benefactors, or εὐεργέται, were a standard feature of the Hellenistic world. The local élite would spend their money and their time on their city and be given honours appropriate to mortals, though exceptional cases might fare even better. Kings provided public buildings to cities, granted rights of inviolability, or simply won military victories. Such royal benefactors might

[36] Cf. Polyb. 6.11.11–13.

[37] Jones 1940: 164–166; on Argos and Rhodes, Jones 1940: 336, n. 20.

[38] See above, n. 9 and n. 14.

[39] Erskine 1991: 106–120, esp. 115–120.

receive cult honours.[40] So the powerful, whether they are kings or the local upper classes, confer benefits. The various cults of the Romans as benefactors pick out this aspect of the powerful—the Romans confer benefits. The benefits which the Romans in fact offer the Greeks are very much military ones, such as defeating kings and giving freedom on Roman terms. Unlike the kings, they are not at this stage sponsors of Greek culture. The Greeks, therefore, are applying familiar concepts here to make sense of the Romans, concepts which are adapted in some way to meet the new circumstances. For instance, the second century sees the emergence of a new phrase, "the Romans the common benefactors" ('Ρωμαῖοι οἱ κοινοὶ εὐεργέται). "Common benefactor" is almost never applied to kings by cities before the Romans.[41] They are the benefactors everywhere and have replaced the kings as the power in the east. So this depiction of Rome as a benefactor is again an attempt to understand Rome in Greek ways, where εὐεργέτης is a means of representing power.

The most prominent representation of Rome is the goddess 'Ρώμη. 'Ρώμη herself would not have been familiar to the Greeks, but the concept of the personification of the city was a familiar one in the Greek world, particularly in the Hellenistic period.[42] Personifications of cities such as Messene in the Peloponnese, Hierapytna in Crete, Sidon in Phoenicia are found on coins in female form.[43] In the sanctuary of Zeus Soter at Megalopolis statues of Artemis Soter and Megalopolis herself were placed alongside Zeus seated on his throne. In Messene there was a statue of the city of Thebes, presumably a consequence of the Theban "liberation" of Messenia from Sparta in the 360s.[44] So, the personification of Rome as the goddess 'Ρώμη would provide a suitable way of representing Rome to the Greeks. Its potency would have been enhanced by the ambiguity of Rome's name. For 'Ρώμη was not just the cult of the personification of Rome, but also the cult of Rome's most familiar attribute, strength. It is an extraordinary coincidence that the Greek word for the city of Rome meant "strength". It was this ambiguity which helped to give the cult of 'Ρώμη its vitality and allowed it to dominate all alternative cults of Roman power.[45]

In contrast to the Senate those things which are the objects of cult are aspects of Rome that are recognisably Greek. Features which are peculiarly Roman do not figure as the objects of cult. Several reasons for this can be suggested. In trying to come to terms with a new power any state will look for those aspects that it can easily comprehend. For the Greeks faced with Rome it is the benefactor, the

[40] Gauthier 1985; also Veyne 1976: 228–271 on the élite and Préaux 1978: 202–207 on kings.

[41] On the phrase see above, n. 5; it may have been applied to Antiochus III by Teos, Herrmann 1965: 34, line 6.

[42] On personification of places, see Steuding 1894–97, esp. 2081–2108; in religion, Fears 1981: 828–833.

[43] Head 1911: 432, 468–469, 797–798.

[44] Megalopolis: Paus. 8.3.10; Thebes: Paus. 4.31.10.

[45] Erskine 1995, esp. 376–378.

demos, and Ῥώμη which best supply this need. Benefactors are what the powerful are or should be, the *demos* distinguishes Rome from a monarchy, and Ῥώμη not only personifies it but supplies its main characteristic, one all too familiar to the Greeks. The Senate, on the other hand, in any of its guises contributes little.

So by looking for what was familiar and Greek in Rome the Greeks made Rome more comprehensible to themselves. But it was this very familiarity which helped to elevate these facets of Roman power to divine status. The normal Greek city, benefactor, and *demos* were very different from their Roman counterparts. On the one hand these aspects of Rome were familiar, but at the same time the scale of Roman power rendered them abnormal. It was because there was a norm for these things to be measured against that they became the objects of cult. Divine status made their abnormality intelligible. The Senate, however, was an institution which was alien to the Greeks and thus could not be contrasted with an ordinary senate. Its very mysteriousness and uniqueness reduced the likelihood that it would become the object of cult.

Yet the Senate does eventually become an object of cult. Why does this happen and why at a time when it has no significant power? It was the unfamiliarity and un-Greekness of the Senate as an institution which had rendered it immune to cult, but it loses this immunity as its perceived uniqueness wears off. By the imperial period the distinction between the Greek *boule* and the Senate is starting to break down. The councils of Greek cities are becoming more like the Senate—with Roman encouragement.[46] Increasingly, membership of the *boule* is permanent and often hereditary. The *boule* becomes more powerful and the assembly a formality. As the Greek conception of the *boule* changes to conform more with Roman ideas, so the Greeks are more prepared to use the term *boule* to refer to the Roman Senate.[47] Once the Senate of Rome is no longer perceived as an alien institution but has become a greater *boule*, then it would have become ripe for cult. By this point the Senate had ceased to be novel. Everyone (or at least everyone who mattered) knew what the Senate was; it had permeated the consciousness of the east sufficiently to be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, the catalyst may have been provided by the political changes that took place in Rome itself, that is to say the emergence of the Principate and the resulting subordination of the Senate. The image of the Senate, if not the institution itself, was revitalised as the emperor sought to reaffirm the position of the Senate and promote its prestige, a process that began with Augustus and his highly-publicised restoration of the Republic.[48] Tiberius too made an effort to promote the role of the Senate and indeed on one occasion in the Senate he justified his acceptance of cult honours to himself by pointing out that he was

[46] Jones 1940: 170–172; Ste Croix 1981: 307–317, 518–537.

[47] Mason 1974: 121–123.

[48] *RG* 34; Suet. *Aug.* 35–39, 41.3; Eder 1990; Nicolet 1984: 89–128; Talbert 1984; Brunt 1984; Millar 1977: 341–355.

to be worshipped jointly with the Senate.[49] That the cult of the Senate met with imperial approval can perhaps be deduced from the appearance of the bust of the personified Senate on coins of Asian cities. Where the image appears on the centrally minted obverse, some form of imperial authorisation would have been required.[50] Thus it is ironical that the cult of the Senate may have been a consequence of the decline in senatorial power, as the Greek cities of the province of Asia absorbed and responded to imperial propaganda.

The Senate may no longer have had the kind of power which it had possessed during the Republic, but association with Rome may have been more important in generating a cult than any effective power. In the Republic, however, there had been no cult of the Senate. This need not occasion surprise. Rather we should be surprised if the cities of the Greek world had produced a cult of the Senate.[51]

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
BELFIELD, DUBLIN 4
IRELAND

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Balland, A. 1981. *Fouilles de Xanthos* 7. Paris.
Bowersock, G. 1965. *Augustus and the Greek World.* Oxford.
Brunt, P. A. 1984. "The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime," *CQ* NS 34: 423–444.
Eder, W. 1990. "The Augustan Principate as Binding Link," in K. A. Raaflaub and M. Toher (eds.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate.* Berkeley. 71–122.
Edson, C. 1940. "Macedonica," *HSCP* 51: 127–136.
Erskine, A. 1991. "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective," *CQ* NS 41: 106–120
—— 1994a. "The Romans as Common Benefactors," *Historia* 43: 70–87.
—— 1994b. "Greek Embassies and the City of Rome," *Classics Ireland* 1: 47–53
—— 1995. "Rome in the Greek World: The Significance of a Name," in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World.* London. 368–383.
Fayer, C. 1976. *Il culto della dea Roma.* Pescara.
—— 1978. "Il culto del Demos dei Romani," *Studi Romani* 26: 461–477.
Fears, J. R. 1978. "Ο ΔΗΜΟΣ Ο ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ: *Genius Populi Romani*," *Mnemosyne* 31: 274–286.

[49] Tac. *Ann.* 4.37.3, cited by Kienast 1985: 258–262, in a heavily political interpretation of the cult of the Senate which almost completely ignores the religious content and motivation of the cult.

[50] Kienast 1985, based on the arguments of Kraft 1972, but Kienast exaggerates the number of coins that are actually evidence for the cult (see above, n. 18).

[51] Earlier versions of this paper were given to the Hibernian Hellenists at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and to the "What is a God?" conference at Gregynog organised by the University of Wales Institute of Classics. My thanks to Greg Rowe, Theresa Urbainczyk, and anonymous readers for help and comments.

—— 1981. "The Cult of the Virtues in Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* II.17.2: 828–833.

Ferrary, J.-L. 1988. *Philhellénisme et impérialisme: Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique, de la seconde guerre de Macédoine à la guerre contre Mithridate.* Rome.

Fishwick, D. 1987. *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West* 1.1. Leiden.

Forni, G. 1953. ΙΕΡΑ *e* ΘΕΟΣ ΣΥΝΚΛΗΤΟΣ: *Un capitolo dimenticato nella storia del senato romano. Mem. Acc. Linc.*, 8s, v.

—— 1982. "Il culto del senato di Roma," in *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio. Atti del Colloquio internazionale dell'AIEGL, Roma, 14–20 maggio 1981.* Tituli 4. Rome. 3–35.

Gauthier, P. 1985. *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs.* Paris.

Habicht, C. 1970. *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte*[2]. Munich.

—— 1990. "Samos weiht eine Statue des *populus Romanus*," *AthMitt* 105: 259–268.

Head, B. V. 1911. *Historia Numorum*[2]. Oxford.

Herrmann, P. 1965. "Antiochos der Grosse und Teos," *Anadolu* 9: 29–159.

Jones, A. H. M. 1940. *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian.* Oxford.

Jones, C. P. 1974. "Diodoros Pasparos and the Nikephoria of Pergamum," *Chiron* 4: 183–205.

Kienast, D. 1985. "Der heilige Senat: Senatskult und 'kaiserlicher' Senat," *Chiron* 15: 253–283.

Kraft, K. 1972. *Das System der kaiserzeitlichen Munzprägung in Kleinasien.* Berlin.

Laumonier, A. 1958. *Les Cultes indigènes en Carie.* Paris.

Liebeschuetz, J. H. W. G. 1979. *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion.* Oxford.

Mason, H. J. 1974. *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions.* Toronto.

Mellor, R. 1975. ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΗ: *The Worship of the Goddess Roma in the Greek World.* Göttingen.

—— 1981. "The Goddess Roma," *ANRW* II.17.2: 950–1030.

Millar, F. 1966. "The Emperor, the Senate and the Provinces," *JRS* 56: 156–166.

—— 1977. *The Emperor in the Roman World.* London.

—— 1989. " 'Senatorial' Provinces: An Institutionalised Ghost," *Ancient World* 20: 93–97.

Moretti, L. 1967. *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche* 1. Florence.

Nicolet, C. 1984. "Augustus, Government and the Propertied Classes," in F. Millar and E. Segal (eds.), *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects.* Oxford. 89–128.

Nilsson, M. P. 1961. *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*[2]. Munich.

Oliver, J. H. 1941. *The Sacred Gerousia. Hesperia* Suppl. 6.

Préaux, C. 1978 *Le Monde hellénistique: La Grèce et l'Orient de la mort d'Alexandre à la conquête romaine de la Grèce, 323–146 av. J.-C.* 1. Paris.

Price, S. R. F. 1984. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor.* Cambridge.

Robert, L. 1937. *Études anatoliennes.* Paris.

—— 1950. *Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques 9. Inscriptions et reliefs d'Asie Mineure.* Paris.

—— 1967. *Monnaies grecques: Types, legendes, magistrats monétaires et géographie.* Paris.

—— 1969. "Théophane de Mytilène à Constantinople," *CRAI* 1969: 42–64.

Robert, J. and L. 1989. *Claros* 1. Paris.

Ste Croix, G. E. M. de 1981. *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World.* London.

Steuding, H. 1894–97. "Lokalpersonifikationen," in W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie* 2. Leipzig (reissued Hildesheim 1965). 2074–2139.
Sherk, R. K. 1969. *Roman Documents from the Greek East*. Baltimore.
Sokolowski, F. 1955. *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*. Paris.
Talbert, R. J. A. 1984. *The Senate of Imperial Rome*. Princeton.
Tuchelt, K. 1979. *Frühe Denkmäler Roms in Kleinasien 1: Roma und Promagistrate*. Tübingen.
Veyne, P. 1976. *Le Pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*. Paris.