

of some *factio paucorum* dominating it: no conflict of interest or opinion between Senate and People could be admitted to exist.

It is only natural that the *tribunicia potestas* was exercised mainly — almost exclusively — in the Senate: this is where what remained of active public life took place. Rowe's claim that the *tribunicia potestas*, conferred on Augustus himself by a law, could be bestowed on the Emperor's chosen *collega* by a senatorial decree is highly doubtful. He quotes Augustus' funeral speech for Marcus Agrippa, a fragment of which has survived in a Greek papyrus: 'the tribunician power was given to you for five years *kata dogma synkletou* [Rowe translates: 'by senatorial decree'] when the Lentuli were consuls', *P.Köln* VI, 249.

But, as E. Badian has argued, *kata dogma synkletou* renders the Latin *ex senatus consulto*, rather than *senatus consulto* (which corresponds to *dogmati synkletou*); 'the latter means that a decree of the senate is the direct instrument of action; the former, by contrast, denotes that action is taken *by someone else* "in accordance with" the decree of the Senate'. This is supported by numerous references to Roman sources. Hence 'Augustus' words mean that Agrippa received [this power] by some further action, taken "in accordance with" the decree of the Senate ... That action can only have been a vote of the People'. Moreover, the fact that Augustus 'prides himself on having always asked the Senate for a colleague' in the tribunician power does not indicate that the Senate acted alone, bypassing the Assembly; rather, it shows that, 'as was proper in his Republic, the Senate had the right to be consulted and to make the real decision'.²

Badian's thesis seems very convincing; at any rate, the opposite cannot be assumed as a matter of course, without trying to counter his arguments. Rowe himself notes, elsewhere (96), that comitial ratifications of honorific decrees are sometimes unreported (as in the case of Germanicus' funeral honours [Tabula Hebana] related by Tacitus). We know from *SC de Pisone Patre* that the *imperium* of Germanicus in the East was bestowed on him by a law (line 34), although Tacitus mentions only a *senatus consultum* (*Ann.* 2.43.1). If it was still considered important to get the popular legislative sanction for Germanicus' *imperium* under Tiberius, it seems wholly improbable that Augustus would have dispensed with it when conferring *tribunicia potestas* on his colleagues — not because it was conceived as 'popular' in some politically controversial, Late Republican sense, but because Senate and People were the legitimate sources of power in the Roman state, and Augustus had no conceivable reason to dispense with this source of traditional legitimacy.

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Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002. xvii + 398 pp. ISBN 0 19 815275 2.

Worship of the Roman emperor, either living or deceased, has often defied explanation, not least because of the hopeless attempts to make it match either of the categories created by the christianizing distinction between 'politics' and 'religion'. Since the fundamental study by S. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984), it has become generally accepted that we should understand these categories as constituting a wider framework of imperial power. The excellent volume here under discussion, a considerably revised Oxford doctoral thesis of 1995 by a former student of Price, is the first detailed study of the

² E. Badian, 'Notes on the *Laudatio* of Agrippa', *CJ* 76 (1980-81) 100. Badian notes that, while he mentions only a decree of the Senate on the *tribunicia potestas*, in the case of Agrippa's *imperium* Augustus speaks of a law (which must also have been preceded by a *SC*). The difference may be 'a matter of style, of rhetorical balance'.

phenomenon of the so-called 'imperial cult' that focusses on Rome and the empire's Italian districts. The book is cleverly constructed, written comprehensibly, and well-illustrated. It has a boldly stated thesis, examines long held interpretations of familiar sources critically, and argues its points in a provocative fashion.

Gradel's main contention is that emperor worship was not at heart alien to the religious traditions of Rome. Emperors were not the only individuals who could during their lifetime receive divine worship, which was "the highest possible honour known in antiquity, expressing a maximum status gap between the recipient and the worshippers" but making "no gods in the absolute — and irrelevant — sense": "divine worship was an honour which differed from 'secular' honours ... only in degree, not in kind" (29). The question 'what is a god' belongs to the philosophical genre only: what matters is a distinction between what happens in the Roman state cults (performed by state officials on behalf of the whole Roman people and paid for by the state) and elsewhere. Gradel argues that the Roman state would not worship a deity because he or she was a deity, but because he or she was of particular relevance for the Roman state. And none of the emperors would ever receive divine worship by the Roman state, even if their importance for the Roman state was brought out in many different other ways and even if they *did* receive divine worship *outside* the Roman state cult, and even if this divine worship took place in a very *public* atmosphere. As Gradel rightly stresses, the Roman emperor was not a god on the so-called 'constitutional level'. Anywhere else, no problem.

The same is argued for the republican period (ch. 2). In the state cult divine honours were unheard-of, as no office or position provided its holder with anything close to ultimate power. But Gradel brings in evidence which is often ignored (especially the comedies of Plautus) to point out that it was natural for certain powerful individuals in the private sphere of the household to receive divine honours, bestowed above all upon the *Genius* of the *paterfamilias* by those under direct and often absolute authority of the household's master. If it is right that "in terms of mental history, ruler cult was the traditional republican response to monarchy" (54), it should come as no surprise, so Gradel argues (ch. 3), that divine honours were conferred upon Julius Caesar with the final collapse of the republic and the emergence of a virtually all-powerful figure. The focus should be on the ancient sources, and nearly all of them agree that the dictator was in fact made a god in the state cult by senatorial decree. That this had not yet been put into effect by the Ides of March 44 is irrelevant: the fact that all future Caesars saw the tragedy happening that day as a warning to avoid divine worship *in the state cult* shows the fine line to be trodden.

As regards the imperial period, Gradel argues (ch. 4) that worship of Augustus and his successors was very popular throughout Italy, and explains Cassius Dio's denial of this (51.20.6-8) as reflecting the historian's "narrow-mindedness" (75). It should not be necessary to adhere to the theory (embodied most illustriously by Lily Ross Taylor) that worship was directed not to the emperor himself as a god but to his 'life force' (*Genius*) instead. As Gradel sees it, the cult of the living ruler was not just the natural response to the newly emerging imperial power structure, but also a more tolerable alternative to the shameful act of worshipping a living person's *Genius* as if one was a patron's client: "the novelty was the principate itself, not, in terms of mental history, the response to it" (102). It becomes then more understandable that there was no worship of the living emperor in the sphere of the state cult: "even when the principate in practice evolved into an office with unlimited powers ... this was never completely formalized in the constitutional façade of Rome" (109). Neither Augustus (ch. 5) nor his successors (ch. 6) received worship in the cults that defined the Roman power structure, even if a tendency is visible in the state cults, with the development of the principate, towards adaptation to the emperor's more absolute powers. That Rome would not become a 'divine monarchy' is, according to Gradel, due only to the "clear lesson" drawn from the murder of Caesar, and the fact that earlier "precedent ... had probably now become codified beyond change: the ruler of Rome received state deification only in connection with his death" (142). Worship of the emperor's *Genius* (ch. 7), with its "social

humiliation" (162, 164) for the worshipping dignitaries, was a second-best option, but came to represent "an important development in the constitutional definition of what an emperor actually was" (196).

Short chapters deal with emperor worship as taking place in the common households (ch. 8) and on the initiative of private groupings (ch. 9), and the concept of *numen* is explained (ch. 10) as "merely a linguistic synonym for direct, godlike cult" (248). The developments in Rome are said to be mirrored in the Italian small towns (ch. 11). Emperor worship formed a *normal* response to the imperial power structure, and it is its absence on the state cult level that is striking. After his death "there was no reason to maintain the fiction of the emperor as first among equals" (264), and he could be made a *Divus* by 'heavenly honours decreed by the Senate' (ch. 12). Naturally, this is not the same as saying that a man became 'a real god' (which is precisely the distinction on which Seneca is playing in the *Apocolocyntosis*, 325-30).

As regards criticism, Gradel's failure to take into account some important recent literature is a serious defect of an otherwise excellent work. Two further issues need to be raised here. First, by focussing on the conception of the imperial cult by 'the Romans amongst themselves' and leaving out the provincial evidence, Gradel tacitly dismisses the possibility of mutual interaction between centre and periphery. It seems unlikely that, with the development of empire over the course of time, there would have been no influence at all on the abstraction of the Roman state and its religion from the empire's provinces, especially the Eastern half, if only because a number of emperors (and with them the imperial court) spent an increasing amount of time away from the capital. Secondly, Gradel describes state religion as "an integral part of the Roman 'constitution'" (12, cf. 75, 112, 153, 196, 223, 263-4), although he acknowledges (e.g. 109) that there was never a constitutionally defined 'emperorship'. As this position was defined in terms of a combination not only of traditional magistracies, but also of state priesthoods, a reflection on the emperor as major priest of Rome would have thrown some more light on the phenomenon. Serving as high priest and receiving divine worship could not be accomplished simultaneously on the state cult level. Viewed on different levels, however, these alternatives were not perceived as inconsistent with each other.

As one emerges from the book as refreshed as from a warm bath, it is only fair to end on a positive note. Gradel is exhilaratingly uninterested in questions concerning the absolute nature of the divine, and the basis for all his assertions is a thorough reinvestigation of the ancient evidence, familiar and unfamiliar alike. The result is an important book on an important topic, which every student and historian of the Roman empire, whether interested in so-called 'religious' or 'political' aspects, ought to read.

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P. Garnsey, *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity. Essays in Social and Economic History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 336 pp., ISBN 0 521 59147 3 (hereafter = Garnsey 1998); P. Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 175 pp. ISBN 0 521 64588 3 (hereafter = Garnsey 1999).

'Famine in Rome' was the title of an article Peter Garnsey (hereafter = G.) published twenty years ago, in which he pronounced that 'The first concern of inhabitants of the ancient world was how to feed themselves and their dependents' (P. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker [eds.], *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity* [Cambridge 1983], 56-64). That this pronouncement describes correctly a basic problem that the majority of the population had to cope with in classical antiquity can hardly be disputed, and yet for a variety of reasons only a relatively small number of ancient historians have shown interest in this subject, at least until recent times. Not so G. who has devoted