

Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus. Precedents, Consequences, Implications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xxiii + 341.

Following the divinization of Caesar, how did Romans represent in art the image of the new *divus*? And how did this affect representations of the living emperor and members of his family? These are just two of the fundamental questions Michael Koortbojian, hereafter K., poses in this wide-ranging and insightful book on the process whereby Caesar and Augustus were made gods, how they were represented in a variety of artistic media throughout the Roman Empire, and further how these representations inform our understanding of the political and religious culture of imperial Rome. The divinization of Caesar, according to K., forced Romans to rethink the very nature of the divine and how it should be represented. The twin themes of tradition and innovation, how they were interwoven in a given representation, and how they at times came into conflict recur throughout. The book consists of nine chapters, 159 illustrations, followed by notes, bibliography, and six indices.

K. devotes a great deal of attention to the appearance of Divus Julius' cult image. As he points out, making a man a god was new to Romans when both by senatorial decree (*senatus consultum*) and popular law (*lex*), Caesar was deified in January 42 BC at the behest of the triumvirs. One of K.'s claims in the introduction (chapter I) is that this imagery was an amalgamation of several models, combining tradition and innovation (9). His starting point, and the image to which he frequently returns throughout this book, is the coin minted by Octavian in 36 BC depicting the façade of the Temple of Divus Julius, with Caesar's cult statue visible between the columns. This leads to a discussion of the extraordinary honors conferred on Caesar during his lifetime (chapter II) which, K. argues, did not confer divinity. More importantly, as K. points out, there are two variations of the image on Octavian's coin of 36 (*RRC* 540/2, rev.)—one showing Caesar in the pose of an augur with veiled head (*capite velato*), holding a *lituus* (the curved staff of the augur) in his right hand; the variant image also shows Caesar holding a *lituus* in his right hand, but with his toga "fall[ing] from his shoulders and ... carried slung over the arm, rendering the figure nude to the waist" ("hipmantled" [45]). The oddity of this variant image only emerges fully in the course of reading the whole book.

Why these two representations of the new *divus*? In order to answer this question, K. explores the origin and significance of the augurate, its symbolism and the manner in which augurs were depicted in art (chapter III). He focuses in particular on two figures as possible models for Caesar the augur; first, the mythical Attus Naevius, whose statue stood in the Comitium, "a symbol of the profound significance of the auspices, and above all, of the power of those who lay claim to determine them" (56); and second, Romulus himself, who founded Rome only after having his undertaking duly approved by the gods through augury. Yet these two mythical

models, and the imagery of the augurate, were inadequate to represent fully the power of the *divus* and his place in the ideology of the new Principate.

K. then advances his argument by engaging in a closer investigation of the figure of Romulus and his divine counterpart, Quirinus (chapter IV). He begins by arguing that the Domitianic fragment long thought to represent the pediment on the Temple of Quirinus depicts a scene showing Romulus' taking of the auspices before founding Rome and the hipmantled figure of Quirinus (not Jupiter, as others have suggested). Thus, the relief shows Romulus at precisely that moment of transformation from mortal to divinity (82). Moreover, we know that there was a statue of Caesar in the Temple of Quirinus. K. takes these two points as evidence to suggest that the hipmantled figure of Caesar on Octavian's coin of 36 BC was a second variant on the cointype: "The moneyers would seem to have initially chosen Caesar's 'Romulean' image [i.e., the figure of Caesar as augur on Octavian's coin of 36 BC], and then exchanged it for a new, 'Quirinal' type, as the more fitting representation of a man now made a god" (91).

Chapter V ("Caesar's Portrait") provides a full catalog and analysis of Caesar's statuary and surviving portraiture. K. points out that two of Caesar's most significant honors—the crown (whether civic or triumphal) and the star above his head (that Octavian claimed to have added to Caesar's statue [Plin. *HN* 2.93–94])—did not appear on his portraits, although both continued to be symbols on coins (125). Ultimately, the absence of crowns and star from Caesar's portraiture, K. argues, shows that Romans struggled to come to terms with Caesar's new status. The important point here, which K. continues to address in subsequent chapters, is the control of Caesar's image in the public sphere. Once Augustus was fully in power, he had less need of the moniker *Divi Filius*. As a result, "the distinctions—and the divinity—of his adopted father clearly played, over time, less and less prominent a role. The story of Caesar's multiple portraits and, in particular, that of the disappearance of his crown, exemplify the fact that history is not a steady state, nor a cumulative process, but a past constantly reconceived in the service of an ever-changing present" (128).

In Chapter VI, K. returns to the imagery of the *lituus* and the augur and argues for a change in representations of the *divus*, as the one who ensured Victory, offering as evidence the cuirass of the statue of Augustus (?) now at Cherchel, which depicts Caesar in hipmantle proffering a *victoriola* in his right hand while being crowned himself by Victory (136–38). In the meantime, the *lituus* became a symbol of the living emperor's augural prerogative, as the sole possessor of *auspicia* (151), basing his argument in part on the relief of the Vicus Sandaliarius, showing Augustus, holding a *lituus*, and his adopted son Gaius. The ramifications of this change in ideology are well known: the triumph, for instance, became exclusively a ceremony for members of the imperial family. K. concludes: "It was to be the living emperor who was considered auspicious, the *divus*, propitious: the *lituus* would become the fitting symbol of the former, the *victoriola* of the latter" (154). The statement that

“victory had always been regarded as a benefit of the gods” (142) is true enough, but there was already a personalization of victory in the late Republic with the advent of the *Ludi Victoriae Sullae* and the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris*, which prefigured, I believe, this aspect of the new imperial ideology.

This new ideology emerged from the divinization of Caesar and affected all manner of honoring the living emperor and the *divus*. Traditional and innovative ways of honoring the emperors were interwoven in given monuments. Chapters VII and VIII explore this phenomenon, focusing in particular on the distinctions between monuments erected under the aegis of central state authority (*SPQR*) and those erected in Italian or provincial towns under local authority or at private expense. A case in point is the monument to Augustus and members of his family erected on the northeast slope of the Palatine by an association of musicians (*collegium aenatorum*) (*CIL* VI 40307). This monument was erected at private initiative (at least it was not sanctioned by the imperial family or approved by decree of the senate or public law, as far as we know), but in a public space. This monument was likely built in stages, beginning with a statue of Augustus in 12 BC (probably on the occasion of his election as pontifex maximus). A statue of Tiberius was added in 7 BC (likely for his triumph) and the temple constructed later (probably around AD 42 under Claudius). K. argues that the evidence of this and other monuments shows that statues honoring living emperors continued to be used in a cult context after emperors were divinized—without changing them in any visible way; and that the dress of a living emperor and *divus* were often the same.

In chapter VIII, K. discusses the tradition in Italian towns of honoring distinguished citizens with a hipmantle statue, signifying heroic status and superhuman achievement, dating back to the second century BC and ultimately emerging from the Hellenistic tradition (e.g., the “Tivoli general”). The Venafro statues (dating to the middle of the first century AD), for instance, depicting two prominent local dignitaries in such a pose, are part of this tradition, but in this new era of divinization, K. argues, such statues can only be viewed as being in imitation of the image of Divus Julius, and therefore engaging in the new imperial ideology created by Caesar’s divinization. After reading this chapter, the variant image on Octavian’s coin of 36 BC showing Caesar in hipmantle pose and holding a *lituus*, with which K. began this study, seems to me even more anomalous—an odd hybrid combining the Italic and ultimately Hellenistic tradition of showing a man in a heroic pose with a symbol of the augurate. A comparable image does not seem to exist from before or after the minting of this coin.

The real strength of this book is the close reading of the extant visual evidence and the carefully nuanced and complex argumentation that arises from it. As K. remarks in his preface, the chapters in this book were written as independent essays, and two were previously published. The result, in my reading, is at times disjointedness to the argumentation, as the conclusion of an argument begun in an earlier chapter appeared in a later one. Nonetheless, this is an extremely valuable study, as it poses

some very fundamental questions surrounding the divinization of Caesar and ultimately adds significantly to our understanding of the origin and evolution of the Augustan Principate.

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