

Damnation, Deification, Commemoration

Janneke DE JONG & Olivier HEKSTER

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY

For Romans, dynastic lines were of great importance. This was already the case in the Roman Republic, in which aristocratic families who controlled politics took great care of their commemoration of the dead. Funerary occasions offered families the opportunity to publicly show famous ancestors, whose fame would radiate upon their next of kin through lineage which was made explicit¹. On marked occasions, the masks of the deceased members of the family (*imagines*) were carried around in a procession, so that every spectator could be reminded of the family's ancestors². Commemoration started from the moment of someone's death. At the funeral, it was customary for a member of the family to give a speech in which the deceased was praised for deeds and virtues. This way of commemorating the deceased not only bestowed honour on the dead and his family, but also served as an example of good behaviour that should be imitated. The funeral and *laudatio funebris* could also have political implications³. Occasionally, persons who

¹ See, for instance, H.I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture*, Oxford, 1996; Ead., *The Art of Forgetting. Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*, Chapel Hill, 2006; T.P. Wiseman, « Domi Nobiles and the Roman cultural elite » in M. C  beillac-Gervasoni (ed.), *Les « Bourgeoisies » municipales italiennes aux I^{er} et I^{er} si cles av. J.-C.*, Paris-Naples, 1983, p. 298-306. Cf. the papers in J.M. Højte (ed.), *Images of Ancestors*, Aarhus, 2002, esp. P. Kragelund, « The emperors, the Licinii Crassi and the Carlsberg Pompey », p. 185-222 and E. D'Ambra, « Acquiring an ancestor: the importance of funerary statuary among the non-elite orders of Rome », p. 223-246.

² The commemoration of the dead occupied a central place in the yearly calendar, by annual festivals; A. K nig, I. K nig, *Der r mische Festkalender der Republik*, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 38-39; P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor. Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius*, Cambridge, 2000 (= *Death and the Emperor*), p. 103.

³ On the *laudatio funebris*, see Pol., VI, 54. Its purpose was to give an eulogy, in which the deeds and qualities of the deceased were summed up, not only for the sake of remem-

had achieved great military successes – or influential politicians – could be voted a funeral at public expense. As is well known, through developments in the Late Republic political influence and, with it, public attention became ever more concentrated in the hands of the few. For the leading men, it was of utmost importance to present themselves as outstanding. To achieve this, every possible aspect that could single them out over their competitors would be of help. In a society where lineage had always been highly valued, descent from an illustrious family was important in confirming positions of power.

Unsurprisingly, this was to apply equally to Roman emperor, who, when the Republic had been transformed into an emperorship, took the most conspicuous place off all. The emperor and his deeds dominated every aspect of public life. Just as private individuals, emperors were commemorated after their death. A major difference, however, is that the emperor's public role automatically turned his death into a public matter – even more so than had been the case for Republican magistrates. The emperor, after all, was permanently public in a way that no ordinary magistrate could ever be⁴. In political terms, the person most concerned with an emperor's death was inevitably his successor. The link between the deceased emperor and his successor suggested dynastic continuity, and this was one of the principles a ruler could bring into play for the legitimization of his power position⁵. Thus, in their self-presentation emperors were to pay attention to their predecessors, and to commemorate them. During the second century AD it became standard procedure to deify the deceased emperor, the ultimate posthumous honour an emperor could get⁶. This would then corroborate the suc-

brance, but also to set an example that would elicit emulation. Cf. E. Flaig, *Ritualisierte Politik. Zeichen, Gesten und Herrschaft im Alten Rom*, Göttingen, 2003, p. 49–68.

⁴ F. Millar, « Emperors at work », *JRS*, 57, 1967, p. 9–19; C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 2000, p. 336–405; A. Wallace-Hadrill, « The Imperial Court », *CAH²*, 10, 1996, p. 283–308.

⁵ On the (continuous) importance of dynastic rule, see O. Hekster, « All in the Family. The Appointments of Emperors Designate in the Second Century AD », in L. de Blois (ed.), *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Policies in the Roman Empire*, Amsterdam, 2001, p. 35–49, *contra* E. Flaig, « Für eine Konzeptionalisierung der Usurpation im Spätromischen Reich », in F. Paschoud, J. Szidat (ed.), *Usurpationen in der Spätantike* (*Historia Einzelschriften*, 11), Stuttgart, 1997, p. 15–34, esp. p. 20 and Id., *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich*, Frankfurt–New York, 1992.

⁶ On the development of this ritual, see O. Hekster, « The Dynamics of Deification », in O. Hekster, C. Witschel (ed.), *The Impact of Empire on the Dynamics of Ritual*, Leiden–Boston, 2008, forthcoming (= *The dynamics of deification*); S. Benoist, *Rome, le prince et la Cité. Pouvoir impérial et cérémonies publiques (I^{er} siècle av.-début du IV^e siècle apr. J.-C.)*, Paris, 2005 (= *Rome, le prince et la Cité*), p. 122–146.

cessor's position on divine terms, since he could name himself son of a god. Along these lines, Penelope Davies has argued that death and deification of emperors had strong dynastic and divine connotations, which were broadcast by means of commemorative monuments in Rome: «...we might characterize these structures less as funerary monuments than as magnificent accession monuments, whose message spoke to the living about the living as well as the dead – and the reborn⁷ ». The new divine status of the deceased and deified emperors was furthermore made clear by building a temple, and by the institution of specific priests.

Imperial deification was not commemorated in Rome alone. Through images on coins and in the imperial titulature, the apotheosis of an emperor could be expressed visually and verbally throughout the empire. From priestly calendars, it is clear that sacrifices for deified emperors were carried out long after their deaths⁸. In written texts, such as inscriptions and papyri, and also coin legends, reference is regularly made to a deified emperor. All through the empire, then, deified emperors played a role in the perception of its inhabitants. Occasionally, however, emperors were not deified after his death. This was, for example, the case with Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Domitian (see appendix 1). With the exception of Tiberius, these emperors rather suffered from posthumous attacks on their memory, dishonouring them even after death. This negative approach towards the dead emperors is generally interpreted as illustrative for a negative judgement by contemporaries of their late ruler. The assumption, at first sight, seems legitimate. Yet, one might still wonder whether it is not rather the sources that have come down to us, which have forced their opinion onto us.

Both negative and positive attitudes towards dead emperors have aroused scholarly attention, but they have often been treated as separate subjects, suggesting that the procedures for consecration or condemnation were clear and unambiguous. Sources, however, show that this was not the case, and that negative or positive commemoration did not

⁷ P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, p. 173.

⁸ Cf. I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford, 2002 (= *Emperor Worship*), p. 18–22; p. 340–343. Although consecration figures prominently on coinage, no mausoleum was ever depicted on coins (with the possible exception of the so-called temple of Romulus, which has been deemed a mausoleum of Romulus, the son of Maxentius. Its uniqueness, however, is more likely an argument against the attribution of this building as a mausoleum. Cf. L. Luchsi, « L'iconografia dell'edificio rotondo nella monetazione massenziana e il "tempio del divo Romolo" », *BullCom*, 89, 1984, p. 41–54).

automatically depend on whether an emperor was condemned or consecrated. Nero, for instance, was condemned, but apparently received honours after his death⁹. Commodus suffered condemnation at first, but was later rehabilitated and even consecrated by Septimius Severus¹⁰. This type of inconsistent behaviour in imperial commemoration is the point of departure for this contribution. It is our aim to give a brief, but differentiated, overview of the reception of dead emperors by different groups in the Roman Empire in the first and second century AD. If it is possible to reach such a differentiated overview, it will also be possible to establish which expectations and demands the different groups had of an emperor, and which groups' perception of emperors became the dominant view in the final (literary) judgement of an emperor. In short, it would offer an explanation for changing attitudes towards dead emperors in the course of time.

In doing so, the following points need to be taken into account. First, the death of an emperor and the significance of the way his memory was dealt with for the confirmation of the emperorship will be discussed in general. What happened with an emperor after his death? Who decided whether a dead emperor was to be condemned or deified? And how did the different groups within Roman society respond to this: was there consensus between the different groups in society when it comes to dealing with the dead emperor, or did they respond differently?

FUNERAL AND APOTHEOSIS

When an emperor died, his corpse was buried or cremated, as would happen with any normal person. Yet, since in the case of the emperor one could feasibly argue that not only a natural body had died, but a body politic as well, the imperial funeral was arranged somewhat differently from ordinary practice. Our knowledge of imperial funerals is primarily based on the literary accounts of the funerals of Augustus, Pertinax, and Septimius Severus¹¹. In these accounts, a central role of the

⁹ E. Champlin, *Nero*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, 2003 (= *Nero*), p. 9-24.

¹⁰ O. Hekster, *Commodus. An Emperor at the Crossroads*, Amsterdam, 2002 (= *Commodus*), p. 186-191.

¹¹ For Augustus: Tac., *Ann.*, 1, 8; Suet., *Aug.*, 100; Dio Cass., 56, 34-46. For Pertinax: Dio Cass., 75, 4-5. For Septimius Severus: Herod., 4, 2. Cf. S. Price, « From noble funerals to divine cult: the consecration of Roman Emperors », in D. Cannadine, S. Price (ed.), *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge-New York-

imperial funeral is given to the Roman practice of apotheosis, the deification of the deceased emperor. Based on these descriptions, Paul Zanker has recently distinguished three stages between the emperor's death and his deification. First, for some time, the emperor's body, or rather a wax pendant of his body, was displayed in the imperial palace at the Palatine. In the meantime, up to the day of the funeral, preparations were made for the actual funeral. On the day of the apotheosis, the wax pendant of the emperor's dead body was carried in a procession from the imperial palace on the Palatine to the *Forum Romanum*. There, the deceased emperor's successor would give a speech, in which the achievements of his predecessor were praised. After this, the procession went on to the *Campus Martius*, where the body would be cremated. The moment the funeral pyre was set to fire was significant, since that set in process the actual transformation of the deceased emperor, which was expressed as the ascension of the deceased emperor to heaven, where he was taken up among the immortal gods¹². His accession to the world of the gods was symbolized by an eagle that flew from the pyre, carrying the emperor's soul to heaven. The apotheosis was of the highest symbolic importance, because it confirmed the Roman imperial system. The transformation of a dead emperor into a god bestowed divine support on the succeeding emperor, through the dynastic principle which was inherent in Roman emperorship. Also, the attendance of different groups at the imperial funeral and deification can be considered as a public communication of loyalty. At the same time, the procedure during the funeral confirmed the social and political order, since the participants to the imperial funeral procession and eventual apotheosis, the members of the elite, troops, and the Roman population, had a specific place in the funeral procession¹³.

Melbourne, 1987 (= *Noble funerals*), p. 56-105; P. Zanker, *Die Apotheose der römischen Kaiser*, München, 2004 (= *Die Apotheose*); but see for an alternative reading of the material, S. Benoist, « La "consécration dynastique": César divinisé au Forum », in É. Deniaux (ed.), *Rome antique: pouvoir des images, images du pouvoir*, Caen, 2000, p. 115-134; Id., « La mort du prince: images du prince et représentations de la société romaine d'Empire à l'occasion des funérailles publiques des empereurs », in O. Dumoulin, F. Thélamon (ed.), *Autour des morts. Mémoire et identité* (Publications de l'université de Rouen, 296), Rouen, 2001, p. 127-139, and finally *Rome, le prince et la Cité*, chap. 3 and 4.

¹² The setting onto fire of the funeral pyre and the ascension of the deceased emperor are the two most significant elements belonging to the apotheosis which are commemorated on coins, cf. P. Zanker, *Die Apotheose*, p. 58.

¹³ P. Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos. Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius*, Madison-London, 2006 (= *Imperium and Cosmos*), p. 58-60; P. Zanker, *Die Apotheose*, p. 20-34; p. 40.

The death of an emperor and his subsequent transformation into a god, thus, can be considered an event in which the whole city of Rome participated, either actively or passively as a witness¹⁴. In ritualized stages, and under acclamation, the emperor became a divinity. Thus, the act of imperial deification could become part of collective memory. The deification simultaneously contributed to the idea of eternity and perpetuation of the Roman Empire, since the deification related to, and so united, the physical body of the emperor with his institutional body: although the emperor died as a person, emperorship continued¹⁵. Finally, the awareness of the imperial deification was imprinted not only on contemporaries and throughout the empire, but also on future generations, since the apotheosis was visualized and documented by various media, such as coins and monuments. To the latter category belong the tombs in which the emperor's ashes were put, and, if he was buried in a predecessor's tomb, the monuments commemorating the emperor's deification. These, as we will see, came especially into use under the second-century emperors¹⁶.

ABSENCE OF APOTHEOSIS

The procedure described above seems to have been the common practice for dead emperors. As always, however, the exception illustrates the rule. Indeed, as is well known from ancient sources, not every dead emperor was made a god. This absence of deification, quite often, has been interpreted as a negative statement about an emperor. It is easily taken as an argument that such an emperor was judged as a bad ruler. This black-and-white thinking is convenient, in that it creates a straightforward polarity: there were only two categories of emperors, the good and the bad ones. Clearly, this is a dangerous argument. In fact, the question is wrong. There are no parameters by which qualifications as « good » and « bad » can be made objectively. Also, if one considers what happened to non-deified-emperors, it seems that in the first century AD there may have been certain tendencies that can be discerned,

¹⁴ For active participation of senators, magistrates, knights and soldiers at the funeral of Pertinax, see Dio Cass., 74, 5.

¹⁵ P. Zanker, *Die Apotheose*, p. 9.

¹⁶ See now, on the commemoration of princes in especially the Augustan time: A. Heinemann, « Eine Archäologie des Störfalls. Die toten Söhne des Kaisers in der Öffentlichkeit des frühen Prinzipats », in F. Hölscher, T. Hölscher (ed.), *Römische Bilderwelten. Von der Wirklichkeit zum Bild und zurück*, Heidelberg, 2007, p. 41-109. Cf. P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*.

but there was no clear procedure. Sometimes absence of deification should be considered as a statement of obvious dissatisfaction, which in some cases was underlined by additional disgracing statements, such as negative acclamations, the mutilation of statues, or the erasure of names in inscriptions¹⁷. Yet, this negative form of commemoration of Roman emperors in the first century AD was not shaped according to a proper set of rules. Instead, leading men were searching for a way to utter their opinion of emperors, who for some reason were deemed unworthy rulers by at least one layer of society. As Harriet Flower has recently put it: «... the history of the first century AD is characterized by a rich variety of sanctions and by complex memory battles over the past, battles that aimed to define the authority of the ruling family and various individuals within it, the position of the emperor, and the very nature of the principate itself¹⁸ ».

The complexity of the topic becomes clear from the different responses originating with different groups after an emperor had died. Nero is an excellent example of this. Though he was (probably) even declared *hostis* whilst still alive, there is strong evidence that long after his death he remained popular with certain layers of society. This can be inferred, for example, from the veneration which continued for a long time after his death, or the popularity of the « Nero-messiahs » : people who gained popular support by pretending to be Nero¹⁹. Domitian, too, was condemned by the senate, which, at the news of his death, violently attacked his images and decreed that his memory should be wiped out. The reactions of the Roman *plebs*, and especially the soldiers, however were not in line with the senatorial opinion²⁰. Suetonius' remark that the soldiers attempted to call Domitian *diius* may signal true popularity of the last Flavian amongst the military, but it may also simply reflect that the practice of deifying a dead emperor had become standard practice in the perception of the soldiers. Two well-known cases may further illustrate the problems of commemorating emperors, either positively or negatively. These are Claudius' and Antoninus Pius' presumed responses to the senatorial wishes as to how to deal with their

¹⁷ See for instance, E. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation. Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*, Leiden-Boston, 2004 (= *Mutilation and Transformation*), and the various contributions in E. Varner (ed.), *From Caligula to Constantine. Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture*, Atlanta, 2000, and in S. Benoist (ed.), *Mémoire et histoire. Les procédures de condamnation dans l'Antiquité romaine*, Metz, 2007.

¹⁸ H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting. Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*, Chapel Hill, 2006 (= *The Art of Forgetting*), p. 280.

¹⁹ H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 197-223 ; E. Champlin, *Nero*, p. 10-13.

²⁰ Suet., *Dom.*, 23.

predecessors. According to Dio, Claudius did not allow the senate to have an official vote taken against Gaius, but nevertheless had his images removed and his name taken out of the usual record²¹. According to the *Historia Augusta*, the senate wanted to annul the acts of Hadrian, but Antoninus Pius objected to this and even managed to have Hadrian deified²². These examples – like the different reactions following Nero's death – put into stark relief the differences of opinion which the various layers of society in the heterogeneous Roman Empire may have held on any given emperor. What senators thought may have been the opposite of what the *plebs* or military thought, and may have been different again from the interests of imperial successors.

Especially in the first century AD, when emperorship was still being shaped and defined as an institution, there are noticeable fluctuations in the balance of power. These can also be noticed in the ways commemoration of emperors took shape. In the second century, alongside a more standardised development of emperorship, ideas of imperial commemoration were ritualised²³. This suggestion can best be illustrated through discussing some examples of imperial commemoration. A brief overview of the treatment of dead emperors is given in appendix 1. Relevant further points that should be taken into account are who made the decision for commemoration, what this decision implied, and how it was reacted to by different groups (e.g. as senators, soldiers, and the urban *plebs* of Rome) ?

EXAMPLES AND OBSERVATIONS

Legally, imperial deification was based on a senatorial decree that mostly followed a proposal by the succeeding emperor²⁴. The emperor whose death created the framework for this was, of course, Augustus. His consecration (at least formally) was decided by the senate after his funeral²⁵. That he was concerned with his own posthumous reputation may be inferred from the construction of the mausoleum he had built

²¹ Dio Cass., 59, 4, 5–6.

²² *SHA, Hadr.*, 24, 5; 27; *SHA, Ant. Pius*, 2, 5.

²³ S. Benoist, *Rome, le prince et la Cité*, p. 149–164.

²⁴ If an emperor was deified, he was given a temple and priests. Imperial deification is, therefore, (for obvious reasons) an important aspect of the imperial cult. Cf. I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship*, p. 261–371.

²⁵ Cf. S. Price, *Noble funerals*, p. 73.

for himself and members of his family²⁶. Consequently, most later emperors, up to and including Nerva, were buried in Augustus' mausoleum, showing (perhaps) the importance of dynastic appeal. Augustus' burial location, much like the procedure of his funeral, became the first norm.

For the dynastic perception of emperorship, imperial tombs are meaningful. With the exception of Nero (and perhaps Caligula), the Julio-Claudian emperors were all buried in the mausoleum of Augustus. Of Caligula Suetonius states: « His body was conveyed secretly to *horti Lamiani*, where it was partly consumed on a hastily erected pyre and buried beneath a light covering of turf; later his sisters on their return from exile dug it up, cremated it, and buried it²⁷. » Commemoration was an issue here, as is suggested by the following passage in Suetonius' account, which describes the reaction by some senators (who, Suetonius argues, wanted to get rid of the memory of the Caesars and reinstall the Republic). In any case, Claudius did not want to have an official decree voted against his predecessor, but still accepted to have some of his images carried away during the night²⁸. Matters were somewhat different for Nero. Possibly at the instigation of Agrippina, Claudius was deified by senatorial decree in AD 54. Nero profited from the divinity bestowed to his « father », as he now could state himself *diui filius*²⁹. During his reign, as is well known, his relationship with the senators deteriorated, which may well have contributed to his negative portrayal. In senatorial historiographical accounts his actions are all presented as acts of megalomania and craziness. Yet, his relationship with the population of Rome may have not been at all a bad one. Some people appeared loyal by paying honour Nero's grave after his death. His Golden House project, which has been traditionally interpreted as a megalomaniac proj-

²⁶ On the mausoleum, see now: P. Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos*, p. 35-53 (also p. 33-35 on the *ustrinum*. Cf. Str., V, 3, 8). Discussing the mausoleum, one should of course remember that when it was constructed, it served its purpose in the « battle of images » with Antony, only later to become, as P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, argues, a statement of Augustus' deeds in his lifetime, and a war trophy.

²⁷ Suet., *Calig.*, 59. Cf. H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 150: « It seems likely that his ashes were then placed in the Mausoleum of Augustus, perhaps in an unmarked location. » She, however, gives no further sources for the suggestion.

²⁸ On the *damnatio memoriae* for Caligula, see E. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*, p. 21-45; H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 148-159.

²⁹ M. Griffin, *Nero. The End of a Dynasty*, London, 1984, p. 98-99; E. Moormann, « Some observations on Nero and the city of Rome », in L. de Blois *et alii* (ed.), *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power*, Amsterdam, 2003 (= *Nero and the city of Rome*), p. 376-388; p. 383.

ect, for which Nero disowned many people of their property, may be reinterpreted as a plan of public entertainment. Moreover, in the eastern provinces Nero probably enjoyed consistent popularity³⁰.

Nero's bad relationship with the senate, however, resulted in an official *hostis* declaration, which implied that raising him to divine status was no longer an option. Rather senatorial behaviour raised the expectation of negative commemoration. Still, after his death his body was not mutilated, and a funerary ritual was carried out³¹. At the same time, Nero's fall from grace becomes clear from the disposition of his ashes in the family grave of the *Domitii*, instead of Augustus' mausoleum, the family grave of the *gens Julia*. The disconnection from the Julian dynasty was surely meant as a humiliation for the former emperor, who had been expected to be buried in the mausoleum, as can be derived from Suetonius' remark that one of the omens for Nero's death was that: « The doors of the Mausoleum flew open of their own accord, and a voice was heard from within, summoning him by name³². » Of the emperors of the year AD 69, Galba and Otho were also buried as private individuals. Care was taken for their bodies after their deaths, which preserved some of their personal dignity. This was not the case with Vitellius, whose body was tortured and dragged with a hook to the Tiber, a treatment normally reserved for criminals³³. The members of the Flavian dynasty, in their turn, were entombed in the Temple of the Flavians which was built by Domitian. Vespasian, and probably Titus as well, will firstly have been buried in the mausoleum of Augustus, before being transferred to their new resting place³⁴. Domitian, like Nero, had a troubled relationship with the senate, which resulted in his body being carried out on a common bier after his death, and a cremation of his ashes in a Roman suburb. According to Suetonius, these were later secretly brought to the family tomb³⁵.

³⁰ E. Moormann, *Nero and the city of Rome*; H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 196-233.

³¹ According to Suetonius' description (Suet., *Ner.*, 50), this was a private occasion, in that Nero's body was not interred in the same way that had become practice under previous emperors. H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 200. K.R. Bradley, *Suetonius' Life of Nero: An Historical Commentary*, Brussels, 1978, *ad loc.*, suggests that Nero's burial was paid for from public money. Cf. E. Champlin, *Nero*, p. 29-30, arguing that Nero did not suffer a *damnatio memoriae*.

³² Suet., *Ner.*, 46, 2. Cf. Dio Cass., 64, 6, 5.

³³ D.G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, London-New York, 1998, p. 162-164; p. 225-226.

³⁴ F. Coarelli, « Gens Flavia, Templum », *LTUR*, 2, p. 368-369.

³⁵ Suet. *Dom.*, 17; 23; Dio Cass., 68, 1; H.I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, p. 235.

Nerva was the last emperor to be buried in the mausoleum of Augustus, perhaps as part of his attempt to link himself to the Julio-Claudians³⁶. Trajan's ashes were deposited in the base of the column that formed a new type of funerary monument, the form of which was to be copied by later emperors, even if its function was not. Trajan's second-century successors were all buried in the new mausoleum that was built by Hadrian, emphasizing again the dynastic perception of emperorship. Yet Trajan's example was followed in the interesting practice of the Antonine emperors to construct commemorative monuments which were connected to the death and apotheosis of the emperors; the columns for Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. According to Davies, these monuments are also intended as accession monuments. In this way, they obtain a double meaning, not only cementing the dynastic link between predecessor and successor, but even creating a divine link. This is plausible, but the argument can be taken further³⁷. Since they lacked « natural » dynastic legitimation, the Antonine emperors may have felt the need to resort to additional legitimating strategies, thus emphasizing the deification of their predecessors.

When Hadrian died, his ashes in first instance were buried in private. Only in 140 AD, his successor Antoninus Pius had Hadrian's ashes transferred to the mausoleum which Hadrian had begun to build, but had remained unfinished by the time of his death³⁸. In this instance, the importance of a successor on the mode of commemoration of his predecessor becomes very clear. Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta* report that Hadrian was hated by all people, and that the senate at first refused to honour him. Only through Antoninus' persistency the senate is said to have agreed to honour Hadrian. The delay in depositing Hadrian's ashes could be considered as a parallel practice to what had happened

³⁶ Cf. O. Hekster, *The dynamics of deification*.

³⁷ P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, p. 27-34; p. 40-48. Davies, however, by ignoring some funerary monuments, fails to draw attention to the great continuity in burial practices. Emperors whose memories were not disgraced were buried in family tombs – the Julio-Claudians and Nerva in the mausoleum of Augustus, the Flavians in the temple of the *gens Flavia*, and the Antonines in the mausoleum of Hadrian. The only exception to this pattern is Trajan, who was buried in the base of his column. Vespasian and Titus (as stated above) may have been first buried in the mausoleum of Augustus. See L. Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Baltimore, 1992, p. 181 (*Gens Flavia, Templum*) ; p. 247-248 (*mausoleum Augusti*) ; p. 249-251 (*mausoleum Hadriani*). The temple of the Flavian *gens* was probably round and domed, the ceiling representing heavens and symbolizing eternity. Mart., 9, 20, 1-2; 9, 1, 8-9; 9, 3, 18-19; 9, 34; Stat., *Silu.*, 4, 3, 19-20; 5, 1, 240-241.

³⁸ P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, p. 35.

to other emperors who had not been deified, such as Caligula, Nero, Galba, and Otho. They had all been buried in a (more) private funerary space. Alternatively, however, Hadrian's temporary « tomb » may have been simply a practical solution, allowing for the time to finish Hadrian's mausoleum³⁹.

Commodus was declared enemy (*polemios*) posthumously, and the people and senate allegedly wanted the body of Commodus to be dragged with a hook and be cast in the Tiber. Pertinax, however, took care that the body was deposited in the mausoleum of Hadrian⁴⁰. In Commodus' case, the most striking point must be his rehabilitation and even deification by Septimius Severus. Probably, the reason why Severus' did so was his need to legitimize his own power position (though finances may also have been involved). As is well known, Severus had himself adopted into the Antonine dynasty, and it would be an act of *pietas* to take care of the memory of late family members. By making Commodus a god, just like his father Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus could not only strengthen his position by means of dynastic, but also by divine legitimation⁴¹. This may be a result from the institutionalization of the emperorship, in which dynastic lines played a role, and where anything other than negative commemoration by implication meant deification. Thus, cohering to an ever more institutionalised emperorship was the institutionalization of positive and negative commemoration. The contrast to (e.g.) the posthumous treatment of Tiberius is apparent. He was not deified but did not have his memory disgraced either, possibly indicating that the posthumous treatment of emperors, like the very concept of emperorship itself, had not yet found a proper form.

DEAD EMPERORS AND THE PEOPLE IN THE PROVINCES

As mentioned above, important part of the imperial funeral in the city of Rome was its unifying capacity. In theory, every individual had the opportunity to participate in parting from the deceased emperor, even

³⁹ P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, p. 35; Dio Cass., 69, 23; *SHA, Hadr.*, 25, 7: *inuisusque omnibus sepultus est in uilla Ciceroniana Puteolis*, which is translated as « hated by all, he was buried at Puteoli on an estate that had belonged to Cicero ». Cf. A.R. Birley, *Hadrian. The Restless Emperor*, London–New York, 1997, p. 279–307, who proposes as translation of *inuisus omnibus*: « seen by all ». See above n. 20 for further references.

⁴⁰ Dio Cass., 74, 2, 1; *SHA, Com.*, 17, 4; O. Hekster, *Commodus*, p. 161.

⁴¹ O. Hekster, *Commodus*, p. 189–191.

if only a limited number would actually be physically present to witness the funeral. What, however, happened in the rest of the empire? Did people know about the imperial funeral? Since it took some time for the news of the emperor's death to reach the provinces, the emperor was probably already buried by the time his death became known with the provincial inhabitants⁴². Although evidence for this is scarce, it is likely that the death of the emperor was commemorated in the provinces. In this respect, much can be learned from the evidence of celebrations that were held for the new emperors' accession from Egypt. In six papyrus texts, the accession of a new emperor is announced, usually with prescriptions to celebrate the occasion⁴³. In some of these texts, the deceased emperor is also referred to with his new status among the gods, and perhaps the celebrations for the new emperor also implied some kind of ritual for the deceased. After all, death and accession were inseparably connected.

P.Oxy. VII 1021, dated 17 November 54, reads: «The Caesar who was owed to his ancestors, god manifest, has gone to join them, and the Emperor whom the world expected and hoped for, the good *daimon* of the world and source of all blessings, Nero Caesar, has been proclaimed. Therefore ought we all wearing garlands and with sacrifices of oxen give thanks to all the gods... » The deceased emperor, whose divine status becomes clear from the phrase « manifest god », is said to have gone to his ancestors. The contrast is formed with the succeeding emperor, who is also surrounded with divinity, as can be derived from the formulation *agathos daimoon*, a snake god who was the protective god of the city of Alexandria. After this announcement, it is ordered that this event should be celebrated. Another text, dated 25 August 117, is *P.Oxy.* LV 3781. It preserves a copy of an edict by the prefect of Egypt Rhammius Martialis, in which he announces the accession of Hadrian: «... know that, for the rescue of the whole human race the emperor... Hadrian...

⁴² Not so, however, in the cases of Trajan, and Septimius Severus whose body (or ashes) had to be transported to Rome. Cf. D.W. Rathbone, «The Dates of Recognition in Egypt of the Emperors from Caracalla to Diocletianus », *ZPE*, 62, 1986, p. 101-131, for an estimation of the time it took for news from Rome to become known in the *nomes* of Egypt.

⁴³ These six papyri, from the first three centuries, are: *P.Oxy.*, VII, 1021 (*SP*, II, 235 = *WChr.*, 113, AD 54) ; *P.Oxy.*, LV, 3781 (AD 117) ; *P.Amst.*, I, 27 (AD 175) ; *BGU*, II, 646 (= *SP*, II, 222 = *WChr.*, 490, AD 193) ; *SB*, I, 425 (AD 236) ; *P.Oxy.*, LI, 3607 (AD 238). A document that can also be connected to imperial accession is *P.Giss.*, 3 (AD 117), but this has a different character, being a dramatic play in which the accession of Hadrian is announced by Phoebus. Cf. F. Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque*, Louvain, 1993, p. 164-166.

has received the power from his deified father... » After the notification, again instructions are given to thank the gods in celebrations. The apotheosis of Trajan can be derived from the phrasing *theou patros*. In papyrological documents deified emperors are regularly, though not consistently, referred to with the addition of the word *theos* (*diuus*) in the imperial titulature of a deceased emperor. An interesting example in this respect is a decree of Severus Alexander, in which the emperor is listed with an elaborate titulature in which his predecessors are named as well. The purpose of this would be not only dynastic legitimation, but also divine legitimation, by emphasizing the divinity of his ancestors⁴⁴. Worthwhile mentioning is also the fact that two of the condemned Severan predecessors, Geta and Elagabalus, are omitted here. Although a century and a half later in date, this practice could be compared to the absence of the names of Gaius, Nero, Galba, Otho and Vitellius in the formulation of the law conferring imperial power to the emperor Vespasian. In less official papyrus documents, originating at a lower administrative level, the use of the additional word *theos* for a deceased emperor is inconsistent. In *P.Oxy.* XXII 2345 (AD 224), for example, we would expect *theou Vespasianou*, in lines 5 and 6, the more so since Marcus Aurelius is also designated *theos* in l. 4, as is Antoninus Pius in l. 7. The text contains an application for membership of the gymnasium.

L. 4: εἰς γ (ἔτος) θεοῦ Μάρκου ἐπικ(εκρίσθαι)... L. 5: πρὸ τῆς τοῦ α(ὐτοῦ) ε (ἔτους) Οὐεσ(πασιανοῦ) ἐπι(κρίσεως)... L. 6: τῷ ε (ἔτει) Οὐεσ(πασιανοῦ) ἐπικ(εκριθμένον) ἐπ' ἀμφόδου Νεμεσίου Ἀπολλώνιον ἐπικ(εκρίσθαι)... L. 7: τῷ β (ἔτει) θεοῦ Αἰλίου Ἀντωνίνου ἐπ' ἀμφόδου τοῦ αὐτοῦ κτλ.

It seems that there were no strict prescriptions for the use of *theos* when deified emperors were referred to. *Theos* could be used when an emperor had been deified, but could also be left out. The conclusion that may be drawn from the papyri is that *theos* can, but must not be used, when an emperor had been deified. If, however, an emperor was not deified, *theos* is never used. In this context it must furthermore be remarked upon that the counterpart of imperial deification, imperial condemnation, is not reflected in papyrus texts from the first and second century, which contrasts with the appearance of papyrological *damnatio* in the third century, especially for Geta. This, however, is an extraordinary case, which will be left out of consideration here⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ *P.Oxy.*, XVII, 2104, and *P.Fay.*, 20.

⁴⁵ J. de Jong, « Propaganda or pragmatism? *Damnatio memoriae* in the third-century papyri and imperial representation », in *Mémoire et histoire*, p. 95-112. In fact, the appli-

Of course, those living in the Roman provinces were not always fully aware of modes in which emperors were to be commemorated. Occasionally, in fact, provincials could betray complete unawareness of Roman imperial goings-on. As Synesius of Cyrene wrote (although only in the early fifth century) : « No doubt men know well that there is always an emperor living, for we are reminded of this every year by those who collect taxes ; but who he is, is not very clear. There are people amongst us who suppose that Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, is still king, the great king who went against Troy⁴⁶. » This must be an extreme, possibly unheard of in the first three centuries of the principate. Images of emperors were highly visible throughout the Empire, as was famously stated by Fronto in a letter to Marcus Aurelius : « You know how in all money-changer's bureaux, booths, bookstalls, caves, porches, windows, anywhere and everywhere there are likenesses of you exposed to view⁴⁷. » Still, these images were not necessarily instantly visible to the inhabitant of the Roman world. A recent analysis of surviving statue bases suggests that statues of new emperors were often not erected within the first year of the new reign. Only in the second year of rule were statues erected with above-average frequency, often continuing into the third and fourth year of rule. It is, however, noticeable, that there are indications « that communities from the reign of Nerva onwards felt some obligations to erect the emperor's portrait more rapidly after his accession⁴⁸ ». This may again indicate standardization of procedure as time went on. As to the commemoration of deceased emperors through posthumous portraits, lack of deification does not seem to have negatively affected the number of posthumous statues for Tiberius. On the whole statues of *diui* were erected very shortly after their death – the vast majority in any case within the reign of a direct successor – a large number of which through private initiatives⁴⁹. Unsurprisingly, Augustus was most often depicted, but there are surprisingly few posthumous bases for statues of Trajan ; especially when tak-

cation of erasure of names in papyrus texts might suggest that as a result of the developments of the second century the choice between deification or disgracing predecessors had become so polarised that at the beginning of the third century it had become an either/or alternative, to be made visible in all modes of representation.

⁴⁶ Syn., *Ep.*, 148 ; A. Garzya, *Opere di Sinesio di Cirene : Epistole, Opetette, Inni*, Torino, 1989.

⁴⁷ Front., *Ad M. Caes.*, 4, 12, 4. Cf. Men. Rh., 377, 29 : « Full of his images are the cities, some in the form of painted tablets, some maybe of more precious material. »

⁴⁸ J.M. Højte, *Roman Imperial Statue Bases from Augustus to Commodus*, Aarhus, 2005 (= *Roman Imperial Statue Bases*), p. 144-156, citation from p. 155.

⁴⁹ J.M. Højte, *Roman Imperial Statue Bases*, p. 133-134, 140.

ing into account the increased frequency of statue dedications in the reign of Hadrian. Commodus is regularly portrayed posthumously, regularly explicitly as the « brother of Septimius Severus », with nearly half of the inscriptions dedicating more space to Septimius' than to Commodus' titles⁵⁰. Again, the importance of a successor's actions for his predecessor's posthumous reputation is apparent.

CONCLUSIONS

Most important to any emperor's memory after his death, then, was the behaviour of his successor. As dynastic claims were an important mode of legitimating any emperor's power position, the relationship between deceased and succeeding emperor was one of mutual dependency. It is difficult to distinguish whether and (if so) to what extent individual emperors were concerned with their posthumous memory. Likewise, it is difficult to suggest with any certainty that emperors were concerned with providing dynastic support to their successors. In some cases, like those of Augustus and Hadrian, it is clear that great building projects were undertaken with the specific purpose to serve as a funerary monument, but most emperors did not start on such enterprises. Instead, their ashes were delivered to the funerary monuments available. Noticeable in this respect is that emperors who were disgraced were buried as a private person, in private land. In general terms, any condemnation of individual emperors seems to have been aimed at the *person* of the emperor, not at the emperorship as such. Fierce reactions against « bad emperors » after their deaths did not lead to reactions against the whole principle of the principate. In similar terms, (dynastic) continuity was one of the major concerns of the emperorship, and providing for a successor was one aspect of holding the imperial office. Imperial death, thus, also presented continuity through (suggested) dynastic succession, which could even be corroborated by divine claims if the deceased predecessor was deified.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that emperors were not completely free in their attitude towards predecessors. There sometimes needed to be careful negotiation between the different groups, depending on the emperor's popularity with the different layers of society during his life. Even afterwards, the actual commemoration of an emperor could differ from one layer of society to the other, and from one loca-

⁵⁰ J.M. Højte, *Roman Imperial Statue Bases*, p. 133-136, 139.

tion to the next. A deified and apparently popular emperor like Trajan received fewer posthumous statues than Commodus, and only a few more than the non-deified Tiberius. Importantly, there seems to have been more leeway in dealing with emperors in the first century AD than in the second. All of the emperors who were not consecrated up to the year 200 AD lived in the first century AD. This was partly the result of dynastic patterns and continuity, but also points at an ongoing standardization of the modes in which commemoration was to take shape. Memory sanctions had been part of the Roman world from the second century BC onwards. Since the death of Caesar, and especially that of Augustus, deification could become its reverse. Eventually, this would lead to a polarized system in which a ruler was either damned or deified upon his death. Deification, however, could not cement a consistent positive reputation, nor did damnation lead to a consistent negative standing. In death, as in life, there was little consistency in imperial reputations.

OVERVIEW OF EMPERORS AFTER DEATH⁵¹

| Emperor | <i>Dies imperii</i> | Date/place of death | Date of funeral | Date of consecration | Place of burial |
|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Augustus | | 19 Aug. 14, Nola | 1st half Sept. | 17 Sept. 14 | Mausoleum of Augustus |
| Tiberius | beginning of Sept. 14 (?) | 16 March 37, Misenum | 4 April 37 | no consecration | Mausoleum of Augustus |
| Caligula | 18 March 37 | 24 Jan. 41, Rome | ? | no consecration | (Lamian gardens) Mausoleum of Augustus? |
| Claudius | 25 Jan. 41 | 13 Oct. 54, Rome | ? | ? | Mausoleum of Augustus (probably) |
| Nero | 13 Oct. 54 | 9 (or 11) June 68, Rome | ? | no consecration | Family tomb of <i>Domitii</i> |
| Galba | 8 June 68 | 15 Jan. 69, Rome | ? | no consecration | In his <i>horti</i> |
| Otho | 15 Jan. 69 | 16/17 April 69, Bedriacum | ? | no consecration | Funerary monument in Brixellum |
| Vitellius | 19 April 69 | 20/21 Dec. 69, Rome | | no consecration | Thrown in Tiber |
| Vespasian | 1 July 69 | 23 June 79, Aquae Cutilia | ? | Between 8 Sept. 79 and 29 May 80 | Later carried to the temple of the Flavian family |
| Titus | 24 June 79 | 13 Sept. 81, Aquae Cutilia | ? | ? | Later carried to the temple of the Flavian family |

⁵¹ Chronology based on D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*², Darmstadt, 1996.

| Emperor | <i>Dies imperii</i> | Date/place of death | Date of funeral | Date of consecration | Place of burial |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Domitian | 14 Sept. 81 | 18 Sept. 96, Rome | ? | no consecration | Temple of the Flavian family |
| Nerva | 18 Sept. 96 | 27 (?) Jan. 98, Rome | ? | ? | Mausoleum of Augustus |
| Trajan | 28 Jan. 98 | 7 Aug. 117, Selinus | ? | After 25 Aug. 117 | Column of Trajan |
| Hadrian | 11 Aug. 117 | 10 July 138, Baiae | ? | 140 (?) | Mausoleum of Hadrian |
| Antoninus Pius | 10 July 138 | 7 March 161, Lorium | ? | ? | Mausoleum of Hadrian |
| Lucius Verus | 7 March 161 | Beginning of 169, Altinum | ? | ? | Mausoleum of Hadrian |
| Marcus Aurelius | 7 March 161 | 17 March 180, Bobonia | ? | ? | Mausoleum of Hadrian |
| Commodus | 27 Nov. 176 (?) | 31 Dec. 192, Rome | ? | Spring 195 | Mausoleum of Hadrian |