

Caelestes Honores: Emperor Worship among Corinth's Earliest Christians

[1] **Philo, Legat. 356–357**

We cried out with one spirit, “Lord Gaius, we are being slandered; **we did indeed sacrifice and we sacrificed hecatombs too** ... three-times already—not just once! First when at your accession to the power, second when you escaped that grievous illness which all the whole world suffered with you, and third with hope for victory in Germany.” “Enough,” he replied, “**that is so, you have sacrificed, but to another, even if on my behalf; what use was it then? For you have not sacrificed to me.**”

ἀναβοησάντων δὲ ἡμῶν ὁμοθυμαδόν, “κύριε Γάιε, συκοφαντούμεθα· **καὶ γὰρ ἐθύσαμεν καὶ ἑκατόμβας ἐθύσαμεν** ... καὶ τρίς, οὐχ ἅπαξ, ἤδη· πρῶτον μὲν ὅτε διεδέξω τὴν ἡγεμονίαν, δεύτερον δὲ ὅτε τὴν βαρεῖαν νόσον ἐκείνην ἦν πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμένη συνενόσησεν ἐξέφυγες, τρίτον δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς Γερμανικῆς νίκης,” “ἔστω,” φησί, “**ταῦτα ἀληθῆ, τεθύκατε, ἀλλ’ ἐτέρῳ, κἂν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ· τί οὖν ὄφελος; οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τεθύκατε.**”

[2] **Josephus, Ap. 2.76–78**

However, he did not prohibit another sort of honors offered to good men—secondary to those offered to God—**which honors we extend to the emperors and the people of Rome. We make for them perpetual sacrifices**; and not only do we celebrate such (rites) every day, at the expense of the whole Judean community, but, while we sacrifice no other victims at the expense of the community, not even on behalf of the (imperial) family, **to the emperors alone we present this signal honor which we render to no one else among mortals.**

Aliis autem honoribus post deum colendos non prohibuit uiros bonos, **quibus nos et imperatores et populum Romanorum dignitatibus ampliamus. Facimus autem pro eis continua sacrificia** et non solum cotidianis diebus ex impensa communi omnium Iudaeorum talia celebramus, uerum cum nullas alias hostias ex communi neque pro filiis peragamus, **solis imperatoribus hunc honorem praecipuum pariter exhibemus, quem hominum nulli persoluimus.**

[3] **1 Corinthians 10:19–22**

¹⁹ What am I saying? That sacrificial meat is something? Or that an idol is something? ²⁰ Rather, (I am saying) that what they sacrifice, [they sacrifice] to *daimonia* and not to God; and I do not want you to become partnered with *daimonia*. ²¹ You are unable to drink from both the Lord’s cup and that of *daimonia*, nor are you able to share the Lord’s table and that of *daimonia*. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

¹⁹ Τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστίν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστίν; ²⁰ ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἂ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ [θύουσιν]· οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι. ²¹ οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. ²² ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;

[4] **P. Oxy. 1021**

He who bound to his forefathers, was seen to be a God, Caesar has moved on to them, but he who has been both awaited and hoped for, has been revealed as Emperor, and **the good daimon of the world**, who is the origin [?] of all good, Nero Caesar has been revealed.

ὁ μὲν ὀφειλόμενος τοῖς προγόνοις καὶ ἐνφανῆς θεὸς Καῖσαρ εἰς αὐτοὺς κεχώρηκε, ὁ δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης καὶ προσδοκηθεὶς καὶ ἐλπισθεὶς/ Αὐτοκράτωρ ἀποδέδωκε/ικται, **ἀγαθὸς δαίμων δὲ τῆς οὐκουμένης** [ἀρ]χὴ ὧν [[μεγισ]] τε πάντων ἀγαθῶν Νέρων Καῖσαρ ἀποδέδεικται.

[5] **OGIS 666**

To good *tyche*: When [[Nero]] Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Emperor, **the good daimon of the world**, together with all good things offered benefaction to Egypt, employing his most brilliant foresight, sent to us Tiberius Caludius Balbillus prefect (the famed astrologer)...

ἀγαθὴ τύχη· ἐπεὶ [Νέρων] Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς Αὐτοκράτωρ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δαίμων τῆς οἰκουμένης, σὺν ἅπασιν οἷς εὐεργέτησεν ἀγαθοῖς τὴν Αἴγυπτον τὴν ἐναργεστάτην πρόνοιαν ποιησάμενος ἐπεμψεν ἡμῖν Τιβέριον Κλαύδ[ι]ον Βάλβιλλον ἡγεμόνα...

[6] Tertullian, *Apol.* 32.2–3

Do you not know that *genii* are called *daemones*, and hence in the diminutive form, *daemonia*?

Nescitis **genios daemonas** dici et inde diminutiva voce **daemonia**?

[7] Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 29.5

Thus, they call on their *numen*, supplicate their statues, entreat their *genius*, that is *daemon*, and for them it is safer to swear falsely by the *genius* of Jove than their kings.

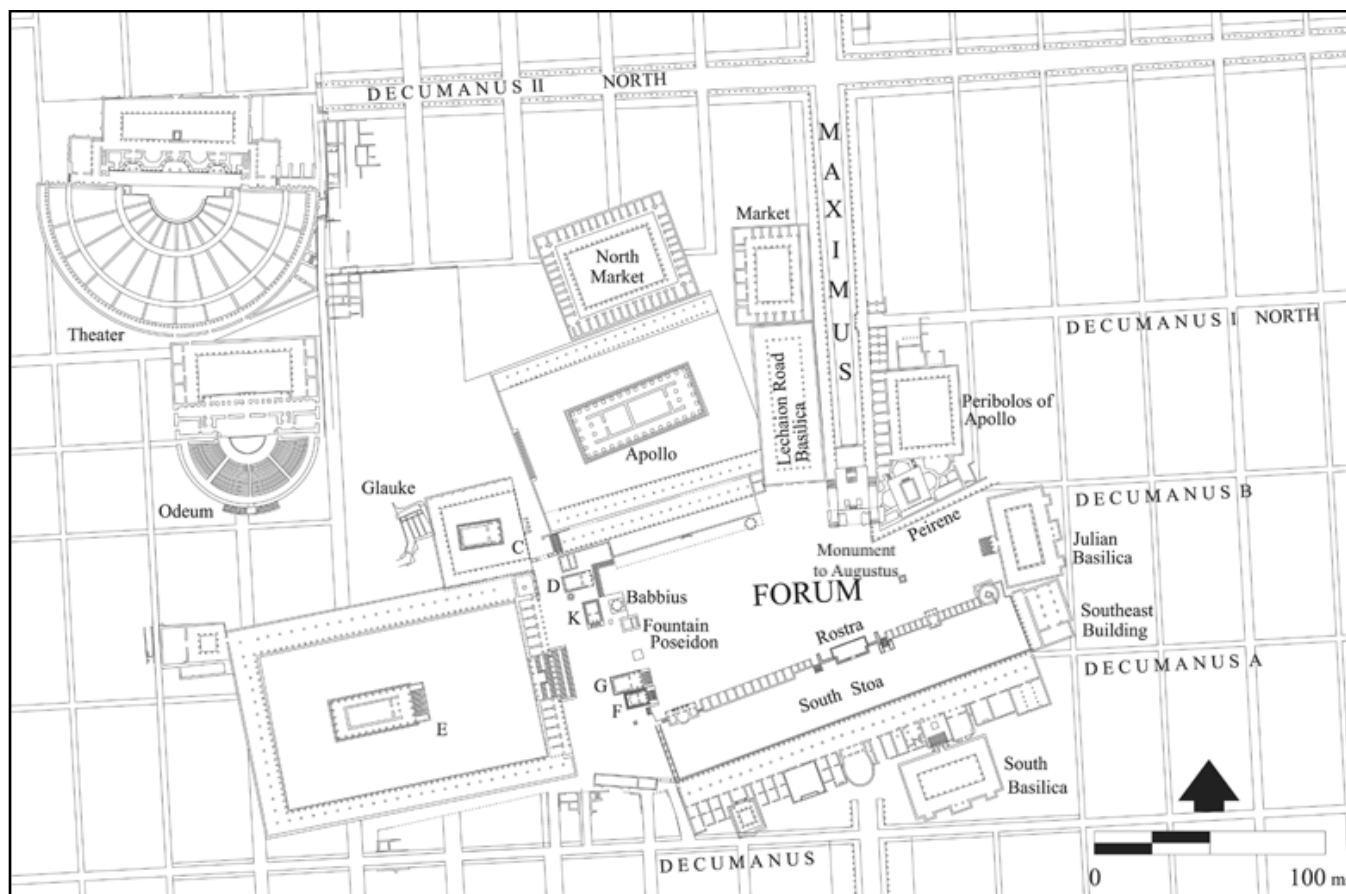
Sic eorum numen vocant, ad imagines supplicant, **Genium, id est daemonem**, implorant, et est eis tutius per Iouis Genium peierare quam regis.

[8] Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.3.1

Above the forum is the Temple of Octavia (Temple E), sister of Augustus, who ruled over the Romans after Caesar, the founder of the present Corinth.

ὑπὲρ δὲ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐστὶν Ὀκταβίας ναὸς ἀδελφῆς Ἀυγούστου βασιλεύσαντος Ῥωμαίων μετὰ Καίσαρα τὸν οἰκιστὴν Κορίνθου τῆς νῦν.

The Forum of Roman Corinth



[9] 1 Corinthians 8:4b–6

^{4b} we know that (there is) no idol in the world and that (there is) no god except the one (God). ⁵ for even if there are so-called gods either in heaven or on earth, just there are many gods and many lords, ⁶ rather, for us, there is one God, the father, from whom all things are and we are for him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and we are through him.

οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς. ⁵ καὶ γὰρ εἴπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς, ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί· ⁶ ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.

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