

## A Late-Republican Recipe for Divinity: Making a God at Rome

This paper argues that during the late-Republican period, a Roman process developed for a man to become divine. Whereas previously a man was declared to possess qualities worthy of divine honors, during the late-Republic a man could possess honors equal to, but not surpassing, a god and as a result become divine. Though based on Hellenistic precedents, this result was a progression in the understanding of divine honors that was uniquely Roman in its application and scope. Through an examination of the iconography, titles, and deeds associated with Pompey and Caesar, I argue that a template for successful and continued transformation from man to god was established through traits and dutiful actions. These traits and actions result in a man becoming divine when they are both reported and believed; specifically, one's divine status was achieved by two means, senatorial decree and popular endorsement of their progression from man to divine (Cole 2013, 6, 23-24).

Cicero analyzes how Pompey and Caesar represented themselves as divine to determine if such status was taboo or undeserved – I focus on Cicero's treatment of the matter because he is a contemporary source (most of our sources are later), because of his personal interest in the question of mortals becoming divine (see his *Consulatio*), and he writes extensively about the topic in *De re publica* and *De natura deorum*. Cicero's goal in these discourses is neither to legitimize nor to condone their claims of divinity, but to determine whether they possess the proper merits and résumé for their change in status to be believed. Using Cicero's analysis as a basis for my own, I argue that Caesar and Pompey possessed the desired traits, but with differing results; Caesar was believed to be divine in life and death while Pompey was not.

The images and pageantry associated with these men deliberately walked the line of taboo; iconography in coins and elaborate triumphs promoted their connections to the divine and

their honors as being equal to the gods (Cole 2013, 27; Nousek 2008, 305). These however, did not offend so long as the author or central figure was perceived to be worthy of such a connection, and if so the image met with successful reception by a Roman audience. For example, a *triumphator* could present himself as Jupiter and even attempt to drive a *quadriga* with four elephants, but so long as he had been victorious, the Republic prevailed, and future victories were assured, the display was believable and not deemed blasphemous. By examining this evidence as well as Cicero's reception of their claims of divinity, I demonstrate that to become god-like there were essential traits and actions required to secure the belief of fellow Romans. To sustain this belief, there needed to be a continued demonstration of divine-like behavior in addition to victories on behalf of the Republic. The pageantry and rhetoric associated with and surrounding Pompey and Caesar progressed into a Roman, and particularly Caesarian, understanding of deification and divine honors.

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