

# Cassius Dio and the Sacred

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### ABSTRACT

I would like to focus my paper on several words belonging to the sphere of the “Sacred” as translated from Latin into Greek by Cassius Dio. Actually, the Severian historian has to translate, that is, to explain to Greek-speaking or -thinking readers terms like *sacer*, *sacrosanctus* (especially for the tribunician power), and *augustus* (particularly in connection with the name of the first emperor). We shall see that Cassius Dio knows very well the exact meaning of each and every one of these Latin words, but often distances himself from traditional Roman beliefs.

### KEYWORDS

*sacer*, *sanctus*, *sacrosanctitas*, *tribunicia potestas*, *Augustus*, *crimen maiestatis*, Sacred, accursed, holy, inviolable, tribunician power

Cassius Dio<sup>1</sup> is the author of *Roman History*, written in Greek and relating the acts and activities of the Romans from their origins right up to his own time: the beginning of the 3rd century AD. The author is a noble Bithynian who had twice served as Consul in the reign of the Severi and had had an illustrious career both in Rome and in the provinces. Recognizing that the Greek-speaking, Eastern portion of the Roman Empire had a very poor understanding of the Empire’s

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. my paper delivered in Verona “Octavian-Augustus in Cassius Dio: between Propaganda and Objectivity”, published in French as FREYBURGER-GALLAND, M.-L.: Octavien-Auguste chez Dion Cassius: entre propagande et objectivité. In LUCIANI, S. – ZUNTOW, P. (edd.): *Entre mots et marbre. Les métamorphoses d’Auguste* [Ausonius Editions Scripta Antiqua 82]. Bordeaux 2016, 219–228.

“Latin” past, he produced a monumental, 80-books work of which, sadly, the majority has been lost to us. However, we do have his entire account of the end of the Republic to the reign of Nero. Thanks to the efforts of two abridgers from the Byzantine epoch, Zonaras and Xiphilin, and to numerous fragments, we know what the majority of the books contained.

In this particular domain which is specific to vocabulary of the sacred, which goes back to very archaic structures, it would seem interesting to study how the author renders in Greek a certain number of traditional notions familiar to the Romans, which would doubtless appear rather foreign and strange to his intended Greek-speaking readership.

We will be focusing upon a number of words related to this notion, such as *ἱερός*, ‘sacred’ and ‘cursed’, *ἄσυλος*, ‘inviolable’, *εὐσεβής*, ‘sacred’, *ἅγιος*, ‘holy’, which will be placed in their lexical family and their religious context, as translations of Latin words like *sacer* and *sacrosanctus*.

One particularly interesting text from the perspective of vocabulary of the sacred comes from a fragment which without doubt belongs to Book 3 of *Roman History*, covering the dedication of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol in 509 BC, right at the beginning of the Roman Republic. The following text presents several words in the family of *ἱερός* and in the family of *ὅσιος*:

Τὸν τοῦ υἱὸς νεῶν ἐθειώσεν ἀπὸ κλήρου ὁ Ὅρατιος, καίτοι τοῦ Οὐαλερίου τὸν τε υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τεθυηκέναι φήσαντος, καὶ τοῦτο παρ’ αὐτῇ αὐτῷ τὴν *ἱερουργίαν* ἀγγεληῆναι παρασκευασάντος ἵν’ ὑπὸ τε τοῦ πάθους, καὶ ὅτι οὐδ’ ἄλλως ὅσιον ἦν ἐν πένθει τινα ὅσα ἱεροποιεῖν, παραχωρήσειεν οἱ τῆς τοῦ ἔργου ἱερώσεως.

Ἐκεῖνος γὰρ οὐκ ἠπίστησε μὲν τῷ ῥηθέντι, οὐ μέντοι καὶ *τῶν ἱερῶν* ἐξέστη, ἀλλ’ ἄταφον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ παιδὸς ὥς καὶ ἀλλότριον, ὅπως μὴδὲν τῇ περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁσίᾳ προσήκειν δόξῃ, κελεύσας τισὶν εἶσαι, πάνθ’ οὕτω τὰ καθήκοντα διετέλεσεν.<sup>2</sup>

The temple of Jupiter was dedicated by Horatius, as determined by lot, although Valerius made the declaration that his (=Horatius’) son was dead, and arranged to have this news brought to him during the very performance of his sacred office, in order that Horatius, under the blow of the misfortune and because in general it was impious for any one in grief to fulfill the duties of priest, should yield to him the dedication of the structure. Horatius, although he did not doubt the report, did not, however, surrender his ministry; on the contrary, after bidding them leave unburied the body of his son, as if it were a stranger’s, in order that he might not seem to concern his sacred office, he then performed all the necessary ceremonies.

## THE GREEK EQUIVALENT TO SACER

*Ἱερός*, frequently used in classical Greek, works quite naturally in Dio as the equivalent to *sacer* operating with a dual sense: “that which refers to the gods, sacred” and “of a cult, ritual”. This Greek term is very ancient indeed. As an adjective it qualifies places, celebrations and objects and its use conforms with the classical Greek. One can note, for example the “Holy Mountain”,<sup>3</sup> the “Holy Way”,<sup>4</sup> the “holy sickness”, i.e. “epilepsy”,<sup>5</sup> which, it should be noted, is not termed

<sup>2</sup>Cassius Dio, frag. 13. 4 = *Excerpta Valesiana*. 8, p. 577: cf. Dio’s *Roman History*. 8 vols. Ed. by H. B. FOSTER, with the English translation by E. CARY. Loeb Classical Library, 1970.

<sup>3</sup>44. 29. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Frag. 6. 2.

<sup>5</sup>46. 33. 2.



*morbus sacer* in Latin but *morbus comitialis* (because it prevents or interrupts the holding of *comitia*, “popular assembly”).

Nominalized in the neutral singular, it refers to a sanctuary, for the most part in Cassius Dio in the realms of Greek geography and religion, such as Zeus’ Sacred Oak Trees at Dodona,<sup>6</sup> the Sanctuary of Hercules at Gades<sup>7</sup> or that of Apollo at Actium.<sup>8</sup> He generally refers to temples in the plural,<sup>9</sup> whereas he repeatedly uses the term *naos* for the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol and also for those of Ceres,<sup>10</sup> Spes,<sup>11</sup> and Quirinus.<sup>12</sup>

In the neutral plural, τὰ ἱερά can evoke sacred objects,<sup>13</sup> an ensemble of rites<sup>14</sup> – be they Roman or foreign, such as the proscribed Egyptian rites<sup>15</sup> – which might involve sacrifices.<sup>16</sup>

All this is unremarkable enough and perfectly conforms to classical Greek usage. There is just one exception – when *ἱερός* is applied to a person and signifies “consecrated unto God, cursed” in the very specific context of tribunician power – a feature which will be revisited. He also translates *sacer* (and especially *sacer esto*) with this very particular and paradoxically ambiguous sense. It is in this way that, speaking about Caesar, he specifies the privileges accorded to Tribunes:

... ὅπως, αὐτὶς ἢ ἔργῳ ἢ καὶ λόγῳ αὐτὸν ὑβρίσῃ, ἱερός τε ἢ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄγῃ ἐνέχῃται,

... so that if any one insulted him by deed or word, that man should be an outlaw (*ἱερός*) and accursed.<sup>17</sup>

This identical formulation is also present in the text of Dio’s abridger, Zonaras, when he describes the creation of the Tribune of the Plebs, which will be considered later.<sup>18</sup>

A compound form of *ἱερός*, *ἱεροπρεπής*, in classical usage (Plato, Xenophon) with the sense ‘worthy of being considered holy’, could well suggest one of the privileges of the tribune, the *sacrosanctitas*. This adjective is to be found in a passage of Book 56, recounting the apotheosis of Augustus and the honors pertaining thereto: “the Tribunes of the Plebs, being *sacrosancti*, were responsible for the organization of the *Augustalia*”, τὰ τε Αὐγουστάλια οἱ δῆμαρχοι ὥς καὶ ἱεροπρεπεῖς ὄντες διατιθῶσι.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Frag. 101. 2.

<sup>7</sup>37. 52. 2.

<sup>8</sup>50. 12. 7.

<sup>9</sup>41. 7. 3 and 9. 2; 51. 5. 5.

<sup>10</sup>50. 8. 2.

<sup>11</sup>50. 10. 3.

<sup>12</sup>41. 14. 3.

<sup>13</sup>42. 26. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. frag. quoted p. 2; 42. 31. 3.

<sup>15</sup>37. 45. 1; 53. 2. 4.

<sup>16</sup>37. 35. 4.

<sup>17</sup>44. 5. 3.

<sup>18</sup>Zonaras 7. 15. cf. Dio’s *Roman history*, vol. I 125–129.

<sup>19</sup>56. 46. 4.



## GREEK EQUIVALENTS TO SACROSANCTUS

Now to focus upon the adjective *ἄσυλος*, “inviolable, sacrosanct”, which is to be found in associated with *ὅσιος* and *ἱερός* to indicate a ‘place which is sacrosanct’.<sup>20</sup> We find it in Antony’s eulogy to Julius Caesar, whereby he calls the dictator:

ἀλλ’ οὗτος ὁ πατήρ, οὗτος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, ὁ ἄσυλος, ὁ ἥρωας, ὁ θεὸς τέθνηκεν, οἶμοι, τέθνηκεν. . .<sup>21</sup>

Yet this father, this high priest, this inviolable being, this hero and God, is dead, alas, dead. . .

This term is also evoked a little later<sup>22</sup> by *ἄσυλία*, ‘inviolability’, and then repeated: *καὶ ὃν ἐξ ἴσου τοῖς δημάρχους ἄσυλον ἐπεποιήκεσαν*,<sup>23</sup> “whose person they had made as inviolable as the tribunes”. Once again, this refers to this fundamental aspect of tribunician power. The same privilege was also accorded to Octavian in the year 36<sup>24</sup> and to Livia in the year 35.<sup>25</sup>

At its origin, this privilege had been that of the Tribunes of the Plebs ever since the creation of this magistracy, as Dio doubtless reported in Book 4 (of which only Zonaras’ summary has come down to us<sup>26</sup>), relating to the moment of the revolt of the Plebs, by means of which two defenders were created and invested with various powers, one of which was ‘inviolability’, which rendered ‘confounded’ those who sought to oppose them.

Καὶ γὰρ καὶ νόμους εἰσήγαγον ἵν’ ὅστις αὐτοῖς ἔργῳ ἢ λόγῳ προσκρούσῃ *ἱερός* τε ἢ καὶ τῷ *ἄγχι* ἐνέχῃται. Τὸ δὲ *ἱερὸν* εἶναι ἀπολωλέναι ἦν. Οὕτω γὰρ πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν ὥσπερ τι θῦμα εἰς σφαγὴν *καθιερώθῃ* ἀνόμαστο. Καὶ αὐτοὺς δὲ τοὺς δημάρχους τὸ πλῆθος σακροσάγκτους ἀνόμασεν, οἷον *τείχη* ἄγια εἰς φρουρὰν τῶν σφᾶς ἐπικαλουμένων *τυγχάνουτας*. Σάκρα γὰρ παρὰ Ῥωμαίους τὰ *τείχη* καὶ *σάγκτα* τὰ ἄγια.

For they introduced laws to the effect that whoever should obstruct them by deed or word should be “devoted” and under a curse. This being “devoted” meant destruction; for this was the term applied to everything that was consecrated, like a victim for slaughter. The tribunes themselves were termed by the multitude *sacrosancti*, since they served as sacred walls, so to speak, for the shelter of such as invoked them; for *sacra* among the Romans means “walls”, and *sancta* “sacred”.

Zonaras’s attempt to explain *ἱερός* in relation with the Latin *sacer* (‘sacred’ and ‘accursed’) is altogether clear: *τὸ δὲ ἱερὸν εἶναι ἀπολωλέναι ἦν*, this ‘being devoted’ meant destruction. The second portion of Zonaras’ passage is very much less clear because it uses the word *sacrosanctus* in explaining that the tribunes were like sacred ramparts protecting those that might call upon them, and that for the Romans the ‘ramparts’ were, by definition, *ἄγια*, i.e. ‘sacred’, where the formulation: *σάκρα γὰρ τὰ τείχη καὶ σάγκτα τὰ ἄγια*, *sacra* meant “walls”

<sup>20</sup>Frag. 109. 18 = Excerpta Valesiana, 122, p. 658, Dio’s *Roman history*, vol. II 496. καὶ οὐδὲν ἦν αὐτοῖς χωρίου, οὐχ ὅσιον, οὐχ ἱερὸν, οὐτ’ ἀσφαλὲς οὐτ’ ἄσυλον. “No place, either profane or sacred, was safe or inviolate for them”.

<sup>21</sup>44. 49. 1.

<sup>22</sup>44. 49. 3.

<sup>23</sup>44. 50. 1.

<sup>24</sup>49. 15. 5–6.

<sup>25</sup>49. 38, 1.

<sup>26</sup>Zonaras 7. 15. 5.



and *sancta* “sacred”. In short, the adjective *ἅγιος* is to be found in the two senses and *sacro-sanctus* is just a case of redundancy. . . which is not entirely false.

It is not very clear what the ‘ramparts’ have to do with this explanation beyond that which Zonaras (or perhaps Dio himself) could have thought of the *Saepta* (a portico’s area on the Field of Mars delimiting the meeting space available to the *Comitia*), *saepta* being the plural of *saeptum* ‘enclosure’ from the verb *saepire* ‘to enclose’. Dio refers to them as *Σεπτὰ* and could have connected this Latin word to the Greek *σεπτός* ‘venerable, worthy of religious respect’.

Elsewhere – and somewhat rare in Dio’s work – there is the use of the word *ἅγιος*. In *Roman History* he retains the classical sense of ‘sacred, holy’ to refer to temples,<sup>27</sup> whereas the closest Greek word in the same family: *ἄγνος* ‘sacred, pure’ is simply not used and, as certain grammar specialists have advanced, both adjectives could arise from a common root with *sacer* and *sancire*. Moreover, in classical Greek, the word *ἅγιος*, which refers to things outlawed by religion, could, like *sacer*, be taken to mean ‘accursed’, but the term is never used in this sense in Dio’s *Roman History*.

Yet it is the adjective *ἐναγής*, from this same family, which one finds in Dio’s work with the sense, ‘accursed’, in just one passage, but it is essential for the tribunician *sacrosanctitas* accorded to Octavian in the year 27:<sup>28</sup>

ἢ τε ἐξουσία ἡ δημαρχικὴ καλουμένη ἦν οἱ πάντες ποτὲ ἀνθήσαντες ἔσχον, δίδωσί τὰ τε ἐπιγινόμενα ὑφ’ ἐτέρων τινός, ἂν μὴ συνεπαινώσι, παύειν, καὶ μήθ’ ὑβρίζεσθαι κἂν ἄρα τι καὶ τὸ βραχύτατον μὴ ὅτι ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγῳ δόξωσι, καὶ ἄκριτον ἀδικεῖσθαι τὸν ποιήσαντα αὐτὸ ὡς καὶ ἐναγῇ ἀπολλύουσι.

The tribunician power, as it is called, which used to be conferred only upon men of the greatest influence, gives them the right to nullify the effects of measures taken by any other official, in case they do not approve it, and makes them immune from scurrilous abuse; and if they appear to be wronged in even the slightest degree, not merely by deed, but even by word, they may destroy the guilty party, as one **accursed**, without a trial.

In the same way, the simple substantive *ἅγιος*, which, in spite of the absence of the initial aspiration, would seem to belong to the same family, refers to the ambivalent sacred character of ‘consecration/curse’. This is only to be found twice in *Roman History*, in those passages already cited herein because of the particular meaning of *ιερός* ‘accursed’.

Finally, it should be noted that unlike other Greek authors of the period (Plutarch, Dionysius of Halicarnassus), Dio does not use the compound *παναγής* understood as a superlative form of *ἅγιος*, as a means of translating *sacrosanctus*. It would seem that all these authors had been confused by the typically Roman notion of *sacrosanctitas*. Certain among these authors (Dionysius, Plutarch, Appian) employ two coordinated adjectives *ιερὸς καὶ ἄσυλος*, *ιερὸς* in the translation of *sacer* and *ἄσυλος* in order to render the idea of inviolability contained in *sanctus*. One also finds *ιερὸς καὶ παναγής*.

In this linguistic confusion, as none of these words is sufficiently explicit for a Greek-speaking public, in his opinion, as has been seen,<sup>29</sup> Dio seems to have felt obliged each time he evokes *sacrosanctitas*, to explain the privilege of the tribunes which a Greek would find excessive.

<sup>27</sup>50. 8. 2; 51. 17. 6.

<sup>28</sup>53. 17. 9.

<sup>29</sup>44. 5. 3; 49. 15. 5–6; 53. 17. 9–10.



He emphasizes these outrageous possible outcomes by using the verb *ύβρίζειν* ‘to outrage’ and words of this family: *ύβριση*,<sup>30</sup> *άνύβριστον*,<sup>31</sup> *ύβρίζεσθαι*.<sup>32</sup>

Another word may be considered: *άσέβεια*. It is a negative compound of the root *σέβ*-which is found in the family of *εύσεβής* (= ‘pious’), *σέβειν* (= ‘to venerate’) and of the Greek title of Augustus, *Σεβαστός*.

The term *άσέβεια* could translate *impietas*, but is never used in this sense in his *Roman History*, but rather as an equivalent of *maiestas* in the very particular case of *crimen maiestatis*, a crime of lèse-majesté in the eyes of emperors, as is well defined in Book 78:

...τούς τε έπάσεβεία τιμή, οία γε ή άσέβεια αύτη ή ές τούς άυτοκράτορας λέγεται γίγνεσθαι, τιμωρίαν τινά έμβιον ώφληκότας...<sup>33</sup>

...Those who had been sentenced to some life punishment or other for an act of ‘impiety’ (I mean the ‘impiety, as it is called, that has reference to the person of the emperors’)...

For example, this word is to be found in respect of Tiberius,<sup>34</sup> of Caligula<sup>35</sup> and of Nero.<sup>36</sup> In the same way, the verb *άσέβειν* signifies “to commit a capital offense” (referring to Tiberius<sup>37</sup> and to Caligula<sup>38</sup>).

Concerning the surname of Augustus, Dio explains this choice:

ούτω δή και τόν Αύγούστον όνομα και παρά τής βουλής και παρά τού δήμου έπέθετο ... βουλευθέντων γάρ σφων ιδίως πως αυτόν προσειπείν ... ό Καίσαρ έπεθύμει μόν ισχυρώς Ρωμύλος όνομασθήναι, αισθόμενος δέ ότι ύποπτεύεται εκ τούτουτής ... βασιλείας ... επιθυμείν, ούκέτ’ αυτόν άντεποιήσατο, Αύγουστος ως και πλείον τι ή κατά ανθρώπους ών έπεκλήθη πάντα γάρ τά έντιμότατα και τά ιερώτατα αύγουστα προσαγορεύεται. έξ ούπερ και σεβαστόν αυτόν και έλληνίζοντές πως, ώσπερ τινά σεπτόν, από τού σεβάζεσθαι, προσείπον.

The name ‘Augustus’ was at length bestowed upon him by the senate and by the people. For when they wish to call him by some distinctive title ... Caesar was exceedingly desirous of being called Romulus, but when he perceived that this caused him to be suspected of desiring the kingship, he desisted from his efforts to obtain it, and took the title of ‘Augustus’, signifying that he was more than human; for all the most precious and sacred objects are termed *augusta*. They therefore addressed him also in Greek as ‘Sebastos’, meaning an August personage, from the verb *σεβάζεσθαι*.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>30</sup>44. 5. 3.

<sup>31</sup>49. 38. 1.

<sup>32</sup>53. 17. 9.

<sup>33</sup>78. 12. 1.

<sup>34</sup>58. 4. 5.

<sup>35</sup>60. 4. 2.

<sup>36</sup>65. 9. 1.

<sup>37</sup>57. 23. 3.

<sup>38</sup>59. 11. 6 and 16. 2.

<sup>39</sup>53. 16. 8.



In this text appears another word of the same family, *σεπτός* ‘venerable’, which we find elsewhere with a significant value when Maecenas, doubtlessly suggesting the tribunician inviolability, advises the future Augustus to show himself to be above insult:

ἵν' ὥς περὶ τῶν θεῶν, οὕτω καὶ περὶ σοῦ φρονῶσιν ὅτι σεπτὸς εἶ.

since you desire that men shall think of you as they did of the gods that your sanctity is inviolable.<sup>40</sup>

For that matter, it is with another verb from this family that this same Maecenas, in anticipation of the bestowing of the title ‘Augustus’ upon Octavian, tells him:

σεβιοῦσι δέ σε καὶ ἑτέρᾳ τινὶ προσήρῃσει, σε πᾶν τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ἔργον ἄνν τοῦ τῆς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῆς ἐπιφθόνου καρποῦσθαι.

They will pay reverence to your August position by still another term of address so that you will enjoy fully the reality of the kingship without the odium attached to the name of king.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, it follows from this study into a certain number of words relating to the sacred that they are often used by Dio in relation to tribunician power and the emperor cult and that the two are, for that matter, linked. It should be noted that it is Maecenas who first evoked this cult with the expression *ὥς περὶ τῶν θεῶν* (cf. *supra*). Indeed, the punishments incurred by those who attacked an individual invested with *tribunicia potestas* were often the same as those accused of a capital offence: death.<sup>42</sup>

Yet Dio knew many emperors from Commodus to Alexander Severus, both the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’. Those falling into the latter category often accused others of capital offences (*ἀσέβεια*), while those in the former practiced amnesty, as Macrinus offered to those whom Caracalla had condemned.<sup>43</sup>

About the imperial cult, Dio evokes first Julius Caesar’s cult, then that of Octavian/Augustus, and then that of all the emperors in succession:

Καῖσαρ δὲ . . . τεμένη τῇ τε Πρώμῃ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ τῷ Καίσαρι, ἥρωα αὐτὸν Ἰούλιον ὀνομάσας, ἐν τε Ἐφέσῳ καὶ ἐν Νικαίᾳ γενέσθαι ἐφήκεν· καὶ τούτους μέντοις Ῥωμαίοις τοῖς παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐποικοῦσι τιμᾶν προσέταξε· τοῖς δὲ δὴ ξένοις, Ἑλληνάς σφας ἐπικαλέσας, ἐαντῷ τινα, τοῖς μὲν Ἀσιανοῖς ἐν Περγᾶμῳ, τοῖς δὲ Βιθυνοῖς ἐν Νικομηδεῖᾳ, τεμενίσαι ἐπέτρεψε. Καὶ τοῦτ’ ἐκείθεν ἀρξάμενοι καὶ ἐπ’ ἄλλων αὐτοκρατόρων οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀκούει, ἐγένετο. ἐν γὰρ τοι τῷ ἄστει αὐτῷ τῇ τε ἄλλῃ Ἰταλίᾳ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις τῶν καὶ ἐφ’ ὅποσον οὖν λόγον τιנדὸς ἀξίῳ ἐτόλμησε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι μεταλλάξασι μέντοι κἀνταῦθα τοῖς ὀρθῶς αὐταρχήσασιν ἄλλα τε ἰσόθεοι τιμαὶ δίδονται καὶ δὴ καὶ ἡρῶα ποιεῖται.

Caesar (= Octavian), meanwhile... gave permission for the dedication of sacred precincts in Ephesus and in Nicaea to Rome and to Caesar, his father, whom he named *Divus Iulius*. He commanded that the Romans resident in these cities should pay honor to these two divinities; but he permitted the aliens, whom he styled Hellenes, to consecrate precincts to himself, the Asians to have theirs in Pergamum, and the Bithynians theirs in Nicomedia. This practice, beginning under him,

<sup>40</sup>52. 31. 8.

<sup>41</sup>52. 40. 2. Translation by E. Cary.

<sup>42</sup>cf. *supra* p. 6.

<sup>43</sup>78. 12. 1. cf. *supra* p. 6.



has been continued under other emperors, not only in the case of the Hellenic nations but also in that of all the others, in so far as they are subject to the Romans. For in the capital itself, and in Italy generally no emperor, however worthy of renown he has been, has dared to do this; still, even there, various divine honors are bestowed after their death upon such emperors as have ruled uprightly, and, in fact, shrines are built to them.<sup>44</sup>

Dio is, finally, at pains to specify that, in Italy and at Rome, no emperor had endorsed such a cult during his lifetime and, here again, he sets himself apart from the “Greeks”, because even in his home province of Bithynia, such action had been authorized by the emperors.

In short, Dio, as a Stoic living in the third century, is not so much conscious of the religious meaning of the “sacred”, as of the political value of a notion as the *sacrosanctitas*. Roman religion, taken in its ensemble, is treated with the same skepticism and the ritualization which characterizes it does not seem to be important to this historian.

<sup>44</sup>51. 20. 6–8.

