

Human Honours and Divine Attributes

Abstract: In the Greek world, the institution of civic honours (granted by communities to reward the actions of an individual or recognise his/her benevolent power) led to the development of a shared rhetoric of praise, giving some words a strong honorific value. Under Roman rule, this honorific vocabulary became enriched as a new form of honour emerged and expanded: honorific titles, directly attached to the individual's name and thus defining his/her social position. This paper explores the overlaps between these titles and divine onomastic attributes. Words such as *euergetes*, *soter*, *ktistes*, *kyrios*, or *despotes* are attested with both values, in both honorific or religious contexts, whereas some other titles seem to be completely absent from the divine sphere. The results of a personal database on honorific titles in Asia Minor are compared with the results of the MAP database to illuminate which appellations are common to humans and gods and in which contexts. In this perspective, Roman emperors (who have in many ways replaced Hellenistic kings) can appear as a sort of middle ground between the human and the divine spheres.

Introduction

In the city of Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, a triple dedication was set up in honour of those who made it possible for the city to recover its freedom, lost during the first mithridatic war. Probably erected under Augustus, the marble stone was engraved in three columns:¹

Γναίω Πονπ[η] | ίω, Γναίω υἱώ, | Μεγάλω, αὐτοκράτορι, τῷ εὐ|εργέτα καὶ σώ|τηρι καὶ κτίστα.
[θ]έω Δ[ι] | Ἐλευθε|ρίω Φιλοπάτριδι | Θεοφάνη τῷ σώ|τηρι καὶ εὐεργέ|τα καὶ κτίστα δευ|τέρω
τᾷς πατρίδος.
Ποτάμωι | Λεσβώνακτο[ς] | τῷ εὐεργέτα | καὶ σώτηρος | καὶ κτίστα τᾷς | πόλιος.

To Cnaeus Pompey the Great, son of Cnaeus, *imperator*, the benefactor and saviour and founder.
To god Zeus Eleutherios Philopatris Theophanes, the saviour and benefactor and second founder of the fatherland.
To Potamon son of Lesbos, the benefactor and saviour and founder of the city.

¹ IG XII.2, 163 = MAP DB S#8538. I follow the date proposed by Robert 1969, which seems the most likely.

Other sources allow us to reconstruct the full story.² Theophanes, son of Hieroitas, a citizen of Mytilene who held the office of *prytanis* at some point in his early career, became a close adviser of Pompey. He accompanied Pompey during his campaign against Mithridates between 66 and 63 BCE and followed him to Rome after the end of the war. In the meantime, he received Roman citizenship, took the name Cn. Pompeius Theophanes and used his friendship with the Roman general to obtain freedom for his fatherland, a privileged status which placed the city outside of the province of Asia. After the death of Pompey, another citizen played an essential role in maintaining good relations between Mytilene and Rome: Potamon, son of Lesbomax. He went on embassy several times, to Julius Caesar and to Augustus, contributing to securing a treaty between Mytilene and Rome and the confirmation of the status of free and allied city. The triple dedication refers allusively to this recent past and it is noteworthy that the memory of Pompey was not erased after the victory of Caesar. All three dedicatees are defined with the same three words: *euergetes* (benefactor), *soter* (saviour) and *ktistes* (founder).³ These words are well documented in an honorific context as official titles awarded by civic institutions to individuals who were of great service to the community or in a position to bring protection and favour. The history of this practice goes back to Classical times but the use of such words as honorific titles, directly attached to the individual's name, developed during the Roman period, from the 1st century BCE onwards. Each of these titles has its own connotations and there is a subtle hierarchy between them.⁴

The small variations are interesting in the inscription from Mytilene. Pompey and Potamon are benefactors, saviours and founders (in this order), while Theophanes is styled as “saviour” first. This, along with his central position in the layout of the inscription, might suggest that he is considered to have played the main role in “saving” the city. He is also “second founder of the fatherland” instead of “founder” without further indication or “founder of the city”. Such a formula refers more explicitly to the figure of the first founder, the mythological or historical *ktistes* of the community, to which Theophanes is compared. In addition, the word *patris* has a more affective flavour than the neutral *polis*. It echoes the epithet *philopatris*, which is also applied to Theophanes, but as part of his onomastic formula and not as a title added to his name and introduced by the definite article (τῷ). However, the most striking difference between Theophanes and the other two dedicatees is the fact that he is referred to as a god (*theos*). While Pompey and Potamon are commemorated as men, having received human honours, Theophanes has undergone a process of deification after his death. He is addressed as a “Zeus of freedom who loves his fatherland” – an ono-

² On Theophanes, see Robert 1969; Salzmann 1985; Labarre 1996, 92–99. On Potamon, Parker 1991; Labarre 1996, 99–106. On both, Pawlak 2020.

³ On the last line, the genitive σώτηρος is a mistake and should read σώτηρι (cf. Robert 1969, 49).

⁴ For a survey of the uses of *euergetes*, *soter* and *ktistes* in honorific contexts from the Classical to the Roman period, see Heller 2020, 19–37.

mastic sequence which alludes to his role in securing the status of free city to his *patris*. Hence *Eleutherios* and *Philopatris* appear as cult epithets, whereas *euergetes*, *soter* and *ktistes* are used as honorific titles.⁵ Nonetheless, *philopatris* is also abundantly attested as an honorific title applied to human benefactors, and *Soter* is a well-known cult epithet.⁶ Depending on the context, the same words can be used to qualify both men and gods.

The aim of this paper is to study these overlaps in order to reflect on the interactions and cross-references between two apparently separated systems: the naming of gods and the honouring of humans. Both systems convey shared values and expectations about the role and abilities of the ones who are addressed with names or titles. A comparison may help to illuminate the representation of human and divine agency: to what extent can honorific and onomastic attributes define a common ground for the actions of gods and men towards the community? Roman emperors deserve special attention in this perspective as, in the Greek world, they could be honoured (and named) both as men and as gods. The results of a personal research on honorific titles have been compared with some results from the MAP database.⁷ The comparison has its limits as the scope of the two investigations is not the same. My study focused on Asia Minor, while MAP is investigating the whole Greek world (leaving aside the Semitic world, beyond my competence). The Greek-speaking regions providing most of the testimonies in the MAP database are (in decreasing order) the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, Attica, Egypt, Syria and Cyprus. The chronological framework is also different: MAP is gathering divine onomastic sequences from the Archaic period until the 4th century CE, while most of the inscriptions mentioning honorific titles range from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Despite these difficulties, it is possible to draw some conclusions. On the one hand, the wide sample from the MAP database (around 19 000 testimonies) reveals general patterns that should be relevant for Asia Minor, unless this region proves to have a very specific behaviour when it comes to naming the gods. On the other hand, two epigraphic corpuses – those of Smyrna in Ionia and Stratonikeia in Caria – have been systematically reviewed for both databases, allowing for a comparative study of divine onomastic attributes and human honorific titles in these two cities.

5 I will hereafter indicate the difference between cult epithets (for gods) and honorific titles (for men) by using capital letters for the former category (*Philopatris*, *Soter*) and not for the latter (*philopatris*, *soter*). However, some cases are ambiguous and both categories can blend together (cf. *infra*).

6 On saviour gods and *soteria*, see Jim 2022b. I thank the author for sharing the proofs of her book with me before publication.

7 Heller 2020, with the online database: <https://www.euergetai.univ-tours.fr>. The extraction from the MAP database was made on January 7th 2023.

1 General Approach: Discrepancies and Overlaps

For my study on honorific titles, I have reviewed nearly 30 000 inscriptions from Asia Minor. In 1637 of them,⁸ I have found one or several honorific titles – which I have defined as a specific mode of praise discourse, summarising in one or two striking words the merits of the person honoured. When awarded to an individual (usually in return for a benefaction or a service to the community), a title works as an extension of the name and tends to become a permanent attribute. It is mentioned next to the individual's name in a variety of contexts, but honorific inscriptions (engraved on statue bases), commemorative inscriptions (engraved by an official at the end of his/her term of office) and, to a lesser extent, dedications (of various objects to various deities) are the three types of epigraphic sources that concentrate most of the attestations. I have excluded from my database official epithets used by Hellenistic kings, such as Ptolemy Soter or Ptolemy Euergetes, which pertain to a different historical context.⁹ The five most frequent titles in my sample are, in decreasing order, *euergetes* (benefactor), *philosebastos* (lover of the emperor), *philopatris* (lover of the fatherland), *soter* (saviour) and *ktistes* (founder). Together, they represent almost 50% of all occurrences of titles. Their geographical spread is not uniform. *Euergetes* is well documented in almost every region of Asia Minor, whereas 90% of the occurrences of *philosebastos* come from Ionia and 80% from Ephesos. The use of this title appears to be highly localised: expressing loyalty to the imperial regime, it has become part of the civic identity of the capital of Asia. *Philopatris*, *soter* and *ktistes* are more widespread but the intensity of their use varies according to the regions.

Out of these five top honorific titles, two are never (or almost never) attested as divine onomastic attributes. *Philosebastos* is totally absent from the MAP database. However, there is one record of *philokaisar*, which is also used as an honorific title, but far less frequently than *philosebastos*.¹⁰ It comes from Koptos in Egypt: in the year 223/4 CE (under the emperor Severus Alexander), a certain M. Aelius Aurelius Dionysios, councillor of the city, who was appointed hypogymnasiarch of the god, set up a statue of “the protector of the city, Zeus Helios great Sarapis who loves Caesar” (τὸν Πολι[έα Δία Ἡλ]ιον μέγαν Σάραπ[ιν τὸν Φιλ]οκαί[σαρα]).¹¹ In his commentary, A. Ber-nand alludes to an inscription from Alexandria where Caracalla is called *Philosarapis*¹² and notes the exchange of goodwill between the imperial house and the god. Such an exchange appears however quite isolated: *Philosarapis*/*Philoserapis* is at-

⁸ Here, I consider the results of the systematic survey of epigraphic corpora and leave aside the additional results obtained for some specific titles by a keyword search on *PHI*.

⁹ On these dynastic titles, see Muccioli 2013. On *Soter* as a royal epithet, Jim 2022b, 166–213.

¹⁰ In my database, there are 52 records of *philokaisar* compared to 313 records of *philosebastos* (applied to individuals).

¹¹ *I.Portes du désert*, 88 = MAP DB S#1114.

¹² *IGR* I.5, 1063.

tested as a (rare) anthroponym, but in the *PHI* database there is no further example of an emperor thus claiming his love for Sarapis.¹³ Similarly, the inscription from Koptos remains a hapax and even if some parallels were to be found in the future, we can safely conclude that divine onomastic attributes only exceptionally express love for the emperor. Gods, unlike men, do not plead allegiance to the imperial regime. Nor are they styled as lovers of the fatherland: the dedication to Theophanes as Zeus Eleutherios Philopatris is the only record of this last epithet in the MAP database.¹⁴ While *Eleutherios* is documented by 45 occurrences, all in relation with Zeus, in Attica, Egypt, Ionia and on Lesbos itself, *Philopatris* is again a hapax. This can be explained by the very specific and rare context of the divinisation of a local citizen, who entered the inner circle of a powerful Roman and immensely benefited his native city.¹⁵ It constitutes a borderline case, as this epithet defines Theophanes' actions as a man rather than his divine nature.¹⁶

So far then, divine onomastic sequences and human honorific titles seem to follow separate paths, with only exceptional overlaps. Such overlaps are slightly more numerous, but still rare, when one examines the use of *euergetes*. With 357 occurrences in my sample, it is the most frequent honorific title awarded to men. It is also attested for women, in the feminine form (*euergetis*), but much less frequently. In the MAP database, there are only 18 instances of *euergetes*: it is quite an unusual attribute for gods.¹⁷ It is very sporadically used by private individuals in dedications or prayers to Sarapis, Isis, Zeus or Asclepius, mostly in the Imperial period. However, one third of the attestations come from Magnesia ad Meandrum and, in fact, derive from a single decree, quoted by five or six other cities.¹⁸ In 208 BCE, the Magnesians sent embassies all over the Greek world in search of recognition for their newly founded Panhellenic festival in honour of Artemis Leukophruene and for the sacred inviolability (*asulia*) of their city and territory. More than sixty decrees and letters from cities, leagues and monarchs were engraved on the walls around the agora to commemorate the positive responses to this quest. These texts often referred to the initial decree presented by the ambassadors, where it was stated, inter alia, that the new status of the festival (defined as

¹³ A search on *PHI* results in 15 occurrences of *Philoserapis* and 5 of *Philosarapis*, almost all used as anthroponyms.

¹⁴ *IG XII.2*, 163 = *MAP DB S#8538*. Cf. *supra* in the introduction.

¹⁵ On cultic honours for local benefactors, see Strubbe 2004.

¹⁶ Analysing this case in his study on the epicletic language of honours, Caneva 2023, 169–175, considers that *Theos* and *Philopatris* are epithets attached to the anthroponym Theophanes, whereas *Eleutherios* is a cult epithet attached to the theonym Zeus. I have in turn considered this complex onomastic sequence as a whole, in contrast with the sequence of honorific titles introduced by the definite article. Both interpretations are not contradictory.

¹⁷ Already noted by Robert 1945, 23. See also Jim 2022a, 91–93.

¹⁸ *I.Magnesia* 31, 38, 45, 52, 61, 79 = *MAP DB S#9732*, 9547, 10029, 8979, 10179, 10258. For the context, see Rigsby 1996, 179–279 (who is responsible for the somehow bold restoration of *euergetis* in *I.Magnesia* 79).

crowned, penteteric and *isoputhios*) was voted by the Magnesians “for the benefactress of the city Artemis Leukophruene” (τῇ εὐεργέτιδι τᾶς πόλιος Ἀρτέμιδι Λευκοφρυηνᾷ) and that they were thus “expressing just gratitude towards the benefactress” (δικαίαν ἀποδιδόντες χάριν τῇ εὐεργέτιδι). The designation of the goddess as *euergetis* is explicitly embedded into the reciprocal relationship between a community and its main deity, the (unspecified) benefactions of the latter leading to enhanced honours paid by the former. This conceptual framework is expressed through the language of euergetism typical of honorific decrees and the sequence “the benefactress” or “the benefactress of the city” appears as a praise discourse addressed to Artemis rather than a part of her name.

The context is quite similar in an inscription found in the sanctuary of Hecate at Lagina, on the territory of Stratonikeia.¹⁹ The end of a decree provides for the display of the list of cities, kings and dynasts who recognised the *asulia* of the sanctuary and the penteteric agonistic festival celebrated for “Hecate Saviour Manifest and the goddess Rome Benefactress” (Ἑκάτη Σωτήριαι Ἐπιφανεῖ καὶ Ῥώμῃ θεᾷ Εὐεργέτιδι). Here, *Euergetis* clearly works as an onomastic attribute for the deity newly associated with Hecate. In the aftermath of the first mithridatic war, as a loyal ally who stood by Rome’s side throughout the war, Stratonikeia was granted legal privileges in a *senatus-consultum* dated to 81 BCE. Among these privileges was the recognition of the *asulia* of Hecate’s sanctuary. Stratonikeia gave wide publicity to this decision and sent envoys to many cities, mainly in Asia Minor and continental Greece, asking them to acknowledge the *asulia*, together with a festival held in honour of Hecate and Rome, probably aiming to achieve greater prestige and a much larger audience than before. The cult of the goddess Rome (θεὰ Ῥώμην) began to spread in Asia Minor after the victory of Rome against Antiochos III in 188 BCE and, more widely, after the end of the Antigonid monarchy in 167.²⁰ At the same time, the Romans (as a people) were sometimes defined as “the common benefactors (of all / of the Greeks)” (οἱ κοινοὶ εὐεργέται): this formula, while anchoring Roman rule in the tradition of euergetism, implicitly recognises the superiority of Rome over Hellenistic kings.²¹ In contrast, the cult epithet *Euergetis* is very rarely attested in relation with Rome as a deity. In the MAP database, the inscription from Stratonikeia finds only two parallels and, in my view, they belong more to the sphere of civic honours than to that of divine names. One comes from Delos:²²

Ῥώμην θεὰν εὐεργέτιν,
τὸ κοινὸν Βηρυτίων Ποσειδωνιαστῶν
ἐμπόρων καὶ ναυκλήρων καὶ ἐγδοχέων,
εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν τῆς εἰς τὸ κοινὸν καὶ τὴν πατρίδα

19 *I.Stratonikeia* II.1, 507 = *MAP DB* S#6994. See Rigsby 1996, 418–423. On Hecate as one of the two main deities in Stratonikeia, see Belayche in this volume.

20 The seminal work is still Mellor 1975. See also Errington 1987.

21 See Ferrary [1988] 2014, 124–132; Erskine 1994; Heller 2020, 26–27.

22 *I.Delos* 1778 = *MAP DB* S#9180 (second half of the 2nd century BCE).

ἀρχιθιασιτεύοντος τὸ δεύτερον
 Μνασέου τοῦ Διονυσίου εὐεργέτου.
 [Μένανδρος] Μέλανος Ἀθηναῖος ἐποίησιν.

The community of Berytian devotees of Poseidon, (consisting of) tradesmen, shipowners and warehousekeepers, (has honoured) the goddess Rome benefactress, because of her goodwill towards the community and the fatherland; Mnaseas son of Dionysios, benefactor, was leader of the guild for the second time. Menandros son of Melas, Athenian, made (the statue).

This *koinon* is one of the numerous professional and ethnic associations that flourished on Delos from the 2nd century BCE onwards, especially after the island was declared a free port under Athenian domination by Rome's will in 167.²³ Here, the members share a common origin (from Berytos-Beyrouth), a common activity (in relation with the sea trade) and a common devotion to Poseidon, ancestral deity from Berytos who, in addition, naturally protects their activity. They erected a statue of the goddess Rome, which stood in one of the chapels of their meeting place. The syntax of the text is typical of honorific inscriptions, with the nominative-accusative formula and the motivation clause, introduced by *heneken* and referring to *eunoia* (goodwill), clearly imitating the phraseology of civic honours.²⁴ Subsequently, the epithet *euergetis* can be interpreted as part of the honorific discourse displayed by the *koinon* to express its gratitude to Rome; we could say it is circumstantial rather than essential. Indeed, another year the same *koinon* erected an altar to Rome and in this inscription the name is simply "Rome", in the genitive case, without any further qualification, not even the word *thea*.²⁵ This leads one to wonder whether the alternative choice of calling Rome *euergetis* has something to do with the fact that the eponymous magistrate is mentioned with the same epithet in the masculine gender. In any case, this introduces an interesting parallel between men and gods: they can both bring benefactions and, despite the gap in the scope of their respective agency and power, the same word is efficient for defining their relationship with the community. The name Mnaseas, son of Dionysios, has been restored in another inscription, where it was also followed by the epithet *euergetes*: he dedicated (and hence financed) a portico for the same *koinon*.²⁶ The merits of Rome are certainly of greater importance. The inscription refers to the goodwill of the goddess towards the fatherland of the members of the *koinon*, that is, Berytos. In the absence of a precise context, it is not easy to determine whether this general formula alludes to specific events or simply acknowledges the positive influence of the Roman power in the region (for instance, by fighting piracy and banditry). The goodwill towards the *koinon*, in turn, could have been channelled through representatives of Rome present in Delos. The association of *Poseidonistai* from Berytos honoured at least two Romans: one was a resident of the island, a

²³ See Bruneau 1970, esp. 622–630; Trümper 2006.

²⁴ On the syntax and vocabulary of honorific inscriptions, see Ma 2013, esp. 15–43.

²⁵ *I.Délos* 1779.

²⁶ *I.Délos* 1773.

banker who lent them money under favourable conditions, thus helping them to build their clubhouse, and the other a Roman official, who may have secured them some legal privileges.²⁷ To sum up, in this instance, the epithet *euergetis* applied to a deity seems closer to an honorific title used to reward both human and godly actions than to a divine onomastic attribute.

This is even clearer in the third and final instance of the sequence “goddess Rome benefactress”, which comes from Assos, in the region of Troas, and is dated under Augustus or Tiberius.²⁸ The *demos* and the Romans who make business in the city ([οι] πραγματευόμενοι Ρω[μαῖοι]) honoured “the goddess Rome, the benefactress of the world” (θεὰ[ν Ρώ]μην [τ]ὴν εὐεργέτιν τοῦ κόσμου). Here, the use of the definite article and the complement added to the epithet definitely point to the feminine version of an honorific title, elsewhere attested for the emperor. Since Augustus, the *princeps* can be hailed as benefactor of all men, of the human kind, of the *kosmos* or the *oikoumene*.²⁹ These rhetorical amplifications of the title *euergetes*, strictly reserved for the emperor, place him at the top of the hierarchy of human benefactors but do not imply divine status *per se*. In the inscription of Assos, the universal dominion of Rome is expressed through the same title applied to a deity.

These examples of overlaps between honorific titles and divine onomastic attributes remain very marginal. The same holds true when one considers the use of *ktistes*. During the late Hellenistic period, this word progressively replaced the older *oikistes*. It has a broader set of meanings: it can refer to the mythological or historical founder of a community as well as the founder of a philosophical school, a dynasty or a building. It began being used as an honorific title during the first century BCE and was then awarded to individuals whose action resulted in a symbolic re-foundation of the city.³⁰ This is the sense in which we find it in the triple dedication from Mytilene analysed above. During the Imperial period, it still rewarded achievements related to the legal status of the city, but also less spectacular benefactions (such as renovation of the gymnasium). However, it is never reduced to a mere synonym of “builder” and, on the contrary, retains a strong political meaning, suggesting a parallel with the original *ktistes*. It is attested for local notables as well as Roman magistrates and emperors. The alternative *oikistes* has not completely disappeared, but is much rarer and concentrates in Miletos, where it is lavishly used to honour the emperor Hadrian, elsewhere hailed as *ktistes*. In the MAP database, *oikistes* is totally absent, while a search for *ktistes* results in 25 records, 19 of which come from Cyrene. In this city, inscriptions from the 2nd to the early 4th century CE repeatedly mention the eponymous priest “of the Founder Apollo” (τοῦ κτίστου Ἀπόλλωνος). This cult epithet is already attested in a dedication to Apollo Ktistes and Artemis on behalf of the emperor

27 *IDelos* 1520, dated to 153/2 BCE and 1782, dated ca. 90 BCE. See Ernst 2018, 386–388.

28 *IAssos* 20 = MAP DB S#13933.

29 See Heller 2020, 198–199, 202–203 and Heller 2022.

30 On *ktistes* and *oikistes* in an honorific context, see Leschhorn 1984; Follet 1992; Pont 2007; Heller 2020.

Nero, in 57/8, and a decree from the early 1st century CE honours a citizen who, among other public services, “has received the crown of the founder of our city, Apollo” (παρ<α>λαβὼν τε τὸν κτίστα τᾶς πόλιος ἀμὼν Ἀπόλλωνος σ(π)τέφανον).³¹ This last, more explicit, formula strongly suggests that the simple epithet *Ktistes* also refers to the original act of founding the civic community, in relation with local myths. Hence this epithet, when applied to gods (rarely) and to men (more often), conveys the same ideas about origins and foundation. However, a god, as an eternal being, can be the *ktistes* of a community from the beginning and forever, while men honoured as *ktistai* are doomed to be mere replicas of the original founders.

Another testimony of *ktistes* in the MAP database raises the issue of the limits between human honours and divine attributes. It is a dedication from Mytilene to the emperor Hadrian, whose onomastic sequence is developed into “Imperator Trajan Hadrian Caesar Augustus Eleutherios Olumpios Founder Zeus” (Αὐτοκράτορι Τραιανῷ Ἀδριανῷ Καίσαρι Σεβαστῷ Ἐλευθερίῳ Ὀλυμπί<ω> Κτίστ<η> Διῷ).³² In a second dedication from the same city, he is named “Imperator Caesar Trajan Hadrian Zeus Olumpios saviour and founder” (Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Τραιανῷ Ἀδριανῷ Διῷ Ὀλυμπίῳ σωτ[ῆ]ρι καὶ κτίστῃ).³³ This last sequence is very widely attested throughout the Greek world, with some variations. It testifies to the great popularity of Hadrian, celebrated both for his overall philhellenism and his benefactions to specific cities.³⁴ In my study, I have recorded 86 attestations of Hadrian with titles; 65 of these are dedications, giving his name in the dative case and mainly engraved on small altars. In a few instances (concentrated in Miletos), the altar is dedicated both to Hadrian and a traditional deity (namely Apollo Didymeus or Artemis Pythie). Thus, the context is clearly a religious one and the sacrifices or libations made on these altars are directed towards the emperor as a god. In half of the cases (38 out of 65), the cult epithet *Olumpios* (which Hadrian received in 128/9 when he undertook the completion of the Olympeion in Athens) is added to his Roman onomastic formula (in the brief form Αὐτοκράτορι Ἀδριανῷ, the developed form Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Τραιανῷ Ἀδριανῷ Σεβαστῷ or some form in between). In 18 cases, he is more explicitly named as Zeus Olumpios, but in 7 cases he is neither Zeus nor *Olumpios*, simply the emperor with his official Roman nomenclature. In all 65 inscriptions, I have considered the words *ktistes*, *oikistes*, *soter* and *euergetes*, used in different combinations and added to the emperor’s name, to be honorific titles awarded to Hadrian as a man, the whole sequence that identifies him thus associating human and divine, onomastic and honorific attributes.³⁵ Yet closer scrutiny reveals that the line between these categories is not so clear-cut. In one inscription from Miletos, the usual sequence “Roman name-

31 *I.Roman Cyrenaica* 2020 C.229 and C.416 = MAP DB S#3622 and 3653.

32 IG XII.2, 183 (with a correction to the first edition which reads Ὀλυμπιοκτίστῳ) = MAP DB S#8543.

33 IG XII.2, 184 = MAP DB S#8544.

34 On Hadrian as saviour and founder, see Benjamin 1963; Pont 2007; Heller 2022.

35 Same interpretation in MAP DB S#8544, where only *Olumpios* is registered as a cult epithet.

divine name-honorific titles” is somehow disturbed, as Hadrian’s Roman name is followed by the sequence “saviour Olumpios founder” (σωτήρι Ὀλυμπίῳ οἰκιστῇ): here, cult epithet and honorific titles mingle and seem equivalent.³⁶ In two other inscriptions from Lycia, *Olumpios* comes last, after the Roman nomenclature and the sequence “saviour and founder” (σωτήρι καὶ κτίστῃ), while in Aphrodisias, the formula “to Hadrian Saviour Zeus Olumpios” (Ἀδριανῷ Σωτήρι Διὶ [Ο]λυμπίῳ) makes it very difficult to determine whether *soter* is used with an honorific or religious value.³⁷ The two connotations (*soter* as honorific title and *Soter* as cult epithet) most probably simultaneously came to mind when reading these inscriptions.

Indeed, the word *soter* is the only one that really stands at the crossroads between human honours and divine attributes, being widely attested in both contexts. The scholarly tradition has discussed whether this epithet always implies a divine status. I think my study has demonstrated that the old opinion of Arthur Darby Nock was right, namely that this word can be applied to men independently of any divinisation process.³⁸ In the context of civic honours, it expresses the gratitude of the community for exceptional actions that saved it from a danger or a difficult situation. During the mithridatic and civil wars, it is attested both for Roman *imperatores* who offered protection in these troubled times (like Pompey did for Mytilene) and for citizens who acted as mediators between their fatherland and the Roman power (like Theophanes and Potamon). Under the Empire, it becomes very rare for local notables and is used to honour Roman governors or emperors almost exclusively. When it is possible to reconstruct the motives lying behind the title, they often appear to be related with help in various crisis situations (earthquake, shortage in food supply, foreign attacks . . .). But sometimes the title *soter* also seems to reward a general attitude, exceptionally benevolent to the Greeks, as in the case of Hadrian. One characteristic feature of this title, which my study has established, is that it is never awarded to women. In some very isolated cases, a couple can be honoured as *soteres* in the plural form, but the feminine form *soteira* is never used in an honorific context, whereas *euergetis*, *philopatris* and even (very rarely) *ktistria* are all attested for women. The ability to save the community is only recognised in male individuals.³⁹

In this regard, there is a strong difference between human and divine societies. In the MAP database, out of 440 records of the attribute *Soter/Soteira*, 62% concern mascu-

³⁶ *I.Milet* 3, 1335.

³⁷ *TAM* II, 410–411; *I.Aphrodisias* 2007, 8.708. In my sample I have rejected another occurrence (*I.Muz. Iznik* I, 32) where the sequence is “to Hadrian Zeus Saviour Olumpios” (Ἀδριανῷ Διὶ Σωτήρι Ὀλυμπίῳ), considering that *Soter* was here a cult epithet and not an honorific title, but in fact all these variations are very close and play with the polysemy of the word. The editor’s interpretation is implicitly indicated by the choice of writing *soter* or *Soter* (the capital letter being reserved for cult epithets).

³⁸ Nock [1951] 1972, followed by Jim 2022b, 44, 202–203, 212–213. *Contra* Habicht 1972, 96–97.

³⁹ Heller 2020, 228–234. In very rare instances, a woman is called *soteira* in a funerary context, but this private and often poetic use alludes to a healing or priestly activity, not to an official title awarded

line deities only, mainly Zeus, but also Asclepios, the Dioscuri, Apollo, Sarapis, Poseidon, etc. In 22% of cases, the epithet is applied only to feminine deities, most often Artemis, but also Hecate, Isis, Athena, Kore, Hygeia, etc. In 10% of cases, a masculine and a feminine deity appear together in an onomastic sequence, both named as “saviours”, either independently (*Soter* and *Soteira*) or together (*Soteres*).⁴⁰ These joint sequences above all concern Zeus and Athena, less frequently Sarapis and Isis. It is noteworthy that (in the current state of the database) Zeus *Soter* is always named before Athena *Soteira*. Although divine feminine agency may be subordinated to divine male agency, it is nevertheless acknowledged in the religious search for salvation.

A similar discrepancy between gender-oriented honorific titles and a more flexible use of the same words as cult epithets can be observed with *despotes*. As a title, it is exclusively attested for emperors, who are honoured as “master of land and sea” or “master of the world” (τὸν γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης / τῆς οἰκουμένης δεσπότην).⁴¹ The feminine form “mistress of the world” (δέσποινα τῆς οἰκουμένης) is extremely rare before the 4th century CE. In the MAP database, the records of the epithet *Despotes/Despoina* are almost equally distributed among gods (23 attestations) and goddesses (24), while two appear in the plural form without any further indication of the identity of the deities named. The alternative word *kurios*, also attested as a title for emperors, albeit rarely, is in turn much more frequent than *despotes* as a divine attribute. I have not systematically studied the 415 records, but a brief survey reveals that the feminine *Kuria* is well documented, especially for Isis, but also Artemis, Athena, Atargatis, Aphrodite, Nemesis . . . Might and lordship are thus qualities that can either be masculine or feminine in the divine sphere, whereas in the humane sphere and in the context of civic honours they are confined to the most powerful man of the world – the emperor. In contrast, a typically feminine honorific epithet such as *semne* also appears to be mostly (but not exclusively) applied to feminine deities (21 instances out of 28 records of the word in the MAP database).

These observations provide for a general comparison between cult epithets and honorific titles. But are they still valid when adopting a local approach, comparing both systems in a given city?

by civic institutions. It is noteworthy that *Soteira* is also attested as an anthroponym (43 records in the LGPN online for 90 of *Soter*) but here, again, it reflects private practices and not public decisions.

⁴⁰ In another 6% of cases, the generic plural *Soteres* does not allow us to determine the gender of the deities named. For a detailed study of the identity of saviour gods and the chronological and geographical spread of this cult epithet, see Jim 2022b, 118–165.

⁴¹ On the chronology and connotations of this title, see Heller 2022.

2 Local Approach: Smyrna and Stratonikeia

The two corpuses examined in this perspective are those of Smyrna and Stratonikeia, published in the series of *Inschriften aus griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*. They have been systematically surveyed for both databases (on honorific titles and on cult epithets). Although the total number of inscriptions is similar (928 in *I.Smyrna* and 1098 in *I.Stratonikeia*), the nature of the evidence varies notably. In Smyrna, more than 70% of the published inscriptions from the Hellenistic and the Imperial periods are funerary texts, whereas in Stratonikeia epitaphs represent only 19% of the total. In this last corpus, the most numerous types of inscriptions are commemorative ones (37% of the total, while these are totally absent in Smyrna) and dedications (22% compared to 7% in Smyrna).⁴² This is mainly due to the different areas excavated: in Smyrna, the urban centre is poorly documented, unlike the *nekropoleis*, while in Stratonikeia, a very rich epigraphic documentation has been discovered in the sanctuaries of Hecate at Lagina and Zeus at Panamara. It is therefore not surprising that, in the MAP database, Stratonikeia is better represented than Smyrna, with 300 testimonies compared to 91. The gap is even bigger in my database, which records 100 attestations of individuals with honorific titles in Stratonikeia, but only 23 in Smyrna.

It is all the more interesting to observe that in Stratonikeia, despite the wealth of the documentation, human honours and divine attributes go very separate ways. The two most frequent titles are “son/daughter of the city” (υἱὸς/θυγάτηρ τῆς πόλεως) and *philopatris*, both expressing devotion to the fatherland. They are often displayed together, in a sequence of three titles also including *philokaisar* or *philosebastos* – which are respectively the third and fourth best documented titles in this city. These four titles are mainly attested for priests and priestesses from Panamara and Lagina (who are thus thanked for the lavish benefactions they offered to the community⁴³), but are never used as cult epithets. In Stratonikeia, Zeus and Hecate constitute a unique pair of predominant deities in a civic pantheon.⁴⁴ Zeus Chrysaoreios/Chrysaoreus and Zeus Karios, both attested in the Hellenistic period, are overshadowed in the Imperial period by Zeus Panamaros/Panemeros, a name that appeared in the context of the civil wars of the late 1st century BCE. This last divine onomastic sequence is by far the most frequent in Stratonikeia and is sometimes expanded into “the greatest and most manifest Zeus Panamaros” (ὁ μέγιστος καὶ ἐπιφανέστατος Ζεὺς Πανάμαρος). Hecate is also named “the greatest and most manifest goddess Hecate” (ἡ μεγίστη καὶ ἐπιφανεστάτη θεὰ Ἑκάτη) or a variation of this sequence. Alternatively, she can be designated as “Hecate Saviour” or “Hecate Saviour Manifest” (Ἑκάτη Σωτεῖρα / Ἑκάτη Σωτεῖρα Ἐπιφανής).

⁴² For these percentages, cf. appendix I.1 in Heller 2020, 271, also available on www.euergetai.univ-tours.fr/ressources (« Analyse des corpus dépouillés »). I did not take into account inscriptions later than the 3rd century CE.

⁴³ See Williamson 2013.

⁴⁴ See Belayche in this volume.

The cult epithet *Soteira* is recorded nine times in relation with Hecate (in inscriptions from the late Hellenistic and the Imperial periods), while the masculine *Soter* is only attested twice, for “Zeus Saviour and Karios” and for “the god Saviour Asclepios” (Imperial period). In an honorific context, there are three attestations of the title *soter*, two of which concern Roman magistrates from the late Republic and early Augustan age, who are also patrons of the city. The third *soter* could be either a Roman magistrate or a local ambassador, the fragmentary state of the inscription not allowing for certainty.⁴⁵ Therefore, the discrepancy observed on a global scale is also confirmed on a local scale: the honorific title *soter* is only masculine, while a goddess can be repeatedly defined as *Soteira*. Yet despite the fact that male representatives of Rome are honoured as *soteres* in Stratonikeia, Rome as a deity is not called *Soteira*, but rather *Euergetis*, in the one instance analysed above. *Euergetes* is also used as an honorific title, but scarcely (7 records) and never in the feminine form. From the perspective I have adopted, there is definitely no proximity between men and gods in Stratonikeia.

At first glance, the situation is quite similar in Smyrna: the best-documented cult epithets have nothing in common with the honorific vocabulary. The “Mother of gods Sipylene” (Μητρί θεῶν Σιτυληνῇ) is the most frequent divine onomastic sequence, mostly mentioned in funerary texts as the deity to which the fine shall be paid if anyone appropriates the grave illegally. These inscriptions all date from the Imperial period, as do those mentioning “Briseus Dionysos”, whereas records of “Aphrodite Stratonikis” concentrate in the 3rd century BCE. The cult epithet *Megas* is used a few times in relation with Dionysos, Demeter or the Nemeseis, but it is not attested in an honorific context as a laudatory term qualifying a deserving citizen. *Agathos*, in turn, is attested once in such a context, in a brief honorific inscription where the *demos* honours Dionysios, son of Dionysios, “who is a good man towards the community and a benefactor of the people” (ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν ὄντα περὶ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ εὐεργέτην τοῦ δήμου).⁴⁶ The same epithet is recorded four times in divine onomastic sequences, for Agathe Tyche and Agathos Daimon – but there is hardly any parallel to draw between these religious usages and the honorific formula *agathos aner*, which is quite frequent for local benefactors.

The only epithet which can appear, in some way, to be common to both gods and men in Smyrna is *soter*. In my database, I have recorded 6 attestations of the word. One is quite uncertain, as it relies on a restoration: a decree of the *koinon* of Asia mentions the high-priest and agonothete “of the goddess Rome and the god Augustus Caesar Zeus Patroos imperator and pontifex maximus, pater patriae and saviour (?) of the whole human race” (θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ θεοῦ [Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος] Διὸς Πατρῶου αὐτοκ[ράτορος καὶ ἀρχιερέως] μεγίστου, πατὴρ τῆ[ς πατρίδος καὶ σωτήρ] τοῦ σύμ-

⁴⁵ *I.Stratonikeia* II.1, 509; II.2, 1321; III, 1520.

⁴⁶ *I.Smyrna* II, 616. This inscription has no date in the corpus, but the sober phraseology suggests the late Hellenistic period.

παντος ἀνθ[ρώπων γένους]).⁴⁷ This kind of rhetorical amplification is typical of the civic honorific discourse on emperors, but it can be developed using other words than *soter*, which is just a possibility here.⁴⁸ This epithet is, in turn, attested with certainty for Hadrian, who is honoured by “the *mustai* of the great Briseus Dionysos *pro poleos*” as “Imperator Trajan Hadrian Caesar Augustus Olumpios, saviour and founder” (Αὐτοκράτορα Τραιανὸν Ἀδριανὸν Καίσαρα Σεβαστὸν Ὀλύμπιον, σωτῆρα καὶ κτίστην). Three dedications engraved on altars give the shorter version “to the emperor Hadrian Olumpios saviour and founder” (Αὐτοκράτορι Ἀδριανῶι Ὀλυμπίῳ σωτῆρι καὶ κτίστῃ).⁴⁹ As I have argued above, in my view, the meaning of the sequence “saviour and founder” is mostly honorific, but *soter* might nevertheless have a religious flavour which gains strength when used next to *Olumpios*. In the MAP database, there are three records of *Soter* in Smyrna. One very fragmentary dedication might be addressed to “Zeus Soter and Athena” ([Διὶ Σωτῆ]ρι καὶ Ἀθην[ᾱ –]) but again the restoration is not certain here.⁵⁰ Another dedication in elegiacs, dated to the late Hellenistic period, applies the epithet to Asclepios:⁵¹

[σ]ωτῆρ' ἀνθρώπων Ἀσ[κληπιόν, ὦ ἐκάεργε,
[σοι] φρενὸς ἐξ ἰδίης γράμ[μα τόδ' εὐράμενος]
Πλειστάρχου Δοκιμεῦς Ἀσκληπιάδης ἀνέ[θηκε]
πατρὶ τέκος, Παιὰν ὡς ἐκέλευσεν ἀναξ.
ἰλήκοις, ὦ Φοῖβε, σὺν υἱεῖ, τῷ δ' ὑγίειαν
δοίηθ' ὑμετέρην ὑμνολογοῦντι χάριν.

The saviour of men, Asclepios, it is to you, who pushes away harm, that Asklepiades son of Pleistarchos from Dokimeion, having composed this epigram, has consecrated him, a son to his father, as the lord Paian has ordered. Have mercy, Phoibos, with your son, and give health as a token of your gratitude to the one who sings this hymn.

A citizen from Dokimeion consecrated a statue of Asclepios to his father Apollo, asking both deities to grant him good health. He obeyed an order, probably given in a dream, by Apollo himself – or by Asclepios, as both are attested with the epithet Paian/Paieon/Paion. It is noteworthy that the name of the human agent (Asklepiades) is related to the name of the god (Asclepios): it could imply a special devotion to Asclepios running in the family. Anyway, he calls Asclepios “saviour of men”, a formula that sounds like a praise discourse rather than a cult epithet. It seems to be a poetic and developed version of the onomastic sequence “Asclepios Saviour” which is at-

47 *I.Smyrna* II, 591.

48 In two other records (*I.Ephesos* VII.2, 3801 II and 3825), the same amplification is directly connected to the Roman title *pater patriae*, Augustus being presented as “father of the fatherland and of the whole human race” (πατὴρ τῆς πατρίδος καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους).

49 *I.Smyrna* II, 622–625.

50 *I.Smyrna* II, 738 = *DB MAP* S#5277.

51 *I.Smyrna* II, 750 = *DB MAP* S#5473. For the date and a brief comment, see Robert 1980, 242–244.

tested elsewhere but not in Smyrna. Here, the kind of salvation brought by Asclepios is explicitly stated: health, preventing from disease and death.⁵²

The same connotations are attached to the third and last instance of *Soter* recorded for Smyrna in the MAP database, which happens to be the sixth attestation in my database. It is also presented as a hymn in honour of a god.⁵³

ὕμνω θεὸν | Μέλητα ποταμόν, | τὸν σωτήρά μου, | παντὸς δὲ λοιμοῦ | καὶ κακοῦ | πεπαυμένου.

I sing the god river Meles, my saviour, as all plague and evil has ceased.

The context for this inscription is most probably the Antonine plague, which affected the whole Roman Empire under the reign of Marcus Aurelius and caused great human and economic damage.⁵⁴ It has been suggested that the author of this dedication might be Aelius Aristides himself, who is known to have survived the epidemic. It could also be an ordinary citizen giving thanks for having recovered from or escaped the disease. The thanks are addressed to a local god-river, sometimes represented on the coins of Smyrna.⁵⁵ The dedicator calls him “my saviour”, a formula which I have interpreted as a private appropriation of the official honorific title “saviour”. Such private uses of words attested as titles (mainly *evergetes* but also, more sporadically, *soter*, *despotes* and *kurios*) are documented in the Imperial period; they developed later than the public uses of the same words.⁵⁶ They establish a personal and hierarchical relationship between two individuals, one expressing their gratitude and loyalty to the other by calling them “their benefactor”, “their saviour”, “their lord”. I have recorded such instances in my database, labelling them “private titles” as they interplay with the honorific connotations of these words and their official use by civic authorities.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, when applied to a god, as in the epigram quoted above, the personal link established by the word *soter* can also be interpreted as a variation of its use as a cult epithet. Here, again, the religious and honorific meanings of the word seem to overlap and were probably both present in the mind of the dedicator, even if his prior concern was for salvation as a divine prerogative.

⁵² On salvation as healing and preservation of health, see Jim 2022b, 100–106.

⁵³ *I.Smyrna II*, 766 = *DB MAP S#5700*.

⁵⁴ On the Antonine plague (the impact of which has been much discussed), see Kirbihler 2006, 621–625, with previous bibliography.

⁵⁵ See *RPC IV.2*, 324 (under Commodus).

⁵⁶ See Heller 2020, 74–82 and 151–154.

⁵⁷ The interplay is particularly clear in an inscription from Patara in Lycia, where Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus are honoured by a local family of senatorial rank and are each called “saviour and benefactor of their whole house/of their whole lineage and house” (*TAM II*, 419, with my comment in Heller 2020, 79–80).

3 Conclusions

This investigation on the overlaps between divine onomastic sequences and honorific titles awarded to men proves to be rather disappointing: the overlaps are in fact very limited and most epithets used as titles are either never or very rarely used to name the gods. The qualities attributed to exemplary citizens – love for the fatherland (expressed through the title *philopatris*, but also “son/daughter of the city”), love for the emperor (*philosebastos*, *philokaisar*), piety (*eusebes*), good character and virtue (*agathos aner*, *kalos kai agathos*, *enaretos*, *panaretos*), noble ambition (*philotimos*, *philodoxos*), noble birth (*eugenes*), etc. – are completely or almost completely absent from the divine sphere. From this perspective, human agency and divine agency, as characterised by titles and names, clearly operate on different levels. In rare instances, a deity can be called *Euergetes/Euergetis*: this cult epithet then refers more or less explicitly to the honorific civic discourse. Defining gods as benefactors can be seen as a transfer of human vocabulary into the divine society.

Only two words have emerged as common to both fields: *soter* and (to a much lesser extent) *ktistes*. They convey similar ideas when naming gods and honouring men: a “saviour” offers great protection while a “founder” presides over the birth or re-birth of the community. But their use as divine attributes and honorific titles are usually clearly separated. In the context of civic honours, these words have undergone a process of secularisation and a man can be honoured as founder or saviour without being equated with a god. In this regard, emperors are a special case: the epithets *soter* and *ktistes* can be applied to them both as men and as gods, and hence have a double meaning, honorific and religious. Yet the major difference observed between the uses of *soter* in the divine and human spheres remains true: no woman is ever called *soteira*, even when she belongs to the imperial house, while this feminine form is well attested for goddesses. Similarly, before the end of the 3rd century CE, the titles *despotes* and *kurios* are only used for emperors, in the masculine gender, whereas the divine onomastic attribute *Kuria* is quite frequent. This is consistent with the conclusions of my study on honorific titles: the most common epithets applied to women in the context of civic honours praise their conformity with the ideal of feminine virtues (*sophron*, *semne*, *philandros*, *philoteknos*). In comparison, divine agency seems much better distributed among the sexes, as the power to save, protect and rule is recognised in both female and male deities. In this regard, it turns out that the striking formula of Nicole Loraux (“a goddess is not a woman”) is completely relevant. In other words, divine status prevails over gender, or the very category of gender is construed differently in human and divine societies.⁵⁸

58 See Loraux 1991; Pironti 2013; Bonnet/Galoppin/Grand-Clément 2021.

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