

# CREATING AN EMPEROR: IMAGES OF AUGUSTUS

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## A. Background

### 1. Portrait bust

from 'Alexander' type [Meroe example in BM]  
to 'statesman' type [Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen].

### 2. Building programme

- Suetonius, *Augustus* 28.3 Since the appearance of the city did not match the majesty of the empire and it was liable to floods and fires, he so beautified it that he could justly boast that he had found it brick and left it marble.

- cf. Dio 56.30.3-4 (On his deathbed Augustus said) 'I found Rome clay and leave it to you stone'. He was not referring to the actual buildings of Rome but to the strength of its empire.

## B. Some MONUMENTS and ART of VICTORY / PEACE

*30 BC capture of Alexandria and Egypt (made a province).*

### 3. Denarii (28 BC and later) *Aegypto capta*. [Egypt captured/annexed]

*20 BC Parthians return standards and prisoners from Carrhae 53 BC and later battles.*

### 4. Denarius (Rome 18 BC) obverse: Head of Hercules.

DVRMIVS IIIVIR [Durmius one of 3 men (i/c the mint)]

reverse: Kneeling Parthian, extending standard.

CAESAR AVGVSTVS SIGN. RECE. [the standards received back]

*25-19 BC Agrippa pacifies Spain - no triumph, no monuments (dies 12 BC).*

*19 BC last 'private' triumph – of Cornelius Balbus (for Africa); Cryptoportico of Balbus.*

### 5. Denarius with Victoria on globe

- *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* preface A copy is set out below of the achievements of the divine Augustus by which he subjected the lands of the world to the rule of the Roman people (*quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit*).

cf. 3.1 I have often conducted wars in the lands of the whole world

(*toto in orbe terrarum*).

### 6. Prima Porta statue, after 19 BC Zanker 188-92; Galinsky 24-8, 155-64.

*16 BC – Tiberius and his brother Drusus (dies 9 BC) campaign across Rhine.*

### 7. Aureus (Lyon 15-12 BC) Zanker 225-6:

obv.: AVGVSTVS DIVI F.

rev.: IMP. X. ['imperator' for 10th time]

cf. Horace, *Odes* 4.4 and 14 (c. 13 BC): the 'Drusus' and 'Tiberius' victory odes;

4 compares Drusus to eagle sent by Jupiter, 14 begins with praise of Augustus.

12-7 BC Tiberius advances to Danube; 7 BC holds triumph (6 BC 'retires').  
AD 6 Pannonian revolt; AD 9 Varus disaster on Rhine;  
Tiberius and his son Drusus campaign on Danube frontier – triumph AD 12,  
Tiberius' nephew Germanicus campaigns on Rhine frontier.

8. **Boscovale cups**, 7 BC (or after AD 4?) Zanker 228-9; A.L. Kuttner, *Dynasty and Empire in the Age of Augustus: the Case of the Boscovale Cups* (1995).

9. **Gemma Augustea**, c. AD 12 Zanker 230.

### 10. **Ara pacis (Augustae)**

Zanker esp. 120-5, 158-61, 172-83; Galinsky 141-55; Kuttner passim.  
cf. Augustus, Res Gestae 12.2

When I returned to Rome from Spain and Gaul, after arranging affairs in those provinces with success, when Ti. Nero and P. Quinctilius (Varus) were consuls (13 BC), the senate decided that an altar of Augustan Peace should be consecrated by the Campus Martius for my return, at which it instructed the priests and Vestal Virgins to make an annual sacrifice.

note A: in 16 BC the senate and people had vowed an altar for Augustus' safe return;  
the altar was eventually dedicated on 30 January 9 BC. [Livia's birthday]

note B: Tiberius and Varus were both sons-in-law of Agrippa; as consuls in 13 BC they proposed law renewing his *maius imperium proconsulare* and *tribunicia potestas*, which he had received for 5 years in 18 BC;

in 17 BC Augustus had adopted Gaius, Lucius and Julia, the three (then) children of Agrippa and Augustus' daughter Julia.

in 12 BC Agrippa died.

### 11. **Solarium** (cf. Pliny, *NH* 36.72) [formerly known as Horologium (Buchner)]

- inscription on gnomon - same as on twin obelisk (9 BC):

imp. Caesar divi f. Augustus pontifex maximus imp. XII cos. XI trib. pot. XIV

Aegypto in potestatem populi Romani redacta Soli donum dedit.

(. . . with Egypt subjected to the control of the Roman people, gave this gift to Sol.)

### 12. **Denarius with Capricorn**

Augustus born 23 September (63 BC) = autumn equinox. Winter solstice = day of Capricorn. Capricorn = the sun-sign at Augustus' conception, or one 'feature'?

- Suetonius, Augustus 94.6

While away at Apollonia he went up to the studio of the astrologer Theogones, accompanied by Agrippa. When great and almost incredible things were predicted for Agrippa, who had consulted first, he (Augustus) obstinately concealed the time of his birth and was unwilling to reveal it through fear and shame that his results would be inferior. When eventually, after considerable urging and with extreme reluctance, he revealed it, Theogones sprang up and did obeisance to him. After that Augustus had such confidence in his fate that he published his horoscope and struck a silver coin with the image of the Capricorn star under which he was born.