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## Augustan images of legitimacy: the numismatic memory of Augustus (AD 14-268)

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Mattia CAVAGNA and David ENGELS (eds.)

# Augustus through the Ages

Receptions, Readings and Appropriations  
of the Historical Figure of the First Roman Emperor



SOCIÉTÉ D'ÉTUDES LATINES  
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# Augustan Images of Legitimacy: The Numismatic Memory of Augustus (AD 14-268)

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## *Abstract*

In the Roman world, no legal procedure existed regulating the transfer of imperial power. As a consequence, representation of the imperial family was one of the crucial ways in which Roman emperors legitimated their reigns. Following the death of Augustus, the first Roman emperor, his image became a symbol of good emperorship. Subsequently, Augustus' memory was used as a tool in order to enhance an emperor's position. Through an investigation of the Augustan references appearing on imperial coinage from Augustus' death in AD 14 until AD 268, it appears that Augustus' memory was not abundantly used on imperial coinage. When present, however, Augustus was remembered in a number of ways. Not limited to his role as founder of the principate, Augustus could also be displayed as an ancestor, a military leader, a pacifier, a reformer, a worldly leader, a divinity and a god. The roles attributed to Augustus seem not to have belonged to a generic canon developed over time, but represented deliberate choices made by later individual emperors, and can be attributed to their specific agendas. Moreover, some emperors styled themselves after Augustus by adapting and copying former Augustan reverses and coin symbols. Through this *imitatio Augusti* emperors could emphasise specific aspects of their personality or of their own reign, strengthening their imperial position through this Augustan link.

## 1. *Introduction*

In 27 BC, the proclamation of Octavian as Augustus started a new era for Rome and its Empire, and marked an important stage in the emergence of the principate. After the death of Augustus, the imperial powers were transferred through his family line, constructed either by blood or by adoption. This dynastic principle often dominated the transmission of the imperial office, although it was not regulated by any constitution or law. After the Julio-Claudian dynasty, it became soon clear that there were no strict regulations that determined who could become a *princeps*: this could be a man of undistinguished birth or even someone who was appointed outside Rome. Later, Vespasian created a legal basis for his succession by listing all former powers and offices the

Julio-Claudian emperors Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius had assumed in the *lex quae dicitur de imperio Vespasiani*.<sup>1</sup> Yet, much more significant was the change of his name into Emperor Caesar Vespasianus Augustus, adopting Caesar as one of his own names and adding Augustus as a *cognomen*. By naming himself Caesar and Augustus, Vespasian asserted himself as head of Augustus' imperial *domus*, claiming its *patrimonium* and *familia*. This name change demonstrates how tracing one's ancestry back to Augustus was considered a strong element in solidifying an emperor's legitimacy.<sup>2</sup> Of course, Augustus' role was not only that of imperial ancestor, he was also the founder of the principate and a predecessor, a father and a grandfather, a military leader and a reformer, a son of a god and a divinity.

This paper aims to trace when and how Augustus' image was displayed on imperial coinage, and subsequently which of Augustus' roles were emphasised. By displaying virtues and achievements, imperial coinage reflected how emperors wanted to be perceived.<sup>3</sup> Any display of *pietas* towards or relationship with Augustus could enhance an emperor's position.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, an emperor could style himself as a new Augustus. Such *imitatio Augusti* could recall various aspects of Augustus' reign, such as the prosperous age, military successes, and the founding of the principate. Because of the coins' unique design, possessing two sides (the so-called obverse and reverse), these messages could be easily displayed on the reverses, while the issuing emperor was portrayed on the obverses.

For Roman emperors, coin advertisement was a welcome addition to their efforts in establishing a legal basis for their reigns.<sup>5</sup> Various studies have demonstrated how imperial coinage acted as a tool in disseminating imperial messages.<sup>6</sup> Imperial coins were continuously minted, even in periods of crisis. As a result, this medium presents a coherent picture that can be used to assess historical events and processes over a longer stretch of time. Furthermore, coinage was a very flexible medium, as each issue could depict different images and legends. Furthermore, coins were disseminated to the far corners of the Empire and were accessible to a diversity of audiences. Coins were issued under the authority of individual emperors, whose images they often depicted. However, previous emperors, such as Augustus, could also be displayed. Coinage

<sup>1</sup> BRUNT (1977); HURLET (1993), p. 263; LEVICK (2009).

<sup>2</sup> See in particular HEKSTER (2015), p. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> On imperial coinage and messaging, see WALLACE-HADRILL (1986); NOREÑA (2001); ID. (2011); MANDERS (2012).

<sup>4</sup> WALLACE-HADRILL (1981), p. 310; 315; 320; CLASSEN (1991); NOREÑA (2001), p. 158; ID. (2011), p. 71-74; MANDERS (2012), p. 178-182.

<sup>5</sup> MANDERS (2012); ROWAN (2012); CLAES (2013); HEKSTER (2015).

<sup>6</sup> To name a few: SUTHERLAND (1959); EHRHARDT (1984); WALLACE-HADRILL (1981); NOREÑA (2001); HEKSTER (2003).

therefore is an excellent medium for tracing developments in Augustus' coin representation over a longer time.

In this paper, I will chronologically analyse the various displays of Augustus on imperial coinage, thereby distinguishing four periods: the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the civil wars of AD 68-69 and its aftermath, the period going from the late first century to the beginning of the second century AD and the first half of the third century AD. These chapters will discuss each coin type displaying Augustus posthumously, and subsequently, they will document when an emperor tried to style himself as a new Augustus (*imitatio Augusti*) through his coin messages.

## 2. Augustus and His Julio-Claudian Successors

Augustus was displayed under each Julio-Claudian emperor: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. His display, however, varied from that of ancestor and allegoric founder of the principate, to that of divine predecessor. The frequency of his coin types differed under each Julio-Claudian emperor. Accordingly, the display of Augustus clearly reflects the different approaches the four Julio-Claudian emperors had towards the first *princeps*.

On the coinages of Tiberius (AD 14-37) and Caligula (AD 37-41), their filiation with Augustus was extensively propagated. Legends as *diui filius* and *diui Augusti pronepos* were added to respectively Tiberius' and Caligula's name, and subsequently the title of *pater* was given to Augustus.<sup>7</sup> Needless to say, the transfer of Augustus' powers as *princeps* was unprecedented. Tiberius' adoption must have been an extra tool to enforce his legal succession. Of course, Tiberius could appeal to his long political and military career, and before his adoption in AD 4 he had also received a share of Augustus' *maius imperium*, establishing him formally as an imperial colleague of Augustus.<sup>8</sup> Caligula, however, could not bring in these powers, nor did he possess any military experience. Unsurprisingly, his coins extensively stressed his imperial descent by placing him into an imperial line of succession up to Augustus. Not only did they advertise Caligula's biological affiliation as great-grandson of Augustus, they also referred to him as the son of Germanicus and Agrippina Maior, who on their turn could claim affiliation to Augustus as his adopted son

<sup>7</sup> All coin types name Tiberius *diui filius*: RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius 1-69; Gaius is named *diui Augusti pronepos* on RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 39-54; Augustus is named *pater* on RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius 49; 70-83.

<sup>8</sup> VELL. PAT. 2.103; TAC., *Annals* 1.3; SUET., *Tiberius* 21-24; DIO 55.13. Cf. LEVICK (1999<sup>2</sup>), p. 49-50; 63. Previously, Tiberius crowned a new pro-Roman king in Armenia (20 BC), coordinated the return of the captured legionary standards in Persia (20 BC); was *legatus Augusti* in Gallia (16-15 BC); campaigned in Pannonia and Dalmatia (12-9 BC); held an *imperium proconsulare* in Germania (8 BC) and was granted *tribunicia potestas* for five years and control in the East (6 BC).



and his granddaughter.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the young emperor was also styled as the son of Tiberius, who had adopted him some years before his accession.<sup>10</sup> Augustus' portrait was also displayed on the coinages of these two Julio-Claudian emperors. Under Tiberius, a series of bronze types was dedicated to *diuus* Augustus; their reverses mainly showed scenes and attributes associated with his funeral procession and cult. Types displayed an altar closure, the elephant funeral cart carrying the statue of the deified emperor, the statue of the deified emperor with an altar (Fig. 1) and a round temple.<sup>11</sup> In addition, some reverses also stressed Augustus' earthly leadership. One depicted a *corona ciuica*, echoing his status as founder of the principate.<sup>12</sup> The goddess Victoria celebrated his military leadership, probably remembering Augustus' successful campaign against the Parthians which freed the eastern provinces.<sup>13</sup> Other depictions of a (winged) thunderbolt and an eagle on a globe symbolised Augustus as a new Jupiter, governing the Empire with worldly and divine power.<sup>14</sup> Again, the filiation of Tiberius with Augustus was stressed as half of the types portraying Augustus denoted the latter as *pater*. Tiberius and Augustus' adopted grandson Agrippa Postumus became Augustus' imperial successors through their adoptions.<sup>15</sup> Yet, this transfer of imperial powers was not regulated by any legal transition, resulting most likely in the intensive paternal advertisement on Tiberius' coinage.<sup>16</sup> The kinship term of *pater* may have also confirmed Augustus' status as father of all Romans, recalling the honorary title of *pater patriae* which he received in 2 BC.<sup>17</sup> The paternal kinship term could have enforced the message of Augustus as the new Jupiter, who also symbolically was the father of the gods. Both explanations for the presence of the *pater* legend are not mutually exclusive, and can have ambiguously represented Augustus both as father of the Empire and of Tiberius.

Caligula's coins highlighted similar roles of Augustus, except for the world dominance theme. In doing so, Augustus was memorised on the one hand by portraying him on the back of Caligula's obverses, and on the other by a sacrificial scene in front of his temple that was inaugurated by Caligula (Fig. 2).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Diui Augusti pronepos*: RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 39-54; *diuus* Augustus: RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 3-4; 9-10; 15-16; 23-24; 31; 65; Germanicus: RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 11-12; 17-18; 25-26; 35; 43; 50; 57; Agrippina: RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 7-8; 13-14; 21-22; 30; 55.

<sup>10</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 35; 43; 50. Suet., *Tiberius* 76; LEVICK (1999<sup>2</sup>), p. 219-220.

<sup>11</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius 49; 56; 71-76; 79-81.

<sup>12</sup> *Res Gestae diui Augusti* 34.3.

<sup>13</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius 57; 63; 69; 77-78.

<sup>14</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius 70-73; 82-83. Contra GRADEL (2002), p. 291-293; 305-310 who states that the eagle is already a reference to Augustus' consecration.

<sup>15</sup> On the elimination of Agrippa Postumus, see LEVICK (1999<sup>2</sup>), p. 49-50; 57-65.

<sup>16</sup> SEVERY (2003), p. 205-212; CLAES (2013), p. 52; 83.

<sup>17</sup> ROSE (1997), p. 22-24; SEVERY (2003), p. 187-212; LYASSE (2008), p. 37-65; 92-96.

<sup>18</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Caligula 36; 44; 51.



Fig. 1. Sestertius of Tiberius for *dius Augustus pater* (RIC P Tiberius 49 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG. Auction 72, 581 [16/05/2013]).



Fig. 2. Sestertius of Caligula with the emperor sacrificing before the temple of *dius Augustus* (RIC P Caligula 44 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG. Auction 86, 105 [08/10/2015]).

Caligula's coins undoubtedly used the image of Augustus as a way to legitimize his succession through his imperial kinship and through his pious gesture towards his divine predecessor.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned before, the young heir of Tiberius had not much political or military experience when he became emperor. His imperial kinship with the divine Augustus was thus a powerful tool to legitimise and strengthen his succession to Tiberius.

<sup>19</sup> On the legitimizing effect of a consecrated ancestor see HEDLUND (2008), p. 175-186. Cf. WEINSTOCK (1971), p. 385-386; GRADEL (2002), p. 262-268; 298-304; 321-371; DE JONG (2006), p. 169-172.



Fig. 3. Dupondius of Claudius for *diua Iulia* and *diuus Augustus*  
(RIC I<sup>2</sup> Claudius 101 – Münzkabine, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18209871).

No explicit kinship affiliation with Augustus is claimed by the Julio-Claudian emperors Claudius (AD 41-56) and Nero (AD 56-68). Claudius could only claim ancestry from Livia, Augustus' wife. Her statue is displayed on one bronze coin type identified as *diua Augusta*, a type she shared with the portrait of *diuus Augustus* on the reverse (Fig. 3).<sup>20</sup> Most likely, the type celebrated the deification of Livia by Claudius, which was performed in AD 42.<sup>21</sup> As her statue was added to the temple of her late husband, the type most likely honoured the couple now re-joined in divinity, and not so much the figure of Augustus himself.<sup>22</sup> With the type, Claudius commemorated the *pietas* he had displayed towards his grandmother Livia and with her, her husband and Claudius' predecessor, Augustus.

Likewise, under Nero, *diuus Augustus* was not commemorated on his own, but he shared a silver and gold type with *diuus Claudius* (Fig. 4), which was briefly issued at the beginning of his reign.<sup>23</sup> On the types, the statues of both *divi* are pulled by an elephant cart which probably featured in Claudius' funeral procession in AD 54. Was the figure of Augustus an obvious choice to accompany the newly deified god?<sup>24</sup> Did he have to strengthen the contested

<sup>20</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Claudius 101.

<sup>21</sup> ARENA (2009), p. 78-80; CIL 6.2032. *Claudii* A.15-18.

<sup>22</sup> *Diuus Augustus* is flanked with the letters SC, which are traditionally depicted on the reverse. Therefore, Livia's statue seems to have been intended as the obverse image, and thus can be perceived as the main theme of the coin.

<sup>23</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> Nero 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Yet, some scholars tend not to agree with the Augustan identification. CLAY (1982), p. 26-29; 42-45, followed by GINSBURG (2006), p. 73 n. 80 and identify the



Fig. 4. Aureus of Nero with *diui Claudius* and *Augustus* (RIC I<sup>2</sup> Nero 6 – British Museum No. 1964,1203.89).

deification of Claudius?<sup>25</sup> Or do the types reflect a transitional stage of display in the portraiture of deified emperors? All can be true, and the arguments do not have to be mutually exclusive. Later, no deified emperor was accompanied by Augustus or his statue, demonstrating that the presence of Augustus next to a newly deified emperor did not become a tradition.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Nero's indirect references to Augustus went further. His first coin portraits show how Nero is trying to stabilise his imperial succession. Portrayed with the typical Julian hairstyle and facial features, the young emperor is styled as a true descendant of Augustus.<sup>27</sup>

However, after some years one by one the Augustan references ceased. After AD 55, the types for the *diui* Augustus and Claudius disappeared, an event that most likely can be linked to the removal of Nero's *a rationibus* Pallas in AD 55.<sup>28</sup> In AD 59, a new coin portrait of Nero was introduced, lacking the Augustan coiffure and showing a more realistic picture of the emperor with a prominent fleshy neck and double chin and with heavy waves of curls in his

statue next to *diuus* Claudius as *Fides Praetorianorum*. GIARD (1988), p. 116 has described the figure as an unidentified female personification.

<sup>25</sup> On Claudius' consecration, see for example the political satire of Seneca titled *Apocolocyntosis (diui) Claudii*.

<sup>26</sup> See CLAES (2013), p. 242-244.

<sup>27</sup> GRAU (2009), p. 133-134; CADARIO (2011), p. 180; HEKSTER (2014), p. 8-9; 18-19.

<sup>28</sup> CLAES (2014). For more on Nero's ancestral advertisement using different media, see HEKSTER (2014).

hair.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Nero's coin legends omitted the references made to his Julio-Claudian descent. First, the phrase *diui filius* was dropped, later also the name Claudius disappeared. After AD 56, Nero's name included only *Caesar* and *Augustus*, with occasionally Germanicus added. These choices seem to emphasise solely his imperial position.<sup>30</sup> All these changes will certainly have reflected Nero's changing attitude towards his Augustan and Julio-Claudian descent, showing the young emperor "as a ruler in his own right, rather than as an Augustan descendant".<sup>31</sup> Indeed, after some regnal years, Nero seems to have had fewer problems with the legitimization of his imperial *auctoritas*, which in fact he had received through Claudius, his predecessor and adopted father. Later coin types, especially after the big fire of Rome in AD 64, primarily focussed on the city of Rome (and Ostia), and (the closing of) the arch of Janus and to Victoria, without referring to any Julio-Claudian coin precedents, proclaiming Nero as the bringer of a new golden age.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. *Augustus in the Civil Wars of AD 68-69 and Its Aftermath*

During the civil wars of 68-69, a special series commemorating Augustus and *diuus* Augustus was issued by the opponents of Nero's reign. Stylistic elements and weight standards indicate that these coins must have been produced by Spanish and Gallic mints.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, scholars have demonstrated that the messages on the coins responded to the coinage that was issued centrally, providing valuable evidence of the political aspirations and ambitions of those who issued them.<sup>34</sup> Most coins of this civil wars-series, numbered group III a (Augustus) and b (*diuus* Augustus) in the *RIC*, portray the bust of (*diuus*) Augustus, displayed bare-headed or wearing either a laurel wreath, an oak-wreath, or a radiated crown.<sup>35</sup> The series includes many coins that unmistakably attempt to reproduce former Augustan types, displaying the Julian comet and

<sup>29</sup> CADARIO (2011), p. 180; see also quoted references in HEKSTER (2014), p. 19, n. 117. For the matter of completeness, CADARIO (2011), p. 183-189 has argued that Nero's coinage also portrays himself as a new Apollo and that he associated himself with Sol/Helios. In these roles, Nero's coinage may have implicitly referred to *diuus* Augustus. We do, however, have to be careful with this suggestion as other evidence for these identifications often comes from images produced by non-imperial centers.

<sup>30</sup> HEKSTER (2014), p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> HEKSTER (2014), p. 18-19, and especially p. 8-9 on the nearly-continuously focus on Nero's Augustan descent and *imitatio Augusti* in modern scholarship. *Contra* GRAU (2009), p. 135-150; ID. (2015), p. 41-60.

<sup>32</sup> HEKSTER (2014), p. 9-13; 19-20; *contra* GRAU (2009), p. 135-150.

<sup>33</sup> *RIC* I<sup>2</sup>, p. 199-200; cf. *BMCRE*, p. cxcvii; KRAAY (1949), p. 147; NICOLAS (1979), p. 1377-1386.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. KRAAY (1949), p. 129 and references; 145; MARTIN (1974), p. 54; ASSENMAKER (2015), p. 229.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. NICOLAS (1979), p. 1337-1346; GIARD (1988), p. 28-30; plate 2.



Fig. 5. Aureus of the civil war group III.a with Augustus and the capricorn with rudder and globe (*RIC I<sup>2</sup> Civil Wars 81 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG*).

Augustus' grandsons, or they use typical Augustan symbols, such as the capricorn (Fig. 5) and the Gallic butting bull.<sup>36</sup> Other types depicted Augustus' reign as peaceful and prosperous or stressed Augustus' role as *imperator*.<sup>37</sup> Finally, a large number of types referred to the Senate and the *Populus Romanus* and others emphasised Augustus' role as founder of the principate through the depiction of the *corona civica*.<sup>38</sup> Sutherland has rightly remarked that "the emphasis given to Augustus in 68-[6]9 was quite certainly a deliberate reminder of the finely balanced constitutionalism which Augustus, military ruler though he essentially was, had slowly and patiently evolved during the early principate, and which Nero's autocracy had ruthlessly diminished".<sup>39</sup> In his recent article, Assenmaker goes even further, claiming that Augustus figured as "the paradigm of the good *princeps*".<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the appearance of Augustus during the civil wars represents a crucial step in the evolution of the political use of Augustus' memory. His role as Julio-Claudian ancestor totally disappeared to the background. For the rebellion leaders, the coins most likely had to symbolize Augustus as their model emperor who ruled the Empire in consent with the Senate and the People of Rome. In doing so, Augustus represented

<sup>36</sup> *RIC I<sup>2</sup> Civil Wars 81-85; 87; 90; 92; 94; 97-100 and RIC I<sup>2</sup> Augustus 37a-38b; 102; 125-130; 166a-169; 174; 176a-178b; 186a-189b; 206-212; Cf. NICOLAS (1979), p. 1377-1379.*

<sup>37</sup> *RIC I<sup>2</sup> Civil Wars 88-91; 93-103; 111; 113-115.*

<sup>38</sup> *RIC I<sup>2</sup> Civil Wars 102; 104-110; 116-117. Cf. KRAAY (1949), p. 147.*

<sup>39</sup> *RIC I<sup>2</sup> Civil Wars, p. 197.*

<sup>40</sup> ASSENMAKER (2015), p. 228-229; cf. MARTIN (1974), p. 54.

everything that Nero was not, a message that the leaders of the anti-Neronian revolt clearly wanted to disseminate.<sup>41</sup>

Vespasian became the victor of the civil wars. Throughout his reign, several types were produced which recaptured and adapted Augustan coin images. Between AD 69 until 71, for example, Vespasian's sons were displayed together as *Caesares Vespasiani Augusti filii* on the reverses of the coins that depicted their father. Wearing togas while holding shields and lances, Titus and Domitian are portrayed as identical with Augustus' adopted grandsons Gaius and Lucius on the Augustus' type.<sup>42</sup> Other Augustan reminiscences in Vespasian's coinage are the capricorn (Fig. 6) and the Gallic butting bull.<sup>43</sup> It is clear that Vespasian's coinage styled him after the Augustus figure that the rebellion leaders of AD 68-69 had created.<sup>44</sup> In addition to this, two other aspects of the Flavian house were advertised by using adapted Augustan reverses. First of all, there were a couple of types re-using Augustan Victory reverses.<sup>45</sup> Most likely, these had to place the Flavian military achievements on par with those of Augustus. Most likely, other Vespasian types, referring to the Judean war, contributed to this Flavian military *imitatio Augusti*.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, the image of Venus, reclining on a column while holding a helmet and a lance, was recaptured by Vespasian and Titus (Fig. 7).<sup>47</sup> Venus, ancestress of the Julian *gens*, unmistakably symbolised Vespasian's Augustan destination to rule the Empire, and furthermore, the goddess stressed the continuation between the Julio-Claudian and the Flavian house. Vespasian's coin imitations, however, went further as his types also show similarities with coins of Vitellius, Otho, Galba, Nero, Tiberius, Agrippa, the *triumviri* and even of older Republican types.<sup>48</sup> Most likely, all these antiquarian types did not figure as one restoration series, like

<sup>41</sup> LANGE (2009), p. 181-190; ROSSO (2009), p. 212; ASSENMAKER (2015), p. 229.

<sup>42</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Vespasian 1344 and *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> Augustus 206-212. Cf. BUTTREY (1972), p. 95-96; JACOBO PÉREZ (2003), p. 116; ROSSO (2009), p. 240; CLAES (2013), p. 164-165.

<sup>43</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Vespasian 357; 768; 780; 841-842; 1058; 1060 and *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> Augustus 125-130; 166a-169; 174; 176a-178b; 186a-189b.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. ROSSO (2009), p. 212-213; ASSENMAKER (2015), p. 229.

<sup>45</sup> See for example: Victoria on prow and on *cista mystica*: *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Vespasian 284-285; 325; 331; 335-338; 406-407; 417; 545; 471; 602-603; 605; 641-642; 644; 650; 676-678; 688; 732-735; 753-755; 775-776; 785; 824; 897-899; 916; 934; 1013-1014; 1035-1039; 1056; 1094; 1103; 1158-1160; 1178; 1198; 1243; 1274; 1285-1286 and *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> Augustus 276; 474; cf. BUTTREY (1972), p. 97; 99-100; 102.

<sup>46</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Vespasian 1-4; 51; 59; 81; 134; 159-169; 221-226; 233-236; 256; 271; 303-308; 363; 368-369; 375-376; 422; 445; 458; 457; 495; 562; 626; 1117-1120; 1134; 1179; 1181; 1204-1205; 1233; 1245-1246; 1268-1269; 1315-1316; 1332; 1357; 1515-1516; 1531; 1535-1536; 1558; 1562. Cf. ROSSO (2009), 240.

<sup>47</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Vespasian 1077-1078 and *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> Augustus 250a-b; BUTTREY (1972), p. 100.

<sup>48</sup> For a good overview, see BUTTREY (1972), p. 95-102. Cf. JACOBO PÉREZ (2003), p. 116; *RIC* II<sup>2</sup>, p. 30-31; CLAES (2013), p. 164-166.



Fig. 6. Denarius of Vespasian with a capricorn and a globe (*RIC* II<sup>p</sup> Vespasian 1058 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG Auction 78, 889 [26/05/2014]).



Fig. 7. Denarius of Titus with Venus reclining on a column, holding a helmet and a lance (*RIC* II<sup>p</sup> Titus 53 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG Auction 84, 956 [20/05/2015]).

the ones that were issued under Vespasian's sons.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, the Augustan antecedents outnumbered the other antiquarian types, suggesting that the association with Augustus was one of the pivotal aims of Vespasian as it must have facilitated the acceptance of his reign, and subsequently, his imperial house.

<sup>49</sup> Arguments for not identifying the Vespasian types with antiquarian references as restoration coinage are: i) they were issued throughout Vespasian's reign, from which they not former a closed series; ii) the legend *restituit* was not mentioned on the types discussed; iii) no replacement of older coins, that could have been memorised by these antiquarian types, is thought to have taken place under Vespasian's reign. Cf. BUTTREY (1972), p. 102-105. Buttrety continues by arguing that Vespasian had been a mint master and that this early career position would explain the antiquarian types in his coin output. Yet, this has been criticised by LEVICK (1999), p. 8-9.



#### 4. *Augustus Recaptured on Restituit Coins*

Under Vespasian's sons, Titus and Domitian, as well as under Nerva and Trajan, Augustus reappears on imperial coinage on the so-called restoration coins. On these coins, the legends, reading RES, REST, RESTITV, RESTITVIT, claim that the coin images have been restored from the past. Scholars have argued that these coins, like *monumenta*, had to restore former coin types that had been worn or deliberately withdrawn.<sup>50</sup> The purpose of the restoration coinage is still a point of debate, explanations ranging from economic reasons to the conservation of heritage.<sup>51</sup> Although each series of restoration coins is different, restoring either various Republican or former imperial types, Augustus is included in each series.<sup>52</sup>

Under Titus (AD 79-81), several coin types of the former Julio-Claudian emperors and Galba were restored in their original form. The series included the following emperors apart from Augustus: Tiberius, Claudius, and Galba.<sup>53</sup> In addition, types of some prominent members of the Julio-Claudian house were restored; they honoured Agrippa, Drusus Senior, Germanicus, Drusus Iunior, and Agrippina Maior.<sup>54</sup> Finally, four Tiberian types depicting *Pietas*, *Iustitia*, *Salus Augusta* and a scene commemorating Tiberius' financial aid after an earthquake disaster in Asia Minor, were also issued.<sup>55</sup> The selection of Titus' restored types associated the emperor explicitly with the former "good" emperors.<sup>56</sup> In doing so, the restoration series associated Titus explicitly with the past dynasty, and like his father's Augustan coins, it emphasised the continuity between his own Flavian and the Julio-Claudian house.<sup>57</sup> In the series, the restored types of Augustus outnumbered the other types that were recaptured. These types were not restorations of coins that had been issued under Augustus, but they were Tiberian types that had been issued in name of *diuus* Augustus

<sup>50</sup> This belief is based on DIO (68.15.3) who reported that Trajan melted down all the worn-out coinage. See MEADOWS / WILLIAMS (2001); KOMNICK (2001), p. 158-164. Cf. *RIC* II<sup>2</sup>, p. 192; *BMCRE* II, p. lxxvii.

<sup>51</sup> For an overview of the four most given purposes, see KOMNICK (2001), p. 158-180.

<sup>52</sup> Later, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus restore one of the legionary coins of Mark Antony, honoring the sixth legion, but no reference to Augustus is made. *RIC* III Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus 443.

<sup>53</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 399-403; 410-413; 420-423; 431-436; 444-452; 454-468; 471-490; 496; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 1-3; 7; 12-14; 19-23; 29-51; 53-62.

<sup>54</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 414-419; 437-443; 470; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 8-11; 24-28; 52.

<sup>55</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 405-410; 424-427; 429-430; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 4-5; 15-18.2.

<sup>56</sup> Galba received a *restitutio memoriae* under the reign of Vespasian; ZIMMERMAN (1995). However, Galba was not included in the emperor's list of the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* and SÜETONIUS, *Galba* 23 reports that Vespasian annulled the decree to put up a statue for Galba on the place he was murdered. Yet, the dates of these events are discussed, see BRUNT (1977), p. 104 and NICOLET (1988), p. 852-853.

<sup>57</sup> MATTINGLY (1920), p. 180-181; *BMCRE* II, p. lxxvii; KOMNICK (2001), p. 164-171.



Fig. 8. Restored sestertius of Titus honoring *diuus Augustus*  
(*RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 401 – Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18208039).

*pater*. The restored types commemorated three different roles of Augustus. Firstly, Augustus' status as deity was celebrated. Augustus' seated cult statue was recaptured (Fig. 1 and 8) as well as the type with the altar enclosure.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Augustus is the only deified emperor who is named and portrayed as a *diuus* in Titus' restoration series. Secondly, Augustus' victorious achievements were emphasised, restoring the Tiberian Victoria types.<sup>59</sup> Thirdly, the coins reissued Augustus' reverses of the eagle on a globe, hinting at Augustus' world dominance (Fig. 9).<sup>60</sup> Augustus was the only person in Titus' restoration series who was memorised because of his military victories and his global government. Next to Augustus, only Agrippa was honoured with a rostral crown remembering at his naval victories, a theme that was emphasised with the god Neptune on the reverse.<sup>61</sup> The reverses of Tiberius, Claudius and Galba as well as the ones of the victorious generals Drusus and Germanicus mostly featured the letters SC, and when reverses recaptured images, they depicted mainly allegoric themes or virtues. In this way, Titus' restoration series can be read as some kind of imperial chronicle in which Augustus was the divine emperor bringing military successes and possessing world dominance, whereas other emperors and imperial relatives were memorised for other deeds.

<sup>58</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 399-403; 449-452; 454-457; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 1-3; 30-32; 38-40. Cf. KOMNICK (2001), p. 169. Underneath the altar enclosure the legend PROVIDENTIA proclaims the providence of the divine Augustus to foresee the security of the Roman Empire, which can be categorised as an worldly message either.

<sup>59</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 445-448; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 35-37. Cf. KOMNICK (2001), p. 169.

<sup>60</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 458-469; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 33-34; 41-51. Cf. KOMNICK (2001), p. 169-170.

<sup>61</sup> *RIC* II<sup>2</sup> Titus 454; KOMNICK (2001), no. 52.



Fig. 9. Restored as of Titus for *diuus Augustus* with an eagle on a globe (RIC II<sup>2</sup> Titus 458 – Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18209801).

The restoration series of Domitian (AD 81-96) resembled Titus' one, but it recaptured a more selective list of emperors and imperial members. Only types featuring Augustus, Agrippa, Tiberius, Drusus Junior, Germanicus and Claudius were restored.<sup>62</sup> The series appeared in the beginning of Domitian's reign.<sup>63</sup> As under Titus, Augustus is again included with the same Tiberian types showing the radiated crown, naming him *diuus Augustus pater* and displaying the same restored images referring to the altar enclosure, Victoria and the eagle sitting on a globe.<sup>64</sup> Augustus was thus remembered in the same roles – divinity, victorious *imperator* and world leader – as under Domitian's brother.

The restoration series issued under Nerva (AD 96-98) featured only *diuus Augustus*.<sup>65</sup> Nerva's series restored new Augustan images either once issued by Augustus himself or by Tiberius for Augustus. The types honoured Augustus' divinity and his peaceful and prosperous reign (Fig. 10). The latter message certainly had to benefit the reign of Nerva, who needed every positive advertisement after the reign of the unpopular Domitian. In doing so, Nerva represented himself as a new founder of the principate, a new Augustus.<sup>66</sup> Many of the restored types also bore the letters SC letters, which aside from the Augustan theme could have referred to Nerva's senatorial appointment.<sup>67</sup> This possibility

<sup>62</sup> RIC II<sup>2</sup> Domitian 822-830; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 1-10.

<sup>63</sup> RIC II<sup>2</sup>, following CARRADICE (1983), p. 117 and KOMNICK (2001), p. 98-99, dates the series to AD 81-82, with the Domitian's assumption of the name of Germanicus in the first half of AD 83 as *terminus ante quem*.

<sup>64</sup> RIC II<sup>2</sup> Domitian 822-824; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 1-3.1.

<sup>65</sup> RIC II<sup>2</sup> Nerva 126; 128-137; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 1-11.1.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. KOMNICK (2001), p. 172-175.

<sup>67</sup> SHOTTER (1983), p. 220-222.



Fig. 10. Restored dupondius of Nerva for *diuus Augustus* with globe and rudder (RIC II Nerva 131 – Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18209854).

is strengthened by the facts that two of Nerva's restored types displayed Augustus' head and that the SC letters do not have an historic prototype, which tentatively suggests that the SC emblem was a deliberately chosen image.<sup>68</sup> Both the senatorial as well as the prosperous age messages designate Nerva as a legitimate successor of Augustus' principate.

The restoration series of Trajan (AD 98-177) is subject of much scholarly discussion, because of its images, economic purpose and volume of the production.<sup>69</sup> Trajan's series has the largest number of types in a restoration series of all emperors who issued these series and, unprecedentedly, restored Republican types besides imperial types. Again Augustus is included in the series together with Tiberius, Claudius, Galba, Vespasian, Titus and Nerva. For Augustus, different life stages are recorded, hailing him as Octavian, *triumvir*, *diui filius*, Augustus and *diuus Augustus*. Augustus' types display primary governmental and military themes. The curule chair represented Octavian in office as *triumvir* (Fig. 11).<sup>70</sup> Augustus' portrait is displayed twice with Agrippa displayed on the reverse. The latter is either displayed with his portrait, wearing a rostral and mural crown or sits on horseback.<sup>71</sup> The issues for *diuus Augustus* either refer to the crocodile, a unmistakable reference to Augustus' capture of Egypt, or show

<sup>68</sup> Of course, we may not underestimate the fiduciary power of the SC letters, which could enlarge the trust of new restoration series, see BAY (1972).

<sup>69</sup> See for example: MATTINGLY (1920), p. 177-178; ID. (1926), p. 266; *BMCRE* III, lxxxvii-lxxxix; KOMNICK (2001), p. 137-138, 175-178; WALKER (2002), p. 93-100; DUNCAN-JONES (2005), p. 481; SEELTAG (2007); WOYTEK (2010), p. 167-169; 641-644; appendix 3.A; BECKMANN (2015). See also the contribution by Martin Galinier in this volume, p. 110-120.

<sup>70</sup> RIC II Trajan 807; KOMNICK (2001), no. 45; WOYTEK (2010), p. 845.

<sup>71</sup> RIC II Trajan 817-818; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 50-51; WOYTEK (2010), p. 848-849.



Fig. 11. Restored denarius of Trajan for Octavian (Augustus) as *Illuir* displaying a curule chair (*RIC* II Trajan 807 – Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18207145).



Fig. 12. Restored aureus of Trajan for *diuus Augustus* with *aquila* and two legion standards (*RIC* II Trajan 820 – Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin No. 18252270).

an *aquila* between two legion standards (Fig. 12).<sup>72</sup> None of the types emphasised Augustus' divinity, except for the *diuus* legend. Nor was he depicted with the radiated crown. It is clear that under Trajan, Augustus is primarily commemorated in his role as political and military leader. Besides Augustus, only

<sup>72</sup> *RIC* II Trajan 819-820; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 56-57; WOYTEK (2010), p. 854-855.

Vespasian and Titus were represented as victorious generals, referring to their involvement in the Judean war.<sup>73</sup> None of the other emperors who appear on Trajan's restored coins were associated with military themes. As Trajan himself was a skilled military man, it could be tentatively suggested that his restoration series presented him in line with the former victorious military emperors, such as Augustus, Vespasian, and Titus.

Although discussing why the restoration series were issued is not within the scope of this paper, it is clear that the types of Augustus were carefully selected to emphasise particular aspects or roles assigned to him as founder of the principate. Under Titus and Domitian, Augustus was commemorated as a victorious *imperator*, a world leader and a divinity. Under Nerva, the divine aspect of Augustus and his prosperous reign were propagated, whereas under Trajan Augustus was commemorated as statesman and military leader. Most likely, the last two emperors even styled themselves after Augustus, highlighting particular roles which fitted their own agendas.

For matter of completeness, it is necessary to mention that under Antonius Pius several types among his regular coin issues were produced that commemorated the restoration of the temple of *diuus* Augustus and *diua* Iulia. Although these types refer to an historical event in the first place, a closer imperial relation between Pius and Augustus was also emphasised, showing again the importance of Augustus as the divine founder of the principate.<sup>74</sup>

### 5. *Diuus and deus Augustus*

After Trajan, Augustus disappears from imperial coinage, only to reappear in a new restoration series issued under Trajan Decius (AD 249-251). Most scholars denote Decius' series as the *diui* series, because it portrayed eleven deified emperors, all wearing the radiated crown, and because the verb *restituit* is omitted from the legends. The main motive behind the divine display was economic, as all *diui* types are former *denarii* restruck into radiates, the so-called *antoniniani*, which, in theory, valued one and a half or two *denarii*. The radiated crowns had a double function, masking the lower silver content of the restruck *denarii*<sup>75</sup> and symbolising the divinity of the emperors.<sup>76</sup> On

<sup>73</sup> RIC II Trajan 826-827; 831-832; KOMNICK (2001), nos. 64-65.1; 68-69; WOYTEK (2010), p. 861-864; 867-866.

<sup>74</sup> RIC III Antoninus Pius 124; 143-144; 272a; 272b; 289-290; 305a; 305b; 755; 787; 795a; 795b; 796; 829; 870; 873; 973; 978; 988; 998; 998a; 1003-1004; 1013; 1017; 1021a; 1021b; 1024-1025; 1040; 1061.

<sup>75</sup> The radiated crown was the value mark of the *Antoninianus*.

<sup>76</sup> LE GENTILHOMME (1946), p. 45; MATTINGLY (1949); BUTCHER (1996), p. 522; POTTER (2004), p. 244. Notably, other *Antoniniani* under Decius' later reign and also Gallus' are overstrikes of *denarii*. Yet, those did not restore any former emperors or coin images, see MATTINGLY (1939).



Fig. 13. Restored antoninianus of Trajan Decius for *diuus Augustus* with altar (RIC IV.C. Trajan Decius 78 – Numismatica Ars Classica AG. Auction 86, 89 [08/10/2015]).

the reverses, the consecration images – either an altar (Fig. 13) or the consecration eagle – must have been a logical choice in relation to the divine status of the emperors.<sup>77</sup> Next to Augustus, the memory of ten other emperors was restored: Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus and Alexander Severus.<sup>78</sup> Remarkably, some deified emperors, such as Claudius, Lucius Verus, Pertinax, Caracalla and the Gordiani, were excluded from Decius' series, suggesting that a deliberate selection was made between more or less preferred emperors. In the *Historia Augusta*, although written more than 100 years later, similar imperial lists are given, in which Augustus is referred to as first, Commodus is often excluded and Pertinax is included together with the later emperors Claudius II Gothicus and Aurelian.<sup>79</sup> It is therefore possible that Decius' series reflects some kind of general accepted canon of model emperors, in which Augustus was advertised as the first emperor and, subsequently, founder of the principate. Decius, who is known for his fierce attempts to connect himself with Trajan, must certainly have seen himself as the twelfth emperor in the list.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Decius' series did not only restore the worn *denarii* of former emperors, the divine status of

<sup>77</sup> The eagle's accession from the funeral pyre symbolized an emperor's elevation to the heavens. For more on the consecration ritual, see TEMPORINI (1978), p. 201-202; ARCE (1988), p. 131-140; ID. (2010); GRADEL (2002), p. 291-293; 305-310.

<sup>78</sup> RIC IV.C. Decius 77-98.

<sup>79</sup> *Historia Augusta*, *Pescennius Niger* 12.1; *Elagabalus* 1.1; *Aurelian* 42.1; *Tyranni triginta* 6.6; *Tacitus* 16.6; *Probus* 22.4; *Carus et Carinus et Numerianus* 3.1-4.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. DMITRIEV (2004). It has been said that Decius adopted Trajan's name and he used similar Dacian propaganda. MANDERS (2012), p. 263-266 also stresses that Decius' restoration series could have been an extra tool to associate himself with Trajan, although the latter's restoration series is different in form and content.



Fig. 14. Aureus of Gallienus with *deus Augustus* (RIC V.A. Gallienus 28 – Harlan J. Berk, Ltd. 122 Buy or Bid Sale, September 2001, lot 16).

the advertised emperors also served Decius' restoration of Rome's *traditional* religion.<sup>81</sup> In this traditionalist view, Augustus was propagated as the main imperial god, although Caesar had been the first in Roman history to receive divine honours. The imperial list starting with Augustus and Decius' associations with Trajan could refer to the standard phrase the Senate used on accession of each new emperor: "May you be luckier than Augustus and better than Trajan".<sup>82</sup> In sum, Decius' *diui* series served several purposes, in which Augustus was commemorated as divine founder of the principate.

Under Gallienus (AD 253-268), Augustus is commemorated for the last time on imperial coinage during the third century. The type figured in Gallienus' *decennalia* issue minted at Rome in the autumn of AD 262. On the obverse, Gallienus' portrait was shown together with the legend GALLIENVS AVG. The reverse hailed DEO AVGVSTO with a portrait of Augustus, whose features looked similar to Gallienus' portrait type 2, apart from the typical Augustan, and later Julio-Claudian, hairline (Fig. 14).<sup>83</sup> After Gallienus' father Valerian had been shamefully captured by the Persian king Shapur I, Gallienus needed other ways to legitimize his reign.<sup>84</sup> His coinage first dropped the gentile name

<sup>81</sup> MATTINGLY (1949), p. 79-82; SELINGER (1994), p. 25; RIVES (1999), p. 142-143; DE BLOIS (2006), p. 273-274; ANDO (2012), p. 149-152; MANDERS (2012), p. 263-266 and references in n. 47.

<sup>82</sup> EUTROPIUS 8.5.3: *felicior Augusto melior Traiano*.

<sup>83</sup> RIC V.A. Gallienus 28; GÖBL (2000), no. 530; GEIGER (2013), p. 219-220; 250-252; Cf. FITTSCHEN (1993); KUHOFF (1979), p. 63-66; ZANKER (1987), p. 98-99; 215-223; 247-250.

<sup>84</sup> AURELIUS VICTOR, *Book of the Caesars* 32; *The Two Gallieni* 1; 17; EUTROPIUS 9.7; FESTUS, *Summary* 23; LACTANTIUS, *On the Death of the Prosecutors* 5; *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* 155-171; *Res Gestae Diui Saphoris* 11; POTTER (1990), p. 50-51;



of Licinius, which can be interpreted as deliberately distancing himself from his paternal descent.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, he started to accentuate his maternal affiliation with the Egnatii by issuing coin types hailing the *VIRTUS* and the *PIETAS* of the native city of this senatorial family, Falerii Novi, nowadays Civita Castellana (Lazio).<sup>86</sup> The evocation of this ancient Italian family would certainly have pleased the Italian elite, but also Gallienus' officers, who had strong nostalgic feelings towards Rome's past and its ancient families, must have been impressed by Gallienus' noble ancestry.<sup>87</sup> The association with the founder of the principate seems to have been another way for Gallienus to strengthen his reign. Being issued on gold flans, the type was probably intended to be distributed among higher officials as presents or as military donatives.<sup>88</sup> This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that this *deus* type also appeared on gold medallions.<sup>89</sup> The coin display of Augustus shows how the imperial cult ideology became excessively exploited turning Augustus into a full god instead of a divine emperor. Nevertheless, the type's message of imperial continuity, personified by Gallienus, could not be mistaken.<sup>90</sup> Recently, Geiger has formulated it aptly, stating that the type announced a new golden age in which Gallienus as a new Augustus would defeat the Empire's enemies and would restore peace.<sup>91</sup> This message would certainly have targeted Gallienus' officers, who mentally dwelt on Rome's great past and hungered for an eternal *pax Romana*.<sup>92</sup> The Gallienian features of Augustus also suggest that the fatherless Gallienus, who likely tried to cut the bonds with his unheroic father, represented the god

328-347; ID. (2004), p. 252-256; WATSON (1999), p. 27-29; GÖBL (2000), p. 59; HEDLUND (2008), p. 176-177; GOLTZ / HARTMANN (2008), p. 247-256, esp. p. 255-256.

<sup>85</sup> Before the capture of Valerian in AD 260, half of Gallienus' coin legends included Licinius, see: *RIC* VI.A. Gallienus Joint Reign 1; 69-80; 82-85; 87; 89; 91-95; 98-100; 109; 113; 115-119; 125; 127-128; 130-135; 137; 141-145; 147-153; 155; 158-159; 161-162; 164; 166; 168; 170-174; 178; 181-182; 184-185; 188-190; 192-194; 197; 199; 202; 205; 207-211; 213-217; 219-221; 223; 225-226; 230-235; 237-238; 240-244; 247-258; 260-262; 264-266; 270-272; 274; 276-281; 283; 286-301; 378; 387; 417-419; 421; 431-436; 438-440; 445-450; 455-462.

<sup>86</sup> *RIC* V.A. Gallienus Siscia 596, although the type was most likely issued at Rome, see GÖBL (2000), no. 349; *RIC* V.A. Gallienus and Salonina 1-2; GÖBL (2000), no. 942A. Other sources show Gallienus link to Falerii Novi as well: AURELIUS VICTOR, *Book of the Caesars* 32.4 mentions Gallienus' Etrurian origin, and the inscription *CIL* 11.3089-3094 testifies Gallienus' visit to the town. See also MENNEN (2011), p. 100-103 and GEIGER (2013), p. 73-75 for more on the Egnatii.

<sup>87</sup> DE BLOIS (1976), p. 134; MANDERS (2012), p. 178; 295.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. BASTIEN / METZGER (1997).

<sup>89</sup> *RIC* V.A. Gallienus 9.

<sup>90</sup> KUHOFF (1979), p. 56.

<sup>91</sup> GEIGER (2013), p. 220, with references in note 1192; 251.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. DE BLOIS (1976), p. 134.

Augustus as his imperial forefather.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, it can be suggested that Augustus' portrait had to recall the traditional *imagines maiorum*. This implies that even in the middle of the third century the image of Augustus as divine forefather seems to have been a powerful tool to strengthen an emperor's reign.<sup>94</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

When present, the numismatic memory of Augustus had many faces. This is immediately visible under his direct successor Tiberius, whose coinage hailed Augustus as an ancestor, a divinity, a military commander and a world leader. After Tiberius, descent from Augustus was only overtly advertised by the young Caligula, who styled himself by the use of an elaborate phrase *pronepos diui Augustus* and displayed his great-grandfather on several coins. For both Tiberius and Caligula, any relationship with Augustus would have been useful to boost the legitimacy of their imperial office in this early period of the principate. Caligula also explicitly commemorated Augustus' divine status by referring to his temple. The divine theme was also followed by Claudius and Nero, although it was not displayed on their coins with great frequency. Being the fourth and fifth emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the need to stress legitimate descent from the first *princeps* seems to have become less urgent. However, the use of the numismatic memory of Augustus did not stop with the Julio-Claudian emperors. The leaders of the civil wars in AD 68-69 understood the power of Augustus' image very well as well. During this period, the image of Augustus signified opposition to Nero's government and supporters, and subsequently, came to represent the model of good emperorship. Types of the civil war period stressed Augustus' military qualities and divine status, they depicted his reign as peaceful and prosperous, and they emphasised that he received his emperorship with the consent of the senate and the people of Rome.

Peace was restored with the reign of Vespasian. He styled himself as a new Augustus on his coinage, copying several Augustan reverses and coin symbols throughout his whole reign. Through this *imitatio Augusti*, Vespasian enhanced the legitimate status of his emperorship and the impact of the military achievements of his Flavian house. Augustus' image reappears on the special restoration coin series, issued under the reigns of Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan respectively. The Flavian brothers, together with Trajan, primarily advertised

<sup>93</sup> From Augustus' reign, the depiction of divine ancestors, such as *diius Iulius* under Augustus, seems to have been accepted. Cf. FLOWER (1996), p. 86-87, 237-255, 263-265.

<sup>94</sup> Because the *decennalia* series also includes a type featuring the legend SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI, Göbl suggested that the type together with the *deo Augusto* type referred to the previous mentioned "*felicior Augusto melior Traiano*" acclamation, yet, without any direct reference to the person of Trajan himself, this suggestion stays tentative.

Augustus' military leadership. On the restoration coins of Titus and Domitian, Augustus is also associated with images of world dominance, while Trajan stressed Augustus' exceptional political career from *triumvir* to (*diuus*) Augustus. It is most probable that these emperors used such political and military messages as a way of glorifying their own imperial position and military achievements. Nerva did something similar, but with another aspect of Augustus' reign. Through images of peace and prosperity, Nerva's coinage promised that his reign would be the renaissance of Augustus' golden age.

The divine status of Augustus was the most advertised aspect of the first *princeps*. Not only did all Julio-Claudian emperors, as well as the leaders of the civil wars of AD 68-69, refer to *diuus* Augustus; Titus, Domitian, and Nerva also highlighted Augustus' divinity in one way or another, as did Antonius Pius, Trajan Decius and Gallienus later on. In doing so, references were made to the cult of Augustus, temple and cult statue, or to other divine attributes which were connected to Augustus. By the third century, the image of Augustus as divinity was the only aspect of the founder of the principate that had survived the ages. It symbolised the revival of traditional Roman religion, but it was also used to mask the illegal practices of the official mint. Moreover, under Gallienus, Augustus' divine status had developed into that of a full *deus*. Gallienus' godly and paternal association with *deus* Augustus, whose features even resembled him, must certainly have helped to legitimate the reign of the fatherless emperor. The *deus* coin type in particular shows how, 250 years after Augustus' death, the image of the founder of the principate was still thought to communicate a powerful message of legitimacy.

### *Epilogue*

No other visual reference to Augustus was made on the third and fourth century coinage, although imperial lineage remained an important aspect in the emperor's legitimation.<sup>95</sup> Yet, in the later Empire, coin reverses developed into more static and conservative range of images, leaving fewer opportunities to disseminate various messages. In the middle of the fourth century however, Augustus' coin image reappeared on the so-called "regular" contorniates series. In this epilogue, the re-introduction of these "regular" contorniates and the reasons why these big brass medallions depicted Augustus' portrait will be discussed.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> HEKSTER (2015), p. 277-314.

<sup>96</sup> MITTAG (1999), p. 31-33; (2016), p. 338 following ALFÖLDI (1943) dates the appearance of the "regular" contorniates to AD 355/360 (under Constantius II) to ca. 410. Next to these, two other types of contorniates exist. In addition, scholars also differentiate between contorniates, proto-contorniates and pseudo-contorniates, see for this debate KOS (1993), p. 431-437 and MITTAG (1999), p. 6-19; 200-206.

The contorniates derive their name from their circular groove, the *contorno*, which is curved within their edge. All seem to have been issued by the mint in Rome. Their obverses display various persons, such as athletes and charioteers, historical and mythological personalities, philosophers and writers, but also former kings and emperors. Of the last group, Alexander the Great was most frequently represented, followed by the emperors Nero and Trajan. Augustus appeared only during the first phase of the appearance of the contorniates, from ca. AD 355/360 until AD 375/380.<sup>97</sup> Remarkably, contorniates depicting Augustus are less abundant than the ones with Nero and Trajan.<sup>98</sup> The major part of the contorniates' reverses have scenes referring to games. The predominance depiction of games could explain why the emperors who went down into history with a bad reputation such as Caligula, Commodus, Caracalla and in particular Nero, were chosen to be included into the contorniates series: all these "bad" emperors could boast about their achievements concerning the sponsoring and promotion of games.<sup>99</sup>

On the contorniates which display Augustus, the founder of the Principate is always named *diuus* and *pater*. In most cases, however, his portrait bears a laurel wreath and never the radiated crown, suggesting that *diuus* Augustus had become a rather standard formula leaving the exact nature of his divinity somehow ambiguous. This choice may have been influenced by Christianity, which became more and more the dominant religion during this period. Likewise, the word *pater* may have been added as some sort of standard title, emphasizing Augustus' paternal role as the first *princeps* of the Roman Empire. The majority of the reverses shared with the obverses of Augustus are all related to games, displaying chariot races, the Circus Maximus and *uenatio* scenes.<sup>100</sup> Other scenes include a walking Victoria, the triad Mars-Fortuna-Diuus Augustus (in military dress) together with Terra and Oceanus, Cybele and Attis in a *quadriga*, Hector and Andromache, and Bacchus in a panther *biga*, which celebrate Augustus as a victorious general, supported by the gods.

It is generally accepted that the contorniates were not used as money. Most likely, they were designed as gifts of good fortune for the New Year or at other occasions, such as the circus games.<sup>101</sup> As a result, the contorniates could have

<sup>97</sup> MITTAG (1999), p. 127-129.

<sup>98</sup> Other Roman emperors and empresses that feature on the contorniates as well are Caligula, Agrippina Maior, Galba, Vespasian, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, the Faustinae, Lucilla, Commodus, Crispina, Julia Domna, Caracalla, Philippus Arabs, and Helena.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. MARVIN (1896), p. 29-38; MITTAG (2016), p. 338-342.

<sup>100</sup> ALFÖLDI (1976), p. 217-232 and tables.

<sup>101</sup> Various scholars have discussed this matter, see for example: STEVENSON (1889), p. 271-279; MARVIN (1896), p. 29-38; BLANCHET (1897), p. 93-96; ALFÖLDI (1943), p. 10; ZADOCKS-JOSEPHUS JITTA (1952), p. 85-87; ALFÖLDI (1990), p. 43; MITTAG (1999), p. 200-214; Id. (2016), p. 238-240. The presence of the legends "VINCAS" and "NIKA" and the display of Hecate, the deity of enchantments which featured on many amulets and gems,

been used as fortune amulets or talismans, a common practice for images of Alexander the Great.<sup>102</sup> From this perspective, it seems that the imperial center did not construct messages for self-advertisement by using the image of Augustus on the contorniates. Moreover, Alföldi and Mittag have demonstrated that a lot of the contorniates' reverses were used interchangeably between the obverses, which means that the reverses were not exclusively reserved for Augustus alone.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, we can state that Augustus was one of the emperors perceived suitable to be associated with the contorniates' fortune messages, styling the first *princeps* as a divine and military patron of the Roman games.

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strengthen the contorniate' function as "luck-bringer" even more. Cf. MARVIN (1896), p. 35-36.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Historia Augustus, Tyranni triginta* 14.2-6; JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 2.5; MAGUIRE (1997), p. 1040-1041; MITTAG (1999), p. 164-166.

<sup>103</sup> ALFÖLDI (1943), p. 217-232; tables and MITTAG (1999), p. 215-216.

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