

Augustus, Egypt, and Propaganda

by

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## Abstract

Augustus was a master of propaganda who employed Ancient and Hellenized Egypt as a means to legitimize his newly acquired power in Rome after the Battle of Actium. This thesis examines the ways in which Augustus moulded the people, imagery and religion of Egypt to suit his political needs. This was accomplished through an examination of the modified imagery of major Egyptian political figures such as Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Cleopatra VII. The symbolism of their images was altered to enhance Augustus' standing in Rome. Augustus' inspirations were also considered, namely Alexander the Great who became a significant influence for Augustus as was evident through the various similarities in their seal rings, family history, and the nature of both their roles as 'restorers' and 'saviours'. The most predominant source for evidence of Augustus' use of Egypt was found in his transportation of monumental obelisks from Egypt into the *Circus Maximus* and the *Campus Martius*. These monuments served to beautify the city while justifying Augustus' authority in Rome. A close second to the transportation of the monumental architecture of Egypt was Augustus' representation of the Battle of Actium upon his coinage. The battle was depicted typically with a tethered crocodile, stalks of wheat, a *lituus*, and a bareheaded Augustus. These actions augmented the prestige of Rome and presented Augustus as a powerful and reliable leader. In terms of religion, Augustus welcomed the practice of Egyptian cults while protecting the physical presence of Rome's traditional religious core, the *pomerium*. This appealed to worshippers of both traditional and foreign cults and further enhanced his favour in Rome. Ultimately, Augustus' actions served to increase his own prestige and credibility. This allowed Augustus to legitimize the authority of his rule and to initiate the beginnings of a stable Roman empire that would endure through Tiberius' reign and those to follow.

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Augustus was a political genius, a master of propaganda, and recognized as a clever, decisive, and uncompromising individual. It is agreed that he changed Rome – fundamentally – in several ways. Roman taxation was reformed; he developed a new system of roads complete with a courier system; he established and maintained a permanent army; and he developed the Praetorian Guard as well as fire and police services. Augustus substantially enlarged the physical boundaries of the Roman Empire and Roman territory soon reached the Red and Black Sea, west towards the Atlantic, and north to the Rhine and Danube. The possession of these areas permitted the annexation of Dalmatia, Pannonia, Raetia, and Noricum. His full subjugation of Hispania and expansion into Africa and Egypt are particularly noteworthy. The victory at the Battle of Actium enabled Augustus to gain the trust of the people and the senate by providing stability through the acquisition of Egypt's excessive wealth. Afterwards, Augustus would conduct a rigorous propaganda campaign in order to continuously legitimize his newly attained authority in Rome. He continued his propaganda campaign against Cleopatra and Antony for the purpose of further securing his position as a traditional Roman looking out for traditional values. Augustus' beautification of Rome through the integration of Egypt's art and architecture further encouraged the legitimization of his rule. Likewise, he protected the sanctity of Rome's religious core while welcoming Egyptian cults into the social fabric of the city. This appealed to both worshippers of traditional and foreign cults. In the meantime, the fascination with Egypt would leave a profound impression upon Augustus' family and the citizenry of Rome. Through Egypt, Augustus enhanced Rome's status and prestige while advancing his own political career by continuously gaining the trust and backing of the Roman citizenry. This would help him in becoming the dynamic and successful sole ruler of an Imperial Rome.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For Augustus' integral role in Rome see his *Res Gestae*: Restoration of traditional customs of their ancestors (8),

Augustus marshalled many different types of public display in order to make his new status and power seem appropriate and justified. The means to this end was aided through a variety of people, places, and events. Augustus would be heavily influenced by his direct contact to the acts and legacies of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Cleopatra VII. The city of Alexandria, a prosperous and attractive city, became a model for Augustus' re-development of Rome. He appropriated the city's wealth and integrated Egyptian politics, art, and architecture into the Roman cultural landscape. In this way, Augustus enhanced the prestige of Rome, established his kingship in Egypt and grounded his claim to political power in a Rome transitioning into an empire. The grandiose art and architecture of Ptolemaic and ancient Egypt encouraged Augustus to expand and beautify his capital city and thereby inspire confidence in his imperial aspirations. They would assist him to forge a new path to political power and success. Augustus would manipulate Egypt's imagery, art, and monuments in a propaganda campaign that would serve to justify the continuation of his authority throughout his rule.

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Closing of the Temple of Janus (13), Building projects and temples (20, 21), Extension of borders (26), Addition of Egypt to Roman rule (27), Founding of colonies (28), Supplications of foreign kings (32), Handing over power to the senate and the Roman people (34).

## CHAPTER 1

### Rome and Egypt Prior to Augustus

Rome's contact with Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great was sporadic yet amicable. It would not be until the Battle of Actium that the two countries would connect in a bond that would not be broken until the Byzantine Era. As stated in his *Res Gestae*, Augustus formally announced that he had "added Egypt to the Imperium of the Roman people".<sup>2</sup> This simple sentence, however, gives no acknowledgment that Egyptian-Roman relations had in fact existed for several centuries. The doors between the Egyptians and the Romans first opened with the division of the empire after the death of Alexander the Great. After Ptolemy I had established himself as the new Egyptian king, his successor, Ptolemy II was the first to initiate diplomatic relations with Rome.<sup>3</sup> This may have been to make amends for the aid that he had provided King Pyrrhus during his invasion of Italy in 280 BC and again in 275, but it was nonetheless the beginning of a diplomatic relationship between the two.<sup>4</sup> In 273 BC, Ptolemy II sent an embassy to Rome to exchange assurances of friendship. This initiated a long-lasting relationship that was beneficial to both parties, generating protection to Egypt and economic benefits to Rome.

Contact with Egypt was again made in 210 BC when the Italian countryside was being ravaged by Hannibal and his army. To assist Rome during these troubling times, Egypt provided grain and resources. This kindness was repaid ten years later by the Romans during the reign of

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<sup>2</sup> *Aegyptum imperio populi Romani adieci - Res Gestae*. 27; Eck (2007), 169 –Augustus recorded his accomplishments throughout his life until he perfected his final draft in AD 14.

<sup>3</sup> Gruen (1984), 673-5; Whitehorne (2001), 78.

<sup>4</sup> King Pyrrhus, a distant relative of Alexander the Great, was eager for power. When he invaded Italy in 280, Ptolemy II had equipped him with elephants and men to guard Pyrrhus' homeland of Epirus. Pyrrhus' success in battle against the Romans came at a crippling cost, hence the term "Pyrrhic Victory". Pyrrhus returned to Sicily in 275 BC where he was vastly outnumbered in the Battle of Beneventum by the superior army of the Romans. A full account of the battles with Pyrrhus is found in Justin 18.1, 23.3, 25.4-5; Lewis (1983), 10.



Ptolemy V (who was only five at the time). The ascension of this boy had caused such internal strife and rioting in Alexandria that it attracted the attention of the Seleucid monarch of Syria, Antiochus III. Amidst the confusion and discord, Antiochus created a secret pact with Philip V for the partition of the Egyptian Empire. By this pact, Antiochus would have the right to annex Cyprus and Phoenicia. The Romans quickly intervened, ordering Antiochus to withdraw from the areas. Antiochus cancelled his invasion and instead attacked Ptolemaic possessions in Cilicia and Lycia in 199-197 BC.<sup>5</sup> In these early years, Rome's involvement in the political situation in Egypt was primarily for the benefit of grain shipments.

Rome again became politically involved with Egypt in the middle of the second century BC. In the 170's BC, Antiochus IV invaded Egypt, took the young Ptolemy VI prisoner, and proclaimed himself King of Egypt. Shortly thereafter in 168 BC, the Romans sent commander Gaius Popillius Laenas with a decree from the senate ordering him to end his war with Ptolemy and to withdraw into Syria. Antiochus complied after Laenas famously drew a circle round Antiochus and told him that he must remain inside the circle until he gave his decision about the contents of the letter. The authoritative action so astonished Antiochus that he soon agreed to the Romans' demands.<sup>6</sup> The expulsion of Antiochus IV was followed by another dynastic dispute, this time between Ptolemy VI and his younger brother. This the Roman senate also settled.<sup>7</sup> In 155 BC, Ptolemy VIII produced a will which was the first of several wills from which Rome was to benefit.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Justin 31.1-4; For further information on the agreement between Philip V and Antiochus III see Magie (1939), 32.

<sup>6</sup> Polybius. 29.27.

<sup>7</sup> The Roman senate left the elder Ptolemy VI on the Egyptian throne while detaching Cyrenaica as a separate kingdom for the younger brother. For further information on the early relationship of the Romans and Egyptians see Lewis (1983), 9-14.

<sup>8</sup> SEG 9.7; Livy *Periochae*, 70.5 - Ptolemy VIII's son Apion would also will Cyrene to Rome. There is some confusion about the details of the will of Apion. Appian: *Mith.* 17.121 states that Apion left Cyrene itself to the

By the last quarter of the second century BC, interaction between the two countries attracted Romans to Egypt as visitors and settlers. The economic benefits which Egypt (in particular Alexandria) afforded Rome led numerous merchants to settle there. Scipio Africanus himself had been invited to stay in Alexandria in 140/139 BC.<sup>9</sup> Inspections and visits to Egypt became more frequent as is evident from a papyrus dating to 112 BC. It outlines the instructions from a high priest in Alexandria to welcome Lucius Memmius, a Roman senator, with 'special magnificence' that included gifts, preparation of guest houses, and sacrifices. His general satisfaction with the events was to be ensured.<sup>10</sup>

Despite growing commercial ties between the two states, Roman political interest in Egypt waned until the 80's BC. When Ptolemy IX died without a legitimate heir, the Roman general Sulla saw an opportunity to benefit from the chaos and placed his own Ptolemaic prince on the throne as his puppet king (Ptolemy XI Alexander II).<sup>11</sup> Ptolemy XI however, was soon thereafter murdered in a gymnasium for his assassination of the reigning Queen, Cleopatra Berenice III. He was on the throne for only 19 days.<sup>12</sup> After the murder of Ptolemy XI, Ptolemy XII Auletes (the flute player) paid enormous amounts of money to the Roman senate to be established as pharaoh and to avoid the execution of Ptolemy X Alexander I's will which allowed the Romans to annex Egypt at any time.<sup>13</sup> For the next 20 years, Rome would be 'financed' by Ptolemy XII's desperation to keep his reign intact and Egypt out of foreign hands. Pompey and Julius Caesar

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Romans. Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.24 suggests that Apion left "the dry part of Libya" to the Romans and that Cyrene was handed over "by the generosity of king Ptolemy (XII)".

<sup>9</sup> Athenaeus, 12.549.

<sup>10</sup> Papyrus Tebtunis 33 - The Papyrus Tebtunis contains a copy of a letter possibly from a high official in Alexandria to Asklepiades. The contents of the letter surrounded the arrival of Lucius Memmius, a Roman senator coming as a tourist. It contained instructions for his reception and entertainment to be provided - Wilhelm (1937), 145.

<sup>11</sup> For a brief description of Sulla's involvement in Egyptian politics see Whitehorne (2001), 121, 177-179.

<sup>12</sup> Appian. *Civ.*1.102.

<sup>13</sup> Ptolemy X Alexander I had to borrow money from the Romans to pay for a campaign against Cyprus. In the circumstance that he should pass away, he may have willed Egypt in his will to the Romans (Cicero, *de Lege Agr.* 1.1; 2.41-42). Ptolemy XII Auletes' ascension to the throne is discussed in length in Cicero's *de Lege Agraria.* 2.16; Whitehorne (2001), 180 and Hölbl (2001), 222-230.

may have also utilized Alexander I's will as a way of holding power over Egypt. This created anxiety among the citizenry and placed Ptolemy XII under enormous pressure. In an attempt to gain Roman support, Ptolemy equipped 8000 of Pompey's cavalymen for battle in 63 BC, an act that drained the financial resources of Egypt, and forced Ptolemy to borrow money from the Roman banker C. Rabirius Posthumus.<sup>14</sup> Rome frequently made allowances to be made for Egypt when it suited them financially.<sup>15</sup>

It was at this point in Egypt's history, approximately 63 BC, that Julius Caesar made his entrance. Suetonius' statement that Julius Caesar himself had attempted to obtain *imperium* for the sole purpose of annexing Egypt seems suspect, yet it does suggest that this may have been a time when Roman politicians began to see Egypt as providing a way to advance their political careers.<sup>16</sup> Alexandria was one of the most important commercial capitals in the Mediterranean and offered an alluring amount of wealth; possession of which could provide significant power to its owner.<sup>17</sup>

In 65 BC, Julius Caesar supported Crassus' desire to annex Egypt based on Alexander I's will.<sup>18</sup> This caught the attention of Cicero (an *optimatus* who was not in favour of annexing Egypt), who in denouncing their plans as profiteering, asked indignantly whether Rome would "regard as enemies those who give us money, and enemies of those who do not".<sup>19</sup> The actions

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<sup>14</sup> Cicero. *Rab.Post.* 28; for further information on Caesar and Pompey's manipulation of Ptolemy XII see, Hölbl (2001), 224.

<sup>15</sup> Sinai-Davies (1997), 307 – Egypt refused to involve themselves with L. Lucinius Lucullus' appeal for ships to fight against Mithridates yet they attempted to involve Rome when they were experiencing periods of internal strife or pressing claims to kinship (Ptolemy XI).

<sup>16</sup> Suetonius *Jul.* 11.1

<sup>17</sup> Diodorus. 17.52.5; Strabo 17.6-9; Plutarch *Cato. Min.* 35.2-5 - Cato remarks upon the excessive rapacity of the chief men of Rome towards the wealth in Egypt.

<sup>18</sup> Plutarch *Crassus.* 13.1.

<sup>19</sup> Cicero *de Leg. Alex.* 1-2; on the future of Egypt see *de Leg. Agr.* 2.41; *Reg. Alex* 6-7 - Cicero refers again to Crassus greed. See Yakobson (2009), 60-61 for his discussion on the future of Egypt and the topic of Roman migration if Egypt be annexed.

of Crassus and the support of Caesar have been characterized as typical “political ideas of self-conscious imperialism and self-opportunistic practices of the era.”<sup>20</sup> Roman politicians with support and power in Egypt could – and did – upset and almost destroy the *res publica*.

In 59 BC, Julius Caesar gained considerable influence in Egypt after accepting a bribe of 6000 talents from Ptolemy XII (equal to six months revenue for the entire country).<sup>21</sup> For this action, Caesar introduced the *lex de rege Alexandrino* making the Ptolemaic king an *amicus et socius populi Romani*.<sup>22</sup> Egypt would be temporarily protected from Roman takeover. Soon thereafter, however, Ptolemy XII was exiled by the Egyptian population for the loss of Cyprus as well as the heavy taxes which he had burdened them with to pay for Roman bribes.<sup>23</sup> Ptolemy was exiled from Egypt from 58-55 BC. Unable to gain the support of the Roman senate a second time, it would not be until 55 BC that Ptolemy would be restored to the throne by paying Aulus Gabinius 10,000 talents to invade Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

In approximately 55 BC, Julius Caesar would become directly involved with Egyptian political affairs. This was significant as rulers would usually not involve themselves so closely with Egypt. Caesar played a significant role in the collection of Ptolemy XII Auletes’ outstanding debt to Rome. Later there would be the civil war with Pompey involving the child pharaoh

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<sup>20</sup> Sinai-Davies (1997), 313.

<sup>21</sup> The unstable political situation in Egypt (caused by Alexander I’s will) caused the Egyptians to see Romans as a source of fear and tension. This fear is exemplified by Diodorus (1.83.8-9) who states that he saw a group of Egyptians lynch a Roman man who had accidentally killed a cat in 60 BC. Although cats had a high religious significance in Egypt (Herodotus 2.65.5) the mob had likely attacked the Roman as a means to gain revenge.

<sup>22</sup> Caesar named Egypt a friend and ally in return for its donation of money as well as in gratitude for the help that Ptolemy gave to the Roman army in Syria - Caesar *Civ.* III. 107; Cicero *Rab. Post.* 3; Cicero *Att.* II. 16.2; Suetonius *Jul.* 54.3.

<sup>23</sup> For the loss of Cyprus see, Dio 38.30.5. For the sums of money spent and the demands of the Egyptians to demand back Cyprus see, Dio 39.12.1-3. For a full discussion on the nature of Ptolemy XII’s relationship with the Romans see Sinai-Davies (1997), 306-340.

<sup>24</sup> Sinai-Davies (1997), 325.

Ptolemy XIII.<sup>25</sup> Finally there was Caesar's resolution of the dispute over the Egyptian throne during the civil war between Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIII. During his time in Egypt, Caesar was exposed to the grandeur of Alexandria. With its' artistic and cultural magnificence, Caesar may have seen Alexandria as an icon of beauty, prosperity, and success.<sup>26</sup> Although Rome was not modelled after Alexandria, the Egyptian city certainly may have influenced Caesar (and other Roman leaders) to transform Rome into a golden city. For Caesar, this began with elaborate building projects such as the *Forum Julium*, the *Saepta Julia*, the new senate house as well as a planned temple to Mars, a theatre and a library that would have rivalled Alexandria's.<sup>27</sup> Diane Favro suggests that, "Caesar demonstrated great adeptness at self-promotion" and exploited building projects as a means of gaining favour and renown.<sup>28</sup> Caesar himself proclaimed that he had spent his own private fortunes and borrowed heavily to fund these projects for the 'public good'.<sup>29</sup> While Augustus mimicked Caesar in this sense, Augustus was contentious in terms of finances and focused upon projects that on the aggrandisement and prestige of Rome while indirectly enhancing his own.

### *Rome and Reaction to Hellenistic Rulers*

In Egypt, rulers from the Ptolemaic dynasty were associating themselves with the attributes of Dionysus in order to gain the favour of their citizens. This reflected the nature of the intellectual and religious climate that had developed during the Hellenistic period in which people were

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<sup>25</sup> Pompey had fled to Egypt and had been murdered by an officer of Ptolemy XIII. Caesar pursued the Pompeian army to Alexandria, where they camped and soon became involved with the Alexandrine civil war between Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra VII. Perhaps as a result of Ptolemy's role in Pompey's murder, Caesar sided with Cleopatra.

<sup>26</sup> Suetonius suggests that Caesar was planning to move the capital to Alexandria (*Caes.* 79) however these rumours of the move to Alexandria were false.

<sup>27</sup> After the burning of the Library in Alexandria, Caesar planned his library to be "the greatest possible" (Suetonius *Caes.* 44; Plutarch *Vit. Caes.* 49).

<sup>28</sup> Favro (1996), 61.

<sup>29</sup> Dio *Caes.* 42.50.

seeking salvation at the hands of their leaders rather than the gods.<sup>30</sup> The use of the title *Neos Dionysus* by Ptolemaic rulers associated them with Dionysus' attributes (benefactor, fertility, abundance) and therefore made it seem beneficial for the Egyptians to worship them. Ptolemy XII was one of the first pharaohs to take on the title of '*Neos Dionysus*' which gained him the nickname Auletes (flute player) as is evident from Strabo's writing.<sup>31</sup>

Now all kings after the third Ptolemy, being corrupted by luxurious living, have administered the affairs of government badly, but worst of all the fourth, seventh, and the last, Auletes, who, apart from his general licentiousness, practised the accompaniment of choruses with the flute and upon this he prided himself so much that he would not hesitate to celebrate contests in the royal palace, and at these contests would come forward to vie with the opposing contestants.

This style emulated the practice of the early Ptolemies such as Ptolemy I, II, and III who also associated themselves with Dionysus (Fig 1). Although the Ptolemies' associations with Dionysus were often not taken seriously (as is apparent in Strabo) the early Ptolemaic rulers were able to represent themselves as bestowers of wealth and good fortune.<sup>32</sup>

Caesar may well have been inspired by the Ptolemies during his campaign in Egypt. Indeed, Caesar's triumph in 46 BC was reminiscent of the procession of Ptolemy II which consisted of a public banquet and exotic animals.<sup>33</sup> Around the same time, in 45 BC a golden statue of Cleopatra was situated beside the cult statue of Venus Genetrix, an act that can be read as an acknowledgement of the divinity of Cleopatra and as a very public linking of her to the ancestral mother of Caesar's family.<sup>34</sup> Since Cleopatra was a humanized form of Isis, Caesar may have

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<sup>30</sup> Hölbl (2001), 289.

<sup>31</sup> Strabo 17.1.11 (Trans: H. L. Jones). For a closer examination of Hellenism in Egypt and Rome during this time see Hölbl (2001), 289-292.

<sup>32</sup> Hölbl (2001) discusses in length the utilization of Dionysus by the Ptolemaic kings 92-98, 170-173.

<sup>33</sup> Plutarch. *Caes.* 55; Suetonius. *Iul.* 37-39; for Ptolemy II's procession see Athenaeus 5.25.

<sup>34</sup> Appian. *Civ.* 2.102; Dio, LI.22.3.

wished to maintain that association in order to subordinate Isis to the Roman goddess Venus. In these ways, Caesar was manipulating Hellenistic and Egyptian culture, politics, and religion to enhance his political standing. Augustus may be seen as using Alexander the Great in a similar way

### *Rome and Reaction to Hellenistic Rulers: Alexander the Great*

One of the most significant characters who would heavily influence Egyptian and future Roman rulers was Alexander the Great. Alexander symbolized power and success, attributes which influenced both Caesar and Augustus throughout their political careers. Caesar himself is known to have wept at a statue of Alexander, exclaiming that he had performed few memorable actions at an age when Alexander had already conquered the world.<sup>35</sup> The similarities between Augustus and Alexander the Great begin as early as the nature of their births. Suetonius associated Augustus with “Alexandrian prodigies” informing the readers that his mother Atia had been visited by Apollo in the guise of a serpent just as Alexander’s mother Olympias had been.<sup>36</sup> The connection with Apollo is seen in a glass cameo in which symbols of Augustus’ priesthoods are located around the god’s snake (Fig 2).<sup>37</sup> This continued the previous Ptolemaic tradition of likening oneself to a god (which began with Alexander) as Antony and Caesar had done before him. Similarly, Augustus was supposedly recognized at birth as a world leader when his father Octavius questioned the priests of Father Liber about the destiny of his son. An offering of wine was made which rose as a pillar of flame in the same manner as it had for Alexander the Great.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Suetonius. *Jul.* 7.

<sup>36</sup> Suetonius *Aug.* 94; Plutarch *Alex.* 2.2 Olympias had also been visited by a serpent in the guise of Ammon, the Egyptian equivalent to Zeus; Zanker (1988), 50.

<sup>37</sup> Symbols of Augustus’ priesthoods are listed in his *Res Gestae* 67. See also Zanker (1988), 126-127.

<sup>38</sup> Suetonius *Aug.* 94

As Augustus progressed through political positions, his seal and his coinage became an important marker of his identity. Augustus modelled his coin types and early portraits on those of Alexander (Fig 3).<sup>39</sup> The typical partition in Alexander's hair is preserved in Augustus' subsequent and ageless portraits which were expressive of his dynamism. Augustus even placed the portrait of Alexander upon his own seal ring.<sup>40</sup> In Augustus' forum, two paintings of Alexander by Apelles were prominently displayed. In one, Alexander was depicted with Victoria and the Dioscuri and in the other, riding in a chariot triumphantly with a deity of war whose hands were tied.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, a variety of poets and writers commented on the ways in which Augustus may have modelled his rule from Alexander and the nature of his early accomplishments in comparison to Alexander's.<sup>42</sup> Horace mentions the ways in which Augustus was worshipped by the Roman citizenry for the peace that he had brought to Rome. Dio refers to the kind way in which Augustus dealt with the Alexandrians after the Battle of Actium. Of particular interest is Dio's mention of Augustus' desire to see 'kings not corpses' referring to the mummified body of Alexander the Great.<sup>43</sup>

Other evidence of Augustus' desire to follow in the footsteps of Alexander include an elaborate lamp holder which Augustus placed in the Temple of Apollo; supposedly the very same holder that had been given to Apollo by Alexander the Great previously.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Cleopatra had descended from the Ptolemaic line (descended by association from Alexander) and so to possess

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<sup>39</sup> Kleiner (2005), 69; Galinsky (1996), 48, 166.

<sup>40</sup> Pliny *HN*. 37.4; Suetonius *Aug* 50, 70.

<sup>41</sup> Pliny *HN*. 35.93-94; Galinsky (1998), 199 – The emperor Claudius had Alexander's face removed from both paintings and replaced it with the face of Augustus. Galinsky considers Augustus actions of *imperium* to be so revolutionary that they should be referred to as *Augustum* instead of *imperium*.

<sup>42</sup> Augustus was only nineteen when he set out to leave his imprint upon the world, surpassing not only Alexander but also his contemporaries, Pompey and Scipio. Virgil *Aen*. 8.791-808 – Virgil comments on Augustus' impressive accomplishments throughout his reign; Horace, *Odes*. 4.5; for a look at Augustus behaviour towards Alexander see Dio. 51.16.

<sup>43</sup> Dio 51.16.5.

<sup>44</sup> Pliny *HN*. 34.14; Galinsky (1996), 220.



her and her country was to possess a part of the great ruler's legacy. Alexander had become the 'Great Restorer' of Egypt, having relieved the Egyptians of Persian oppression: Augustus was considered the 'restorer' of Rome from a declining Republic. The seal ring, along with his similar birth to Alexander and their similar roles as 'restorers' of their respective territories, suggests that Augustus saw Alexander the Great as a model worth emulating and Egypt as one of his great territories to be obtained. Here lies the possibility that Augustus pursued Egypt; financially, for its wealth of natural resources; and personally, to possess a part of Alexander the Great through the seizure of his land. Both men were brilliant masters of public image who became icons in their own time and immensely successful political figures. Their carefully crafted images were enhanced and transmitted through the media of the day: literary and historical works, inscribed dedications, sculpture, coins, and architecture.

Alexander's most glorious city, Alexandria with, its architecture, culture and possession of the great leader's remains was a potent symbol of power and prestige in the ancient world.<sup>45</sup> For centuries before the reign of Augustus, it had been a vital trading post between Europe and Asia and the center of scholarship and intellectual pursuit for poets, historians, artists, and philosophers who flocked to the Alexandrian Library and Museum. For many of the Roman ruling elite, Alexandria served as an ideal capital city. The unconventional manner in which Caesar and Antony were involved with Egypt, however, generated unease and unrest amongst the Roman citizens, both elite and common, who disapproved of such involvement with Egypt and its ruling queen.<sup>46</sup> This served as an invaluable lesson for Augustus as he looked to

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<sup>45</sup> Kleiner (2005), 89 refers to Alexandria as "a sophisticated world of erudition and art, statecraft and bounty"; for Caesar's desire to move Rome's capital to Alexandria, see Suetonius *Caes.* 79.

<sup>46</sup> For Caesar's relationship with Cleopatra and his desire to marry her see, Suetonius. *Jul.* 52; for Caesar's initial impression of Cleopatra and the reactions of the people see Plutarch. *Jul.* 48-49.

Alexandria as a source (monetary and culturally) with which to fund Rome's physical transformation from a city of brick into one of marble. Egypt was the means by which he achieved this transformation, a fact that Augustus would not let the Roman people forget.

## CHAPTER 2

### Augustus' Propaganda - Cleopatra and Antony

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 31 BC, Antony's naval forces succumbed to Octavian's general Agrippa.<sup>47</sup> Octavian was left the undisputed ruler of the Mediterranean. Following his success, Octavian amalgamated Egypt's significant wealth and resources which would stabilize Rome financially for generations to come. For this act, Octavian would receive an outpouring of support and appreciation from the Roman citizenry, support which allowed him to claim an unassailable position as Rome's leader. His success at the Battle of Actium would be represented in various media displaying many aspects of Antony and Cleopatra, both in positive and negative lights. This continued the propaganda campaign which Augustus had initiated at the beginning of the conflict.<sup>48</sup> Like Caesar, Antony exploited both Ptolemaic and Greek practices for political gain. He was initiated into the cult of the Eleusinian Mysteries and adopted Dionysian themes for political purposes. In 41 BC, he was hailed as Dionysus Χαριδότης (the bringer of joy) and Μειλίχιος (benefactor) upon his arrival in Ephesus.<sup>49</sup> Octavian would use Antony's associations to Dionysus as well as Heracles to work against him. Cleopatra herself would serve as a direct contrast to Octavian's traditional morals and values.

The degree to which Cleopatra and her imagery were involved in Augustus' propaganda campaign was amplified after her death in August of 30 BC. He would manipulate her imagery to promote his political and moral ideals. Most importantly, Cleopatra was the last of the Ptolemaic monarchs who was heir to the empire of Alexander the Great. Levick suggests that she

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<sup>47</sup> Octavian would receive the title *Augustus* in January of 27 BC.

<sup>48</sup> For an introduction to the propaganda that was utilized by Octavian before and during the Battle of Actium see Levick (2010), 44-49.

<sup>49</sup> Plutarch *Ant.* 23.2, 26.5.

represented “stability, authenticity and self-government”, things which Augustus sought to achieve for Rome.<sup>50</sup> Cleopatra’s imagery was most beneficial in that it could be applied to a variety of media. These portrayals bore a mixture of themes, messages and ideals which supported his political ascension and his social principles.

The pride of Augustus’ massive triumph was intended to be the parading of Cleopatra herself, but after her premature death, Dio reported that, “[Augustus] felt both admiration and pity for her, and was excessively grieved on his own account, as if he had been deprived of all the glory of his victory”.<sup>51</sup> Instead, an effigy of Cleopatra and the physical appearance of her children by Antony alleviated some of his distress and embarrassment. Cleopatra herself is described by Plutarch as “upon a couch ... so that in a way she too...was a part of the spectacle and a trophy in the procession”.<sup>52</sup> This effigy was supposedly found in the ruins of Hadrian’s Villa in 1818. It was found in sixteen parts and was formed from a paste of beeswax that was commonly used in the Egyptian Fayum mummy portraits (Fig 8).<sup>53</sup> The nature of its discovery was recorded by John Sartain in 1883. The portrait was thought to represent Cleopatra’s final moments before her death.<sup>54</sup> The image of Cleopatra was described by Sartain, “with splendid jewels” with “a knot on each shoulder (which) covers her right breast, but the left is exposed to the bite of the asp”. He also comments on her “expression of grief and pain” which articulates “forcibly the mental

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<sup>50</sup> Levick (2010), 42.

<sup>51</sup> Dio *LL*.14.6 (Trans: Earnest Cary, Herbert Baldwin Foster)

<sup>52</sup> Plutarch *Ant.* 84.3 (Trans: Bernadotte Perrin).

<sup>53</sup> Sartain (1885), 9 - These were the *tablet* portraits, frequently purchased for a very steep cost by Romans. The effigy was discovered by Micheli, a well-known antiquary, under the *cella* of the temple of Serapis, at Hadrian's Villa. It was later analysed by Giov. Batt. Tannucci from the Royal Academy of Pisa and the report was printed in the “Autologia di Firenze,” Vol. 7. In August, 1822, Marquis Cosimo Ridolfi, a distinguished scientist and chemist, assisted by Targiani Tozzetti, analysed the chemical breakdown of the painting that proved to be two-thirds resin and one-third wax.

<sup>54</sup> Sartain (1885), 72 - The painter was believed to be Timomachus who was the artist for two paintings which Julius Caesar had commissioned of Medea and Ajax for an offering at the temple of Venus Genetrix.

and bodily anguish of the Queen”.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, the original work has been lost, leaving only a “copy” that was produced in the Neo-Classical style of the late 1800’s. Although its remnant serves as an unreliable source of its original appearance, it augments Plutarch’s account and adds to the scanty knowledge of the context of Cleopatra’s death.

Despite the presence of an effigy of Cleopatra, it is recorded that Augustus felt stripped of his prize. The pro-Augustan writer Cassius Dio describes a seemingly fictional time when Augustus sent the freedman, Thyrsus, to profess his ‘love’ for her as Antony and Caesar had before. In this way, he prevented her from destroying her amalgamated wealth and captured her alive before she had the chance to commit suicide. If these actions of Augustus were true, this desperate act may have served a dual purpose, to preserve the wealth of Egypt for Rome and to preserve her physical body as a trophy of personal glory.<sup>56</sup> The defeat and possession of Cleopatra placed Augustus in a dominant position. Unlike Caesar and Antony, he was not taken in by the queen, rather he had conquered her. This accomplishment demanded respect from the citizenry who were encouraged by his reliable and trustworthy nature as leader of Rome.

On a personal note for Augustus, it is reported by Plutarch that “he could not but admire the greatness of her [Cleopatra’s] spirit”.<sup>57</sup> It was because of this admiration, Kleiner believes, that

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<sup>55</sup> Sartain (1885), 14.

<sup>56</sup> Dio. 51.8.6-7 - It has been well established that Dio was extremely pro-Augustan, as well as a dedicated rhetorician. The value of his history is diminished due to his “facts” which were adorned or modified to create a more dramatic presentation. Barnes (1984), 255 refers to Dio’s written work as “coloured”. Millar (1966) 87-92 says that the annalistic element of Dio concerning Augustus was “thin” and was the reason for why he drew upon “subsidiary sources” and “his own knowledge”. Swan (2004) 6-7 notes that, “Dio valued and arguably wished to embody...prodigies like Augustus...conservative, patriotic figures distinguished for their moderation, who put the common good before themselves.” Swan goes on to say that Dio may have believed that history had a direction or goal, a *telos* which he defines as. “...a state of well-being...to be striven for or maintained...For Dio it amounted to an ecumenical order under the good and secure rule of Rome, specifically a monarchic Rome once the empire achieved a magnitude and diversity that a republican constitution could not sustain.” (10). Perhaps it reflects Dio’s desire for peace during the reign of Severus.

<sup>57</sup> *Ant.* 86.4 (Trans: Thomas North, Rev. Walter W. Skeat)

Augustus allowed Antony and Cleopatra to be buried side by side in Alexandria.<sup>58</sup> This ‘admiration’ may also have influenced his choice to permit her gilded statue to remain in the Temple of Venus Genetrix which no doubt puzzled the Augustan poets who had branded her the “harlot queen of licentious Canopus”.<sup>59</sup> Levick states that she was seen as a “pallid bogey-woman and whore, an erotic object for male writers and readers...an oriental despot for taking down”.<sup>60</sup> The reasons for her continued presence there may never truly be known: from her powerful personality to her association with the deified Caesar, or her religious significance as the goddess Isis, or the fact that her statue may have been forever an indicator of Augustus’ domination over her and Egypt. Conversely, it has been written that Augustus was paid off to preserve her image.<sup>61</sup> In any case, it was important for Augustus to maintain Cleopatra’s image in Rome as a constant reminder to the Roman people of his success against Egypt.

#### *Augustus’ Employment of Cleopatra in Art*

Throughout the empire, Cleopatra’s images remained untouched but not unaltered to suit Augustus’ political and social intentions. The most subtle yet compelling evidence of Cleopatra’s imagery used to support Augustus’ propaganda campaign may be found within the excavations of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine. Propertius provides the most valuable information on this monument: The temple was constructed beside the residence of Augustus and was accessible

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<sup>58</sup> Kleiner (2005), 159.

<sup>59</sup> Propertius, *Elegies* 3.11.39 (Trans: Vincent Katz).

<sup>60</sup> Levick (2010), 49.

<sup>61</sup> Plutarch. *Antony* 86.5 – *Ἀντώνιον δὲ οἱ μὲν ἔξ, οἱ δὲ τρισὶ τὰ πενήκοντα ὑπερβαλεῖν φασιν. αἱ μὲν οὖν Ἀντωνίου καθηρέθησαν εἰκόνες, αἱ δὲ Κλεοπάτρας κατὰ χώραν ἔμειναν, Ἀρχιβίου τινὸς τῶν φίλων αὐτῆς δισχίλια τάλαντα Καίσαρι δόντος, ἵνα μὴ τὸ αὐτὸ ταῖς Ἀντωνίου πάθωσιν.* “Then those images of Antony were thrown down, but those of Cleopatra remained in place; for Archibius, one of her friends, giving Caesar two-thousand talents so that they may not suffer the same as Antony’s” (Trans: Bernadotte Perrin). At the time, 2000 talents could have easily supported an army for a year! There is debate as to whether the statue was the one in Rome or one in Egypt. See Tyldesley (2008), 58.

to the public. It was built after the Battle of Actium and dedicated in October of 28 BC.<sup>62</sup> The excavations in 1968 revealed terracotta plaques decorated with a variety of mythological scenes, some relating directly to the triad of Cleopatra, Antony and Augustus. Upon its dedication in 28 BC, Horace composed a special verse for the occasion which did not mention the Battle of Actium but rather Apollo as the guardian of peaceful pursuits.<sup>63</sup>

It is obvious that the temple is dedicated to the nature and actions of Apollo but one cannot dismiss the allusions to Egypt and Cleopatra. Plaques relating indirectly to the Battle of Actium were carved with mythological subjects to provide a timeless aspect to the presentation.<sup>64</sup> One particular scene shows no less than nine times Hercules and Apollo battling for the Delphic Tripod (Fig 5).<sup>65</sup> The theme of Augustus and Antony in the guise of their chosen gods was a well-known one in Rome, one which Augustus frequently referred to in his propaganda. This particular theme suited the nature of the Battle of Actium well: Hercules/Antony commits a crime and seeks council at the Delphic oracle. Receiving nothing, he attempts to steal the oracle's tripod/Rome but is stopped by Apollo/Augustus. Later Hercules/Antony is sold as a slave to Omphale/Cleopatra. In this plaque, Cleopatra is represented by a lotus flower (an Egyptian decoration) beneath their feet. It has been understood that the confrontation for the tripod was symbolic of the battle for the possession of Rome.<sup>66</sup> As Apollo is always the victor of

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<sup>62</sup> Propertius (31.1-16); Kleiner (2005), 174 – The temple was intended to be built after the campaign against Sextus Pompeius in Sicily, but its construction was delayed.

<sup>63</sup> For information on the Temple of Apollo and Augustus' association with the god, see Herkster and Riche (2006), 160 – 165; Horace *Epode*. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Galinsky (1996), 220.

<sup>65</sup> Kleiner (2005), 112, 175 - Measuring at two by two and a half feet, the reliefs, like many others were brightly painted; Borbein (1968), 176-78; Strazzulla (1990), 17-22.

<sup>66</sup> Kleiner (2005), 175 - Cleopatra/Isis appears in a more obvious form in other plaques with a rattling sistrum, an Egyptian headdress (possibly with the indication of a cobra, royal Egyptian insignia), an elaborate hairstyle, emerging from a blossoming acanthus plant, surrounded by male and female sphinxes. If these plaques represent Cleopatra herself, the male sphinx may represent her father, Auletes.

such pursuits, Augustus is naturally depicted as the champion of Rome with Cleopatra little more than an ornament of decoration.

*Antefixes* or ornaments on the temple revealed a mix of Classical and Egyptian motifs such as griffins, Silenus and elephant heads, and acanthus leaves. One such antefix displays two women; one an idealized Roman woman and the other an exotic female, both ornamenting a central pedestal or *baetyl*, to which Apollo's armory is attached (cithara, quiver and bow) (Fig 6). Kleiner identifies these women as Livia and Cleopatra.<sup>67</sup> The woman on the right has a centrally parted hairstyle, waved, tied in a bun with idealized features and an aquiline nose; similar to portraits of Livia where she is presented as a Roman goddess. The woman on the left has more exotic and Egyptianizing features; a more prominent nose, tight curls and a long plait of hair that runs down the back of her neck. If Kleiner's theory is correct, Livia may be showing her dominance over the exotic queen as Augustus had over Antony. Overall, the antefixes and plaques seem to reveal the dominance of Rome over Egypt as a promotional piece. By using well-known mythological imagery, it gave a timeless effect to Augustus' message. This sense of an everlasting reign was crucial to Augustus' authority. Augustus intended for his dominance over Egypt to survive through the generations and not to end with his reign.

Additional themes relating to Augustus' utilization of Cleopatra were also found upon the temple's portico which depicted the fifty daughters of Danaus in between the columns (Fig 7).<sup>68</sup> The story goes that Danaus and his daughters had fled Egypt to escape forced marriage to the sons of Aegyptus. When marriage became unavoidable, Danaus demanded that all of his

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<sup>67</sup> Kleiner (2005), 176-77; Other scholars believe that the figures in this scene are in fact Apollo and Artemis or servants under Apollo; Homer *Iliad* 24.603-61 - The murder of Niobe by Apollo and Artemis, this scene may have been a reflection of their actions; Galinsky (1996), 188 – Identifies the figures as attendants

<sup>68</sup> Propertius 2.31.3-4; Ovid *Trist.* 3.1.61.



daughters kill their husbands on their wedding night. The death of the ‘lustful’ Egyptians may be analogous to Egypt’s ‘death’ and takeover by Augustus. This theory becomes unlikely, however, when we consider the end of the story: For their actions, the daughters are condemned in Tartarus to pour water into a leaky bath in which they are supposed to wash away their sins. Kleiner suggests that “Augustus’ conquest of the female fury at Actium underscored his success as Rome’s savior, a victory made possible through the unwavering support of Apollo”.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the punishment of the Egyptian Danaids specifically symbolizes Augustus’ victory over Cleopatra. For the Romans, ‘female fury’ was something to be constrained and controlled. Cleopatra’s defeat by Augustus was seen not only as a military victory but a social victory.

Other similarities between the Danaids and Cleopatra reside within their ancestry, both of which were Greek (Argive and Macedonian). The success and failure of these women may have referenced Cleopatra’s own rise and fall from power.<sup>70</sup> Although Apollo remained the protagonist of the temple, Cleopatra nevertheless was the antagonist over whom Augustus (Apollo) could celebrate his victories.

Galinsky suggests that the portico may have signified the fraternal war between Danaus and his brother Aegyptus. In this case, the viewer may have associated this with the civil strife between Antony and Augustus.<sup>71</sup> The construction of the temple began soon after the Battle of Actium when the negative propaganda against Antony was still prominent. As the temple was being

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<sup>69</sup> Kleiner (2005), 178.

<sup>70</sup> *The Suppliants* written by Aeschylus in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC details the actions of the Danaids. The subsequent death and punishment in Hades of all the Danaids but one (Hypermnestra) is suggested by lines 230 and 416. Winnington (1961), 143 however, suggests that it seems unlikely that the conclusion of the play would result in eternal punishment of an entire chorus. The women were wronged, mis-guided by their father, and driven to their deeds by desperation. Winnington suggests rather, that the logical conclusion would be a reconciliation of the women to marriage. If we believe that the Danaids are in fact punished for their actions, Cleopatra may ultimately be seen to be like the women; punished for her own actions.

<sup>71</sup> Galinsky (1996), 221.

constructed, however, the negative feelings began to simmer down. This may explain why the derogatory themes towards Antony and Cleopatra are so subtle in their presentation. For Augustus, the Temple of Apollo is likely to have served as both a dedicatory monument and a form of propaganda. If we believe the anecdotes, the imagery of Antony and Cleopatra may have been presented in such a way as to remind the people of Augustus' victory and to represent himself as the protector of Rome and Roman values.

Lastly, the Vatican Cleopatra may have been preserved to display Rome's dominance over Egypt. The head, made out of Parian marble, stands 39 cm tall and was found in the villa dei Quintilii on the Via Appia in 1784. It was Ludwig Curtius who first identified the figure as Cleopatra VII. He also proposed that the sculpture may have resided in the Temple of Venus Genetrix, a part of the same statue, as recorded by Appian, which Caesar placed by the side of Venus in 45 BC.<sup>72</sup> More importantly, Curtius mentions that the portrait may have held a tiny person on the shoulder which was later removed. The assumption that a figure ever existed in the first place is based on the identification of some raised marble upon Cleopatra's left cheek by Curtius in 1933.<sup>73</sup> He suggested that the uneven marble may have represented a tiny figure's hand placed on Cleopatra's left cheek.<sup>74</sup> Curtius proposed that the identity of this figure, originally thought to be Cupid upon Aphrodite, may have been Caesarion (Fig 4).<sup>75</sup> This theory is supported by the fact that Julius Caesar built this temple in his Forum with the purpose of dedicating it to the goddess of motherhood and domesticity: such a depiction of Caesar's son

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<sup>72</sup> Appian, *Civ.* 2. 102.

<sup>73</sup> For the information on this statue of Cleopatra at the Temple of Venus Genetrix see Curtius (1933), 182-192.

<sup>74</sup> Eugenio La Rocca explains that the residual marble may be residue from the replication process. However, it is suggested by Kleiner (2005), 153 that Curtius' result was based not only on the residue but also by evidence of the mother-child statuary type in the Hellenistic period and the fact that the Venus statue (which Cleopatra's statue stood beside) portrayed the goddess with her son Eros.

<sup>75</sup> Coins that Cleopatra had minted in Cyprus in 47 BC show her holding Caesarion. These coins are often associated with Aphrodite and Eros (Fig 19).

with his mother would not have been out of place in such a setting. Children in Augustan imagery however, have been notoriously difficult to understand.<sup>76</sup> It is especially difficult in this case since the child has been removed and there are no written sources to indicate the identity of the tiny body. Theoretically, if the missing figure was that of Caesarion, Augustus may have removed his image before it was recorded in any written source. Since Augustus had ordered the death of Caesarion, the destruction of his imagery (*damnatio memoriae*) would have been an expected manoeuvre. This would clarify why Augustus left Cleopatra's statue to stand since he had 'removed' his rival. The 'removal' of Caesarion allowed Augustus to establish himself as the undisputed ruler and conqueror of Rome and Egypt.<sup>77</sup> This may also support the theory that Augustus wished to possess for himself a part of the reign of Alexander the Great, as he had replaced the heir of Egypt (Caesarion) and was now the next official 'descendant' from Alexander.<sup>78</sup> The theory remains unproven today, however, it is more likely that the portrait which Curtius found was not the original because the statue of Cleopatra beside that of the Venus Genetrix was said to be made of gold.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the Vatican Cleopatra may have been a contemporary copy of the golden version that stood in the temple. The identity of this particular piece has also been considered to be that of Julia or Octavia.<sup>80</sup> Ultimately, if this piece may be accepted as Cleopatra, its presence would have been important to Augustus as a way of expressing his dominance over her and Egypt. Augustus was able to control the survival or destruction of her powerful images, redirecting their messages to suit his purposes.

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<sup>76</sup> Take for example the baby at the foot of Augustus *Prima Porta* (Fig 17). It may be interpreted as Cupid or it could have been his grandson Gaius. The children on the *Ara Pacis* provide similar confusion. No satisfying conclusion has been offered.

<sup>77</sup> Caesarion was likely not a threat to Augustus' position since his father was dead and his mother was the queen of Egypt. He would have had no legal standing in Rome.

<sup>78</sup> The Ptolemaic family (more accurately their reign) was descended from Alexander the Great. By removing Caesarion's image, Augustus took over his role as the latest descendent of the Great king.

<sup>79</sup> Dio, LI.22.3; Appian *Civ.* II.102.

### *The Arretine Bowl*

The use of mythological themes to depict Cleopatra and Antony as contrasting to Augustus' traditional values continued on pottery. The *Arretine Clay Bowl* displays a pejorative scene with Hercules and Omphale being drawn by centaurs (Fig 20).<sup>81</sup> Arretine ware was a high-quality, red glazed pottery; a cheaper clay alternative to the silver cups which were so appealing to the upper classes for their material and subject matter (typically homosexual love, myths and sacrifices).<sup>82</sup> The inexpensive material may have allowed for a more wide-spread distribution throughout Rome with the ability to reach a wide range of social classes. This scene is assumedly representative of Antony and Cleopatra by the lion-skin and the hero's club which the female character dons while being handed a massive drinking vessel.<sup>83</sup> Plutarch describes the connection between Cleopatra and the woman in this piece:

Just as in the paintings of Omphale taking Hercules' club and donning his lion skin, so Cleopatra would disarm Antony and make sport of him. Then he would miss important appointments and forego military exercises, just to cavort with her on the banks of the Canopus and Taphosiris and take his pleasure with her.<sup>84</sup>

Antony is shown looking back to Cleopatra, wearing see-through clothing, standing underneath a parasol to protect his delicate skin; a less than manly depiction. Whether the producers of this piece intended its message to evoke Cleopatra and Antony is difficult to say. Regardless,

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<sup>80</sup> Goudchaux in Walker and Higgs (2001), 213.

<sup>81</sup> Zanker (1988), 59 – A scene reminiscent of the Arretine Bowl was depicted upon a silver bowl produced early in Augustus' reign, the mould of which may have been made available to the pottery of Perennius in Arezzo.

<sup>82</sup> Clarke (1998), 108 - Erotic scenes were similarly found in the respectable houses of the Roman nobility, see Ovid *Tristia* 2. 497-546.

<sup>83</sup> Zanker (1988), 58; Horace's *Epode* 9.15 describes his disgust at Antony's effeminate nature. Later in the *Epodes*, Horace (1.37) places Cleopatra in a sympathetic role as a "dove" or "hare" being chased by a "falcon" or "hunter". He may have wished to depict the two as weak and luxurious as a means to express the superiority of Rome. Reckford (1959), 200 - After the Battle of Philippi, Horace befriended Octavian's right-hand man in civil affairs, Maecenas, and became a spokesman for the new regime. For the terrible effects of love on men see Propertius *Elegies*. 1.13-15.

<sup>84</sup> Plutarch. *Antony and Demetrius* 3.3.

Augustus' negative propaganda campaign may have encouraged the people to see it that way.

Propaganda in all shapes and sizes was a major part of Augustus' success and without Cleopatra he would not have had a suitable opponent with which to continuously elevate his character and political savvy.

### *Cleopatra and Antony in Virgil's Aeneid*

The anti-Cleopatra/Antony propaganda and the legitimization of Augustus' rule is exhibited in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Seen by some as a propaganda piece for Augustus, it presents Aeneas' ancestral relationship to Venus and his lineage to the Julian clan.<sup>85</sup> The imagery on the shield of Aeneas is reminiscent of the breastplate of the *Prima Porta* Augustus and is a prime example of ways in which Augustus made his connection to the gods without appearing as one.<sup>86</sup> In the *Aeneid*, the shield of Aeneas displays the Battle of Actium as a clash of Roman and Egyptian gods. A barking Anubis aiming his weapons to that of Venus, Neptune, Minerva and Apollo. Augustus had to be presented as a great military leader, so Virgil used Aeneas' shield as way of creating a symbolic image of Augustus' victories. This hereditary connection with the gods, particularly to Venus served to fabricate the legitimacy of Augustus' rule.

Augustus may have been understood as the character of Aeneas and Cleopatra as Dido, the queen of Carthage. If this is so, then Augustus was shown stepping away from the charms of a rich city and powerful companion for the good of a poor and humble Rome. Dido may be seen as Cleopatra in the sense that they were both African, rich, alluring women whose respective cities,

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<sup>85</sup> Augustus was already a master of propaganda and did not specifically require an epic of Roman history glorifying him. Virgil's motives for the *Aeneid*'s production may have been to achieve personal glory or to influence Augustus' actions thereby playing a significant role in Rome's revival.

<sup>86</sup> The breastplate on the Augustan *Prima Porta* (Fig 18) is believed to have been inspired by Aeneas' shield. For further information, see Holland (1947), 276-284. Aeneas' shield reveals many of the sentiments which Augustus wanted to portray about the Battle of Actium: Augustus' ability to provide stability, his association with Julius Caesar as a god, his pride towards Agrippa, and the once proud Antony taken in by his 'shameful' consort (Virgil *Aeneid*. 8.671-700).

Carthage and Egypt, would eventually fall into the possession of Rome. The *Aeneid* expressed Augustus' pride at possessing Egypt and indirectly, justified his rule in Rome by associating his lineage with that of a goddess. In contrast, a part of the *Aeneid* called "The Fama Episode" (*Aen.* 4.173-185), Aeneas may be seen as the *genius* of Rome. Prior to and during the Fama episode Aeneas is taken in by Dido/Cleopatra, whereas afterwards, Aeneas considers the well-being of his future realm of higher significance than the charms of a wealthy city. The change of heart which Aeneas experiences may be reminiscent of the changes which Rome experienced in transitioning from Antony to Augustus. Like Antony towards Egypt, Aeneas was taken in by the overwhelming wealth and luxury of Carthage. Virgil refers to the 'brilliant purple and gold' that surrounds Dido and her city.<sup>87</sup> Antony's dealings with Cleopatra, just as Aeneas' with Dido, were not to the benefit of Rome as a city. Aeneas as Augustus, however, would eventually place the city's well-being as his top priority.<sup>88</sup> This passage also suggests that Cleopatra's ability to rule was compromised by her obsession with Antony just as Dido's political duties towards her fledgling city had been side-tracked by Aeneas. These allusions enhanced Augustus' image as the protector of Rome whereas Cleopatra and Antony were tarnished for their luxurious ways.

### *The Pearls*

Cleopatra's imagery continued to play a part in Augustus' ascension to power through a 'pair' of pearl earrings that Augustus placed upon the statue of Venus in Marcus Agrippa's new Pantheon

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<sup>87</sup> Virgil *Aeneid*. 129-160.

<sup>88</sup> In Horace's *Odes*, 1.37, celebrating Octavian's victory at Actium, Cleopatra is presented as the enemy of Rome, described in hostile terms: a 'frenzied queen' plotting the destruction of Rome, surrounded by 'a mob of polluted, foul creatures', mad and drunk with hopes of conquest. It is odd however, that Antony is never mentioned. In Horace's *Epode* 9 which also celebrates the victory at Actium, Antony is described as behaving in a shameful manner, unworthy of any Roman.

in 27-25 BC.<sup>89</sup> These earrings were referred to as “Cleopatra’s pearls”. They were of an extraordinary size, possibly the largest in the known world.<sup>90</sup> Whether the pearls were actually those of Cleopatra is unclear but Augustus claimed that the earrings were made from one of the two pearls which Cleopatra had attempted to swallow during a dinner with Antony. In 29 BC, Augustus had displayed this pearl in his triumphal parade atop the effigy of Cleopatra. Pliny himself writes that pearls were a prized possession traditionally passed on through the Egyptian kings.<sup>91</sup> Cleopatra would have had the privilege of receiving the precious pearls because of her new position as pharaoh. Flory suggests that “Cleopatra’s pearl” was divided in half and placed into the ears of the Venus inside Agrippa’s Pantheon to symbolize Egypt’s new loyalty to Rome.<sup>92</sup> The pearl may also have served as a commentary against *luxuria*; for a mortal to possess such a gift was considered hubristic. Augustus’ dedication of the pearls to a Roman goddess was far more appropriate and suited to his moral regime.<sup>93</sup> In the past, Augustus had shown disapproval of private extravagance by refusing to place statues or works of art in his own home in favour of the bones of heroes and animals.<sup>94</sup> This served as a statement of his appreciation and adherence to the values of the past and that foreign wealth was for the purpose of adorning Rome, not his private abode. Had he kept the pearl as his own possession, he would have been considered hubristic by admitting his own royal standing. By dedicating the pearl to one of the ‘queens’ of Rome, Augustus may be understood as transferring Egyptian wealth over to Rome.

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<sup>89</sup> The Venus statue stood with those of Mars and Divus Julius in the Pantheon to display Augustus’ heritage. Dio mentions that Augustus himself chose not to be named or displayed in the same area as the deified gods rather his statue was placed in the antechamber to signify him as being human, a symbol of his modesty (Dio. 53.27.3).

<sup>90</sup> Its partner earring was said to have been swallowed by Cleopatra in a bet with Antony (Pliny *HN*. 9.59.119-121).

<sup>91</sup> Pliny *HN*. 9.58. 119.

<sup>92</sup> Flory (1988), 503; *RG* 27.1

<sup>93</sup> A similar action was taken when he came into possession of a massive piece of crystal, which was dedicated by Livia on the Capitoline (Pliny *HN*. 37.27).

<sup>94</sup> Flory (1988), 504.

Ultimately, Augustus needed to justify his place as sole-ruler in Rome, a goal that required constant dedication and attention. The anti-Cleopatra/Antony propaganda served as a contrast to Augustus' traditional moral, social and political ideals. The mythological nature of the depictions gave them an everlasting sense, one which would assist Augustus in the legitimization of his rule for the long-term.



## CHAPTER 3

### Art and the Legitimization of Rule

Egyptian motifs were integrated into Octavian's visual propaganda campaign particularly after his military success against Antony and Cleopatra. In 27 BC, the senate awarded him with the *cognomen* of 'Augustus' which secured him enduring executive power and civil authority as well as proconsular *imperium* and *potestas*. His success over Egypt was first commemorated by a *denarius* minted in both silver and gold showing Octavian's takeover with the legend *AEGYPTO CAPTA* (Fig 8). The legend is written out in full on the costly *denarius*; the choice coin to celebrate the successful conclusion of Octavian's Egyptian campaign. Many variations of this coin were produced; the typical form bearing the bare head of Octavian and the legend *CAESAR COS VI*. Also the *lituus*, an augural staff, is a common icon found within this coinage. The significance of its presence has resulted in some debate among scholars: Keaveney points out that the portrayal of the *lituus* could refer to the initial entrance of a magistrate entering office, but there is little explanation as to why a priestly instrument would be used to signify the authority of a magistrate.<sup>95</sup> It could have also represented the legitimizing of his military power just as the oath of the citizenry had in 32 BC.<sup>96</sup> A final theory as to the presence of the *lituus* suggests it is a symbol of Octavian's dedication to the welfare of Rome. This was the tool of the *pontifices* who had authority over sacrifices and vows and oversaw the completion of rites, rituals and prayers. Since Octavian's plan was to preserve traditional religion within Rome, it may have been an appropriate symbol for him to assume upon his coinage.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Keaveney (1982), 153.

<sup>96</sup> Stewart (1997), 170. Normally the *lituus* and the *jug* are synonymous with Roman culture of augury and sacrifice.

<sup>97</sup> The augural staff was used as a symbol of one of Augustus' three priesthoods and is also associated with Apollo (Fig 3).

The nature of Octavian's (hereafter called Augustus) propaganda upon his coins after the Battle of Actium had a distinctive triumphal theme to it between the years of 30-27 BC. Egypt was portrayed as a crocodile both chained and unchained with the reverse legend of AEGYPTO CAPTA. Roman rulers were notorious for portraying their defeated enemies as powerful and formidable opponents to enhance their own victory. One need only look at the imagery of the Gallic men upon the coinage of Julius Caesar. The men appear rough, savage, and frightening with their long flowing locks and ferocious persona (Fig 9). These appearances served as a tribute to the defeat of worthy adversaries as well as a demonstration of the might of the people who defeated them. Egypt may be seen in a similar light. From the Roman point of view, the crocodile was a recognizable symbol of Egypt. Second, crocodiles were a common and frightening sight in Egypt and the image of a crocodile being 'tamed' was surely an impressive one to represent a fierce Egypt, fallen to the Romans.

The seizure of Egypt was further commemorated on the coinage between the years of 29 and 28 BC and is referred to on coins released subsequently. The coins were divided into two categories of legends: CAESAR.DIVI.F and IMP.CAESAR. The *denarii*, bearing the inscription CAESAR.DIVI.F belong to the series produced up to 29 BC which refer to his victory at the battle of Actium. The latter IMP.CAESAR which date between 29 and 27 BC commemorated his distinction as *Imperator*. The nature of Augustus' Egyptian propaganda campaign reminded the citizenry of his worth to them as a purveyor of wealth and of Rome's military might and success which encouraged continuing support of his autocracy.

Egypt was recognizable on Roman coins by a variety of secondary motifs symbolizing the country's power, wealth and culture. Such symbols included the sistrum, the ibis, the lotus, and wheat. Other recognizable features include the Nile, the Sun, the Moon, Apis, Osiris, Isis and

Serapis.<sup>98</sup> Upon a copper *dupondius* (*aes*) which Augustus minted in respect for Agrippa, Augustus depicts wheat as an indicator of the wealth that Egypt's possession provided for Rome (Fig 10). The coin dates later in Augustus' career, approximately 9-3 BC, and shows the back-to-back portraits of the laurelled head of Augustus and his general Agrippa with the rostral/naval crown and the legend IMP DIVI F(ilius).<sup>99</sup> On the reverse is a crocodile tethered to a palm tree by a chain, along with wheat symbolizing Egypt's primary resource.<sup>100</sup> Above the crocodile is a laurel wreath indicating the Roman victory over Egypt. Augustus is paying homage to Agrippa while referring to Rome's everlasting prosperity through the acquisition of wealth and grain from Egypt. In addition, the legend COL(onia) NEM(ausus) refers to Augustus' establishment of a new colony for Rome's veterans in Nemausus (Modern - Nimes, located in Southern France) after the pacification of Egypt.<sup>101</sup> The clear and simple motifs were effectively used to convey the magnanimous benefit of Egypt's capture, understandable to all levels of citizenry. Clarity of meaning and context within Augustus' propaganda was critical to his success politically and socially. He had a reputation to uphold; one of power and domination. The continuous expression of Egypt's benefit to Rome was vital to the maintenance of this reputation. Firstly, it put at ease the minds of public and the senate as to the idea of his autocratic rule (a great benefit had already come to them from his leadership). Secondly, it continuously protected Augustus from retribution through any loss of support. Augustus' Egyptian propaganda campaign was necessary to maintain the trust of the citizenry and to constantly remind them of the benefits of keeping him around.

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<sup>98</sup> Stevenson (1964), 13.

<sup>99</sup> Sutherland (1974), 102; Ashton (2003), 12; Donalson (2003), 138 - Dates the coins to a group that were produced between 20 and 10 BC.

<sup>100</sup> Sutherland (1974), 102.

<sup>101</sup> Donalson (2003), 138; Herbert (1996), viii.

## *The Obelisks*

Coinage was not the only medium used by Augustus for propaganda purposes. Monuments and architecture were obtained directly from Egypt to memorialize their domination. Roulet identifies that the Egyptian objects transported to Rome typically fell into three categories: those which were taken at random, those which resided in famous locations, and those with religious or historical significance bearing royal insignia.<sup>102</sup> There were also those objects requiring massive transportation feats, such as the obelisks, or their imitations which were constructed in Rome.<sup>103</sup> The two most significant ones, brought over by Augustus in 10 BC, were placed in the *Circus Maximus* and the *Campus Martius*. Pliny indicates that the obelisk in the *Circus Maximus* stood approximately eighty-five feet in height and was first erected by King Semensperteus (Fig 11).<sup>104</sup> Various 19<sup>th</sup> century historians commented on the origins of this obelisk. Henri Gorringer summarises his findings as follows, “Bonomi considers the obelisk to be that which Pliny mentions as the work of Sesotris; Kircher identifies it with that which Pliny ascribes to Semensperteus; and Zoega calls it an obelisk of Rameses. From the sculptures and inscriptions it appears to have been erected at Heliopolis by Seti I (xix dynasty, BC. 1439-1388, Lepsius.)”<sup>105</sup> Herodotus and Didorus Siculus claim that the name was King Sesostris or Sesothis.<sup>106</sup> Roulet comments that this obelisk made of red granite was located on the eastern end of the *spina* and it

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<sup>102</sup> For the third category, it is likely that these were chosen by Egyptian priests living in Rome. For details on the presence of Egyptian priests in Rome, see Roulet (1972), 17-18.

<sup>103</sup> For a list of monuments created in Rome, see Roulet’s catalogue in *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments in Imperial Rome* (1972), 157.

<sup>104</sup> Pliny *HN*. 36.14 - The king ruled Egypt about 1300 BC at Heliopolis.

<sup>105</sup> The dedicatory sculptures on the north, south and west sides represent Seti I, while those on the east side represent Ramesses II. For a detailed, but slightly dated look at the inscriptions and details of the *Circus Maximus* obelisk, see Gorringer (1889), 130-132.

<sup>106</sup> Herodotus. 2. 102; Didorus Siculus. 1.53; for a detailed analysis on the various names, origins and accomplishments of Sesostris, see Burton (1972), 164-165. There are sixteen various readings to the name Semensperteus; for a brief commentary on Augustus’ obelisks, see Laistner (1921) and Aicher (2004). See also, Ammianus Marcellinus 4.6-23 for a description of the inscription which was on the obelisk in the *Circus Maximus*.

dated to the dynasty of Sethos I and Ramesses II from Heliopolis.<sup>107</sup> The variously named King Semenpser-teus was the most famous of the Egyptian pharaohs having brought prosperity and political stability to Egypt.<sup>108</sup> This obelisk served as a trophy of Augustus' Egyptian takeover and was displayed with obvious visibility.<sup>109</sup> Its placement in the *Circus Maximus*, already an area of worship for Apollo and the Sun, reveals that Augustus may have recognized the original connection of obelisks with the sun and heliopolitan theology by placing it in one of Rome's most important sun-worshipping institutions. A symbol so heavily associated with success, wealth and religion: it is easy to understand why Augustus chose this particular obelisk to represent him in the heart of Rome.

The obelisk which Augustus placed in the *Campus Martius* was first erected by Psammetichus II between 595 and 589 BC. It stood as the *gnomon* for the *Solarium Augusti*, the massive sundial which stood 21.79 meters high (Fig 12).<sup>110</sup> It was made of pink Aswan granite and was centered between Augustus' *Ara Pacis* and Mausoleum.<sup>111</sup> The idea of a colossal sundial may have originated from Egypt itself. The first century writer Josephus in his *Contra Apionem*, quotes a line from Apion's *Aegyptiaca*, "...he speaks as follows. 'I have heard from old Egyptians that Moses was a native of Heliopolis and that he...also set up pillars instead of

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<sup>107</sup> Roulet (1972), 69

<sup>108</sup> Burton (1972), 163.

<sup>109</sup> The *Circus Maximus* had always been associated with the sun cult; Kleiner (2005), 163 - These obelisks decorated the Roman skyline as well as served as a permanent memorial to his subjugation of Egypt.

<sup>110</sup> The exact nature of the obelisk as a sundial to the Romans is described in Pliny *HN*. 36.14-15; A confusion of the obelisks exact origin is noted in Goringe (1889), 133 "Bonomi identifies it with the obelisk that Pliny ascribes to Semensterteus, although it is generally identified with the one he ascribes to Sesostris. Birch ascribes it to Psammetik II (xxvi dynasty, BC 596-591, Lepsius)"; Roulet (1972), 79 describes this obelisk as being located now in the "Piazza di Montecitorio. Red granite. H: 21.79 m. XXVIth Dynasty (Psammetichus II) from Heliopolis. Inscribed"

<sup>111</sup> Pliny *HN*. 36.71-73, 74, 75 – The great mathematician Facundus Novus added a gold ball to the top of the obelisk which gathered a distinctive shadow upon the ground, which otherwise would have been lost with the tapered pyramid on the top.

*gnomons*’ (obelisks) under which was represented a figure in relief like a concave sundial”<sup>112</sup>.

Augustus had essentially become a controller of time and nature; a further indication of his continuing power and authority over Rome. Pliny, who referred to the obelisks as ‘rays of sun’, indicated that both the *Circus Maximus* and *Campus Martius* obelisks were covered in inscriptions which described the operations of Nature according to the philosophy of the Egyptians.<sup>113</sup> Augustus, as a follower of the Cult of Apollo, may have appreciated their association with the sun, making them a suitable trophy of his conquest and as a way to integrate the massive monoliths into the Cult of Apollo. Augustus would later add Latin inscriptions on the base of these monuments honouring the sun, Apollo, and himself as the son of Divius Julius.<sup>114</sup>

IMP – CAESAR – DIVI – F

AVGVSTVS

PONTIFEX MAXIMUS

IMP – XII – COS – XI – TRIB – POT – XIV

AEGYPTO – IN – POTESTATEM

POPULI – ROMANIO – REDACTA

SOLI – DONUM – DEDIT

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<sup>112</sup> (Trans: William Whiston); Wilson (1889), 219-220 - This was the first sundial produced in Egypt, shortly before Ahaz made his sundial in Judaea, 755 BC.

<sup>113</sup> Pliny *HN*. 26.14 – The Egyptian word for obelisk, *tekhen*, also means “ray of sunlight”; the obelisk as a ray of sun is also mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus XVII.4.7. For the nature of the inscriptions upon the obelisk see Gorringe (1889), 130-132.

<sup>114</sup> Originally, the *Circus Maximus* obelisk was partially inscribed by Seti I, but he died before the eastern side was completed; For Budge’s original (though unaccepted) complete translation of the hieroglyphics see Budge (1975), 183-189.

From a commercial point of view, the *Circus Maximus* held between 150,000-260,000 people for games, festivals, and religious events.<sup>115</sup> Augustus certainly recognized the potential to advertise his success and glory in Egypt. Because of the obelisks' monumental size and highly visible Egyptian and Roman texts, they would have been an identifiable symbol of power to both the literate and illiterate of the day. These monumental structures were symbolic of Augustus' Egyptian conquest and represented his acquisition of power both in Rome and in Egypt. They were not only a trophy for Augustus, but a trophy for Rome. Politically, they became a symbol of Augustus' victories. Ammianus Marcellus stated that obelisks were erected for the gods by kings who had attained success in battle or some form of prosperity for their country.<sup>116</sup> He writes, "which kings of long ago, when they had subdued foreign nations in war or were proud of the prosperous condition of their realms, hewed out of the veins of the mountains...set up and in their religious devotion dedicated to the gods of Heaven".<sup>117</sup> Pliny wrote that "[Obelisks]...were made by the kings, to some extent in rivalry with one another".<sup>118</sup> Later Roman emperors, like the pharaohs, would also erect obelisks when they had been successful in war or defeated a foe.<sup>119</sup>

In Egypt, gilded obelisks were called *tekhen*, while pyramidions were called *benben* (mounds), named after the stones associated with the sun god *benu* (a bird or phoenix).<sup>120</sup> This symbolism would have naturally appealed to Augustus who worshipped Rome's equivalent sun god, Apollo. The early obelisks atop the *benben* mounds were small, somewhat like modern tombstones, to mark the location where offerings were to be placed for the deceased. It was during the

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<sup>115</sup> Dionysius. 3; Pliny *HN*. 34. The difference in the numbers is a result of different time periods. Pliny died in 79 AD whereas Dionysius died approximately 7 BC.

<sup>116</sup> Ammianus Marcellus 17.4.6

<sup>117</sup> Ammianus Marcellus 17. 4.6 (Trans: John C. Rolfe).

<sup>118</sup> Pliny *HN*. 34.14.64 (Trans: John Bostock).

<sup>119</sup> Such examples of these emperors include Caligula and Domitian.

<sup>120</sup> D'Alton (1993), 73.

Ptolemaic and Augustan reigns that we see the proliferation of massive sized obelisks, symbolic of success and power which littered Alexandria and Rome.

A spectacular way to assert political supremacy, Augustus' transportation of the obelisks from Egypt to Rome served to place Rome in the same cultural realm as Alexandria, making Rome a more attractive capital city. Augustus now possessed Egypt's land, wealth and culture. Pliny reveals that the transportation of the obelisks incurred much excitement and admiration of Augustus.<sup>121</sup> Later, Augustus' tomb was guarded by two plain red granite obelisks which stood approximately 14 meters high. The uninscribed obelisks were set up in front of the façade of his Mausoleum on the east and west of the entrance.<sup>122</sup> The lack of mention by Pliny or Strabo may indicate that it was an addition to his tomb by a later emperor. The later emperors, like Augustus, may also have regarded the obelisks as a sign of power and a trophy of his conquest of Cleopatra and Egypt.

### *Cleopatra's Needles*

Of the obelisks which Augustus had transported from Egypt, two of them appear to have been associated (by name only) with Cleopatra. The pair were erected by Pharaoh Tuthmosis III in Heliopolis, before one was removed by Augustus, over a thousand years later, and placed at the entrance of the Caesareum in Alexandria.<sup>123</sup> These obelisks which stood 42 cubits in height would later be known as 'Cleopatra's Needles'.

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<sup>121</sup> Pliny *HN*.36.14.

<sup>122</sup> Roullet (1972), 78 describes them both as, "[Located now in the] Piazza del 'Esquilino and Piazza del Quirinale. Red granite. Roman. Uninscribed. Erected with its twin on the north of the façade of the mausoleum of Augustus. Pyramidion was cut away to make room for some kind of ornament."

<sup>123</sup> The Caesareum was first constructed by Cleopatra in honour of either Julius Caesar or Mark Antony. It was later completed and dedicated to Augustus in 13-12 BC. For further debate on the nature of its dedication see: McKenzie (2007), 177.



The term “Cleopatra’s Needles” was coined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD when they were transported to New York and London although they were never directly associated with the queen.<sup>124</sup> Perhaps in Augustus’ time, the obelisks may have been associated with Cleopatra, however their association with a well-known ancient pharaoh was more likely the reason for their removal. If, by chance, the obelisks were associated with Cleopatra the connection would surely not have been lost to Augustus who quickly claimed one of the obelisks as a personal trophy. This acquisition symbolizes one way in which Augustus may have further possessed Cleopatra and Egypt. Augustus used the obelisk as a marker at the Caesareum which was re-dedicated to himself in light of his conquest of Egypt. Egypt abounded in obelisks. They were erected to commemorate significant events, perpetuate reputations, and to hand down glory. In Augustus’ case, the potent Egyptian icons served as a monumental marker of his success and a continuous reminder of his benefit to Rome.

### *Augustus in Egypt*

The use of Egypt and Cleopatra’s imagery was invaluable to express Augustus’ possession of Egyptian land, resources, and culture but Augustus’ own imagery was also developed within Egypt. It may have been Gaius Cornelius Gallus who first placed Augustus’ imagery within Egypt itself. A victory stele erected on Philae (an island on the Nile) in 29 BC shows Augustus’ name inscribed in a cartouche, an honour reserved only for the Egyptian pharaoh. The stele was commissioned by Gallus (the first Roman prefect appointed to Egypt by Augustus after the Battle of Actium) to celebrate the end of Ptolemaic rule.<sup>125</sup> Martina Minas-Nerpel recently re-

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<sup>124</sup> For the inscriptions upon the obelisks as they were found in the late 1800’s see Gorringer (1885), 51.

<sup>125</sup> Dio 51.17.1-3 (Trans: Earnest Cary) - “Afterwards he made Egypt tributary and gave it in charge of Cornelius Gallus. For in view of the populousness of both the cities and the country, the facile, fickle character of the inhabitants, and the extent of the grain-supply and of the wealth, so far from daring to entrust the land to any

translated the stele to reveal the context surrounding Augustus' name on the cartouche.<sup>126</sup> The translation is as follows: "Regnal year one, 4th month of the winter season day 20 (16 April 29 BC) under the majesty the Horus, the perfect child, mighty arm ruler [of rulers] chosen of Ptah Kaisaros (Octavian) living forever...." It is likely that it was not Augustus who insisted on this honour but the Egyptian priests who wished to preserve the stability which the pharaoh maintained. The role of the pharaoh was to maintain order, *Maat*, through carrying out ritual and festivals; otherwise there would be reversion to chaos.<sup>127</sup> Augustus was forced further into the role of pharaoh following the actions of his prefect Gallus. Dio explains that Gallus "was encouraged to insolence by the honour shown him. Thus, he indulged in a great deal of disrespectful gossip about Augustus and was guilty of many reprehensible actions besides; for he not only set up images of himself practically everywhere in Egypt, but also inscribed upon the pyramids a list of his achievements."<sup>128</sup> Gallus was charged by Valerius Largus and exiled by Augustus.<sup>129</sup> Forthwith, Augustus would place in Egypt a succession of short-term prefects.<sup>130</sup>

For the modern observer, Augustus' appearance in Egypt may have seemed contrary to his persona as the champion of traditional Roman values. Through his depictions in Egypt, however, it is clear that Augustus was attempting to prevent chaos due to the absence of a pharaoh. Augustus accomplished this by using tried and true Egyptian visual strategies. He was described in the temple scenes as "beloved of Ptah and Isis" and "beloved of the Osiris Buchis, Great god,

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senator, he would not even grant a senator permission to live in it, except as he personally made the concession to him by name."

<sup>126</sup> Originally the name referred to was thought to be that of Gallus as he was the assigned ruler of Egypt. For the results of this study see Nerpel (2009) 265-98.

<sup>127</sup> Dundas (2002), 444.

<sup>128</sup> Dio (51.23-24)

<sup>129</sup> Rutledge (2001), 67; Dio 53.23.6.

<sup>130</sup> For a list of all of the prefects in Egypt and their roles see Brunt (1973), 142-143 - Aelius Gallus (26-24 BC), Gaius Petronius (24-21 BC), Publius Rubirus Barbarus (12 BC), Gaius Turranius (7-4 BC), Publius Octavius (2-3), Quintus Ostorius Scapula (3-10), Gaius Iulius Aquila (10-11), Lucius Antonius Peto (11-12), Quintus Magnus Maximus (12-14).

Lord of the House of Atum".<sup>131</sup> It is likely that Augustus was largely unconcerned with his image in Egypt. He may very well have let them depict him as was necessary as long as the grain shipments from Alexandria arrived regularly in Rome.

Augustus is most prominently seen on Cleopatra's Temple at Dendera serving numerous functions. On the majority of the reliefs on the temple, he is paying homage to the usual entourage of Egyptian gods; offering an obelisk to gods such as Hu, Horus and Hathor (while ironically in real life Augustus was transporting the obelisks out of Egypt).<sup>132</sup> Augustus also partook in dedication and foundation ceremonies *in absentia*.<sup>133</sup> His name was inscribed on the temple's rear wall near the relief portrait of Caesarion and his mother. To add to this, Augustus assisted in the preservation of the temple by adding walls to the *naos* and completed the construction of a separate, smaller temple to Isis.<sup>134</sup>

Augustus would add his image to another frieze on the rear wall, depicting himself before Isis, Harsomtus, Horus and Hathor; presenting to them mirrors, and small figures of Ma'at and Ihy (Fig 13). This five-frame frieze portrayed the continuing lineage of pharaohs in Egypt establishing Augustus as the emperor in addition to Caesarion. On another relief, Horus is shown being born and nursed in the presence of none other than Augustus in the image of a pharaoh. Augustus was no stranger to manipulating ritual and imagery to appease the masses.<sup>135</sup> For Egypt, the continuation of the pharaoh was crucial to the well-being of their religion and culture,

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<sup>131</sup> See references in Grenier (1989) 14, 22.

<sup>132</sup> It is interesting to note that many of the gods within the Egyptian pantheon were associated with snakes. Augustus may have been depicted as dedicating to one or more of these gods. His mother Atia and the mother of Alexander the Great were both affiliated with snakes.

<sup>133</sup> Kleiner (2005), 192.

<sup>134</sup> Kleiner (2005), 87.

<sup>135</sup> Dundas (2002), 435.

“the continuity between the old power and the new”.<sup>136</sup> Augustus’ acceptance of this position in Egypt and his transferral of their art and architecture served to beautify his capital city as well as establish himself in a powerful position both in Egypt and in Rome.

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<sup>136</sup> Dunand (1983), 53.

## CHAPTER 4

### Integration of Egyptian Cults – The Preservation of a Traditional Religious Core

Augustus further stabilized Rome and legitimized his rule by preserving traditions that were customary to the Roman people. With the changing intellectual climate throughout the Hellenistic period however, Romans began to pursue cults which did not entirely mesh with Roman tradition. The most significant of these cults was that of the Egyptian goddess Isis. Augustus would integrate the Egyptian cults in a way that would preserve Rome's religious center (the *pomerium*) while encouraging the religious pursuits of the Roman people, thereby gaining their further trust and support.

Augustus not only integrated new cults and ideologies into Rome but also addressed the decline of traditional family values and religious practice through his moral reforms. In 18 BC, he passed the Julian Laws and changed the criminal code. The new laws, such as those against adultery, were intended to mitigate the social and civil disorder caused by the cynicism of late Republic, and to encourage long-term stability for the state. Augustus also promoted marriage and child bearing by providing special privileges and rewards.<sup>137</sup> Augustus' social and religious reforms even affected institutions such as the *Pontifex Maximus*. Augustus relinquished part of his private home to serve as the residence of the *Pontifex* and made it available to the public. As for the Vestal Virgins, he created a shrine for them beside his home and placed his wife, Livia, in charge of their sacred duties.<sup>138</sup> Augustus became responsible for the Vestal Virgins who guarded the sacred flame that preserved the existence of the *res publica*. The Vestals represented life and death, stability and chaos for the Roman state. They were also a powerful symbol of the

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<sup>137</sup> *RG*. 8; for an examination of Augustus' moral reforms see Eck (2007), 100-113.

<sup>138</sup> Eck (2007), 74, 139.

integrity of the State, which was synonymized with the chastity of their bodies.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that Augustus took responsibility for the Vestal's cult by incorporating their new shrine into his residence on the Palatine. In this way, the emperor identified his home with the renewal of Rome and the prosperity of his empire. Livia's involvement implied that she also had a role in the protection of the Roman State. Augustus would also restore old temples in hopes of bringing people back to the worship of the traditional Roman gods. In honour of his uncle, Divine Julius was added to the list of Roman gods which made Augustus the official son of a god. Augustus assisted in the rejuvenation of traditional religious practice. The next step was to address the masses that secretly supported and practiced Egyptian cults in Rome.

The Egyptians had a level of stability and respect for the gods which did not exist in the war-torn Rome of the first century BC. Republican Rome had been torn by continuous wars, financial and political strife, and leaders who drove the city into violent civic conflicts.<sup>140</sup> Traditional religious practices encompassed morality and sacred duties towards the gods involving prayers, vows, oaths and sacrifices. The *paterfamilias* acted as the *Pontifex Maximus* of the home and his daughters served as its Vestal Virgins. The gods were communicated with intimately; they responded to human appeals and provided rewards in life rather than in death. The traditional Roman afterlife, however, offered little beyond a gloomy residence with one's spirit placed in a semi-conscious and emotionless state.<sup>141</sup> For many people, traditional religion sufficed for their daily needs but the proliferation of foreign cults may have served as an exotic and exciting

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<sup>139</sup> A. Staples (1998), 147; for a discussion on the controversial nature of the sexuality of the Vestal Virgins see, M. Beard (1980), 12-27.

<sup>140</sup> Tacitus *Ann.* 3.28 - Augustus justified the benefits of his sole-rule as a means to relieve Rome from its twenty years of continuous strife and lack of customs and laws.

<sup>141</sup> Beard, North and Price (1998) - appeal of foreign cults 278-291, actions associated with Roman religion 42, Vestal Virgins 52-54, afterlife 289.

alternative; a means by which to escape from daily drudgery and chaos of war.<sup>142</sup> The popularity of these cults may have inspired Augustus to control their practice in Rome (restricted from the *pomerium*) while still providing a welcome environment: an action which was appealing to both worshippers of traditional Roman religion and those who practiced Egyptian cults.

The most predominant of the Egyptian cults which were introduced to Rome were not surprisingly those of Isis and Serapis. Ptolemy Soter I had ‘modernized’ the cults, leaving only the most attractive elements which appealed to the cultures outside of Egypt.<sup>143</sup> Isis worship had transitioned into Rome through the international trading island of Delos in the second century BC. The tiny island was invaluable to Rome as it served as a free port with thousands of slaves and goods being transported daily.<sup>144</sup> Egyptian culture and Egyptianizing motifs became popular on Delos and were transported to Rome through the trafficking of slaves and products.<sup>145</sup> The increased ease of communication through water transport and the development and improvement of roads further disseminated the faiths on commercial and social currents. Despite a few setbacks, the Egyptian cults would last in Rome for another four centuries, all the way down to the emperor Julian. Isis was the perfect foreign goddess for the Romans as she symbolized syncretism and universality, integrating herself flawlessly into the melting pot of Roman beliefs.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Wardman (1982), 36.

<sup>143</sup> Turcan (1996), 76-77- Ptolemy I assimilated the Egyptian Osiris to the Greek Hades/Pluto in order to set up a god whom both Egyptians and Greeks could both worship. This includes the creation of a new Egyptian god, Serapis, who had the features of Osiris but was in human rather than animal form (Pausanias 1, 18, 4). Serapis had a Greek appearance but Egyptian characteristics. The earliest mention of Serapis is found in Arrian *Anabasis*, VII. 26.

<sup>144</sup> The significant nature of Delos in regards to slaves is stressed heavily in Huzar (1962), 169-178 as well as in Livy 33.30, Polybius 30.29; 31.7 and Strabo 10.5.4; 14.5.2

<sup>145</sup> Turcan (1996), 82-85.

<sup>146</sup> Beard, North and Price (1998), 280 - Isis was easily incorporated and was worshipped under many names such as Venus, Minerva and Magna Mater; Godwin (1981), 123.

As devotion to the foreign cults increased during the Late Republic, the senate attempted to alter and abolish their exotic elements to suit traditional Roman customs. The Isis cult was suppressed no less than five times, most notably in 59, 58, 53 and 48 BC, when the senate ordered that her altars and statues be torn down.<sup>147</sup> In the years after 58 BC, the senate had prohibited Isis, Serapis, Harpocrates and Anubis altogether from the capital and their altars were destroyed. In 53 BC, according to Dio (40.47), the shrines of Isis and Serapis which had been built by private expense were again torn down. The frequent re-building and destruction of the shrines by senatorial action in the 50's BC reveal that the popularity of the Egyptian cults was reaching its peak during this time. Therefore, the actions of the senate may have been a drastic method to reassert their authority against the popularity of foreign religion.

To control the situation, in 28 BC Augustus permitted the worship of the Egyptian cults to legally occur in Rome as long as they remained outside of the *pomerium*.<sup>148</sup> Following this action, he began the restoration of Egyptian temples in Rome which had been built by private individuals; ordering their sons and descendants to repair some of them and restoring the rest himself.<sup>149</sup> Augustus' preservation of the Egyptian temples suggests that he wished to appeal to the worshippers of the Egyptian cults. Augustus portrayed himself as both the protector of Rome and as a welcome host to foreign cults; an image which worked well to help unify the

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<sup>147</sup> Seeck (1908), 642; Turcan (1996), 86-87.

<sup>148</sup> Augustus' banning of the Egyptian cults is further discussed in Le Glay (2005), 122; Dio. 54.6.6 - In 21 BC, while Augustus was in Sicily, his general Agrippa was necessitated to drive the Egyptian cults from the *pomerium* "which were again invading the city"; Turcan (1996), 88 - During this time, the cults were banned from the suburbs within a radius of 1.3 km of the *Urbs*

<sup>149</sup> Dio 53.2.4. Augustus did not, however, erect new Egyptian temples in Rome.



worshippers of both traditional Roman religion and those who worshipped the Egyptian cults under one ruler.<sup>150</sup>

As previously mentioned, the *pomerium* was the heart of Roman religious practice. Furrowed out during the time of Romulus, it outlined the border of the city. Tacitus remarks that the *pomerium* ran from the Forum Boarium to the Palatine and the Roman Forum. By the end of the regal period, it had encompassed the “*Regiones quattuor*: Suburana, Esquilina, Collina and Palatina”.<sup>151</sup> The *pomerium* served many roles: civic auspices were taken within its boundaries, the *imperium* of military commanders was at its strongest at its borders and burials were forbidden within it.<sup>152</sup> Most importantly, the *pomerium* was a *religious* boundary.<sup>153</sup> Foreign cults were forbidden within its boundaries (with the exception of Apollo and Magna Mater).<sup>154</sup> The cults were free however, to practise in other parts of the city as well as the plebeian districts.<sup>155</sup>

The Romans were well-known for their openness towards foreign religion as a means of assimilating cultures while preserving their traditional practices. Many Roman practices originated from outside of Rome: The *sella curulis*, haruspices, and fasces came from Etruria; and many cults and festivals came from Sicily, Greece, and Asia Minor.<sup>156</sup> For Augustus to focus

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<sup>150</sup> Rome traditionally conquered foreign peoples through integration rather than domination.

<sup>151</sup> Tacitus *Annals*. XII. 23-4; Favro (1992), 67.

<sup>152</sup> On the *pomerium* see Beard, North and Price (1998), 180.

<sup>153</sup> Galinsky (1996), 215.

<sup>154</sup> Beard (1994), 168 - Rome officially adopted Cybele, known as Magna Mater around 205/204 BC. The Romans were alarmed by a number of meteor showers during the Second Punic War. Having consulted the Sibylline Books, they decided to introduce the cult of the Great Mother of Ida (Magna Mater Idaea, also known as Cybele) to the city. Their ally Attalus I (241-197 BC), instructed them to go to Pessinus and bring back the goddess' most important symbol, a large black stone that was said to have fallen from the sky (Livy 10.4-11.18). The Romans claimed her conscription as a key religious component in their success against Carthage during the second Punic War (218 to 201 BCE). Castor and Pollux may also be added to this list of exceptions, see footnote 158.

<sup>155</sup> Orlin (2008), 235.

<sup>156</sup> Orlin (2008), 243.

on what was purely Roman was impossible. This may be why he concentrated on a physical boundary to indicate what was considered 'Roman'. Smith has suggested that "a key component to renewing group self-identity is allowing for religious reform, and even the incorporation of ostensibly foreign elements, while still maintaining well-defined boundaries."<sup>157</sup> Augustus maintained the façade of a traditional Rome by protecting Rome's 'core'.<sup>158</sup> This is reminiscent of his vision to re-establish traditional values and morals in the city while welcoming Egyptian culture to gain further support of the masses and continue the legitimization of his reign.<sup>159</sup>

### *Origins of the Imperial Cult*

The imperial cult in Rome may have been inspired in part by the ruler and dynastic cults of Hellenistic tradition as modelled by the Ptolemies who institutionalized the dedication of cults to their rulers.<sup>160</sup> The cause for the spread of ruler worship was the changing religious outlook which characterized the post-Classical and early Hellenistic period. Individualism escalated and living men received honours which were traditionally reserved for mythological or historical figures: founders of cities, war-heroes, athletes, philanthropists and law-givers.<sup>161</sup> Such honours included altars, sacrifices, images, temples, priests, epithets, games, processions, festivals and

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<sup>157</sup> Smith (1986), 119-125.

<sup>158</sup> Vitruvius discussed the locations of temples for a variety of cults such as Magna Mater, Castor and Pollux and Venus Erycina never mentioning the *pomerium* as a limitation to their positions (*De. Arch.* 1.7.1). This raises suspicion as to why the Egyptian cults received such concern whereas others remained relatively unnoticed.

<sup>159</sup> On "invented traditions" as a means of creating a sense of identity, see Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). From their introduction (4): "we should expect it [the invention of tradition] to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed." They also (6) remark on "the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes."

<sup>160</sup> Fishwick (1987), 6.

<sup>161</sup> Such examples of these honours are seen with Dion of Syracuse who was paid honours in his lifetime by the Syracusan assembly who referred to him as a 'saviour and god' (Plutarch *Dionysius.* 46, 1) or 'as a god' (29, 2). Examples of founders of cities were Miltiades in the Chersonese (Herodotus 6, 38), Brasidas in Amphipolis (Thucydides 5, 11). Examples of tyrant slayers were Harmodius and Aristogeiton (Demosthenes. 19, 280). An example of an athlete was Theagenes (Pausanias 6, 8, 11). For further detail on the beginnings of the heroic cults see Fishwick (1987), 3-5.

anniversaries. They were given to men in gratitude for actions which had provided benefits for the city and were awarded titles such as founder (κτίστης), benefactor (εὐεργέτης) or saviour (σωτήρ).<sup>162</sup> There was an increasing scepticism towards the gods and an augmentation of humans to a more divine status. Plato held that the gods could not be trusted to ensure the safety of people since they were open to bribery.<sup>163</sup> The augmentation of a human's divine status was most evident within the world of Alexander the Great and his successors. The key event in the genesis of a ruler cult was Alexander's address to the oracle in the oasis of Siwa in January of 331 BC. Alexander was recognized as the son of Ammon who was also associated with Zeus.<sup>164</sup> This recognition made a great impression upon the Greek cities who granted him *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί*, 'honours equal to those given to the gods', one of the first major occurrences of such an honour given to a living man.<sup>165</sup>

Alexander's divine status is reflected in numerous sources including Aelian's commentary on the aftermath of Alexander's defeat of the Persians during the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC. He reported the Spartans to have said, "Since Alexander wishes to be a god, let him be a god."<sup>166</sup> Later on, Aelian mentions Anaxarchus who had "laughed at Alexander for making himself a

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<sup>162</sup> Fishwick (1987), 11.

<sup>163</sup> Plato *Rep.* 2. 365(D)-366; *Laws.* 10.

<sup>164</sup> The exact reason for Alexander's trek to Siwa is unclear. It has been thought to be a result of his desire to emulate Hercules and Perseus (Arr. 3.3.2), to seek clarification of his divine origins (Fredricksmeier (1990), 310), to disown Philip as his father (Plutarch *Alex.* 50) or for military and political purposes (Robinson (1943), 286). Ancient sources have different views on the message which Alexander received in terms of his relation to Ammon: Arrian (1.30) recounts that Alexander asked for a sign of his relation to Ammon from which he had a vision of Ammon embracing his mother. Strabo (17.814) suggests that Alexander had gone to see the oracle at Siwa because Perseus and Heracles had done so before him. The oracle told Alexander that he was the son of Zeus (frequently associated with Ammon). Plutarch *Alex.* 27.2.5, says that the prophet of Ammon had welcomed Alexander like a father to his son on behalf of Ammon, and from that point Alexander considered himself to be his son.

<sup>165</sup> Fishwick (1987), 21; Hölbl (2001), 92-93 – Alexander was not the first living man to receive such honours by the Greeks, others included Lysander in Samos, King Amyntas in Pydna and Phillip II in Amphipolis. For a full discussion of *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί* see Fishwick (1987), 21-31.

<sup>166</sup> Aelian *Varia Historia.* 2.19. (Trans: Thomas Stanley)

god”.<sup>167</sup> Even Demosthenes supported the claim that Alexander wished to be identified as the son of Zeus-Ammon.<sup>168</sup> The combination of Alexander’s ambition for divinity, his persona as the son of Ammon, and the Greek idea of *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί* created a powerful scenario for Alexander; one in which he was able to be worshiped as a god.

The attachment of these origins to Alexander was nothing new for the Egyptians as every king of Egypt had been traditionally defined as the son of Ammon. But it certainly pushed forward the idea of a living god-king and would anticipate the ruler cults of the Hellenistic period.<sup>169</sup> From a political point of view, the granting of *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί* was a way for a city to honour its ruler for upholding the existence of the state and assuring its protection.<sup>170</sup> According to Fishwick, these honours spread so rapidly that it became an expected, even ‘unavoidable’, means of paying respect.<sup>171</sup> A few years later, the Greeks would honour Antigonos and his son Demetrius for their protection against the regime of Demetrius of Phaleron. For their deeds they were elevated to the status of saviour-gods (*θεοὶ σωτῆρες*).<sup>172</sup> In this way, the early Hellenistic period shaped the idea of the connection between kingship and the ruler cult: the establishment of a cult was the only way in which a city could express its gratitude for the successes of the ruler. This honour would have otherwise been attributed to the gods.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Aelian *Varia Historia* 9. 37. (Trans: Thomas Stanley)

<sup>168</sup> Demosthenes is reported by Hyperides to have said, “Let him be the son of Zeus and of Poseidon too if he wishes” Athenaeus 12. 537-538. Later in the work, Ehippus says that "Alexander used to wear even the sacred vestments at his banquets; and sometimes he would wear the purple robe, and slit sandals, and horns of Ammon, as if he had been the god” Athenaeus 12. 53. (Trans: C.D. Yonge).

<sup>169</sup> Fishwick (1987), 11.

<sup>170</sup> Bowersock (1965), 112.

<sup>171</sup> Fishwick (1987), 11.

<sup>172</sup> Plutarch *Dem.* 10.3-4.

<sup>173</sup> Hölbl (2001), 93

The Ptolemies created the dynastic cult of Alexander as a way to stress their relationship with him, in the same way that Augustus would deify Julius Caesar to attach himself to a god.<sup>174</sup> But Augustus carefully positioned himself alongside Dea Roma, in order to avoid a ruler cult specifically in his honour at this stage of his career.<sup>175</sup> For the Romans, rulers who had been given special grants of *imperium* were treated much in the same way as Hellenistic rulers. Divine honours had become a conventional way of showing appreciation for rulers who were seen as deliverers. The ‘worship’ of these Roman rulers therefore, may be seen as a continuation of the cult of *euergetes*.<sup>176</sup> Fishwick suggests that Hellenistic honours, cults, titles and dedications were given to Roman rulers as early as the time of C. Marcellus.<sup>177</sup> There is sufficient evidence that fundamental aspects of the Hellenistic god-king were being assumed by the Romans. This opened the doors for Augustus to bridge the gap between the Hellenistic ruler and dynastic cults to the Roman imperial cult. This would be accomplished through Augustus’ association with the Republican deity Roma. Like a Hellenistic ruler, Roma was given altars, priests, temples, festivals, sacrifices, months and hymns, the full range of *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί*. As Roma was a deity, Augustus could attach himself to her and be worshipped indirectly.<sup>178</sup> Dea Roma would become the embodiment of Imperial Rome.

There are passages in Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Georgics* that suggest Augustus’ progression towards becoming a religious leader. In the second paragraph of the first Eclogue, Virgil refers to Augustus as ‘a god’ and one to whom he will offer a sacrifice.<sup>179</sup> Later in the piece, Virgil

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<sup>174</sup> For a discussion on the ways in which Ptolemy I associated to Alexander’s divinity and the evolution of the ruler cult see Hölbl (2001), 93-95.

<sup>175</sup> Fishwick (1987), 72.

<sup>176</sup> Fishwick (1987), 46.

<sup>177</sup> Fishwick (1987), 46-48. This honour may have been given to Marcellus in the form of *spolia opima*, for killing the Gallic king Viridomarus in 222 BC at the battle of Clastidium.

<sup>178</sup> For a full explanation of Augustus’ associations with Roma, see Fishwick (1987), 125-130.

<sup>179</sup> Virgil *Eclogue*.1.6-8, 40-41.

stresses Augustus' youth, an attribute of a deity.<sup>180</sup> Virgil's *Georgics*, however, suggest that apotheosis lay in the future for Augustus rather than in the present.<sup>181</sup> This conservatism may have reflected Augustus' political decision at the time to refuse the office of the *Pontifex Maximus*.<sup>182</sup> Even so, Virgil ends by encouraging Augustus to expect to be called upon in people's vows.<sup>183</sup> Augustus' reluctance to have temples erected on his behalf may have been based on his fear of opposition from the Roman people. Instead, Augustus accepted the construction of a temple to Dea Roma in Pergamon (29 BC) where he was worshipped alongside her as a *synnaos theos*.<sup>184</sup> Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, like the *Aeneid*, also references Augustus as a religious ruler. This is most evident in Book 1 and Book 15 where the gods, particularly Venus, are interacting directly with Julius Caesar.<sup>185</sup> Through Ovid, it may be interpreted that Augustus was seen as intimately related with the Gods. Although Augustus could not be considered a god himself, it was still acceptable to worship him through the providing of honours.

Augustus himself received *ἰσόθεοι τιμαί* from the Greeks soon after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. These honours included state festivals celebrating his birth, major events of his career, his victories, and his Julian patrimony.<sup>186</sup> In Athens, the epithet *soter* was awarded to him for his liberation of the Greeks. Epithets like *euergetes* and *soter*, although not a permanent part of a rulers' title, were given to those who had provided concrete benefits to the city.<sup>187</sup> Other honours

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<sup>180</sup> Virgil *Eclogue* 1.41.

<sup>181</sup> Virgil *Georgics* 1. 24-25.

<sup>182</sup> Augustus allowed Lepidus to hold the position until his death in 12 BC; an action that would have satisfied Roman custom and pleased the citizenry.

<sup>183</sup> Virgil *Georgics* 1.42.

<sup>184</sup> Erskine (2005), 443.

<sup>185</sup> Ovid *Metamorphosis* 1. 199-243, 553-567; 15.843-870.

<sup>186</sup> Fishwick (1987), 84 refers to the term "Kaiserfest" in reference to Augustus' birthday; Even the name 'Augustus' has divine characteristics without labelling him as divine. Garnsey and Saller (1988), 165. - The Greeks also erected altars for Augustus.

<sup>187</sup> Fishwick (1987), 27.

included tribes and months named after him as well as games which were organized in a manner reminiscent of the cult given to the Ptolemies.<sup>188</sup>

In Rome, the senate decreed that an offering of wine be made to Augustus' *genius* at all banquets public and private.<sup>189</sup> This endowment began the intrusion of the *Genius Augusti* into private cult.<sup>190</sup> In addition, Augustus himself promoted the abstractions that emphasized his personal qualities. Fishwick explores the nature of these abstractions which included, "*Victoria Augusta*, a key element in imperial ideology; *Pax Augusta*, the personification of the peace brought by submission to Roman imperialism; *Concordia Augusta*, harmony with the imperial family...also *Augustan Salus*, *Fortuna* and *Felicitas*...and *Numen*".<sup>191</sup> The ruler cult became an instrument for communication between ruler and citizenry and for the legitimation of his monarchical power.<sup>192</sup>

The new religious and intellectual climate in Rome combined with the integration of Hellenistic ruler cults, Ptolemaic practices, and Egyptian cults, may have been some of the influences which encouraged Augustus to pursue the persona of a religious leader. There had not however, been much trace of a belief in the "divinity" of a ruler, living or dead, in Roman tradition, contrary to the centuries-old Hellenistic tradition of divine honours for kings, pharaohs and governors.<sup>193</sup> Augustus opened the doors for a traditional Roman imperial cult to begin. In

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<sup>188</sup> Erskine (2005), 443.

<sup>189</sup> Fishwick (1987), 84 – The offering appears to have been obligatory to all classes and likely fostered loyalty at every level of society.

<sup>190</sup> Fishwick (1969), 356 - In 14-12 BC, Augustus' *genius* was officially honoured along with the *Lares Augusti*. Traditionally, cult was paid to the *genius* of the *paterfamilias*.

<sup>191</sup> See Fishwick (1987), 86 for a detailed analysis of Augustus' abstractions. *Numen* referred to the divine power of a living emperor. It was a way of worshipping a living emperor without literally calling him a god.

<sup>192</sup> Erskine (2005), 442.

<sup>193</sup> Hölbl (2001) 75, 91- An Egyptian king was considered to be the earthly manifestation of Horus. The pharaohs' role was to prevent chaos by performing sacred rituals which would maintain *Maat*. After the reign of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies were recognized as saviours, protectors, and guarantors of financial and economic growth. Such qualities were expressed in epithets such as *Euergetes* and *Soter*.

Rome, the lower orders were permitted to worship him at the *Lares Compitales*, renaming it the *Lares Augusti*.<sup>194</sup> Augustus, as a religious ruler, consolidated the young empire by fostering a sense of belonging, reaffirming a sense of structure and unity. Although the Roman citizenry and the senate were still suspicious of dictatorships, Augustus may have been seen less as a dictator and more as a sole-ruler who was dedicated to the well-being of his empire. Dictatorships were reserved for economic or social emergencies for a period of six months or less but were often abused.<sup>195</sup> Dictators in the Roman Republic were considered a ‘temporary tyranny by consent’ but many became corrupt by forcibly placing themselves in more permanent positions.<sup>196</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Appian of Alexandria debated the benefits of a Dictatorship to preserve constitutional order.<sup>197</sup> In 44 BC, Mark Antony developed a law concerning the abolishment of dictatorships called the *Lex Antonia de dictatura in perpetuum tollenda*.<sup>198</sup> Roman politicians were forced to walk a fine line when it came to a dictatorship so as not to upset the citizens who were not prepared to have another Tarquinius Superbus on their hands.<sup>199</sup> Dictatorships would sometimes turn tyrannical. Polybius believed that tyranny represented the worst of monarchy; a deviation from the lawful and a fall into pleasure and passions which were lawless.<sup>200</sup> Augustus attempted to minimize such behaviours, even denying the offer of Dictator

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<sup>194</sup> Jones (1970), 150.

<sup>195</sup> Kalyvas (1973), 172-175: Some men were appointed for emergencies during war (*rei gerundae causa*) such as: L. Quinctius Cincinnatus in 458 BC and M. Furius Camillus in 396, 390, 389 and 367. Others, for civil disturbances, (*seditionis sedandae causa*) Furius Camillus in 368 and Q. Hortensius in 287. Dictators were also appointed to hold elections when a consul was not available (*comitiorum habendorum*). Other positions include: the investigation of secret conspiracies (*quaestio extraordinaria*), or to appease the gods to win their favour.

<sup>196</sup> Kalyvas (2007), 413-414.

<sup>197</sup> Dionysius *Roman Antiquities*. 5. 50-77; Appian *Roman History* 1. 98-115.

<sup>198</sup> Williamson (2005), 471;

<sup>199</sup> There were 85 recorded Dictatorships from 501 to 202 BC before such popular men as L. Cornelius Sulla (*Dictator legibus scribendis et rei publicae Constituendae*) and Julius Caesar (*Dictator Perpetuus*).

<sup>200</sup> Polybius 6.7; Dio 4.13 referred to both dictatorship and a tyranny as a “love for monarchy” (ἔρωτα μοναρχίας). The most poignant examples of this deviation occurred with Sulla (82-79 BC) and Caesar (49, 48-47, 46-45, 45-44 BC). Both of these men caused a series of disruptive and violent civic conflicts.



when the position was rekindled and offered to him in 22 BC.<sup>201</sup> Instead, Augustus would maintain a level of authority while being respectful, minimalistic, and free of autocracy. This honourable authority would gain Augustus the trust and support required to develop the imperial cult in Rome.

The imperial cult was easily established in the religious centers of cities across the empire as Augustus was considered the son of the deified Caesar as well as that of Apollo.<sup>202</sup> This association connected him to the worship of the Sun which was already popular in Rome and Egypt. It allowed the citizenry to worship the deceased ruler (Caesar and later Augustus) as a god while remaining in the realm of traditional religion. From the time of Sulla, Apollo's symbols had appeared on Roman coinage (cithara, tripod, sibyl) to represent a prosperous future for the Republic.<sup>203</sup> It was when Antony left for Egypt as *Neos Dionysus* that Augustus (then Octavian) placed his full faith in Dionysus' counterpart, Apollo. Augustus would associate himself with the sun god Apollo during various times throughout his reign, notably upon his seal ring.<sup>204</sup> His early seal ring depicted the image of a female (rather than male) sphinx which may have represented the symbol of his *regnum Apollonis* that was prophesied by the Sibylline Books.<sup>205</sup> The sphinx was also found on the seal ring of his mother (Fig 16).<sup>206</sup> Augustus

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<sup>201</sup> *RG.* 1.5.

<sup>202</sup> Suetonius *Aug.* 94

<sup>203</sup> Zanker (1988), 49.

<sup>204</sup> Suetonius *Aug.* 70.1 mentions Augustus who appears unexpectedly in the guise of Apollo while Livia that of Juno, possibly celebrating their wedding.

<sup>205</sup> Pliny *HN.* 37.1.10; Suetonius *Aug.* 50; Zanker (1988), 49; Galinsky (1996), 162 – The sphinxes alluded to the prophesies in the Sibylline Books which predicted the peaceful reign of Apollo during Augustus time, it is important to note however that the books were edited at Augustus' bidding during his reign.

<sup>206</sup> Pliny *HN.* 37.4.8-10 - The sphinx had two meanings based on whether it was Greek or Egyptian. The Egyptian version was male and served as a benevolent guardian of temples. In contrast, the Greek/Macedonian version, typically female, was merciless and deadly. Perhaps the ring served as a protective force for Augustus and a harmful one to his enemies.

marked Apollo as his birth father and continued this relationship with Apollo through his military and political career.<sup>207</sup>

As previously mentioned, in the 30's BC, Augustus had planned to move from his home near the *Forum Romanum* to another location on the Palatine. Soon after lightning struck the property, to which Augustus responded by dedicating a temple to Apollo there, establishing it as the permanent residence of the *Pontifex Maximus* and making it available to the public.<sup>208</sup> The citizenry so admired his actions that a new residence was constructed for Augustus at public expense.<sup>209</sup> From this point Apollo was permitted to be worshipped within the *pomerium*.<sup>210</sup> This connection between house and temple was dangerously close to Ptolemaic residences (particularly those at Alexandria) where the king and god resided together. To downplay this monarchical association, the exterior of Augustus' house may have been purposefully modest. Augustus removed himself from the typical characteristics of ruler and dynastic worship while performing admirable religious actions which impressed the citizenry of Rome who would worship him as an imperial leader.

The changing religious climate of the Hellenistic period prompted the Roman citizenry to pursue practices which were outside of traditional Roman religious customs. Egyptian cults served as an exotic and exciting means to escape from war and the toils of daily life. The cults' popularity continued even after Augustus had provided Rome with stability. By legalizing the cults' practice outside of the *pomerium* Augustus gained popularity and political prestige from

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<sup>207</sup> For an extensive look on the nature of Augustus and Apollo and the contrast to Antony and Dionysus see Zanker (1988), 49-67.

<sup>208</sup> Suetonius *Aug.* 29 interpreted the lightning strike as a divine message from Apollo himself.

<sup>209</sup> Dio.49.15.5; Vell.Pat.2.81.

<sup>210</sup> For a further discussion into Augustus relationship with Apollo see Favro (1996), 100; Galinsky (1996), 215-216; Gosling (1986), 586-589 – Gosling stresses that Augustus' excessive use of Apollo in his propaganda was due to the fact that Apollo was a god of the Julian family and that Augustus' birthday fell upon the *ludi Apollinares*.

worshippers of both the traditional and foreign cults. The successful integration of the Egyptian cult into Rome and the religious climate may have encouraged Augustus to explore the concept of becoming a religious leader himself. Although he was reluctant to allow people to see him as divine, the concept of a religious leader had the benefit of unifying the people under the worship of one leader. The fact that he had already received *ισόθιοι τιμαί* from the Greeks after the Battle of Actium suggests that the people appreciated his efforts during the war. Since that time, Augustus had put in continuous effort to gain the trust and backing of the Roman people in support of his continued power and authority. In addition, his integration of the Egyptian cults in Rome suggested that he was welcoming of differing cultural practices, an attitude which likely appealed to the masses. Ultimately, the successful integration of Egyptian cults, the Hellenistic ruler and dynastic cults (as modelled by the Ptolemies), and the intellectual environment of the Hellenistic period encouraged Augustus to explore the concept of becoming a religious leader in order to create a sense of unification under one ruler. By building this persona as a religious leader, Augustus further enhanced his authority in Rome.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Spread of Egyptian Motifs in the Private Sphere

Augustus utilized Egyptian art and culture as a means to bolster himself politically. The Roman people were inundated with Egyptian ideas, religion, and culture which became appreciated by all levels of society. Even Augustus' own family and friends utilized Egyptian motifs as a means of promoting their own self-image.

In the Palatine home of Augustus' wife Livia, many Egyptian motifs such as crowns and solar disks reveal a similar design to those of Cleopatra's temple at Dendera.<sup>211</sup> The motifs of Livia's home seem to have had as Kleiner puts it "a resonance for their patrons that went beyond fashion".<sup>212</sup> Livia, like Cleopatra before her, had inherited the wealth and prestige of Egypt. Yet a level of caution is apparent in her display of the motifs. Livia had two villas: one on the Palatine Hill and another at Prima Porta. The decorations of both villas are a transition between the Second and Third Pompeian Styles complete with garden scenes and fruit-laden trees and baskets.<sup>213</sup> The themes found in both villa's are symbolic of the richness and fertility of the Augustan era which was provided by Egypt (Fig 22 & 23).<sup>214</sup>

Livia, although dissimilar to Cleopatra in manner, may have looked towards her career for guidance as she was one of few formidable women to gain power in a man's world. Roman matrons enjoyed a great deal of respect and authority but lacked the political power of the Hellenistic queens. It is plausible that Livia may have combined Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman

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<sup>211</sup> Balch (2008), 76.

<sup>212</sup> Kleiner (2005), 173.

<sup>213</sup> Ramage (2009), 139.

<sup>214</sup> Ramage (2009), 139-140.

elements to create her image and public persona.<sup>215</sup> It was Livia, more than Julia or Octavia, who succeeded Cleopatra, and replaced her on Egyptian coins. Although Augustus may not have consciously acknowledged Livia as ‘replacing’ Cleopatra, her appearance upon Alexandrian coins between 1-5 AD mimicked the style of the Ptolemaic kings and queens (Fig 21).<sup>216</sup>

In terms of her public appearance, Cleopatra vividly demonstrated that a woman in the public eye had the ability to create her own persona. Livia sought to become the symbol of Roman womanhood, pursuing the feminine ideas of modesty, temperance, and faithfulness. By having two children of her own and adopting two others with Augustus, she was presented to the Roman people as the ideal mother of Augustus’ marriage and social legislation.<sup>217</sup> Flory indicates that Livia acquired substantial honours which were more reminiscent of Hellenistic queens than of Roman matrons. These honours included: becoming *Augusta* after the death of her husband, sponsoring buildings and temples, having public statues dedicated to her, having the *Ara Pacis Augustae* dedicated to her by Augustus on her birthday, and receiving freedom from *tutela* (she could administer her own property) and sacrosanctity.<sup>218</sup> None of these honours, however, gave her the political power that Hellenistic queens enjoyed.<sup>219</sup> Cleopatra, for example, was depicted as the ruler and legitimate heir of the authority and political power of her father, Ptolemy XII. Furthermore, she was associated with the Egyptian and Olympian goddesses Isis and Aphrodite, and worshipped as a goddess in her own right.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> For the conditions of Livia’s precarious position during Augustus’ reign and her influences from Cleopatra see Kleiner (2005), 252-260.

<sup>216</sup> Kleiner (2005), 252 – Livia never had portrait coins in Rome.

<sup>217</sup> Kleiner (2005), 252; Livia’s persona as a dutiful wife did not prevent her from pursuing political power. In 35 BC, Livia received her first official marks of status, the right to manage her own affairs without a guardian and a grant of *sacrosanctitas*; Dio 49.38.1; 55.2.5-6. - The privileges given Livia in 35 were also bestowed on Augustus’ sister Octavia, who was married to Mark Antony at the time; Flory (1993), 292- 294, 298.

<sup>218</sup> Flory (1993), 287-308; Flory (1996), 298-299.

<sup>219</sup> J. Seibert (1967), 138.

<sup>220</sup> M. Wyke (1992), 101-103.

Livia however, was associated with the goddess Ceres/Demeter. Rose identifies the images of Livia, Antonia Minor, Livilla, Agrippina I, Drusilla, Messalina, and Agrippina II to have had their sculpture represent them holding wheat stalks, poppies or the cornucopia, surrounded by various fruits and wheat.<sup>221</sup> The attributes of Demeter/Ceres were used for various political purposes such as symbols of agricultural fertility, chastity, and motherhood; ideals which were promoted by Augustus. Livia's association with Ceres suited dynastic imperial propaganda. It allowed her to assimilate the goddess' attributes as a 'provider' for the empire, particularly in terms of descendants. Spaeth suggests that *Ceres Mater* became the link between Livia's son, as the new emperor, to his ancestors. Therefore, she secured the legitimization of the emperor's throne.<sup>222</sup> Livia, may be seen as developing a new political language which enabled her to gain significant honours and privileges in order to further legitimize Augustus' authority in Rome. In this way, Livia assisted in paving the way toward the acceptance of a hereditary system of political power.<sup>223</sup> Arguably Livia's contemporaries and future emperors used her image to legitimize their own throne. Livia became the personification of the virtues that Augustus wanted to promote. Therefore, although Hellenistic influences may be seen within Livia's reign, her primary intention was to represent the figure of a traditional Roman matron working within the traditional Roman system.

Most of the Egyptian works found in Roman social circles were not political in nature rather, they represented fashion and luxury, a rare indulgence for the Romans. These Egyptian works included pyramids, obelisks, sphinxes, lions and animal-headed gods.<sup>224</sup> Augustus' integration of

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<sup>221</sup> Rose (1997), 88-89, 100-175.

<sup>222</sup> Spaeth (1996), 121-122.

<sup>223</sup> Kleiner & Matheson (2000), 29-42.

<sup>224</sup> Kleiner (2005), 168; Rouillet (1974), in her catalogue of imported Egyptian works during the Imperial period, comes up with a similar list, adding "the puzzling ex-votos" while leaving out pyramids because they were not actually imported into Rome but rather built in smaller forms there. Although many antiquities were taken from

his own enormous monoliths turned the heads of many of Rome's elite, resulting in commissions of buildings and paintings with Egyptianizing flavour which heavily outweighed the number of Egyptian originals found in Rome. They had less to do with political ambition and more to do with being *en vogue*.<sup>225</sup> Artistic competition continued during the Empire as it had in the Republic, resulting in countless Egyptianizing motifs appearing in non-political contexts. The contexts for these Egyptianizing pieces varied from cemeteries and circuses to villas, houses, and gardens. For example, the aristocrat, Gaius Cestius, erected a large concrete pyramid faced with marble for his family tomb shortly before 12 BC (Fig 15).<sup>226</sup> Cestius was likely seduced by the prestige of possessing a pyramidal tomb just as the Egyptian pharaohs had in past centuries. Other similar funerary pyramids popped up around the Via Appia and Via Flaminia (one was even thought to be the resting place of Augustus' nephew Marcellus who was the first buried at the Mausoleum of Augustus in 23 BC).<sup>227</sup> "The divinities that were once Egyptian are now Roman" (Minucius Felix 22,2) and "The whole world swears today before Serapis" (Tertullian *Ad Nationes*. 2,8), wrote the Christian writers of the second century AD who commented on the overwhelming cultural takeover of the Egyptians. Egyptian motifs were heavily utilized by wealthy Roman citizenry to enhance their personal personas. This is reminiscent of Augustus' manipulation of Egyptian art, monuments and culture as a part of his propaganda campaign to gain continued support in Rome.<sup>228</sup>

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Egypt as religious pieces, many were copied and forged. This resulted in everlasting fame but their religious meaning disappeared over time.

<sup>225</sup> Kleiner (2005), 168.

<sup>226</sup> Roullet (1974), 84, 85 - Describes Cestius' pyramid as "[Located now in the] Via Ostiensis. In situ. Later incorporated into the Aurelian wall near Porta Ostiensis".

<sup>227</sup> Barrett (2002), 36.

<sup>228</sup> Additional Egyptian influences were seen at the Farnese Villa see, Turcan (1996), 85-86.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

Augustus' success at the Battle of Actium enabled him to utilize Egypt's wealth, art, and culture towards the stabilization and the beautification of Rome. In doing so, he gained the trust and backing of the people and the senate. From that point, Augustus continuously legitimized his authority in Rome through a rigorous propaganda campaign involving Egypt. Through Egypt, Augustus enhanced Rome's status and prestige while advancing his political career. These actions would help him in becoming the dynamic and successful sole ruler in a fledgling empire.

In the beginning, Egypt's relationship with Rome was an economic one, serving as a convenient bread-basket in times of financial troubles. Egypt soon came to rely on Rome for protection against foreign corruption and take-over. Rome became indirectly involved with Egyptian politics and culture as was evident by the numerous visits made by Roman officials near the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC. Rome's power became paramount over Egypt in 87 BC, when Ptolemy X Alexander I gave Egypt to Rome in his will. Rome however, decided not to take Egypt, because it had fallen into civil war. In 80 BC, Sulla planted the first puppet prince in Egypt, Ptolemy XI Alexander II, who served for a two week period before being murdered. Following this catastrophe, Egypt was placed in a vulnerable position. Alexander I's will could be executed at any time by the Romans. There would be a great deal of court intrigue until the reign of Cleopatra VII, who realized the growing influence of Rome. Although it may seem that the Romans were inserting themselves into Egyptian politics, there was a reciprocal flow of influence. Julius Caesar drew upon the norms, political structures, and art of Egypt in establishing his power, and he in turn served as an education for Augustus as he was consolidating his own power.



The primary method in which Augustus legitimized his authority in Rome was through an extensive propaganda campaign. Cleopatra and Antony served as contrasts to Augustus' traditional moral, social and political ideals. Through a series of mythological depictions in architectural works such as the Temple of Apollo and the Arretine bowl, as well as in Virgil's *Aeneid*, the message conveyed was that Augustus was a traditional Roman with traditional values. This message gained the support of the Roman citizenry and was essential in the long-term legitimization of Augustus' rule.

Augustus further justified his authority in Rome through the integration of Egypt's most symbolic art and architecture. This integration served to augment Rome's dominance over Egypt as well as to beautify Rome. Such examples included Augustus' use of Egyptian symbolism upon his coinage and seal rings and the transportation of obelisks. Other imagery and motifs of Egypt such as crocodiles, sphinxes, and even Cleopatra's own portraiture were employed in Rome to enhance Augustus' power and prestige. The use of Egyptian imagery was invaluable to express Rome's possession of Egypt's resources and culture. Just as important was Augustus' persona developed within Egypt. His acceptance of this position subsequently demonstrated his dominance over the country and allowed Rome great monetary benefits. The monumental architecture and potent Egyptian icons in Rome as well as Augustus' dominant position in Egypt served as a marker of his success and a reminder of his benefit to Rome.

Augustus also appeased the Roman citizenry by focusing upon the rejuvenation of Rome's traditional religious practices while encouraging the integration of the Egyptian cults. His actions would gain the respect and support from both Roman traditionalists and worshippers of foreign cults. This was accomplished through the protection of Rome's religious core, the *pomerium*, revitalising traditional morals and values through the Julian Law and accommodations made to

the *Pontifex Maximus*. As for the Egyptian cults, particularly that of Isis, they were welcomed and their temples restored by Augustus. Although the cults' practices were banned in the *pomerium*, the preservation of their temples suggests that Augustus wished to appeal to its worshippers while portraying himself as the protector of Rome's traditional identity.

The successful integration of Egyptian cults, the Hellenistic ruler cults, and the intellectual environment of the Hellenistic period encouraged Augustus to explore the concept of becoming a religious leader in order to create a sense of unity under one ruler. Augustus also benefitted from the concept of *ἰσόθει τιμαί* or 'honours equal to those given to the gods'. This concept was a commonly used method by Greek cities to establish cults for living rulers who had provided protection and/or security. Traditionally, this had been reserved only for mythological or historical figures. But with the intellectual climate of the Hellenistic period, salvation was sought at the hands of rulers rather than the gods. This provided Augustus the perfect opportunity to receive divine honours for the financial benefits he had gained from Egypt and the stability he had brought upon Rome. Augustus manipulated the cult/ruler relationship of the Hellenistic kings by integrating them with Roman norms. By building a persona as a religious leader, Augustus further augmented his authority in Rome.

Augustus' use and abuse of the imagery, culture, religion and politics of Egypt served to increase his own political and social standing in Rome. He re-defined Rome by assimilating Egypt's most culturally acceptable elements. In addition, his manipulation and transportation of the great antiquities of Egypt helped to establish Rome as the new cultural capital. While remaining traditional in his persona, it was this traditional yet progressive approach that allowed Augustus to maintain his authority. Without Egypt, Augustus may not have found the bread-basket with which to provide Rome with its much needed stability. Nor would he have had a

suitable counterpart with which to contrast himself. Frequently, scholars have argued Augustus' level of respect for Egypt and whether he used the country solely for financial gain. One may note however, that it was not Egypt that Augustus spoke against but Antony and Cleopatra who showed themselves to be irresponsible during a critical time in both their careers. He clearly appreciated the prestige and magnitude of Egypt's art and architecture as was evident in his prominent display of two of their most famous obelisks in the *Campus Martius* and the *Circus Maximus*. Furthermore, although Augustus banned the practice of Egyptian cults within the *pomerium*, he may have felt a sense of awe towards the pride which the Egyptians took in their religion and the dedication which they had to their gods. Augustus essentially created in Rome what already existed in Egypt but fashioned it to suit the Roman traditional lifestyle. Ultimately, Augustus brought Egypt's wealth into Rome, beautified the city through the assimilation of Egyptian art and architecture, and by belittling the character of Cleopatra and Antony increased his own prestige and credibility. This allowed Augustus to initiate the beginnings of a stable Roman empire that would endure through Tiberius' reign and those to follow.

## Images

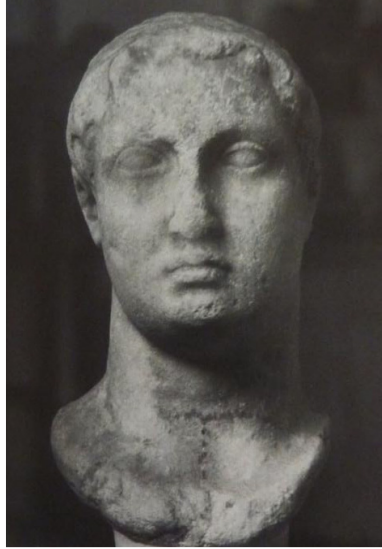


Fig 1 – Marble head of Ptolemy III with a diadem and small bull horns which liken him to Dionysus.



Fig 2 – A glass cameo of the Apollonian snake winding across a tripod. A symbol of the sun appears behind its head. The tripod, feeding chickens (below), augural staff (right) and ladle (left) represent the three priesthoods to which Augustus belonged; linking him directly with the snake of Apollo.



Fig 3 – (Left) Portrait of Young Octavian Arles  
(Center) Marble Head of Augustus 30's BC  
(Right) Head of Augustus from Prima Porta.



Fig 4 – The Vatican Cleopatra. Found at the Villa dei Quintilii on the Via Appia, may be a Roman copy of the gilded bronze statue of Cleopatra in the Temple of Venus Genetrix.



Fig 5 – Plaque from the Temple of Apollo - Apollo and Hercules with the Tripod



Fig 6 – (Left) Cleopatra and Livia, Servants, or Apollo and Artemis.

(Right) - This plaque shows two facing sphinxes, one female and the other male. Between them is the upper body of Isis (or a priestess of Isis) holding in one hand a sistrum (a ceremonial rattle) and in the other a plate of food.





Fig 7 – Terracotta plaques representing Danaides decorating the portico.



Fig 8 - Silver coin.

(Obverse) Head of Octavian, bare, right; behind, *lituus*: CAESAR [COS] VI

(Reverse) Crocodile standing right: [A]EGVPTO CAPTA



Fig 9 - Roman silver Denarius with the head of captive Gaul 48 BC, following the campaigns of Caesar.



Fig 10 - Copper alloy coin.

(Obverse) Heads of Augustus, laureate (right) and Agrippa, wearing a combined mural and rostral crown (left) back to back: IMP.P P.DIVI F

(Reverse) Crocodile right, in chains, with palm-shoot behind; to left of palm-tip, wreath with long ties: COL NEM





Fig 11 – The obelisk originally belonging to King Semnpsertus of Egypt. This monument later stood in the Circus Maximus (now the Piazza del Popolo).



Fig 12 - The obelisk originally belonging to King Ramesses II of Egypt which later stood in the Campus Martius (now the Piazza Montecitorio).



Fig 13 – *Temple of Hathor, Dendera* - Cleopatra and Caesarion wearing double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt sacrifice to Hathor. Augustus' inscription appeared below.

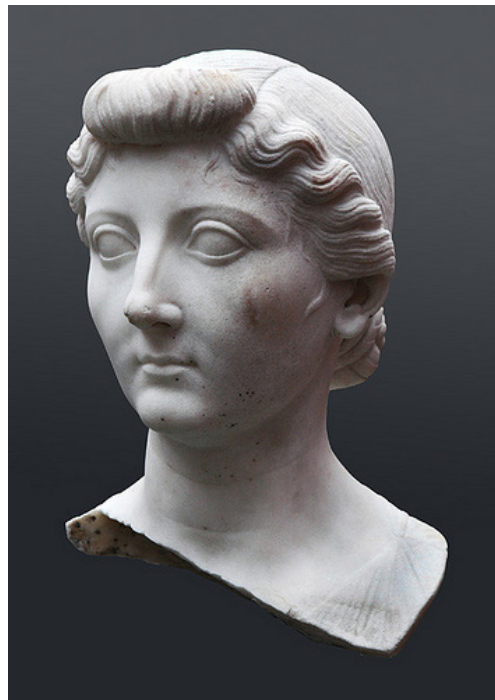


Fig 14 – Typical Marble Portrait of Livia



Fig 15 - Pyramid of Gaius Cestius



Fig 16 – Augustan Sphinx Seal Ring: Golden Aureus with Augustus and a Female Sphinx



Fig 17– *Prima Porta Augustus*. Is the small boy a cupid, a symbol of death, his grandson Gaius or a space filler?



Fig 18 – *Prima Porta Augustus*. Augustus as a god, sphinxes near his shoulders on his breastplate





Fig 19– *Coins of Cleopatra from Cyprus*. The obverse of this coin displays the queen's head as well as that of her young son Caesarion in front of her. Caesarion's appearance beside her indicates Cleopatra's intention to focus upon familial values. The design could thus perhaps be interpreted as Aphrodite and Eros or Isis and Harpocrates.



Fig 20 – Mould for Arretine clay bowl, 30 BC.  
(Above) Hercules/Antony looking back at Omphale/Cleopatra.  
(Below) Omphale/Cleopatra.



Fig 21- Bronze diobol from Egypt featuring Livia in a fashion similar to Ptolemaic queens.



Fig 22 – Silver Denarius. 13-14 AD.

(obverse) Head of Augustus, laureate, right.

(reverse) Draped female figure seated right on low-backed chair, holding long straight sceptre in right hand and bunch wheat in left hand.



Fig 23 – Garden Room, from the Villa of Livia, Prima Porta. Late first century BC.



Fig 24 – Columns, garlands, and basket in the House of Livia, on the Palatine Hill. End of first century BC.

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