

**As you read the two articles, make sure that you can answer these questions.  
You may have to read and research beyond these 2 articles to fully answer  
the questions**

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What different names did Augustus have and what were the dates associated with these different names?

Find out why Caesar was popular with the army and the people of Rome

Find out why Caesar was not popular with the Senate of Rome

A triumvirate is power sharing between three people. Find out who was in the First Triumvirate (clue, this was before Augustus' time)

Who did Octavian share his power with in his Triumvirate?

In what ways were Octavian and Mark Antony related?

Why was Cleopatra so unpopular with the Senate and Rome?

What mistake did Caesar make that Octavian was keen to avoid?

How did the emperor manage to transform Rome and avoid being seen like Julius Caesar?

If the new emperor was so keen to NOT be seen like Caesar, then why do you think he adopted the name Augustus CAESAR?

If you were the new chief of Rome, would you kill Caesar's murderers or keep them alive? Why?

The conclusions from the second article is somewhat biased. Try to find out why

Both of these articles are taken from the web-site called Ancient History Encyclopedia <http://www.ancient.eu/> There are many more web-sites on Ancient Rome that you can look at!

Recommended listening – In Our Time podcast – The Augustan Age  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kftmw>

Further resources can be found on google classroom – **kl20ha**

## Augustus



by Joshua J. Mark

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Augustus Caesar (63 BCE – 14 CE) was the name of the first (and, by all accounts, greatest) emperor of Rome. Augustus was born Gaius Octavius Thurinus on 23 September 63 BCE. He was adopted by his great-uncle Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, and then took the name Gaius Julius Caesar. In 27 BCE the Senate awarded him the honorific Augustus ("the illustrious one"), and he was then known as Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus. Owing to the many names the man went by in his life, it is common to call him Octavius when referring to events between 63 and 44 BCE, Octavian when referring to events between 44 and 27 BCE, and Augustus regarding events from 27 BCE to his death in 14 CE. It should be noted, however, that Octavian himself, between the years 44 and 27 BCE, never went by that name, choosing instead to align himself closely with his great uncle by carrying the same name (a decision which prompted Mark Antony's famous accusation, as recorded by Cicero, "You, boy, owe everything to your name").

### **AUGUSTUS & THE SECOND TRIUMVIRATE**

After Julius Caesar's assassination in March of 44 BCE, Octavian allied himself with Caesar's close friend and relative, Mark Antony. Together with another supporter of Caesar, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, Antony and Octavian formed the Second Triumvirate in October of 43 BCE. Their first order of business seems to have been the systematic killing of any political rivals and supporters

of Caesar's assassins (though exactly which of the three was most responsible for the killings is disputed by ancient and modern writers alike with some claiming Octavian innocent and others ascribing to him the most bloodshed). Having cleansed Rome of the 'bad blood' of their opposition, the Second Triumvirate then turned their attention to Caesar's assassins. At the Battle of Phillipi in October 42 BCE, the forces of Brutus and Cassius were defeated by those of the Second Triumvirate forcing both assassins to kill themselves.

### **THE ERA OF AUGUSTUS' REIGN WAS A GOLDEN AGE IN EVERY RESPECT.**

Between 38 and 36 BCE, Octavian and Lepidus battled Sextus Pompeius (son of Pompey Magnus, Julius Caesar's great rival) for rule of Rome with Antony lending aid from Egypt. The Second Triumvirate was victorious over Pompeius, and Lepidus, glorying in the triumph and confident of his strength, insulted Octavian by ordering him to leave Sicily, the theatre of operations, with his troops. Octavian, however, offered Lepidus's troops more money than Lepidus could pay and his army defected to Octavian. Lepidus was stripped of all his titles save Pontifex Maximus and the Second Triumvirate came to an end. During this time, however, relations between Octavian and Mark Antony began to deteriorate. In 40 BCE, in an effort to solidify their alliance, Octavian had given his sister, Octavia Minor, in marriage to Antony. Antony, though, had allied himself closely with Cleopatra VII of Egypt (the former lover of Julius Caesar and mother of his son Caesarion) and, in fact, had become her lover. Octavian charged that Antony had mis-used his sister when Antony divorced Octavia in favor of Cleopatra in 33 BCE which prompted Antony to write Octavian, "What's upset you? Because I go to bed with Cleopatra? But she's my wife and I've been doing so for nine years, not just recently. Does it really matter where, or with what women, you get your excitement?"

To Octavian, Antony's behavior in the east, both in private, politically and militarily, was intolerable. He forced the priestesses of the temple of Vesta in Rome to surrender Antony's will and had it read in the Senate. The will gave away Roman territories to Antony's sons and contained directions for a great mausoleum to be built in Alexandria for Antony and Cleopatra, among other stipulations which Octavian felt threatened the grandeur of Rome and branded Antony a renegade. Among the worst of Antony's offenses was his declaration that Caesarion was the true heir of Julius Caesar, not Octavian. The Senate revoked Antony's consulship and declared war on Cleopatra VII. At the Battle of Actium on 2 September 31 BCE Octavian's forces, under the General Agrippa, defeated the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra, scattered them (many had already defected to Octavian's side before the battle) and

pursued the survivors until 1 August 30 BCE when, after the loss of Alexandria, Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves. Octavian had Caesarion strangled (stating that “two Caesars are one too many”) and Antony’s eldest son executed as a possible threat to Rome.

Octavian was now the supreme ruler of Rome and all her territories but, in order to keep from making the same mistake his adoptive father had of seeming to covet power, Octavian was careful to characterize all of his political stratagems as being for the good of the Republic of Rome. In January of 27 BCE, Octavian resigned his powers humbly only to receive them back from the grateful Senate who also bestowed upon him the title Augustus. Octavian was careful not to refer to himself by that title at any time in public, simply calling himself 'Princeps', or, First Citizen. So carefully did Octavian play the political game in Rome that his claims to restoration of the Republic seemed in earnest, even when he gained supreme power, giving him absolute control over Rome and her colonies.

## **AUGUSTUS AS EMPEROR**

Popular already with the soldiers of his army, the title Augustus solidified his power in the provinces as Imperator, or commander-in-chief (from which the English word 'emperor' is derived). The month of August was named in his honour. In the year 19 BCE, he was given Imperium Maius (supreme power) over every province in the Roman Empire and, from that time on, Augustus Caesar ruled supremely, the first emperor of Rome and the measure by which all later emperors would be judged. By 2 BCE Augustus was declared Pater Patriae, the father of his country.

The era of Augustus' reign was a golden age in every respect. The peace which Augustus restored and kept (the Pax Romana) caused the economy, the arts and agriculture to flourish. An ambitious building program was initiated in which Augustus completed the plans made by Julius Caesar and then continued on with his own grand designs. In his famous inscription Res Gestae Divi Augusti (The Deeds of the Divine Augustus) he claims to have restored or built 82 temples in one year. The famous public baths of Rome were constructed under Augustus by his second-in-command, Agrippa, and the poet Virgil composed his epic the Aeneid. Augustus took great personal concern in the arts and was a personal patron of many artists.

He passed many sweeping reforms as well as laws to maintain stability in

marriage and to raise the birth rate in Rome, making adultery illegal, offering tax incentives to families with over three children and penalties for childless marriages. So strictly did Augustus himself adhere to his laws that he banished his own daughter, Julia, and his grand-daughter, for adultery.

## **DEATH**

Augustus died at Nola in 14 CE. His official last words were, “I found Rome a city of clay but left it a city of marble” which aptly describes Augustus’ achievements during his reign as emperor. According to his wife Livia and his adopted son Tiberius, however, his last words were actually, “Have I played the part well? Then applaud as I exit.” Augustus’ body was brought back to Rome in state and, on the day of the funeral, all businesses in Rome closed out of respect for the emperor. He was succeeded by Tiberius who he had adopted in 4 BCE and who read the eulogy (along with his own son, Drusus) at Augustus’ famously grand funeral. The emperor’s body was cremated and his ashes interred in his mausoleum. Augustus’ death was mourned as the loss of a great ruler of immense talent and vision. and he was proclaimed a god among the host of the Roman pantheon.

# **Augustus' Political, Social, & Moral Reforms**

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by Steven Fife

published on 18 January 2012

Augustus is well known for being the first Emperor of Rome, but even more than that, for being a self-proclaimed “Restorer of the Republic.” He believed in ancestral values such as monogamy, chastity, and piety (virtue). Thus, he introduced a number of moral and political reforms in order to improve Roman society and formulate a new Roman government and lifestyle. The basis of each of these reforms was to revive traditional Roman religion in the state.

## RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS

First, Augustus restored public monuments, especially the Temples of the Gods, as part of his quest for religious revival. He also commissioned the construction of monuments that would further promote and encourage traditional Roman religion. For example, the *Ara Pacis Augustae* contained symbols and scenes of religious rites and ceremonies, as well as Augustus and his “ideal” Roman family – all meant to inspire Roman pride. After Augustus generated renewed interest in religion, he sought to renew the practice of worship.

## RELIGIOUS REFORMS

In order to do so, Augustus revived the priesthoods and was appointed as *pontifex maximus*, which made him both the secular head of the Roman Empire and the religious leader. He reintroduced past ceremonies and festivals, including the Lustrum ceremony and the Lupercalia festival. In 17 BC, he also revived the Ludi Secularae (Secular Games), a religious celebration that occurred only once every 110 years, in which sacrifices and theatrical performances were held. Finally, Augustus established the Imperial Cult for worship of the Emperor as a god. The cult spread throughout the entire Empire in only a few decades, and was considered an important part of Roman religion.

## TAX & INHERITANCE LAWS

Augustus’ goal in restoring public monuments and reviving religion was not simply to renew faith and pride in the Roman Empire. Rather, he hoped that these steps would restore moral standards in Rome. Augustus also enacted social reforms as a way to improve morality. He felt particularly strong about encouraging families to have children and discouraging adultery. As such, he politically and financially rewarded families with three or more children, especially sons. This incentive stemmed from his belief that there were too few legitimate children born from “proper marriages.” On the other hand, he penalized unmarried men older than 38 years old by imposing on them an additional tax that others did not have to pay. They were also debarred from receiving inheritances and attending public games. Furthermore, the Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus prohibited celibacy and childless marriages, as well as made marriage compulsory.

## **MARRIAGE & DIVORCE LAWS**

Augustus also amended divorce laws to make them much stricter. Prior to this, divorce had been fairly free and easy. In addition, after Augustus' reforms, adultery became a civil crime instead of a personal crime under the Lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis. In other words, it became a crime against the state, which meant that the state (not just the husband) could take an adulterer to court if there was evidence of adultery. Penalties for adultery included banishment, or sometimes the husband or father of the adulterer could kill an adulterous wife. Augustus' own daughter, Julia, was banished for adultery after this new legislation. She was exiled to a desolate island called Pandateria.

Augustus also felt that people should not interact with or, especially, marry those outside of their own social class. As such, he created laws that reinforced hierarchical seating in the theatre and amphitheatre. For instance, front row seats were reserved for Senators, the next rows for equestrians, then the rest divided up for young men, soldiers, and so on.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Augustus was looked upon as a saviour of traditional Roman values. His political, social, and moral reforms helped to bring stability and security, and perhaps most importantly, prosperity to the Roman world which had been previously rocked by internal turmoil and chaos. As a result, Rome's first Emperor eventually came to be accepted as one of the gods, and he left a unified, peaceful empire that lasted for at least another 200 years before new crises emerged in the 3rd century CE.