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PRIESTHOODS TO EMPEROR AUGUSTUS

A Study of the Imperial Cult in the Provinces of the Western Roman Empire



Procession of flamines

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In accordance with the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th Edition.

Abbreviation	Full Author & Title
<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
Cass. Dio, <i>Roman History</i>	Cassius Dio, <i>Roman History</i>
Cic., <i>Dom.</i>	Cicero, <i>De domo sua</i>
Cic., <i>Leg.</i>	Cicero, <i>De legibus</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (1863–)
Hor., <i>Carm.</i>	Horace, <i>Carmina</i>
Hor., <i>Epist.</i>	Horace, <i>Epistulae</i>
Ov., <i>Fast.</i>	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i>
Petron., <i>Sat.</i>	Petronius, <i>Satyrica</i>
Philo, <i>Leg.</i>	Philo Judaeus, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Plin., <i>HN</i>	Pliny (the Elder), <i>Naturalis historia</i>
Plin., <i>Ep.</i>	Pliny (the Younger), <i>Epistulae</i>
Plut., “ <i>Flam.</i> ,” in <i>Vit.</i>	Plutarch, “ <i>Flaminius</i> ,” in <i>Vita Parallelae</i>
Quint., <i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i>
Suet., <i>Aug.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Augustus</i>
Suet., <i>Calig.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Caligula</i>
Suet., <i>Claud.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Claudius</i>
Suet., <i>Iul.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Iulius</i>
Tac., <i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
Tac., <i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i>
Varro, <i>Ling.</i>	Varro, <i>De lingua Latina</i>

INTRODUCTION

IN ANCIENT ROME, RELIGION and politics were deeply intertwined. Roman religion revolved around rituals that ensured society maintained the *pax deorum*, or the peace of the gods. Religion was enmeshed in the broader Roman political, cultural, and social contexts through priesthoods, festivals, and temples that sought to garner the gods' favor. In a speech in 57 BCE, M. Tullius Cicero observed that "no action of [the ancestors] was ever more wise than their determination that the same men should superintend both what relates to the religious worship...[and] the highest interests of the state."¹ Cicero emphasized how the religious realm and civil governance overlapped in ancient Rome. Worship of the Roman emperor epitomized this intersection. The deification of the emperor began during the reigns of Julius Caesar and his adopted son, Augustus.² Under Augustus, worship of the Emperor thrived in the provinces of the empire outside of the capital city of Rome. The three priesthoods to Augustus that emerged in the Latin West during his imperial reign – *sacerdotes*, *flamines*, and *Augustales* – revealed how the worship of the Emperor was a result of careful negotiation between local initiative and Roman custom. This

mediation depended on and was affected by Roman norms regarding deification, the permeation of Roman culture within regions of the empire, and the social status of the people involved in the worship. A comparison of these three priesthoods demonstrates how different cross-sections of the Latin West used worship of the Emperor to negotiate with and involve themselves in the new locus of imperial power that emerged during the transition of Rome from a republic to an empire.

Roman religious practices were not based on a monolithic set of beliefs but were characterized by relative toleration of diverse customs. Roman religion encompassed many gods, which gave it the flexibility to absorb foreign deities into its religious pantheon. The empire thus largely chose not to interfere with the various religions practiced within its borders. Individuals in the empire's provinces mostly retained their ability to practice the religious rites of their choice, as long as their worship did not threaten Roman military and political hegemony.³ For example, traditional Egyptian and Greek worship flourished in conquered Roman regions. Romans even adopted gods from the Greek East, such as Bacchus, Apollo, Castor, and Pollux, and they created Roman counterparts for these traditional Greek gods.

The toleration and syncretism characteristic of the relationship between Roman and native religious traditions influenced the development of the worship of the Roman emperor in the Latin West. The eastern

¹ Cic., *Dom.*, trans. C.D. Young (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), 1.

² For clarity, this paper refers to the Emperor by his adopted name 'Augustus' rather than his birth name 'Octavian,' even though he did not assume the name 'Augustus' until 27 BCE. Ken Dowden, *Religion and the Romans* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), 57-58. The name 'Augustus' epitomized the Emperor's cultivation of a divine persona, as Augustus meant "venerable" in Latin. Dowden, *Religion and the Romans*, 57-58. The Roman poet Ovid declared in his 8 CE work *Fasti* that "Augustus alone bears a name that ranks with Jove supreme. Holy things are... called august...[F]rom the same root come augury." Ovid, *Fast.*, trans. James George Frazer, Loeb Classical Library 253 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1.607-16. Unless otherwise noted, the translations of all classical works in this paper are from the Loeb Classical Library. Ovid's explanation demonstrated that contemporaries of Augustus linked this epithet with his divine associations. Ovid's etiology also emphasized the term's linguistic relation to augury, a ritual that was used to ascertain the god's will and was of great religious importance to the Romans.

³ Mary Boatwright, Daniel Gargola, and Richard Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 347-48. Druids and Jews within the empire faced sporadic persecution, which was usually associated with their political actions. Jewish monotheism posed a challenge for Roman polytheism. An analysis of these complex dynamics lies outside the scope of this paper. For a discussion of Rome's treatment of the Druids, see Andrew Johnston, *The Sons of Remus: Identity in Roman Gaul and Spain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

and western provinces of the empire differed in their worship of Augustus because of the long tradition of worshipping rulers in the East. This paper is limited to the priesthoods that developed in the western half of the empire.⁴ Imperial Roman writers alluded to the existence of the worship of Augustus in the Latin West during Augustus' lifetime. As the first century BCE Roman poet Horace described in *Epistles*, "while [he is] still among us, we bestow honours [on Augustus], set up altars to swear by [his] name."⁵ Horace, a contemporary of Augustus, indicated that altars and priesthoods to Augustus had spread throughout the empire during the Emperor's lifetime.⁶ Similarly, Suetonius, a historian writing a century after Augustus' reign, also reflected on the widespread nature of festivals celebrating Augustus in his *Life of Augustus*. Suetonius described how "the provinces, in addition to temples and altars, established quinquennial games in [Augustus'] honour."⁷ These celebratory days for Augustus mimicked the festivals that had existed for centuries to honor traditional deities.⁸

Although this worship existed in the Latin West, traditional norms regarding the apotheosis of an emperor constrained the veneration of Augustus during

his lifetime among Romans within the capital city. Augustus hesitated to seek his deification among Romans; the recent assassination of Julius Caesar shortly after he was apotheosized served as a cautionary tale for Augustus.⁹ In the winter of 30 to 29 BCE, cities from the provinces of Asia and Bithynia asked Augustus for permission to build temples devoted to him.¹⁰ In his third century CE work *Roman History*, Dio reported that Augustus responded by permitting only the creation of temples "to Roma [the personified deity of Rome] and to Caesar... [Augustus] commanded that the Romans resident in these cities should pay honour to these two divinities; but he permitted the aliens, whom he styled Hellenes, to consecrate precincts to himself."¹¹ Augustus differentiated between Roman and non-Roman citizens. He allowed only non-Romans to honor him, which reflected his hesitancy to approve of Romans' deification of him so that he could avoid suffering Caesar's fate. While no archaeological evidence of cults to Roma and Caesar has been found, and historians question whether Dio accurately described the worship of Augustus in the provinces, Dio's observation nonetheless suggested that Augustus opposed

4 See Part I of this essay for a more detailed discussion on the East's heritage of worshipping its rulers.

5 Hor., *Epist.*, 2.1. While Fairclough translated largimur as "we bestow," largiri had two different connotations. Largiri could mean "to give generously, bestow, lavish" or "to give presents corruptly, engage in bribery." By using the verb largiri with these two valences, Horace suggested that the honors given to Augustus were extravagant and violated religious norms. Oxford Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1003.

6 Horace was a contemporary of Augustus, so his description of altars to Augustus would not have been influenced by the extensive worship of Augustus that occurred after the emperor's death. Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 112.

7 Suet., *Aug.*, 59.

8 James Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 149.

9 In his *Roman History*, Dio detailed the divine honors that had been bestowed on Caesar, including statues "with an inscription to the effect that he was a demigod" and one engraved with the epithet "to the Invincible God." Dio, *Roman History*, 43.14.6, 43.45.3. In his biography of Caesar, Suetonius concurred with Dio, recounting how Caesar "allowed honours to be bestowed on him which were too great for a mortal man," like "temples, altars, and statues." Suet., *Jul.*, 76. Caesar's assassins were motivated to kill him, in part, because of this deification. Kevin Hopkins concluded that Caesar "was assassinated by a band of nobles who could not endure his supreme power and quasi-divinity." Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 202.

10 Duncan Fishwick, "Augustus and the Cult of the Emperor," *Studia Historica; Historia Antigua* 32 (2014): 48

11 Dio claimed that "[t]his practice, beginning under him, has been continued under other emperors, not only in the case of the Hellenic nations but also in that of all the others." Dio, *Roman History*, 51.20.6-51.20.8.

public worship of himself among Roman citizens but allowed such worship in the provinces.¹² Augustus' *Res Gestae*, the summary of his accomplishments that he promulgated across the empire, reflected his desire to avoid his worship among Romans. Augustus recounted in his *Res Gestae*, "[s]ilver statues of me... were erected in the city... [T]hese I myself removed, and from the money thus obtained I placed in the temple of Apollo golden offerings."¹³ Augustus portrayed himself as actively discouraging Romans from worshiping him and re-directing their prayers to traditional deities, which underscored his discomfort with emperor worship.

Historians have proposed varying theories to explain the relationship between emperor worship in the Latin West and the central authority in Rome. Some scholars have posited that Rome imposed the religious cult of the emperor to foster political unity among provincials under Augustus' leadership. Martin Charlesworth, for example, described how Augustus "initiated" emperor worship in the Latin West as a "political not a religious creation, an instrument to make firmer the bonds of loyalty."¹⁴ Other historians like Ittai Gradel have

discredited this view by observing the modern biases that underpin its logic. According to scholars like Gradel, Roman culture lacked distinct spheres of religion and politics.¹⁵ Strictly distinguishing between the two realms superimposes modern notions of a separate church and state onto the ancient world.

Other scholars have argued that provincial Romans not only subscribed to worshiping the emperor but actively instigated it in their local communities. In their book *Religions of Rome*, Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price refuted that a singular imperial cult existed; instead, they suggest that numerous cults dedicated to worshiping the emperor arose throughout the Roman Empire.¹⁶ These cults differed depending on the legal status of the community in which they were created and that community's native religious traditions.¹⁷ James Rives expanded on this idea, observing that cults arose out of a complex interaction between Romans and local residents in various provinces.¹⁸ Gwyneth McIntyre characterized this process as "a mix of spontaneous development and careful negotiations."¹⁹ Karl Galinsky similarly concluded that the

12 Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, vol. 3 (Leiden: EJ Brill, 2002), 230. J.M. Madsen contended that Dio's description reflected his own biases against emperor worship, which led Dio to claim that Augustus never intended it to exist. J.M. Madsen, "Cassius Dio and the Cult of Iulius and Roma at Ephesus and Nicaea," *The Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 66, no. 1, (May 2016): 286-287. A fictional dialogue written by Dio shed light on his disapproval of the imperial cult. Dio envisioned a conversation between Maecenas and Agrippa, purported advisors of Augustus, who advised Augustus that he should not "permit the raising of a temple to [himself]...[because] from temples comes no enhancement of one's glory. For it is virtue that raises many men to the level of gods." Dio, *Roman History*, 52.35. Fishwick suggested that Dio's disapproval of the imperial cult was a reaction to the late-first century rule of Commodus and Elagabalus, two unpopular emperors who abused the imperial cult. Duncan Fishwick, "Dio and Maecenas: The Emperor and the Ruler Cult," *Phoenix* (Autumn 1990): 270-271.

13 Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 24. Suetonius also reported this event. Suet., *Aug.*, 52.

14 Martin Charlesworth, "Some Observations on Ruler-Cult Especially in Rome," *Harvard Theological Review* 28, no. 1 (1935): 26-28. Other scholars, including M.P. Nilsson, A.D. Nock, G.W. Bowersock, and Paul Veyne, ascribed to this view.

15 Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 4-5. Scholars such as H.W. Pleket, Fergus Millar, and Simon Price agreed with this perspective.

16 Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1 (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 318.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 149.

19 Gwyneth McIntyre, *Imperial Cult* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 29.

imperial cult should be viewed as “a web of interactions, mutualities, and reciprocities.”²⁰ This paper concurs with McIntyre and Galinsky’s analysis and views worship of the emperor in the Latin West as a nuanced negotiation between Roman imperial policy and local initiative. This framework helps explain the differences between the varying religious cults across the Latin West.

Modern scholarship tends to omit, however, a central aspect of these imperial cults – the scale and constituents of the communities that they served. Henry Fairfield Burton and Margaret Laird observed that cults functioned differently depending on whether they were provincial, local, or popular cults.²¹ Provincial cults represented the Roman province as a whole, while local cults, which the city government set up, served an individual town.²² Individuals throughout the Latin West also formed cults for themselves, and these popular cults were not associated with a circumscribed geographic region.²³ While historians such as Burton and Laird recognized this tripartite structure of emperor worship, few scholars have examined the emergence and proliferation of priesthoods to the emperor at these three levels.²⁴ As Emily Hemelrijk noted, “the study of [the imperial cult’s] priests... has been more or less neglected,” which led her to examine female priesthoods to the emperor in the Latin West.²⁵ Duncan Fishwick, a leading scholar on the imperial cult in the western provinces, limited his study to provincial priesthoods.²⁶ Other scholars, such as Laird and Harriet Flower, focused on the popular priesthood of the Augustales but

did not compare it with its provincial and local counterparts.²⁷ Historians such as Gradel and J.F. Drinkwater did not examine the difference between provincial and local priesthoods or how the time frames in which these priesthoods arose affected the types of honors they bestowed on Augustus.²⁸ This paper seeks to contribute to modern scholarship by focusing on the period during which Augustus lived and immediately after he died in 14 CE. By examining provincial, local, and popular priesthoods to Augustus, this analysis demonstrates how the Emperor’s death and the subsequent changes in how Augustus was deified in Rome affected cults to Augustus throughout the western empire during the transition from republic to empire.²⁹

First, to honor Augustus without asserting that he was a Roman deity with a flamen, provincial cults in the Latin West emphasized the non-Roman aspects of their worship. They worshiped Augustus alongside *dea Roma*, a deity that had emerged in the Greek East during the early second century BCE. These cults further associated their worship of Augustus with foreign cults by naming their priests *sacerdotes* instead of the traditional *flamines*. While the term *sacerdos* had foreign connotations, *flamen* was the title for the priest of a state-recognized Roman deity. No state-recognized *flamen* existed in Rome during Augustus’ lifetime, and this naming convention in the provinces accorded with Roman mores that disapproved of the deification of a living emperor. Members of the Roman imperial family had established these provincial cults in the Latin West,

20 Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 288.

21 Henry Fairfield Burton, *The Worship of the Romans*, *Biblical World* 40, no. 2 (Aug. 1912): 86. Margaret Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 85.

22 Burton, *The Worship of the Romans*, 86.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales*, 85.

25 Emily Hemelrijk, “Priestesses of the Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Titles and Function,” *L’Antiquité Classique* 74 (2005): 137.

26 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*.

27 Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales*, 85. Harriet Flower, *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden: Religion at the Roman Street Corner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 308.

28 Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 85-86. J.F. Drinkwater, “A Note on Local Careers in the Three Gauls Under the Early Empire,” *Britannia* 10 (1979): 94.

29 The inscriptions analyzed in this study are not exhaustive of all the epigraphical evidence relating to priesthoods of Augustus. Inscriptions instead are used as representative of broader themes and patterns.

and these individuals would have understood the Roman political and religious aversion to deifying a living emperor. Given their close interaction with Rome, these priesthoods took care not to transgress Roman norms by worshipping Augustus as a Roman god with a flamen while he was alive. The careful consideration of priestly titles in provincial priesthoods underscored an effort by elite provincial priests to maintain Roman customs in order to affiliate themselves with and gain power in the eyes of the central authority in Rome.

Second, in contrast to provincial priesthoods, many local priesthoods violated Roman tradition by using the title flamen during Augustus' lifetime. Flamines of local cults were concentrated in regions that had been under Roman control for centuries. This distribution suggested that these cults were established by local individuals (not Romans) who were not troubled by transgressing Roman norms. Local elites who created and staffed these priesthoods sought to garner power within their local communities, not to tie themselves closer to the central Roman authority. Newly conquered territories within the empire, however, differed. These regions lacked local priests to Augustus during the Emperor's lifetime. This difference indicated that the individuals in these communities did not view the establishment of local flamines to Augustus as an effective way to attain social status within their own communities. Variance in the spread of local priesthoods to Augustus reflected how adherence to Roman religious norms depended on the degree to which Roman culture existed within a region.³⁰ In locales where Roman culture had long flourished, serving as a local priest to Augustus was an attractive path for elite individuals to gain regional prestige.

Third, formerly enslaved peoples throughout the

Latin West formed popular priesthoods called Augustales that oversaw the worship of the lares Augusti at religious shrines. Augustus re-instituted the festival of the Compitalia, a celebration of the lares of the crossroads, and he associated his divine epithet with the lares that had been worshiped there. The Compitalia historically had been associated with the empire's freed population. Freedmen thus seized on Augustus' revival of the festival to enmesh themselves in the worship of the Emperor that had been limited to elites at the provincial and local levels. As Augustales, freedmen constructed monuments in Augustus' honor and donated public works to their communities. In exchange for this generosity, local elites bestowed honors on these freedmen. Becoming an Augustalis thus offered an opportunity for wealthy freedmen, who were otherwise excluded from Roman magistracies, to obtain prestige within their communities. The Augustales demonstrated that priesthoods to the Emperor could create new sources of power for previously disenfranchised populations.

A comparison of these three priesthoods reveals that the worship of the Emperor in the Latin West was a product of negotiation between local initiative and Roman norms. This mediation depended on and was affected by Roman beliefs concerning imperial deification, the permeation of Roman culture within the region, and the social status of the people involved in the worship. The worship of Emperor Augustus re-organized religion and politics throughout the western Roman world. As the Roman state shifted from a republic to an empire, different localities and groups within the empire sought to orient themselves to the new imperial authority.

30 The degree to which Roman culture infiltrated a region has been termed 'Romanization' by scholars, a word fraught with bias. According to Simon Keay, 'Romanization' should not be taken to mean that "native communities [became] more Roman. It was part of a more a [sic] complex series of cultural relationships in which the distinction between Roman and native became blurred, and Roman cultural symbols were deployed in a number of ways in a range of regional contexts." Romanization was a "symbiotic but unequal process of cultural exchange...deployed as public acts of loyalty to the Emperor and State by elites as a means of self-empowerment." Simon Keay, "Romanization and the Hispaniae," in *Italy and the West: Comparative Issues in Romanization*, ed. Simon Keay and Nicola Terrenato (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 131. John Rogan further explained that Romanization was not synonymous with military victory, as thorough permeation and acceptance of Roman customs could take generations. John Rogan, *Roman Provincial Administration* (Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2011), 27.

1. PROVINCIAL PRIESTHOODS

CERTAIN PRIESTS TO AUGUSTUS were associated with a province or set of provinces. Provincial altars to Augustus honored the Emperor alongside the foreign goddess *Roma*, a deity first worshiped in the Greek East during the second century BCE. Romans in the Latin West called these provincial priests to Augustus *sacerdotes* (a term with foreign connotations) rather than *flamines* (the traditional priest of a state-recognized Roman deity) during the Emperor's lifetime to underscore the foreign nature of their worship. This title reflected an awareness of Roman religious customs because Augustus was not a state-recognized deity in Rome with a *flamen* while he was alive. After Augustus died and received a *flamen* in Rome, provincials adjusted to the change in Roman mores by calling provincial priests *flamines*. Roman norms shaped these provincial priesthoods because members of the Roman imperial family had established these priesthoods while on military campaigns. These individuals would have been attuned to the political implications of declaring Augustus a full-fledged deity and worshiping him with a *flamen*. Following their establishment, provincial

priesthoods continued to adhere to Roman norms because they regularly interacted with Rome through the provincial council. Because provincial priests had a central role in these councils, the elite individuals who served as priests could display their loyalty to Rome and increase their influence both within their province and the empire at large.

Provincial priesthoods honored the Emperor alongside the goddess *Roma*, a foreign deity who personified the Roman state. The first altar to Augustus was established in Lugdunum in August in 12 BCE.³¹ This altar served the western Roman provinces of Lugdunensis, Aquitania, and Belgica.³² While Titus Livy, Suetonius, and Dio did not mention the joint worship of Augustus and *Roma* at the provincial altar of Lugdunum, archaeological evidence has revealed that both deities were revered there.³³ A marble plaque from Lugdunum corroborated that the worship of the goddess *Roma* occurred at its altar to Augustus. Although the remaining fragment of the plaque contains only "RO," scholars have argued that the piece was the beginning of the label from Lugdunum's provincial altar "to Ro[ma and Augustus]."³⁴ Roman coins from Lugdunum support this assertion, as they depicted an altar engraved with the words "ROM. ET AVG" (Appendix, Fig. 1).³⁵ Moreover, the epitaph of a provincial priest of Lugdunum, Gaius Catullius Deciminus, called him "the sacerdos to the temple of *Roma* and Augustus of the Gallic province."³⁶ Nearly three dozen epitaphs and dedicatory

31 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 9.

32 This paper refers to the cult of Augustus at Lugdunum as a provincial cult, even though it served three provinces – Lugdunensis, Aquitania, and Belgica – because its status as a cult that served more than a single local town rendered it more similar to a provincial cult than a local one. Like other provincial cults, the cult of Augustus at Lugdunum had an administrative council associated with it.

33 Observing this discrepancy, Fishwick posited that *Roma* was of secondary importance compared to the worship of Augustus. This interpretation supports the idea that *Roma* was a secondary deity that functioned to legitimize the worship of Augustus in light of imperial norms. *Roma*'s existence at these altars of Augustus was more important to the individuals involved in the worship of Augustus than to later writers. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 131.

34 CIL 13, 1664. Trans. This author. Duncan Fishwick, "The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms in Spiegel der Neueren Forschung II*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 1205-1206.

35 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 105.

36 "C(aio) Catul[lio] / Decimi(no) / Tuti(i) Catullin[i fil(io)] / Tricassin[o omnibus] / honorib(us) ap[ud su]os funct(o) sac[er]d(oti) / ad templ(um) Rom(ae) et / Augg[(usti)] prov(inciae) Gall(iae)." CIL 13, 1691. Trans. this author.

inscriptions from Lugdunum similarly mention that the provincial priests served both *Roma* and Augustus at this altar.³⁷ One provincial priest, Caius Julius Rufus, for example, built an arch in Mediolanum Santonum in 19 CE in honor of Emperor Tiberius, his son Drusus, and his adopted son Germanicus. Below the dedicatory inscription of the arch, Rufus pronounced that he, a “sacerdos at the altar of *Roma* and Augustus... gave [this arch].”³⁸ Less epigraphical evidence has survived from the subsequent altar at Oppidum Ubiorum, a cultic site established around 10 BCE that would serve the province of Germania Magna, so a similar analysis of that altar is not possible. Fishwick, however, has posited that it too honored both *Roma* and Augustus after the model for a provincial altar established at Lugdunum.³⁹ Other than these altars at Lugdunum and Oppidum Ubiorum that worshiped *Roma* and Augustus, no other provincial altars to Augustus arose in the Latin West while he was alive.⁴⁰

The goddess *Roma* had originated in the Greek East during the second century BCE. Worship of *Roma* grew out of the eastern tradition of venerating rulers, including the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies of Egypt, Lycurgus and Lysander of Sparta, and Alexander the Great of Macedon.⁴¹ The first mention of *Roma* occurred when the Greek city of Smyrna appealed to

Rome for aid against King Antiochus III of Greece in 195 BCE.⁴² Smyrna established a temple to *Roma* to appease Rome.⁴³ After the end of the Macedonian War four years later, the Greek city of Chalcis similarly built a temple to *Roma* and Titus Quintus Flamininus, the Roman general who had conquered Greece.⁴⁴ In his second century CE biography of Flamininus, Plutarch described how “a priest of Titus is duly elected and appointed, and after sacrifice and libations in his honour, a set hymn of praise to him is sung... to great Zeus, to *Roma*, [and] to Titus.”⁴⁵ The Chalcidians integrated the deification of the Roman general and *Roma* into their worship of traditional deities like Zeus. Following the establishment of the cult to *Roma* in Chalcis, similar cults emerged across the ancient Greek world, including in the cities of Corinth, Argos, Gytheum, Rhodes, Delphi, Lycia, and Chois.⁴⁶

Not only did worship of the goddess *Roma* arise in the Greek East, but the East began setting up joint cults to *Roma* and Augustus long before the Latin West. Dio recounted in his *Roman History* how the eastern provinces of Asia and Bithynia asked Emperor Augustus in the winter of 30 to 29 BCE whether they could establish a cult to both him and *Roma*.⁴⁷ Coins from the Greek city of Pergamum in Asia depicted such an altar to *Roma* and Augustus (Appendix, Fig.

37 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 60-8.

38 “C(aius) Iulii[us]...Rufus...[sacerdos Romae et Aug]usti [ad a]ram qu[a]e est ad Confluent[e]m, praefectus [fab]rum, dat.” CIL 13, 1036. Trans. this author.

39 Fishwick, “The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire,” 1209.

40 While there were municipal altars at this time in Gallia Narbonensis, Lusitania, and Baetica, provincial altars did not emerge in these regions until the mid-first century CE reign of Emperor Vespasian. Id., 155-156.

41 Fishwick, “The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire,” 1209.

42 Tac., *Ann.*, 4.56. Titus Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, ed. W. Weissenborn and H.J. Müller (N.p.: Perseus Digital Library, 1911), 43.6.6.

43 Tacitus described how deputies from the Greek city of Smyrna proclaimed to Rome that they were “the first to erect a temple to the City of Rome.” Tac., *Ann.*, 4.56. In addition, Livy described how in 170 BCE, a group of Alabandians came to Rome to request aid in defending themselves against the Gauls. Livy recounted how they “announced that they had built a temple to the City of Rome, and had established annual games in honour of that divinity.” Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 43.6.6.

44 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 46-47.

45 Plut., “Flam.” in *Vit.*, 17.1.

46 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 49.

47 Dio, *Roman History*, 51.20.6-51.20.8.

2).⁴⁸ After Pergamum established a cult to Augustus, similar cults spread to the cities of Ancyra in Galatia and Pamphylia in Syria.⁴⁹ Philo, a Greek writer from the early first century BCE, recognized the traditional Greek origins of this worship of Augustus. In his *Legatio ad Gaium*, he described how individuals within the East honored Augustus “with the honors usually accorded with Olympian gods... [like] temples, *propylaea*, [and] sacred precincts.”⁵⁰ Philo recognized that eastern worship of Augustus imitated the honors traditionally accorded to Greek deities. Greco-Roman writers observed that the western cult to Augustus emerged from these eastern traditions. In his *Carmines*, the late-first century BCE poet Horace described how Romans “honour... [Augustus] with many a prayer... as Greece does when remembering Castor and mighty Hercules.”⁵¹ A contemporary of Augustus, Horace compared Roman veneration of the Emperor with Greek hero worship. Describing the Italian city of Neapolis, Dio later declared that “[t]o Augustus himself a sacred contest was voted in Neapolis [in 2 BCE]... because its inhabitants... tried in a manner to imitate the customs of the Greeks.”⁵² Horace and Dio both recognized that worship of Augustus in the Latin West had developed from the Greek East.

The foreign associations of the goddess *Roma* allowed provincials in Lugdunum and Oppidum Ubiorum to call their priests to Augustus *sacerdotes* during Augustus’ lifetime. Livy’s *Periochae*, a summary of the lost chapters of his late-first century BCE and early-first century CE *Ab Urbe Condita*, recorded that

“Gaius Julius Vercondaridubnus, an Aeduan, [was] appointed the [first] priest [sacerdos]” of the altar at Lugdunum.⁵³ In his early-second century CE *Annales*, the Roman historian Tacitus similarly described how a “priest [sacerdos was] consecrated at the Altar of the Ubians” in Oppidum Ubiorum.⁵⁴ Because *sacerdos* was a title with foreign associations, provincials gave this name to their priests of Augustus while the Emperor was alive so that they could honor him without asserting that he was a state-recognized deity with a *flamen*. Fishwick posited that *sacerdotes* were priests of cults associated with foreign lands, while *flamines* were official priesthoods of the Roman state.⁵⁵ Scholars, however, do not universally accept this claim. Gradel, for example, asserted that *sacerdos* was simply a general term for priests, while *flamen* was a specific priest of a single god.⁵⁶ Whether Fishwick or Gradel is correct does not alter the significance of the use of the title *sacerdos*. Using this title for provincial priests to Augustus reflected a hesitancy among inhabitants of the Latin West to employ the traditional title of *flamen*, which was reserved for specific state-recognized deities.

Shortly after the Emperor died, however, *flamines* to Augustus began to appear in western provincial cults in the provinces of Tarraconensis, Lusitania, and Baetica. Tarraconensis established a provincial cult to Augustus in Tarraco in 15 CE, one year after Augustus died.⁵⁷ Scores of inscriptions from the first and second centuries CE called the priests that staffed this cult *flamines*.⁵⁸ For example, an inscription from Tarraco during the late first century CE referred to Quintus

48 Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230.

49 Ronald Mellor, “The Goddess Roma,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II* 17.2 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1981), 979.

50 Philo, *Leg.*, 22.149-51, quoted in Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 297-298.

51 Hor., *Carm.*, 4.5.

52 Dio, *Roman History*, 55.10.9.

53 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 139. See also CIL 13, 5679.

54 Tac., *Ann.*, 1.57.

55 Fishwick, “The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship,” 1207-1208.

56 Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 85-86.

57 Tac., *Ann.*, 1.78.

58 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 85.

Licinus as the *flamen* of *Roma* and Augustus of the province of *Hispania Citerior*.⁵⁹ A provincial cult also arose in the province of *Lusitania*, which referred to its priests as *flamines* in 11 different inscriptions.⁶⁰ “Albinus Albui, a *flamen* of divine Augustus and divine Augusta of the province of *Lusitania*” dedicated a votive offering to Augustus several decades after the Emperor’s death.⁶¹ As in *Tarraconensis* and *Lusitania*, priests in *Baetica* began to call themselves *flamines*.⁶²

The almost immediate emergence of provincial *flamines* after Augustus’ death suggested that the Latin West had modulated their worship of the Emperor to reflect Rome’s evolving religious customs. Augustus was given a *flamen* in Rome upon his death in August of 14 CE. A month later, the Roman Senate deified the Emperor.⁶³ Dio recounted in his *Roman History* that shortly after Augustus died, the Senate “declared Augustus immortal [and] assigned to him priests.”⁶⁴ In his *Annales*, Tacitus confirmed that Augustus’ successor, Emperor Tiberius, established a *flamen* to Augustus.⁶⁵ Once Augustus received a *flamen* in Rome, Romans within the capital city treated him as a legitimate god of the Roman state. Tacitus’ description of a legal matter

involving “violation of the deity of Augustus by perjury” corroborated that Romans considered Augustus a traditional god after he died.⁶⁶ According to Tacitus, Tiberius adjudged the violation of Augustus’ deity by perjury to be “on the same footing as if the defendant had taken the name of Jupiter in vain.”⁶⁷ Tiberius’ judgment revealed that Romans within the capital, including the Emperor, considered Augustus as much of a deity as the father of the Roman pantheon. The use of the priestly title *flamen* in provincial priesthoods immediately after Augustus’ death conformed to Rome’s change in policy regarding deification of the Emperor.

The titles of provincial priests to Augustus comported with Roman norms both before and after his death because members of the Roman imperial family had established these provincial cults while on military campaigns. Augustus’ stepson Drusus and his army had founded the altar at *Lugdunum*. According to summaries of the lost chapters of Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*, “states of Germany...were attacked by Drusus, and the uprising that arose in Gaul over the census was settled. An altar of the divine Caesar was dedicated at the confluence of the Saone and the Rhone.”⁶⁸ Livy explained that a

59 “Q(uinto) Licinio / M(arci) f(ilio) Gal(eria) Silva/no Graniano / fl(ami)ni Romae / et Aug(usti) provinc(iae) / Hispan(iae) citer(ioris).” CIL 2, 4225. Trans. This author. For other examples of inscriptions from Tarraco that called the provincial priest a *flamen*, see AE 1965, 236 and CIL, 2, 3329.

60 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 151-154.

61 “Divo Augusto / Albinus Albui f(ilius) fl(ami)ni d(omi)ni Aug(usti) et] / div(inae) Aug(ustae) provinc(iae) Lusitan(iae).” CIL 2, 473. Trans. This author. For other examples of inscriptions from *Lusitania* that refer to the provincial priest as a *flamen*, see CIL 2, 5264, AE 1966, 177, and CIL 2, 5264. An analysis of the priests to other members of the imperial family is beyond the scope of this paper, but for studies on worship of the imperial family more broadly, see Gwyneth McIntyre, *A Family of Gods: The Worship of the Imperial Family in the Latin West* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016) and Hemelrijk, “Priestesses of the Imperial Cult in the Latin West.”

62 For examples of inscriptions from *Baetica* that refer to the provincial priest as a *flamen*, see CIL 2, 3271 and CIL 2, 2344.

63 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 150-151.

64 Dio, *Roman History*, 56.46.1. In his biography of Augustus, Suetonius recounted that after Augustus’ death, “an ex-praetor...took [an] oath that he had seen the form of the Emperor, after he had been reduced to ashes, on its way to heaven.” Suet., *Aug*, 100.

65 Tac., *Ann.*, 1.73.

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*

68 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 139. In contrast, Suetonius recorded how “Claudius was born at *Lugdunum* on the Kalends of August in the consulship of Iullus Antonius and Fabius Africanus, the very day when an altar was first dedicated to Augustus in that town.” Suet., *Claud.*, 2. Iullus Antonius and Fabius Africanus were consuls in 10 BCE,

rebellion in Gaul over the Roman census had brought Drusus to Lugdunum. By linking the arrival of the Roman army with the creation of the provincial altar to the Emperor, Livy suggested that Drusus and his men had founded the monument. Fishwick proposed that because Drusus was Augustus' stepson, he likely was following Augustus' instructions when constructing the altar.⁶⁹ Although Livy did not explicitly state whether Augustus ordered Drusus to establish the altar, the Emperor likely would have known of Drusus' actions and, at a minimum, did not prohibit them. Dio corroborated Livy's account, adding in his *Roman History* that "[t]he Sugambri and their allies had resorted to war, owing to the absence of Augustus... and Drusus therefore... [sent] for the foremost men... on the pretext of the festival [at] the altar of Augustus at Lugdunum."⁷⁰ Dio elucidated the connection between the Roman imperial presence in the region and the construction of the altar that Livy had identified. Perceiving that Augustus was no longer present in the region, the Sugambri waged war on the Roman province.⁷¹ Drusus quelled this rebellion, established the altar at Lugdunum, and invited the Sugambri to join in the worship. Dio's account suggested that Drusus established the altar to Augustus to pacify rebellious groups under shared religious traditions that celebrated the Emperor's reign.⁷²

As at Lugdunum, members of the Roman imperial family created the altar at Oppidum Ubiorum. Tacitus recounted in his *Annales* that, at this altar, the Roman general Germanicus exclaimed, "[m]ay thy spirit, Augustus... may thy image, my father

Drusus, and the memory of thee, be with these same soldiers of yours."⁷³ Ronald Mellor posited that Germanicus directed this allusion to Augustus at the altar of the Emperor. The reference to Drusus, Mellor argued, suggested that Drusus had established the altar when he visited the region in approximately 10 BCE while on a military campaign.⁷⁴ Fishwick concurred, dating the altar at Oppidum Ubiorum from 8 to 5 BCE when Drusus was in Gaul with his army.⁷⁵ While less information survives concerning the founding of this altar than the shrine at Lugdunum, the available evidence suggests that members of the Roman imperial family constructed it.⁷⁶

Despite Augustus' hesitation towards his deification in Rome, worship of the emperor flourished after he died, both in Rome and the provinces. Not only did Romans throughout the empire continue to honor their first emperor, but they apotheosized subsequent emperors for centuries. Twenty-five emperors and members of the imperial family received divine honors, including Emperors Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Hadrian. By the fourth century CE, however, worship of the emperors and the religious milieu in which it had arisen faded due to the growing popularity of the nascent monotheistic religion, Christianity. Worship of the emperor arose from political fluctuations that occurred during the transition from republic to empire, and it would fall with the political and religious changes that accompanied Rome's transition to a Christian empire devoted to the worship of a single deity.

After Romans established these cults, the

so Suetonius' account seemingly conflicted with Livy's dating of the founding of the altar to 12 BCE. Fishwick reconciled the apparent discrepancy between Livy and Suetonius' dating of the altar by positing that Suetonius meant that Claudius was born on the anniversary of the altar's founding. Fishwick reached this conclusion because Suetonius emphasized how Claudius was born on the same day that the altar was dedicated, not in the same year. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 17.

69 Fishwick, "The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire," 1205.

70 Dio, *Roman History*, 54.32.1.

71 A.J. Christopherson, "The Provincial Assembly of the Three Gauls in the Julio-Claudian Period," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 17, no. 3 (July 1968): 3512.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Tac., *Ann.*, 1.43.

74 Mellor, "The Goddess Roma," 988.

75 Fishwick, "The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire," 208.

76 Fishwick, "Augustus and the Cult of the Emperor," 53. Dowden, *Religion and the Romans*, 45.

provincial priests continued to respect Roman norms regarding the title of the priesthood and the Roman customs associated with it because the provincial cults and their priests closely interacted with the Emperor, who cared about how he was honored. A central part of the provincial cult was the provincial council, an administrative body led by the priest.⁷⁷ Once a year, the council would honor Augustus with gifts, celebrations, and prayers.⁷⁸ An episode recounted by Quintilian, a Roman writer in the late first century BCE, demonstrated the interaction between provincial councils and Rome. Quintilian described how “the Emperor Augustus was given a golden torque weighing a hundred pounds by the Gauls.”⁷⁹ As Quintilian’s account revealed, provincial councils worked with the Emperor himself. The physical location of provincial altars outside of established towns and cities reflected that they served the broader region and were not just concerned with the local populace. As Penny Goodman observed, provincial altars in the provinces of Narbo and Tres Galliae were located outside the boundaries of the nearby city, which she argued served to distinguish the provincial cult from the nearby local town.⁸⁰ These provincial cults served a vast group of people.⁸¹ Strabo’s early-first century CE text *Geography* described how the altar at Lugdunum was “dedicated by all the *Gallatae* in common to Caesar Augustus” and “inscribed on

it [were] the names of sixty people.”⁸² Such provincial altars brought together a wide swath of territory and inhabitants under the provincial priest. These cults afforded provincials an unprecedented means to communicate with the central authority at Rome. Representing a region and directed towards the broader empire, these cults adhered to Roman custom by distinguishing that Augustus was not a state-recognized deity with a *flamen* while he was alive.

Because these provincial councils cooperated with Rome and its norms, provincial priesthoods provided opportunities for elite provincials to gain empire-wide prestige. For example, Pliny the Younger, a late-first century CE writer and Roman statesman, remarked that Voconius Romanus, a provincial priest, was descended from “one of the leading families of Hither Spain.”⁸³ Becoming a provincial priest allowed these elite individuals to accumulate even more status. Using epigraphical evidence, Fishwick concluded that the provincial priests of Lugdunum, C. Iulius Rufus and C. Iulius Victor, descended from Gallic nobility.⁸⁴ By holding an important religious magistracy, elites from newly conquered regions could augment their power within the empire. A bronze tablet detailing regulations for the *flamen* of the province of Gallia Narbonensis underscored the prominent role that priests enjoyed on provincial councils.⁸⁵ The tablet detailed how “in the

77 J. S. Richardson, *The Romans in Spain* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 171.

78 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 1, 101. Provincial councils served a similar role in the eastern provinces. In Ancyra, nobles such as the son of King Brigatus of Amaseia and the son of King Amyntas of Galatia were priests to Augustus in 3 BCE and 22 CE, respectively. To affiliate themselves with the central authority, these priests gifted to Rome banquets, olive oil, gladiatorial shows, bull fights, and athletic competitions. Richard Gordon, “The Roman Imperial Cult and the Question of Power,” in *Raising the Eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies: An Album Amicorum in His Honour*, ed. Lauren Golden (N.p.: BAR Publishing, 2001), 111.

79 Quint., *Inst.*, 6.3.79.

80 Penny Goodman, “The Provincial Sanctuaries of the Imperial Cult at Lyon and Narbonne: Examples of Urban Exclusion or Social Inclusion,” in *Proceedings of Symposium On Mediterranean Archaeology* (Liverpool: Archaeopress BAR, 2001), 95.

81 James Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 91.

82 Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, trans. H.C. Hamilton, 3 vols. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 4.3.2.

83 Plin., *Ep.*, 2.13.

84 Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 41.

85 C.H. Williamson, “A Roman Law From Narbonne,” *Athenaeum* 65 (1987): 175. Fishwick concluded that this charter concerned a provincial, not a local, priest. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol. 3, 5.

provincial assembly of Narbonese Gaul...[the provincial priest had] the right to give an opinion and vote.”⁸⁶ While this charter dated from the mid-first century CE reign of Vespasian, it revealed how a provincial priest’s religious appointment empowered him within the province’s political administration.⁸⁷ The central role of provincial priests within provincial councils augmented their stature within the broader community. Becoming a priest was thus an enticing prospect for elite provincials because it allowed them to express their loyalty to Rome and increase their power and prestige.⁸⁸

The title of provincial priesthoods demonstrated an abiding respect for Roman imperial norms. By associating the worship of the Emperor with the goddess *Roma* and using the title *sacerdos* while Augustus was alive, provincial priests in the Latin West emphasized that Augustus was not a state-sanctioned deity with a *flamen*. Members of the Roman imperial family who would have been attuned to the political implications of transgressing Roman norms by granting a living emperor a *flamen* had established these priesthoods while on military campaigns. Even after they were founded, these provincial priesthoods adhered to Roman customs because they closely interacted with Rome and the Emperor in provincial councils. The elites that held these provincial priesthoods used them to express their loyalty to the Emperor and amass power for themselves within the province.

2. LOCAL PRIESTHOODS



WHILE PROVINCIAL PRIESTHOODS served the province as a whole, local priesthoods operated in a single town, which had implications for the title and function of the priesthood.⁸⁹ Roman provinces were broken into local administrative structures. In the regions of Italy and Hispania, towns were called *municipium* or *colonia*.⁹⁰ In the territory of *Tres Galliae*, which contained the provinces of *Lugdunensis*, *Aquitania*, and *Belgica*, towns were known as *civitas*.⁹¹ Unlike provincial cults, where priesthoods avoided transgressing Roman tradition by calling priests to Augustus *flamines* during the Emperor’s lifetime, local cults exhibited more freedom to worship Augustus according to the desires of the local community.⁹² In territories where Romans and their culture had existed for centuries, such as in Italy, *Gallia Narbonensis*, *Baetica*, and *Lusitania*, locals broke with Roman precedent and called their priests to Augustus *flamines* even while Augustus lived. The title *flamen* implied that local inhabitants, who were unconcerned with Roman norms, established and maintained these cults. Local elites founded and served as priests of these cults to gain power within their local communities. In contrast, in newly conquered regions such as *Tres Galliae* and northwest Hispania, no evidence exists of local priests to Augustus during his lifetime. This absence of local priesthoods to Augustus suggests that elites within these communities did not view the assertion of Augustus’ divinity as an effective way to increase their social status within their community. The distribution of local priesthoods to Augustus demonstrated that

86 Williamson, “A Roman Law From Narbonne,” 180.

87 “The approximate date for the institution of the cult is fixed by a fragmentary texts from Athens honoring Q. Trebellius Rufus...who was the first provincial *flamen* [of *Narbonensis*].” *Ibid.*, 175.

88 Dowden, *Religion and the Romans*, 62.

89 Lily Ross Taylor, “The Worship of Augustus in Italy During His Lifetime,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 51 (1920): 117.

90 Johnston, *The Sons of Remus*, 23.

91 *Ibid.*

92 Taylor, “The Worship of Augustus in Italy,” 123.

the cult of Augustus was intimately associated with the degree to which a community had embraced and integrated Roman culture into its own traditions.

In a region long saturated with Roman influence, priests to Augustus within Italy were generally called *flamines* even during Augustus' life. For example, the 4 CE dedicatory inscription on an arch to Gaius, the adopted son of Augustus, from the Italian town of Pisae referred to its local priest to Augustus as a *flamen*.⁹³ Similarly, an inscription from 1 to 14 CE from the Italian town of Verona called its priest to Augustus a *flamen*.⁹⁴ Roman culture flourished throughout Italy because of its proximity to the capital and long-time status within the empire.⁹⁵ Although Roman influence permeated Italy, this culture did not restrict the religious practices of the local population. Zsuzsanna Varhelyi observed Italy's flexibility to deviate from Roman norms more broadly. She deemed it a "safe backwater," free from the "religious control and primacy of emperors" that dominated the capital city.⁹⁶ Italian inscriptions attested to the proliferation throughout Italy of local priests to Augustus who were called *flamines* during the Emperor's lifetime.

The Italian town of Pompeii was a notable exception to this trend, as the local priest to Augustus during the Emperor's reign, Marcus Holconius, employed the titles *sacerdos* and *flamen* interchangeably. An inscription from 1 BCE to 11 CE referred to Marcus Holconius as the *flamen* to Augustus, while an inscription from 2 BCE on the base of a statue of the same man called him the *sacerdos* to Augustus.⁹⁷ These two inscriptions were not outliers in Pompeii; rather, Holconius frequently shifted his title between these two terms.⁹⁸ Among Italian towns, however, Pompeii was an anomaly, as the use of the title *sacerdos* for a local priest to Augustus occurred only in this city.⁹⁹ The unique economic status of Pompeii and the political ambitions of Holconius may explain the Pompeian irregularity. Pompeii was an unusually wealthy city, which, according to Mary Gordon, rendered it "less representative of other Italian municipia."¹⁰⁰ Its wealth contributed to its close political and economic interaction with Rome, which might have justified Holconius' adherence to Roman mores by calling himself a *sacerdos*.¹⁰¹ In addition, scholars have suggested that Holconius may have harbored political aspirations beyond his local environs.

93 CIL 11, 1421. Trans. This author. For an example of a *flamen* to Augustus during the Emperor's lifetime from the Italian town of Aesernia, see CIL 9, 2648.

94 CIL 5, 3341.

95 Beard noted how Italy was not a true province of the Roman Empire that was subject to Roman taxation but "a collection of self-governing communities." Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1, 321. Communities in Italy with local priesthoods should be analyzed similarly to local priesthoods within the provinces of the empire.

96 Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, *The Religion of Senators in the Roman Empire: Power and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 108.

97 CIL 10, 838; CIL 10, 830.

98 CIL 10, 830, CIL 10, 947 and CIL 10, 948 referred to Holconius as a *flamen*. CIL 10, 838, CIL 10, 837, CIL 10, 840, and CIL 10, 944 referred to Holconius as a *sacerdos*.

99 Observing this occurrence, McIntyre concluded that the interchangeability of these titles in Pompeii was an anomaly in Italy. McIntyre, *A Family of Gods*, 57. Gradel, however, disagreed with McIntyre. He concluded from the fact that Holconius was called both a *sacerdos* and *flamen* to Augustus that "obviously both titles could be used for the same office," which led him to "suggest that the Pompeian synonymity is valid also for the term as employed at the provincial level." Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 86. Gradel, however, did not recognize that Holconius was a local priest of Pompeii, not a provincial one, and that provincial and local priesthoods may have had different relationships with Rome regarding the titles they should call their priests. Gradel also did not attend to the nuances identified in this paper that render the trend in Pompeii not applicable to the local priesthoods in other towns.

100 Mary Gordon, "The Ordo of Pompeii," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 17 (1927): 165.

101 *Ibid.*

Holconius had already attained significant political power; he had been a *duovir* five times, a *quinquennalis* twice, and a *patronus coloniae*.¹⁰² John D'Arms observed that Holconius sought to affiliate himself with Augustus, including by refurbishing a theater in imitation of Augustus' famous theater of Marcellus in Rome.¹⁰³ Such an agenda may suggest political ambitions aimed at the provincial or Roman government. This objective also would have explained Holconius' use of the title *sacerdos*, a title that adhered to Roman norms surrounding emperor worship, rather than simply *flamen*, the typical title for local priests to Augustus in Italy. Regardless of the reason, the existence of interchangeable titles in Pompeii was an exception to the broader pattern throughout Italy of local *flamines* to Augustus during the Emperor's lifetime.

Other provinces such as Gallia Narbonensis, where Roman influence had flourished for centuries, exhibited more consistency in calling their local priests to the Emperor *flamines* while Augustus lived. For example, a pre-14 CE inscription from the town of Baeterrae was dedicated "[t]o Lucius Aponius... the first *flamen* of Augustus in the city of Iulia Baeterrae."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, an inscription in the town of Geneva from 30 BCE to 14 CE called its priest to Augustus, Lucius Julius, "a *flamen*."¹⁰⁵ Gallia Narbonensis had been under

Roman dominion for centuries, as Rome had conquered the region in the late second century BCE.¹⁰⁶

As in Gallia Narbonensis, local priests to the living Emperor were called *flamines* in the provinces of Baetica and Lusitania, which suggested that the local population, not Romans, had established and titled the priesthoods. An inscription from 14 CE in the town of Flavia Conimbriga in Lusitania called the priest Lucius Papius a "flamen to divine Augustus."¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in the town of Tucci in Baetica, a dedicatory inscription from 11 CE called Lucius Lucretius Fulvianus a "flamen of the piety of Augustus."¹⁰⁸ Local *flamines* existed throughout Hispania during Augustus' lifetime, including in the towns of Emerita, Pax Iulia, Barcino, Carmo, Urgavo, Aurgi, Epora, Olisipo, Salacia, Osonuba, Labitolosa, Complutum, Baetulo, Saguntum, Saetabis, Mentesa Bastitanorum, Valeria, Consabura, Dertosa, Ilerda, Castulo, Gerunda, Lacipo, and Barbesula.¹⁰⁹ The use of the title *flamen* for local priests to Augustus in these locales was consistent with the pattern observed in Gallia Narbonensis, as Romans had invaded this region centuries earlier and established urban centers there.¹¹⁰ Studying the effect of Roman culture on Hispania, Theodor Mommsen concluded that "Roman civilization pervaded Hispania earlier and more powerfully than any other province."¹¹¹ Baetica

102 John D'Arms, "Pompeii and Rome in the Augustan Age and Beyond: the Eminence of the Gens Holconia," in *Romans on the Bay of Naples and Other Essays on Roman Campania*, ed. Fausto Zevi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970): 430. CIL 10, 830 attested to Holconius' career in government.

103 D'Arms, "Pompeii and Rome in the Augustan Age and Beyond," 422. For an inscription identifying Holconius as the benefactor of the Pompeian theater, see CIL X, 883, 834.

104 "L(ucio) Aponio...primo Urbi Iul(iae) Baeter(ri)s." CIL 12, 4230. Trans. This author. For another example of an inscription that referred to the local priest within Gallia Narbonensis as a *flamen*, see CIL 12, 2606.

105 "*flamen* in col(onia) Equestre vicinis / Genavensibus lacus dat." CIL 12, 2607. Trans. this author.

106 J. A. O. Larsen, *Representative Government in Greek and Roman History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966), 130.

107 "Divo Augusto / L(ucius) Papius L(uci) f(ilius) *flamen*." CIL 2, 41. Trans. this author.

108 "Pietati Aug(ustae) / L(ucius) Lucretius Fulvianus *flamen*." CIL 2, 1663. Trans. this author.

109 Simon Keay, "Innovation and Adaptation: The Contribution of Rome to Urbanism in Iberia," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 86 (1994): 306.

110 *Ibid.*, 324.

111 Theodor Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire: The European Provinces* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 77. Leonard Curchin concurred with Mommsen, commenting that "[a]part from being Rome's earliest provincial acquisition on the European mainland, Spain — or at any rate her civilized southern and eastern sectors — achieved a level of romanization unexcelled anywhere else in the Empire (albeit matched, eventually, by

had been within the Roman province of Hispania Ulterior, which had been established two centuries earlier in 197 BCE. Roman institutions like coinage, language, and roads were prevalent in this territory.¹¹² Lusitania's historical trajectory differed from Baetica's, as Lusitania did not become a Roman province until 27 BCE. Romans nevertheless had controlled a large part of this region since 138 BCE and had brought their culture to the region a century before Augustus' lifetime.¹¹³ The existence of local flamines to Augustus in Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, and Lusitania while Augustus was alive suggested that Rome was not involved in establishing the emperor worship that existed in these locales, which were saturated with Roman culture.¹¹⁴ Rather, the local population, not Romans, likely established these cults, given that the cults overtly broke with Roman imperial norms.¹¹⁵

The local populace created these priesthoods to Augustus because they afforded individuals prestige within their communities. Elite individuals who had served in the civil administration of a town held these local priesthoods.¹¹⁶ For example, inscriptions from Gaul that listed a local priest's past magistracies

indicated that the priest often had already served as a duumvir, the highest judicial official in a town.¹¹⁷ Not only were local priests powerful individuals within their communities, but the priesthood afforded them further parochial prestige. In the town of Mellaria within the province of Baetica, an inscription from an early-second century CE statue commemorated how "the council of Mellaria decreed for this man [the flamen, Gaius Sempronius Speratus] the expense of burial, a funeral oration, two equestrian statues... [with] the expense having been remitted."¹¹⁸ According to this inscription, Speratus' townspeople had bequeathed him a multitude of gifts to honor his service as a priest of the local town. Local priests' construction of monuments and statues with inscriptions that memorialized their service reflected these priests' attempts to gain prestige from their priesthood.

Appeals to imperial notions of power to bolster local status were not limited to the creation of local priesthoods to Augustus. The phenomenon of the lares lubanci, a deity mentioned in an inscription in the town of Conimbriga within Lusitania, epitomized this practice. This inscription commemorated how it was

neighbouring Narbonensis)." Leonard Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 85.

112 G. Alfody, "Spain," in *The Augustan Empire, 43 BC-AD 69*, vol. 10, ed. Alan Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 449.

113 Ibid.

114 This lack of interference with local custom characterized Roman policy more broadly. D'Arms concluded that "not only were a town's traditions tolerated when local conditions were stable, but even in periods of municipal crisis — such as a state of anarchy in Pisa in A.D. 4 — Rome's standard policy was one of non-interference and...autonomy permitted to Italian cities." D'Arms, "Pompeii and Rome in the Augustan Age and Beyond," 415-416. In his treatise *De Legibus*, Cicero proposed that Rome should enact laws that "no one shall have gods to himself, either new gods or alien gods, unless recognized by the State. Privately they shall worship those gods whose worship they have duly received from their ancestors." Cic., *Leg.*, 2.19. While Cicero's declaration did not become Roman law, his dichotomy of private versus public religion suggested that Rome concerned itself more with modes of religious worship that occurred publicly and subverted the social order, not with the beliefs and practices of individuals. Such a distinction might explain why provincial priests adhered to Roman customs and did not declare Augustus as a new god with a *flamen* while he was alive, but local priests could more easily transgress these norms.

115 Richardson, *The Romans in Spain*, 170.

116 Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 101-102.

117 Drinkwater, "A Note on Local Careers," 94-5. For an example of this trend, see CIL 2, 3696.

118 "huic ordo Mellariensis decreverunt sepult(urae) / impen(sam) funeris laud(ationem) statuas equestras duas...imp(ensa) remissa p(osuit)." CIL 2, 2344. Trans. this author.

“consecrated [to] the lares lubanci of this community of the Dovilonici. Albuus, son of Camalus [set this up].”¹¹⁹ The lares were ancient Roman deities.¹²⁰ While this inscription displayed a classic first century Roman style of evenly spaced capital letters, Andrew Johnston noted that its pervasive syntactical and grammatical mistakes suggested that the monument’s author was not a native Latin speaker.¹²¹ As Johnston observes, the lares lubanci of the Dovilonici invoked traditional Roman modes of worship to assert an idiosyncratic local identity. Such a practice, according to Johnston, “does not amount to ‘becoming Roman,’ but rather reflects the development of a new repertoire of strategies for ‘being local.’”¹²² As with the lares lubanci, the blending of local and Roman traditions to create a unique mode of worship characterized the development of local priesthoods to Augustus in provinces filled with Roman influence such as Italy, Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, and Lusitania.

In contrast to these regions where local elites held flamines to Augustus during his lifetime, regions with a less thorough permeation of Roman culture, such as the territories of Tres Galliae and northwest Hispania, exhibit no evidence of local priests to Augustus while the Emperor was alive. While the absence of evidence is not conclusively evidence of absence in its own right, the significant disparity between the distribution of priesthoods across the empire suggests that an underlying factor caused such a discrepancy. Tres Galliae and northwest Hispania had differing histories and relationships to Roman culture than Italy, Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, and Lusitania. Caesar had only recently conquered Tres Galliae in 50 BCE.¹²³ Similarly, little urban development had occurred in northwest Hispania before 27 BCE when Augustus conquered

the region and reorganized the administration of the Iberian Peninsula.¹²⁴ In these regions with significantly less Roman cultural presence, no local cults to Augustus dating to the Emperor’s lifetime have been discovered.¹²⁵ This absence can be explained in two ways, both of which likely were at play. Nascent communities within these provinces had not yet been granted a Roman charter and its accompanying privileges and recognition. Greg Woolf explained how local civic authorities had to declare responsibility for local public cults in their communities in order to obtain a charter from Rome.¹²⁶ These towns thus may have been wary of transgressing Roman norms by worshiping a living emperor with a flamen. The absence of local priests to Augustus in these regions could also reflect that elites in these communities simply did not want to worship Augustus’ divinity on a local level. Because such worship was not part of their religious and political lexicon, it did not offer individuals an opportunity to gather power or prominence within their local communities. Unlike in regions with long-standing Roman influence, in Tres Galliae and northwest Hispania, priesthoods to Augustus were not part of the social milieu that bestowed local recognition on the individuals who held these positions.

Local cults exhibited more independence from Roman norms than provincial cults. In the regions of the Latin West where Roman culture had long thrived, such as in Italy, Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, and Lusitania, locals worshiped Augustus during his lifetime as they pleased, even if that veneration involved crossing Roman norms. Locals in these regions honored the Emperor as a deity with a flamen during his lifetime. This transgression insinuated that local inhabitants, not Romans, established and maintained these priesthoods.

119 Quoted and trans. Johnston, *The Sons of Remus*, 62.

120 For an extended description of the involvement of the lares in worship of the emperor, see Part III of this essay.

121 Johnston, *The Sons of Remus*, 62, 308.

122 *Ibid.*, 63.

123 Larsen, *Representative Government in Greek and Roman History*, 130. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*, 83.

124 C. H. V. Sutherland, *The Romans in Spain: 217 BC-AD 117* (London: Methuen & Co, 1939), 143.

125 Keay, “Innovation and Adaptation: The Contribution of Rome to Urbanism in Iberia,” 303.

126 Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 224.

Local elites staffed the priesthoods they created to gain prestige in their immediate communities. In contrast, no evidence of local priests to the living emperor exists in regions less suffused with Roman culture, such as Tres Galliae and northwest Hispania. This discrepancy suggested that the local elites in these regions were wary of or uninterested in transgressing Roman norms by developing local cults to a living emperor. The degree to which a community engaged with and integrated Roman culture into its local identity to gain parochial prestige affected the nature of the local priesthoods to Augustus.

3. POPULAR PRIESTHOODS

IN CONTRAST TO PROVINCIAL and local priesthoods, which operated in circumscribed geographical areas and were associated with specific provincial or local governments, popular priesthoods to Augustus served a particular subgroup within their communities.¹²⁷ More than 2,500 inscriptions from 12 BCE to the third century CE attest to the prominence of the popular

priesthood of the Augustales in the Latin West.¹²⁸ Augustales oversaw the worship of the lares Augusti, which were deities that Augustus had placed at existing shrines throughout the Latin West when he revived the festival of the Compitalia and associated it with himself. Because the Compitalia historically had been associated with freed populations, freedmen used Augustus' resurrection of this festival as an opportunity to involve themselves in the worship of Augustus by creating the institution of the Augustales.¹²⁹ Freedmen were largely barred from holding powerful magistracies in the Roman civil service, so the priesthood of the Augustales offered freedmen a means to gain prominence within their local communities. The Augustales demonstrated that priesthoods to the Emperor could give rise to new sources of power for otherwise disenfranchised populations.

Augustus revived the festival of the Compitalia in 12 BCE and associated it with the lares Augusti.¹³⁰ Compitalia was an ancient Roman festival that celebrated the lares, guardian deities, of the crossroads.¹³¹ In his mid-first century CE biography of Augustus, Suetonius recounted how the Emperor "revived...the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse... [including] the festival of the Compitalia" and "provided that the lares of the Crossroads should be crowned twice a year."¹³² According to Suetonius, Augustus

127 Burton, *The Worship of the Romans*, 86; Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales*, 88.

128 McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, 27. Flower observed that the vast body of inscriptions attesting to the *Augustales* contrasted with the paucity of references to them in literary texts. She concluded that this discrepancy arose because *Augustales* were freedmen who sought to commemorate their new status in monuments, while literary authors largely were elites who would not have served as *Augustales*. Flower, *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden*, 255. Although the priesthood of the Augustales flourished in the Latin West, it was virtually non-existent in the city of Rome and in the empire's eastern provinces. In the eastern empire, *Augustales* were found only in *coloniae*, which were more associated with Roman and eastern traditions. McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, 27. Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy*, 6.

129 Robert Duthoy observed how various inscriptions referred to the *Augustales* using slightly different titles, including *Augustales*, *seviri Augustales*, and *magistri Augustales*. He concluded, however, that all of these titles referred to the same priesthood. For clarity, this paper uses the term *Augustales* to refer to the priesthood. Robert Duthoy, "Les *Augustales*," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, no. 16 (1978)

130 Suet., *Aug.*, 31.

131 Varro explained in his treatise *De Lingua Latina* that "Compitalia is a day assigned to the lares of the highways...where the highways competunt 'meet,' sacrifice is then made at the compita 'crossroads.'" Varro, *Ling.*, 6.25.

132 Suet., *Aug.*, 31.

reinstated the traditional worship of the Compitalia and established new regulations for celebrating it. Pliny the Elder elaborated, detailing how Augustus “divided [the city] into fourteen districts, with 265 crossways with their guardian lares.”¹³³ By increasing the number of subdivisions within the city, Augustus multiplied the number of crossroads and their shrines. When endorsing this festival, Augustus linked the lares to himself. Ovid recalled how “[i]n the City there are a thousand lares, and the Genius of the leader, who handed them over to the public.”¹³⁴ Archaeological evidence supports Ovid’s claim that Augustus associated the festival of the lares with himself. A votive inscription in Rome during Augustus’ lifetime recorded that “Augustus...gave the lares Augusti to the officers of the neighborhood.”¹³⁵ The Belvedere Altar, an altar built from 12 to 2 BCE within the city of Rome, also depicted Augustus distributing the lares Augusti to the local community.¹³⁶ In revitalizing the ancient Compitalia festival, Augustus associated its worship of the lares with himself, which transfigured his image into the religious traditions of his subjects.

The precise relationship between the lares Augusti and Augustus’ divinity has puzzled scholars. Beginning with Lily Ross Taylor and continuing with

Duncan Fishwick, Ittai Gradel, and Christer Bruun, a number of scholars have asserted that the lares Augusti were the lares of Augustus’ home.¹³⁷ These scholars parsed Augusti as a genitive singular noun that indicated possession. John Lott and Harriet Flower, however, criticized this view. They argued that Augusti, instead, was a plural nominative adjective.¹³⁸ To support this assertion, they pointed to inscriptions that referred to the lares Augusti without abbreviation. Such inscriptions mentioned the “laribus Augustis.”¹³⁹ This plural dative ending of Augustis suggested that the phrase should not be translated as “to the lares of Augustus,” as Augustus’ name would need to be in the singular genitive (Augusti, not Augustis) to render such a translation appropriate.¹⁴⁰ Lott and Flower urged, instead, that laribus was a plural dative noun and that laribus Augustis should be translated as “to the august lares,” where Augustis was an adjective modifying laribus.¹⁴¹ Under this view, Augustus did not replace the traditional lares with his own household deities but, instead, associated himself with the worship of the lares by bestowing on these deities an epithet that suggested his own divine status.¹⁴² In this way, Augustus obliquely asserted claims to his own divinity by linking himself to traditional Roman deities.

133 Plin., HN, 3.9.

134 Ov., Fast., 5.142-5.144.

135 AE 1935, 173.

136 J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 105. Beard et al. agreed that the Belvedere Altar was a compital altar. Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1, 186.

137 Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown, CT: American Philological Association, 1931), 233. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, vol 1, 84-85. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 117. Christer Bruun, “The Date of One Hundred **Augustales* from Roman Ostia in CIL XIV 4563: Early Second Century CE,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 198 (2016): 257.

138 Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 110. Flower, *The Dancing Lares*, 288.

139 See CIL 6, 445-448 and CIL 6, 30957.

140 Flower, *The Dancing Lares*, 288.

141 *Ibid.*

142 *Ibid.*, 290, 255. In addition to her argument based on the grammar of inscriptions, Flower contended that “[i]t would make no sense to say that the domestic lar(es) of any individual household had been moved outside to the shrine at the crossroads, the traditional shrine of another equally well-established pair of such deities.” *Id.*, 289. Flower cited Suetonius’ description of the grief that Romans expressed when Germanicus died, which led them to “fl[ing] their household gods into the street” as evidence that Augustus’ domestic lares would not have become public lares as a mode of worship. Suet., *Calig.*, 5.

Staffed by freedmen, the priesthood of the Augustales oversaw the worship of these lares Augusti. Helenius Acron, a third century CE scholiast of Horace, related in his *Commentarii* on Horace's *Satira* that "I set up household gods in the crossroads, for Augustus had commanded that they be worshiped... Moreover their priests were freedmen who were called Augustales."¹⁴³ This commentary indicated that the priesthood of the Augustales arose out of local initiatives by freed individuals to oversee Augustus' revival of the worship of the lares of the crossroads. The timing of the earliest inscriptions concerning the Augustales supports these origins, as they date to 12 BCE, the same year that Augustus initiated his renewal of the Compitalia.¹⁴⁴ Although Augustus associated the traditional lares with himself by distributing the lares Augusti,

Steven Ostrow observed that Augustus likely did not establish the Augustales as a priesthood.¹⁴⁵ Variability in the titles, structure, and distribution of Augustales across the Latin West suggested that these priesthoods emerged not from a single centralized directive from Augustus but from more diffuse local initiatives.¹⁴⁶

Freedmen could involve themselves in the worship of the lares Augusti because of the historical associations between the freed population of the empire and the Compitalia festival.¹⁴⁷ According to legend, the servant Ocrisia had given birth to Servius Tullius, the mythical seventh king of Rome, after she was divinely impregnated.¹⁴⁸ In his *Natural History* from 77 CE, Pliny the Elder recounted how "the Lar of the household was [Servius Tullius'] progenitor. It was owing to this circumstance, we are informed, that

143 "lusserat enim Augustus in compitis deos Penates constitui, ut studiosius colerentur. Erant autem libertini *sacerdotes* qui *Augustales* dicebantur." Helenius Acron, "Satira 2.3," in Acronis and Porphyriosis *Commentarii* in Q. Horatium Flaccus, ed. Ferdinandus Hauthal (N.p.: Springer, 1866), 265. Trans. This author. Pomponius Porphyrius, a second century CE scholiast of Horace, also explained that "[f]or lares were put in the crossroads by Augustus and freed priests were dedicated who were called *Augustales*." "Ab Augusto enim lares in compitis positi sunt et libertini *sacerdotes* dati qui *Augustales* appellati." Pomponius Porphyrius, "Satira 2.3," in Acronis and Porphyriosis *Commentarii*, 278. Trans. this author.

144 McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, 27.

145 Steven Ostrow, "'Augustales' Along the Bay of Naples: A Case for Their Early Growth," *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte*, (1st Qtr., 1985): 68. Scholars have questioned whether the *Augustales* should be considered a priesthood or a civil magistracy. Delineating between religious and civil magistracies in the Roman world, however, obscured the overlap that existed between these categories. Some scholars have argued that the religious nature of the *Augustales* decreased over time. For example, Robert Duthoy described how the religious nature of the *Augustales* declined after Augustus' death, while Taylor pointed to the secularization of the priesthood into a magistral body during the period from 112 to 140 CE. Duthoy, "Les *Augustales*," 1304-1305; Lily Ross Taylor, "*Augustales*, *Seviri Augustales*, and *Seviri*: A Chronological Study," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 45 (1914): 242-243.

146 The phenomenon of the Lupa Augusta epitomized how freedmen imbued deities with the epithet Augusta in order to affiliate themselves with the central authority in Rome. In the late first century CE, the "freedman, Lucius Visellius of the Euangelus, a *sevir Augustalis*" set up an inscription in the town of Baetulo in Hispania Citerior to the "Lupa Augusta." CIL 2, 4603. Trans. this author. The wolf was a powerful symbolic for Romans. According to the famous myth of Rome's founding, a she-wolf had reared Romulus and Remus. By the first century CE, this myth already had acquired canonical status in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*, Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, Ovid's *Fasti*, and Plutarch's *The Life of Romulus*. The Lupa Augusta, however, was not a deity worshiped in Rome or in the provinces more broadly. The inscription to this deity represented an attempt by an *Augustalis* to express his loyalty to Rome and its history in a new manner. Mika Rissanen, "The Lupa Romana in the Roman Provinces," *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 65 (2014): 335.

147 Ostrow, "'Augustales' Along the Bay of Naples," 68.

148 Plin., *HN*, 36.70.

the Compitalia, games in honour of the lares, were instituted.”¹⁴⁹ Pliny’s aetiology explained the association of the festival of the Compitalia with freedmen, as Servius Tullius’ mother was a servant. By analyzing epigraphical evidence, McIntyre has estimated that 85 to 95 percent of Augustales were freedmen.¹⁵⁰ The earliest inscription mentioning an Augustalis from the Italian city of Nepes in 12 BCE recounted how the “first magistrate Augustales Philippus the freedman of Augustus” dedicated this altar to Augustus.¹⁵¹ Subsequent inscriptions from the end of the first century BCE and the beginning of the first century CE from the Italian towns of Veii, Nola, Beneventum, and Metellinum similarly identified Augustales as freedmen.¹⁵²

These freedmen were wealthy, and their inscriptions sought to commemorate how their self-generated wealth allowed them to become Augustales. Freedmen’s construction of monuments itself suggested that the Augustales were men of financial means, as marble was expensive in antiquity. A play written by Gaius Petronius Arbiter in the mid-first century CE, *The Satyricon*, buttressed this conclusion. The play depicted a fictional Augustalis, G. Pompeius Trimalchio, a wealthy freedman. In the play, Trimalchio instructed

that his gravestone bear the inscription, “here rests G. Pompeius Trimalchio, freedman of Maecenas, sevir Augustalis...Brave, loyal he grew rich from little.”¹⁵³ This engraving emphasized this Augustalis’ pride in his wealth and position as a freedman. While fictional, this play still shed light on how Augustales within Roman society conceived of their priesthood and its relation to their finances. Epigraphical evidence supports such an extrapolation. An inscription from the Italian town of Parma during Augustus’ lifetime was dedicated “to the numen of Augustus” by “Quintus Munatius Apsyrus,...Augustalis.”¹⁵⁴ A contemporaneous plaque from a monument in the Collegio of the Augustales from the Italian town of Herculaneum likewise described it as “sacred to Augustus. Aulus Lucius Proculus and Aulus Lucius Julianus, sons of Menenia, using their own money, gave a dinner for the Augustales and the decurions” (Appendix, Fig. 3).¹⁵⁵ This sign commemorated how two brothers dedicated a monument and feast in honor of Augustus’ sanctity. Giuseppe Guadagno concluded that this plaque belonged to the local Augustales’ temple of Augustus in Herculaneum, as its size and language comported with inscriptions from other religious buildings.¹⁵⁶ Augustales flaunted their wealth

149 Ibid.

150 McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, 27-28. Taylor noted that freedmen were more likely to construct a monument to commemorate their status than free-born individuals because of the pride they felt in becoming free. For example, inscriptions from Rome would indicate that the capital city contained three times the number of freedmen as free-born people, contrary to what contemporary textual sources conveyed about Rome’s largely free population. This discrepancy underscores how inscriptional evidence can skew demographic estimates. Lily Ross Taylor, “Freedmen and Freeborn in the Epitaphs of Imperial Rome,” *American Journal of Philology* 82, no. 2 (April 1961): 129-130.

151 “Imp(eratori) Caesari divi f(ilio)...magistri Augustal(es) prim(i) / Philippus Augusti libert(us).” CIL 11, 3200. Trans. This author. Steven Ostrow, “The *Augustales* in the Augustan Scheme,” in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, ed. Kurt Raaflaub and Mark Toher (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 366.

152 For inscriptions from Veii, see CIL 11, 3782 and CIL 11, 1026. For an inscription from Nola, see CIL 10, 1272. For an inscription from Beneventum, see AE 1968, 127. For an inscription from Metellinum, see AE 2011, 482.

153 Petron., *Sat.*, trans. W. C. Firebaugh (New York: Horace Liveright, 1922), 13, 27.

154 “[Nu]mini August[i] / [Q(uintus?)] Munatius Apsyr[u]s / [VI]vir et Augustali[s] / [via]m lapide turbinat[o] / [a f]oro ad portam / [st]ravit crepidine[s] / castella posuit port[am] / [m]armoribus statu[is] / [fist]ul[is] et salientibus / ornavit d(e) p(ecunia) s(ua).” CIL 11, 1062. Trans. this author.

155 “Augusto sacr(um) / AA(uli) Lucii A(uli) filii Men(enia) / Proculus et Iulianus / p(ecunia) s(ua) / dedicatione decurionibus et / Augustalibus cenam dederunt.” AE 1979, 169. Trans. This author. For the dating of this inscription to Augustus’ lifetime, see Ostrow, “*Augustales*’ Along the Bay of Naples,” 77.

156 Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy*, 115. Although most historians accept

and its role in allowing them to join the worship of the Emperor and celebrate Augustus with monuments and divine honors.

The institution of the *Augustales* thus allowed freedmen, who were otherwise largely barred from holding political office, to integrate themselves into the modes of religious expression that elite individuals employed in the provincial and local priesthoods. Freedmen, no matter their wealth, were disqualified from serving in political positions in the Roman Empire, save for the lowliest administrative posts.¹⁵⁷ The institution of the *Augustales* gave freedmen a means to gain prestige outside of traditional politics.¹⁵⁸ By donating public works, wealthy freedmen could contribute to their communities and obtain a previously unattainable level of stature.¹⁵⁹

The numerous construction projects that the *Augustales* undertook independent of the religious worship of Augustus reflected the use of this priesthood as a means to attain prestige within their community more broadly. For example, the epitaph of the *Augustalis* Marcus Caelius from 12 to 1 BCE from

the Italian town of Formia celebrated how “Marcus Caelius, freedman of Marcus Phileros...*Augustalis* in Formia, decorated the temple of Neptune with various stones at his own expense.”¹⁶⁰ Showcasing how this *Augustalis* donated these decorations with his own funds, the inscription highlighted the freedman’s use of his wealth for religious public works beyond the worship of Augustus. *Augustales* also contributed to public works that had no religious significance, such as building roads, statues, and public baths across the Latin West.¹⁶¹ An inscription from the Italian town of Parma from Augustus’ reign, for instance, commemorated how “Quintus Munatius Apsyrtus,...*Augustalis*...made the road with turbinated stones and put an entrance into the castle with marble statues...He decorated it with his own money.”¹⁶² A dedicatory inscription from 2 BCE to 14 CE in the region of Latium also recounted that “the *sevir Augustales* on account of the games for the *Augustales* of Augustus...made the portico from a decree of the *decurions*.”¹⁶³ Such inscriptions not only depicted *Augustales*’ funding of construction and public games, but that *decurions*, who were part of the upper

Guadagno’s analysis, some scholars have suggested that this panel instead belonged to an altar or statue, not a building. These scholars pointed to the absence of any word within the inscription that connoted construction or a building. Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy*, 115-117.

157 Sutherland, *The Romans in Spain*, 158. For example, membership in the *ordo decurionum*, the Senate, was limited to people who were born free. Leonard Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (London: Routledge, 1991), 66.

158 Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy*, 6.

159 Christer Bruun, “True Patriots? The Public Activities of the *Augustales* of Roman Ostia and the *Summa Honoraria*,” *Actors* 48 (2014): 70.

160 “M(arcus) Caelius M(arci) l(ibertus) Phileros accens(us) / T(iti) Sexti imp(eratoris) in Africa Carthag(ine) aed(ilis) praef(ectus) / i(ure) d(icundo) vectig(alibus) quinq(uennalibus) locand(is) in castell(is) LXXXIII / aed(em) Tell(uris) s(ua) p(ecunia) fec(it) llvir Clupiae bis Formis / Aug(ustalis) aedem Nept(uni) lapid(ibus) vari(i)s s(ua) p(ecunia) ornav(it) / Fresidiae N(umeri) l(ibertae) Florae uxori viro ob seq(uentissimae).” CIL 10, 6104. Trans. This author. See also CIL 5, 7027.

161 Ostrow, “‘*Augustales*’ Along the Bay of Naples,” 69. Laird, *Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy*, 7. Taylor, “*Augustales*, *Seviri Augustales*, and *Seviri*,” 232.

162 “[Nu]mini August[i] / [Q(uitus?)] Munatius Apsyrtu[s] / [VI]vir et Augustali[s] / [via]m lapide turbinat[o] / [a f]oro ad portam / [st]ravit crepidine[s] / castella posuit port[am] / [m]armoribus statu[is] / [fist]ul[e]is et salientibus / ornavit d(e) p(ecunia) s(ua).” CIL 11, 1062. Trans. This author. For an example of an *Augustalis* constructing a road in the Italian city of Falerii during Augustus’ lifetime, see CIL 11, 3083.

163 “[Aug(ustalis) pr]o ludis Augustalibus / [Imp(eratoris) Cae]s(aris) divi f(ili) Augusti / [pontif(icis)] maximi co(n)s(ulis) XIII / [tribu]n[ic]iae potestat(is) / [patris] patriae ex d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) / porticum fecit.” AE 2008, 1709. Trans. This author. See also CIL 11, 1030 and AE 1922, 120.

class in Roman towns, had approved these actions. This endorsement reflected that the munificence of the Augustales was well-known and praised at the highest levels within these local communities. Engagement in public works allowed wealthy freedmen to cultivate a persona of generosity that was linked to their position as an Augustalis.¹⁶⁴

Augustales cherished the recognition and prestige that arose from their donations and sought to be remembered for these honors. More than a dozen inscriptions from Pompeii from the period shortly after Augustus died reflected the prestige that Augustales held.¹⁶⁵ While these inscriptions date to the period after Augustus' death, they still reflect the function of the priesthood of the Augustales throughout this era. An epitaph to "Marcus Cerrinius Restitutus, Augustalis," memorialized the honors that local decurions had bestowed on him.¹⁶⁶ It described how "[t]his place [was] given by decree of the decurions."¹⁶⁷ This Augustalis cherished the privilege of the location of his tomb, which was placed directly outside the city of Pompeii in an area otherwise dedicated to decurion burials.¹⁶⁸ The epitaph of Naevoleia Tyche and her husband, an Augustalis, similarly underscored the central role that their public munificence played in their self-image. Their epitaph honored "Naevoleia Tyche, freedwoman of Lucius, for herself and for Gaius Munatius Faustus, Augustalis and citizen of the district, to whom the decurions, with the consent of the citizens, decreed a bisellium, because of

his merit."¹⁶⁹ In return for his generosity, this Augustalis had received a bisellium, a traditional Roman seat of honor bestowed upon individuals after displaying public generosity that exceeded the expectations of their office.¹⁷⁰ This tomb reflected its occupants' desire to be remembered for the communal honors they earned. The accompanying relief boasted of the Augustalis' generosity by depicting him distributing grain (Appendix, Fig. 4).¹⁷¹ On the left of the relief, individuals, including men, women, and children, waited for their share, underscoring that the deceased Augustalis' generosity had extended to the whole community. On the right, decurions watched and bestowed the bisellium. This image captured the honors that the Augustales earned by donating public works. The epitaph of Gaius Calventius Quietus similarly honored "Gaius Calventius Quietus, Augustalis. On account of his munificence, he is honored with a bisellium by decree of the decurions and with the consensus of the people."¹⁷² Not only did Quietus' epitaph emphasize how this Augustalis had received a bisellium in recognition of his benevolence, but his tomb displayed an image of the bisellium, which demonstrated its centrality to his identity (Appendix, Fig. 5).¹⁷³ Freedmen emphasized in their epitaphs the honors they had received from elites in their community in recognition of their generosity as Augustales. Becoming an Augustales and attaining the prestige associated with the position marked these freedmen's lives as one of their most cherished accomplishments

164 Nicola Mackie, "Urban Munificence and the Growth of Urban Consciousness in Roman Spain," in *The Early Roman Empire in the West*, ed. Thomas Blagg and Martin Millett (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1990), 184.

165 Lauren Hackworth Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 61.

166 "Cerrinius / Restitutus / Augustalis loc(us) d(atu)s d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)." CIL 10, 994. Trans. Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 73.

167 Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 73.

168 *Ibid.*, 56.

169 "Naevoleia L(uci) lib(erta) Tyche sibi et / C(aio) Munatio Fausto Aug(ustali) et pagano / cui decuriones consensu populi / bisellium ob merita eius decreverunt." CIL 10, 1030. Trans. Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 54.

170 Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 43, 59.

171 *Ibid.*, 55.

172 "C(aio) Calventio Quieto / Augustali / huic ob munificent(iam) decurionum / decreto et populi conse(n) su bisellii / honor datus est." CIL 10, 1026. Trans., Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 62.

173 Peterson, *The Freedman in Roman Art*, 63.

for which they wished to be remembered.

Popular priesthoods to Augustus throughout the Latin West arose from opportunity. Freedmen used Augustus' revival of the *Compitalia*, a festival traditionally associated with the freed population, to participate in and demonstrate their worship of the Emperor – a new locus of status and religious power that free-born elite citizens exercised at the provincial and local levels. Wealthy freedmen otherwise barred from political office could use these popular priesthoods to earn recognition by constructing public works in the name of Augustus' divinity, and local elites honored them for their generosity. These *Augustales* prized the honors they received and incorporated both their position and honors into their enduring memorials.

CONCLUSION

THE WORSHIP OF AUGUSTUS IN THE Latin West was not monolithic. It instead emerged through various processes that depended on its proximity to political and religious traditions established in Rome. By associating provincial worship with the foreign deity *Roma*, provincial priests communicated that they did not seek to worship Augustus as a state-recognized deity with a *flamen* – an act that would have been anathema in Rome while Augustus was alive. These provincial priests instead used the title of *sacerdos*. After Augustus died and received a *flamen* in Rome, provincial *flamines* began to appear in the Latin West, which reflected the care that provincial priests took to adhere to Roman religious customs. Roman norms were prevalent in provincial priesthoods because these priesthoods had been established by members of the Roman imperial family while on military campaigns. Provincials remained attuned to Rome's political and religious customs even after they were established, as they participated in provincial councils that interacted with Rome. Provincial priests, who typically were elite individuals, held central roles on this council. They used the prominence of the priesthood to affiliate themselves with Rome and amass

power.

At the local level, by contrast, Roman norms had a lesser effect on the worship of Augustus. In territories long infused with Roman presence, such as Italy, Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, and Lusitania, local priests to Augustus were called *flamines* while Augustus was alive. This title reflected that local elites had established priesthoods for their immediate communities, not for the broader empire. Local citizens used these priesthoods to distinguish themselves and gain prestige within their local communities. These priesthoods to Augustus, however, did not arise uniformly across the empire. In newly conquered regions, such as Tres Galliae and northwest Hispania, no evidence exists of local priesthoods to Augustus that date to the Emperor's reign. This absence suggests that local elites in these more recent additions to the empire may have been wary of contravening Roman custom or did not view the assertion of Augustus' divinity as an effective way to gain power in their communities.

At the popular level, the *Augustales* arose as a priesthood to oversee the worship of the *lares Augusti*. These priesthoods arose from the local initiative of wealthy freedmen who took advantage of Augustus' revival of the festival of the *Compitalia* to become involved in a new source of power that previously had been available only to free-born elites. Because freedmen were otherwise largely excluded from holding important civil magistracies, the priesthood of the *Augustales* afforded these individuals an unprecedented opportunity to obtain an elevated status in their communities by engaging in public works and receiving honors for their contributions.

The three priesthoods to Augustus that emerged during the Emperor's reign demonstrated how different cross-sections of the Latin West used the worship of Augustus to become involved in the new font of imperial power that arose as Rome transitioned from republic to empire. This mediation depended on and was affected by Roman norms regarding the deification of humans, the spread of Roman culture within a region, and the social class of the individuals involved in the worship. The rise of this diverse form of worship across the Latin West demonstrated how bestowing religious honors on the new Emperor offered different people diverse ways to understand the concentration of political

and religious authority in the hands of one man. These varying methods of worship enabled communities to integrate the unprecedented power of emperorship into the religious and political landscape of their own communities.

Despite Augustus' hesitation towards his deification in Rome, worship of the emperor flourished after he died, both in Rome and the provinces. Not only did Romans throughout the empire continue to honor their first emperor, but they apotheosized subsequent emperors for centuries. Twenty-five emperors and members of the imperial family received divine honors, including Emperors Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Hadrian.¹⁷⁴ By the fourth century CE, however, worship of the emperors and the religious milieu in which it had arisen faded due to the growing popularity of the nascent monotheistic religion, Christianity. Worship of the emperor arose from political fluctuations that occurred during the transition from republic to empire, and it would fall with the political and religious changes that accompanied Rome's transition to a Christian empire devoted to the worship of a single deity. ♦

174 Dowden, *Religion and the Romans*, 60-1.

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