

AUGUSTUS AND CAPRICORN: ASTROLOGICAL POLYVALENCY AND IMPERIAL RHETORIC*

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At the beginning of the seventeenth century the great astronomer Kepler wrote to his patron, the Habsburg emperor Rudolf II:

Most noble lord, I have now for several weeks on end devoted my utmost efforts to the nativity of Caesar Augustus, about which your kingly majesty wishes to know, but, as I see, it has been almost in vain. For although it is no specially difficult task to calculate the configuration of the heavens for a particular time, nevertheless, what is lacking in the nativity we are now considering is that we no longer today know the correct time of it.¹

The unfortunate astronomer had spent considerable time combing the evidence of the ancient authors available to him about the date of Augustus' birth.² He attempted to sift through the conflicting evidence about which day would have been Augustus' birthday, before performing complex calculations of the planetary movements, in order to assess the role Capricorn might have played in his horoscope. His ingenious solution to the problem failed to impress Rudolf, as we can see from Kepler's second letter on the subject (the emperor's letters are not extant):

Most noble lord, your kingly majesty has suspected me of a lack of diligence, as though I had not sufficiently reported the nativity of Augustus. . .³

Rudolf had his own ideas about Augustus' horoscope: he was apparently committed to the idea that Capricorn was the sign in which Augustus' Ascendant⁴ lay. This view probably explains his particular interest in the question — his own Ascendant fell in Capricorn.⁵ Kepler recognized the source of this view as Joseph Scaliger, perhaps the foremost chronologist of his time, who had discussed the issue in his editions of Manilius' *Astronomica* in 1579 and 1599, as well as in his chronological work *De emendatione temporum*. Scaliger, declared Kepler, was 'very diligent and would not readily overlook an author who wrote about a matter'. Kepler was naturally eager to show his master that his diligence was such that he had read even more of the ancient evidence than Scaliger.⁶

Rudolf expected all kinds of advice from his 'imperial mathematician', asking him about the future of the Turkish kingdom, then the most obvious threat to the Empire, about the outcome of a quarrel between the Republic of Venice and Pope Paul V, about an astrological calendar he had read, about the special conjunction of planets which occurred every eight hundred years due to recur in 1603, and about the natal horoscope of the Prophet Mohammed, among many other matters. In this period, questions which demanded expertise in astrology and chronology were the proper interest of scholars and their patrons. Not only the emperor Rudolf, with his notorious magpie-like mentality, but also a former patron, the Bavarian chancellor Hans Georg Herwart von Hohenburg, had demanded that Kepler produce a horoscope for Augustus' birth. Herwart had first written about an ominous star-configuration described in Lucan's *Pharsalia* in 1597. In subsequent correspondence about this issue, in March 1599, he brought up the problem which was to give Kepler so many troubled weeks:

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¹ J. Kepler, *Opera Omnia* (ed. Frisch, 1870), VIII, 331, my translation. These papers were not dated.

² *ibid.*, 331.

³ *ibid.*, 333.

⁴ The Ascendant is the point on the zodiac rising in the East at the moment depicted by the horoscope.

⁵ 'Cur autem portenderit Capricornus ipsi regnum, non reperio, nisi quod idem de nostro Rodolpho dici potest, cui Capricornus in ortu . . . Sic Reginae Angliae . . .' J. Kepler, *Gesammelte Werke* XIII (ed. Kaspar), 315.

⁶ Kepler had his disagreements with Scaliger: in his work *De vero Anno, quo aeternus Dei Filius humanam naturam in Utero benedictae Virginis Mariae assumpsit*, he argued for a different year of Christ's birth, while he kept his mind off the siege of Linz going on all around him in 1626 by inventing arguments against Scaliger's work.

While I write this an astrological, or rather genethliological⁷ question of this ancient type occurs to me, a question which seems to me at least, rather noble and distinguished. . . How, I want to know, could Augustus have been born on the ninth day before the Kalends of October 'a little before sunrise' and yet born on a day 'under Capricorn'?⁸

In fact Herwart also mentions Scaliger's arguments before offering his own solution, based on numismatic evidence, that the significance of Capricorn lies in the possibility that there was an eclipse in Capricorn in 38 B.C. — a solution which, unlike most others from the seventeenth century, has found no subsequent supporters. Scaliger changed his mind about the question, perhaps in response to his critics, though his initial thesis found support from some contemporaries, as later. The tale of the controversy is to be found in a work of Albert Rubens, son of the painter, in his own discussion of Augustus' birthday.⁹ This remarkable essay covers nearly all of the options on Augustus' horoscope canvassed in later centuries.

Rubens observed that the question had by that time long exercised the ingenuity of learned men.¹⁰ Many more distinguished scholars, in succeeding centuries less enthusiastic about the disciplines of chronology and astrology, right up to the present day have joined their number, but the question seems to have generated more fascination than satisfactory answers. Even a scholar as learned in astrological lore, and as tough-minded, as Housman changed his mind about the question between editions of Manilius, as Scaliger before him.

The fact that so many well-equipped intellects failed to produce an answer which could satisfy posterity, and often themselves, should perhaps make their enterprises serve as negative *exempla* for us. The argument of this paper is that these scholars failed because they sought a single answer to the question of Augustus' birth-sign. There must always have been not one single sense in which Capricorn was Augustus' birth-sign, but many senses, and it was the flexibility of astrological methods and the polyvalency of the symbols employed that made astrology so effective an instrument of Augustan rhetoric.

In what follows, the ancient evidence, both archaeological and literary, and the modern controversy are once more reviewed in order to consider the roles which Capricorn could have played in the horoscope, and to examine the related question of what Capricorn meant and thus why Augustus might have chosen to publicize it as his sign. This last issue puzzled Kepler, who thought that Capricorn had no particularly lucky significance.¹¹

I. THE LITERARY EVIDENCE

As Rubens observed, 'Nodus ac cardo controversiae nascitur ex Suetonio'¹²:

When in retreat in Apollonia, Augustus and Agrippa together went up to the observatory of Theogenes the astrologer; they wished to consult him about their future careers. Agrippa went first and was prophesied such almost incredibly good fortune, that Augustus, afraid and ashamed that he might be found to be less successful, held back from disclosing the hour of his birth. Yet when at last, after a great deal of hesitation, he grudgingly supplied the information for which both were pressing him, Theogenes leapt up and flung himself at his feet; and this gave Augustus such implicit faith in the destiny awaiting him that he soon (*mox*) ventured to publish his horoscope, and struck a silver coin stamped with Capricorn, the sign under which he had been born.¹³

⁷ Genethliology was the branch of astrology concerning birth-horoscopes.

⁸ Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 298.

⁹ *Alberti Rubeni, Dissertatio de Natali Die Caesaris Augusti*, in I. G. Graevius, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum* XI (Venice, 1735), col. 1378.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, col. 1378.

¹¹ ' . . . Capricornus . . . hatt nichts absonderlich glückliches zu bedeütten gehabt', Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 335. Cf. Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 315.

¹² *op. cit.* (n. 9).

¹³ Suet, *Aug.* 94.12: 'In secessu Apolloniae Theogenis mathematici pergulam comite Agrippa ascenderat; cum Agrippa qui prior consulebat, magna et paene incredibilia praedicerentur, reticere ipse genituram suam nec velle edere perseverabat, metu ac pudore ne minor inveniretur. Qua tamen post multas adhortationes vix et cunctanter edita, exilivit Theogenes adoravitque eum. Tantam mox fiduciam fati Augustus habuit, ut thema suum vulgaverit nummumque argenteum nota sideris Capricorni, quo natus est, percussit'.

The word *mox* is imprecise, but it is evident that it is impossible to draw definite conclusions about the date of this event, as the story, if based on fact, was certainly embroidered subsequently for dramatic effect.

Dio confirms the story that Augustus had his horoscope published: his account appears after his mention of the decree banning all diviners from private consultation, or from discussing anyone's death, which dates from A.D. 11. He claims that the publication of the horoscope was by means of an edict (ἐκ προγραφῆς), clearly amazed that anyone in Augustus' position would take such a risk:

But so little did Augustus care for himself that he set out the arrangement of the stars under which he was born for everyone to see in an edict.¹⁴

As for Suetonius' story about the coins issued by Augustus, it is amply backed up by numismatic evidence, of which we shall examine a small part later.

Suetonius also tells us that Octavian was born shortly before sunrise, eight days (in our reckoning) before the Kalends of October, 63 B.C. — 'natus est Augustus M. Tullio Cicerone C. Antonio consulibus novem ante Kalendis Octobris paulo ante solis exortum'.¹⁵ Hence there is apparently a contradiction, as the sun is in Libra on this date. Since Suetonius tells us Augustus was born a little before sunrise, we know that his Ascendant, the point rising in the East as the child is born, which was more important than the sun-sign in ancient astrology, was also in Libra — it was rising with the Sun, or only just before it. So how could Capricorn have been Augustus' birth-sign? The immediate reaction was to emend Suetonius, on the argument that a scribe had mistakenly written 'exortum' for 'occasum', as was proposed by one Johannes Tristanus Sanctamantius.¹⁶ This was a solution which appealed to Kepler at one stage.¹⁷ But before we consider attempts to explain Capricorn's role, we need to see whether Libra could have been recognized as Augustus' birth-sign.

There is some evidence for this possibility. Virgil (in *Georgics* 1.32–5) has Scorpio draw in its claws, and Virgo (Erigone) make room for Augustus in the sky, space which Libra occupies. But this is not quite unequivocal evidence, since it is merely a reference to Augustus' future translation to the stars, rather than his birth, and the place may have been chosen in order to make learned reference to Libra's late arrival in the Greco-Roman Zodiac. More straightforward is the poem in the Latin Anthology which clearly states that Caesar's sign is Libra.¹⁸ But there must still be doubt as to which Caesar is meant.

Manilius, the author of the long didactic astrological poem dedicated to Augustus, seems the most likely source of an authoritative pronouncement on Augustus' birth-sign. In Book IV (542–7), he praises the man born when the autumnal claws begin to rise (in a section devoted to discussion of Ascendants) in terms which can only refer to an emperor.¹⁹ Again, at 773–7, Libra is Italy's own sign, and is praised as such, and l. 776 ('qua genitus Caesarque meus nunc condidit orbem'), though corrupt, can only plausibly be reconstructed as referring to Caesar, the founder of the city, as having been born under Libra.²⁰

The picture of Augustus as Rome's new founder is familiar from Suetonius.²¹ But controversy over the chronology of Manilius' writing throws the conclusion that Augustus is meant into doubt. Goold, in his 1977 introduction to his Loeb edition (endorsed in 1992), followed Housman in arguing that Augustus is dead by the fourth book, and Tiberius the proper recipient of astrological compliments.²² To add to the potential confusion, it is not even

¹⁴ Dio Cassius LVI.25.5: καίτοι οὕτως οὐδὲν τῷ Αὐγούστῳ τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἔμελεν ὥστε ἐκ προγραφῆς πᾶσι τὴν τῶν ἀστέρων διάταξιν, ὅφ' ὧν ἐγγένηντο, φανερώσαι.

¹⁵ Suet., *Aug.* 5.1.

¹⁶ This solution was rejected by Rubens (op. cit. n. 9), col. 1379) on the grounds that another passage in Suetonius refers to Octavian's father coming late to the Senate because he had been delayed by the birth of his son, which would hardly fit with an evening nativity.

¹⁷ Kepler, Letter to Herwart, 9–10 April 1599, in op. cit. (n. 1), XIII, 320.

¹⁸ *De Duobus Signis, Anthol. Lat.* 43, PLM Baehrens 4, p. 144: 'Laniger astrorum ductor Taurusque secundus, / Tum sidus geminum et Cancri fulgentis imago, / Truxque

Leo et Virgo, / quae spicea munera gestat, / Et Libram qui Caesar habet, Chelaeque minaces . . .

¹⁹ 'Sed, cum autumnales coeperunt surgere Chelae, / felix aequato genitus sub pondere Librae. / examen sistet vitaeque necisque / imponet iugum terris legesque rogabit. / illum urbes et regna tremant nutuque regentur / unius et caeli post terras iura manebunt'.

²⁰ 'Hesperiam sua Libra tenet, qua condita Roma / orbis et imperium retinet discrimina rerum, / lancibus et positas gentes tollit premitque, / †qua genitus Caesarque meus nunc condidit orbem† / et propriis frenat pendentem nutibus orbem'.

²¹ Suet., *Aug.* 7.

²² Housman's edition of Book IV (1920).

clear that Libra was Tiberius' birth-sign, although there is some other evidence to support this supposition.²³ The birth-date of 16 November would not allow a definite decision in favour of either Libra or Scorpio.²⁴

But the evidence in favour of Libra is surely outweighed by that for Capricorn. In Book II of Manilius, Capricorn is given unequivocal recommendation (507–9):

...contra Capricornus in ipsum
convertit visus (quid enim mirabitur ille
maius, in Augusti felix cum fulserit ortum?)

Capricorn, on the other hand, turns his gaze on himself (what greater sign can he ever marvel at, since it was he that shone propitiously on Augustus' birth?)

This is backed up by the poem attributed to Germanicus, an adaptation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* (558–60):

hic, Auguste, tuum genitali corpore numen
attonitas inter gentes patriamque paventem
in caelum tulit et maternis reddidit astris

This sign, Augustus, thanks to his body which engendered you, brought to the sky your divine soul, before the eyes of the amazed peoples and the frightened country, and returned it to the mother stars.

Here the words *genitali* and *maternis* make it clear that in this translation to the stars Augustus is carried back to the constellation from which he came. Together with Suetonius' evidence, and that of the visual material, as we shall see, Capricorn seems far the stronger candidate.

II. MODERN CONTROVERSY

Calendrical Arguments

Part of the particular fascination of the question for seventeenth-century scholars was the difficulty of the chronological issues involved. Kepler went straight to the point. 'Quaesitur quo die anni hodierni Iuliani retro extensi id acciderit (We need to know on what day of today's Julian year retrojected [on to the old calendar] it happened)'.²⁵ Several scholars, including Seth Calvisius and Kepler, argued that the birth must have fallen in Julian July. Kepler favoured 2 July.²⁶ Scaliger invoked the confusion of the calendar before the Julian reform precisely for the purpose of dealing with the apparent contradiction between Augustus' birthday and the prominence of Capricorn. Hence he argued in his 1599 edition of Manilius that someone was confused by the implications of the Julian reform — either Suetonius, or Theogenes, and after him Augustus and Germanicus.²⁷ If Suetonius was right about the time of the birth and its Ascendant, and the date, then that date belonged to the old Roman year, which was the equivalent of a date in the Julian December. Garrod revived this suggestion in 1911, arguing that Augustus was actually born on 20 December, when Capricorn would have

²³ There was a silver minting of Queen Pythodoris Philometor of Pontus with Tiberius' head on the obverse and a star between scales on the reverse which is clearly paired with an issue showing Augustus on the obverse and Capricorn on the reverse of three years earlier. W. H. Waddington, E. Baisdon and T. Reinach, *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure* (1904), 1, pp. 20 and 20 bis, 21 and 21 bis. J. Bayet, *R.E.L.* 17 (1939), 141–71, suggests that the date 63 (of an unknown era) given on the Tiberius coins may correspond to A.D. 12.

²⁴ In support of Scorpio, see W. von Voigt, *Philologus* 58 (1899), 170–204, W. Gundel, *RE III A 1* (1927), 605f.,

and T. Hölscher, 'Historische Reliefs', in W. D. Heilmeyer, H. G. Martin, and E. La Rocca (eds), *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik. Eine Ausstellung im Martin Gropius-Bau, Berlin, 7 Juni–14 August 1988* (1988), 351–400.

²⁵ Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 5), x, 109.

²⁶ Rubens (*Dissertatio de Gemma Augustea* (ed. Kähler, 1968), 12), using the reference to the Catalinarian conspiracy, argued on the other hand that it really was the Julian 23 September, which corresponded to the 18 or 19 November.

²⁷ Scaliger, *Manilii Astronomicon* (Lyons), p. 162.

been sun-sign and Ascendant.²⁸ He worked on the assumption that only sixty seven days were intercalated in 46 B.C., and that there was only one intercalary month between 63 and 46, both of which assumptions are highly questionable. There are various versions of this thesis; one which inverts the argument was most recently elaborated by Radke.²⁹ He tries to prove that Augustus was born on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of January in 64 of the civil year, when there was, according to his calculations, a discrepancy of eighty three days from the Julian calendar. Radke suggests that this was the date that Augustus gave to Theogenes, and that it was only later, in 30 B.C., that the Senate, after a new calculation of the birthday, decreed the day on which it should be celebrated. This is not a very convincing thesis, not least because there is no evidence to suggest that there was a recalculation in Augustus' case or indeed in anyone else's. Brind'Amour argues that there is no chance that Augustus' birthdate given according to the old calendar could have corresponded to a date in Julian December, and goes on to produce a series of arguments in support of the idea that 22 December of the civil year in 64 would in fact have coincided with the same date in the Julian calendar.³⁰

Rival Theories about the Place of Capricorn in Augustus' Horoscope

Most modern scholars have settled for a September date, making Libra the sun-sign, and they have broadly fallen into two camps. Each side has been joined by reinforcements with further ammunition against their opponents, each arguing that they have finally settled the question. Such claims have continued to be made; in 1990 we find Glen Bowersock on one side and Michael Schutz on the other.³¹ Consensus has never been reached, and many have opted for agnosticism on the question.

One camp took its cue from the solution which Scaliger put forward in 1579, though he withdrew it in his revised edition of Manilius in 1599; having devoted so much time to chronology, he was perhaps more inclined to find a chronological solution. Citing the astrological writer Demophilus, Scaliger suggested that though Augustus' sun-sign and Ascendant was Libra, Capricorn was the zodiac sign of conception, following a rule that in the case of diurnal births of ten-month babies, the sign in a certain angular relationship to the Sun in the natal horoscope was the sign of conception.³² Bouché-Leclercq, author of *L'astrologie grecque*, the modern bible of ancient astrology, in 1899 produced a different version of the thesis: Capricorn was the *chronocrator*, or Lord of Time for the month of conception.³³ Versions of this thesis found many supporters,³⁴ on simpler grounds: if he was born in September, he was conceived in December, when the sun was in Capricorn. This answer appealed to Bowersock, who thought that the question had finally been settled by excavation of Augustus' giant sundial, to which we shall come later. A clinching argument in favour of the conception-theory seems to be found in Plutarch's *Life of Romulus*. Tarutius of Firmum, one of the earliest prominent Italian astrologers, cast the horoscope of Romulus, first founder of Rome, retrospectively, in response to a question from Varro:

Tarutius had the fine audacity to pronounce that the conception of Romulus in his mother's womb took place in the first year of the second Olympiad, on the twenty-third day of the Egyptian month

²⁸ Garrod, *Manilii Astronomicum*, Liber II.509, pp. 114–20.

²⁹ G. Radke, *Fasti Romani: Betrachtungen zur Frühgeschichte des römischen Kalenders* (1990), 74–87.

³⁰ P. Brind'Amour, *Le calendrier romain: recherches chronologiques*, Collection des Études Anciennes (1983).

³¹ G. Bowersock, 'The Pontificate of Augustus', in K. A. Raaflaub and M. Toher (eds), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate* (1990), 380–94; M. Schutz, 'Zur Sonnenuhr des Augustus auf dem Marsfeld: eine Auseinandersetzung mit E. Büchners Rekonstruktion und seiner Deutung der Ausgrabungsergebnisse, aus der Sicht eines Physikers', *Gymnasium* 97 (1990), 432–57.

³² Scaliger counted the birth as diurnal on the grounds that it was close to sunrise, and cited the anecdote about Octavian's mother and Apollo (Suet., *Aug.* 49) to show that Octavian was a ten-month baby. The relevant angular relationship (aspect, in astrological parlance) was a left square. Edition of Manilius (1579).

³³ A. Bouché-Leclercq, *L'astrologie grecque* (1899), 373, n. 2.

³⁴ T. Reinach, *Num. Chron.* 4.2 (1902), 3; T. Rice Holmes, *CQ* 6 (1912), 73–81; J. Bayet, *R.E.L.* 17 (1939), 141–71; R. J. Getty, *Phoenix* 5 (1951), 96–107; T. Hölscher, *Jahrbuch des Zentralmuseums Mainz* 12 (1965), 71–3. Cf. Unger, *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie* 129 (1884), 569ff.

Choiac at the third hour, when the sun was totally eclipsed, and that he was born on the 21st day of the month Thoth at sunrise.³⁵

In this passage we have a contemporary astrological expert considering the moment of conception, and in fact a contemporary who could have constructed or altered his answer in response to Octavian's rise to power. Most commentators reckon that the date should be assigned to the revised Alexandrian calendar, which allows reconstruction of a conception on 24 December and birth on 20 September according to the Julian calendar, thus under Capricorn and Libra respectively, just as for Augustus.³⁶ Such a remarkable coincidence would seem to back up the conception theory. However, one recent calculation dissents, placing the dates of Romulus' conception and birth according to Plutarch on 24 June and 24 March respectively.³⁷

There are also other question-marks over the conception theory. Why does Suetonius use the term *natus* for conception? This Housman could not accept. Having been seduced by the conception theory in his editio maior of Manilius in 1903, he was then inspired by the calculations of Smyly in 1913 to argue that it was because the Moon was in Capricorn at Augustus' birth that it was adopted as his sign.³⁸ Kepler, though he located the birth in Julian July, had suggested this solution.³⁹ Rubens admits the potential of this theory, though ultimately preferring a third option.⁴⁰ It was a theory which found new adherents from the late nineteenth century onwards, apart from Housman and Smyly.⁴¹ Support was found for the theory in another reference to the work of Tarutius, this time on the horoscope of the city of Rome. Cicero, who reports this, remarks of the horoscope only that the Moon was in Libra, a remark which links interestingly with Manilius' description of Libra as Rome's birth-sign:

However, my good friend Tarutius of Firmum, who was steeped in Chaldaic lore, made a calculation, based on the assumption that the city's birthday was on the Feast of Pales (at which time tradition says it was founded by Romulus), and from that calculation, Tarutius even went so far as to assert that Rome was born when the moon was in Libra, and from that fact unhesitatingly prophesied her destiny.⁴²

Partisans of the Moon theory, following Kepler's citation from Manilius,⁴³ suggested that in earlier astrological theory the Moon was more important than the Sun for defining horoscopes. Alternatively, they cited another common astrological doctrine, that while the Sun ruled day-time births, the Moon ruled night-time nativities, such as those of Augustus. A further point in their favour is that Manilius, who is not only evidence for contemporary theory, but also writing for Augustus, does not mention conception as a possible source of horoscopic data. There is also the consideration that the great astrologer Ptolemy admitted that finding the moment of conception posed problems, and thus deterred astrologers. Kraft cited numismatic evidence pairing the Moon with Capricorn to support the Moon theory.⁴⁴

However, the conception theorists were not to be defeated by such considerations. They argued that only obscure doctrines gave the Moon the defining role in the horoscope, and that Augustan propaganda clearly laid more emphasis on links with the Sun than the Moon. Furthermore, though methods of calculation may be disputed, the Moon is just outside Capricorn on the Julian dating of 23 September.⁴⁵ So it looks as if we are left in a similar position to Kepler; after further centuries of enquiry, conclusions are highly provisional.

³⁵ Plutarch, *Romulus* 12.5: εὐ μάλα τεθαροηκότεως καὶ ἀνδρείως ἀπεφῆνατο τὴν μὲν ἐν τῇ μητρὶ γεγονέναι τοῦ Ῥομύλου σύλληψιν ἔπει πρῶτω τῆς δευτέρας ὀλυμπιάδος, ἐν μηνὶ κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Χοιάκ, τρίτῃ καὶ εἰκάδι, τρίτης ὥρας, καθ' ἣν ὁ ἥλιος ἐξέλιπε παντελῶς. τὴν δ' ἐμφανῆ γένεσιν ἐν μηνὶ Θωῦθ, ἡμέρᾳ πρῶτῃ μετ' εἰκάδα, περὶ ἡλίου ἀνατολάς.

³⁶ J.-H. Abry, *R.E.L.* 66 (1988), 109. Scaliger also changed his mind about this issue between editions of Manilius.

³⁷ Brind'Amour, *op. cit.* (n. 30), 243.

³⁸ Housman, *Manilius* (1903), pp. lxx–lxxi; A. E. Housman, *CQ* 7 (1913), 109–14. He began from J. G. Smyly, *Hermathena* 17 (1913), 136–68.

³⁹ Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 1), vi, 607, VIII, 332–3.

⁴⁰ Rubens, *op. cit.* (n. 9), col. 1381.

⁴¹ E. Riess, *RE* II (1896), 1822; W. Gundel, *Philologus* N.F. 35 (1926), 309–38.

⁴² Cicero, *De Divinatione* II.98: 'Quidem Tarutius Firmianus, familiaris noster, in primis Chaldaicis rationibus eruditus, urbis etiam nostrae natalem diem repetebat ab iis Parilibus, quibus eam a Romulo conditam accepimus, Romamque, in Iugo cum esset luna, natam esse dicebat'.

⁴³ Kepler, *op. cit.* (n. 1), VI, 607.

⁴⁴ K. Kraft, *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 17 (1967), 18, n. 3. But see below on the Q. Oppius coin.

⁴⁵ T. Holscher, *Jahrbuch des Zentralmuseums Mainz* 12 (1965), 72.

III. CASTING AUGUSTUS' HOROSCOPE

Housman reprimanded commentators for making suggestions without knowing anything about ancient astrology. But the vital clue all the warring commentators have missed in their attempts to solve this question, however detailed their technical knowledge of astrological doctrines, is the significance of the nature of astrology. As emerges, if you cast and interpret a horoscope following the prescriptions of ancient treatises, the last thing astrologers worried about was contradiction, the concept so fundamental to the solutions offered by the opposing sides on this question.⁴⁶ The art of astrology consisted of finding more and more ways of answering the same question. The result of all this accretion of doctrines is that if you approach a natal horoscope with a simple question about the 'native' or subject, such as 'How many children will this person have?', you can end up with six or more different answers ranging from 'None' to 'Twenty-four or more', by following recommended procedures.⁴⁷ This was the virtuoso performance to which they aspired. On the basis of the fundamental elements, a competent astrologer would improvise creatively. This is one reason that arguments based on chronological development must be treated with caution, since astrologers were, to an extent, individualists. Furthermore, a major part of the appeal for emperors, and in particular for Augustus, who was after all experimenting in the ideological arena, was the flexibility of astrology. It combined familiar, very rich symbols in new ways, so that a complex network of signs could be created. While no one, not even Augustus and his consultant astrologers, could understand all the meanings generated, there was enough density for astrological symbols to be read at different levels by different audiences.

In this context, it is no surprise to find that there was a theory (which goes back to a key early Hellenistic astrological text), which has escaped all the commentators determined to find the single meaning of Capricorn:

Petosiris says that wherever the Moon happens to be at conception, this will be the Ascendant or the place opposite it [the Descendant]. Wherever the Moon happens to be at the birth, that will be the place of the Ascendant at conception.⁴⁸

Hence both conception theorists and Moon theorists could be right.

But it is important not to stop here, secure in the knowledge that there is ample reason for a scholarly cease-fire in this abstruse doctrine. Astrologers were individualists, and even if Theogenes, or other court astrologers took account of this doctrine, they would not leave the matter there. Any court astrologer worth his salt would seek out another theory to support his case. For instance, there is a system of locating the different provinces of life, such as marriage, riches, or travel, by calculating where a set of points fall. These points are known as the Lots. A few scholars picked up on this doctrine and proposed it as a third solution to the Capricorn puzzle. It was Gottfried Wendelin, followed by Rubens,⁴⁹ in the seventeenth century, who saw that, following one of the several methods for casting the Lots, that of Manilius, the most important Lot, the Lot of Fortune, falls in Capricorn. The system of the Lots was more important for some astrologers than for others, and in Manilius it was very important. For most astrologers the Lot of Fortune was sufficiently important to be marked on the chart like a planet. Gundel, who picked up the idea, noted that the interpretation of Capricorn's importance as the site of the Lot of Fortune gave the line from Manilius, '[Capricornus]. . . in Augusti felix cum fulserit ortum' a technical sense. *Felix*, rather than being 'propitious' in a general sense, referred specifically to the 'lucky' place of the Lot of Luck.⁵⁰ Rubens even suggested that the circle enclosing the figure of Capricorn on the costly gem known as the Gemma Augustea represented the symbol for the Lot of Fortune.⁵¹ Rubens pointed to coins

⁴⁶ See T. S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (1994) and idem, *Ancient Astrology* (1994), ch. 5.

⁴⁷ See the horoscope calculated for Prince Charles, in my *Ancient Astrology*, 210.

⁴⁸ Ὁ δὲ Πετώσιρις φησιν, ὅτι, ὅπου ἡ σελήνη ἔτυχεν ἐπὶ τῆς σορᾶς, τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ἀποκύψιν ὠροσκοπεῖ ἢ τὸ τοῦτου διάμετρον ὅπου δὲ ἡ σελήνη ἐπὶ τῆς ἀποκύψεως

ἔτυχεν, ἐκείνο τὴν σορᾶν φησιν ὠροσκοπημέναι, Scholion on Demophilus, in E. Riess, *Nechepso-Petosiris*, *Philologus Suppl.* vi (1892), 325–88, fr. 14.a.

⁴⁹ Wendelin was cited in Rubens, *op. cit.* (n. 5), col. 1381 and, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 12.

⁵⁰ Manilius II.509; W. Gundel, *Philologus* N.F. 35 (1926), 309–38.

⁵¹ Rubens, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 12.

associating Capricorn with objects identified by Lactantius as attributes of Fortuna. An astute astrologer might have noticed the potential of Fortuna for Augustus and played up this element. If we look at modern attempts to cast Augustus' horoscope, other elements which could be played up could also come into view.

IV. THE HOROSCOPE OF AUGUSTUS

In the light of the possibility that the conception theorists and the Moon theorists can be reconciled, we may look again at two earlier attempts to reconstruct Augustus' birthchart. Both Brind'Amour and Abry use Tuckerman's ephemerides for the date of the 22 September, though their figures differ slightly. (For a reconstruction according to Brind'Amour's figures, see Fig. 1.) Abry simply relies on what she describes as the view of the majority,⁵² whereas Brind'Amour offers new arguments (above, n. 30). Accepting this reconstruction of the time of birth for the moment, it becomes obvious that Capricorn, as well as being the location of the Moon, is also one of the Cardinal signs, being the site of the IMC (Imum Caelum). (The Cardinal points, or Cardines, known as 'angles' to modern astrologers, are four sites which impart special powers to astrological entities located in them. They are the Ascendant, the point rising in the East, the Midheaven directly overhead, the Descendant setting in the West, and the IMC, the point opposite the Midheaven, which is invisible because it is below the horizon.)

But it is necessary to look at more than one element in the horoscope; the mistake made by too many commentators has been to seek to identify a single answer. Brind'Amour found little remarkable in the chart: except that Mercury was in his house, exaltation and decan, that is, in locations in the chart defined according to various rules as belonging to Mercury, and thus as increasing his influence. But on Abry's interpretation it was indeed the sort of horoscope to impress an astrologer, if not to make him adopt an immediate *proskynesis* position. The most impressive feature, in her view, is the coincidence of the Cardines with the first degrees of the four zodiac signs in which equinoxes and solstices took place. Because Augustus was born on the equinox, at dawn on 22 September, the Cardines were ninety degrees apart. (A normal horoscope, unless for a location on the equator, will not have its Cardines ninety degrees apart, because the ecliptic, the apparent path of the Sun and planets, lies at an angle to the equator, crossing it only at the equinoxes.) Now since his Ascendant is conjunct with the sun (he was born just before dawn), the Cardines fall at the beginning of each sign. Apart from Capricorn and Libra, the Midheaven is in Cancer, and the Descendant in Aries.

Furthermore, Jupiter, king of planets as of gods, and a beneficent star, is in his exaltation, which maximizes his power for good. The horoscope is also related to the *thema mundi*, the horoscope of the beginning of the world, a well-known doctrine, according to which the Ascendant was in Cancer, the Midheaven in Aries, the Descendant in Capricorn, and the IMC in Libra, as Abry notes.⁵³ In this horoscope, Cancer was in the Ascendant, Aries in Midheaven, and Capricorn on the Descendant. So Augustus' birth could take on cosmic dimensions.

At any rate, Capricorn is only one of a number of significant elements immediately apparent to the astrologer; we must remember that according to Suetonius and Dio the whole horoscope was published. There are some artistic productions relevant to the importance of the Cardinal signs which should be mentioned here. One agate shows a male head with Capricorn and Libra just by the neck, which may well be Augustus,⁵⁴ while two others belong to a series of glass-pastes in which a male head appears with ram, Capricorn, and crab.⁵⁵ There is another agate which may be relevant: Libra and Capricorn, Cancer, a swan, and something

⁵² Abry, *op. cit.* (n. 36), simply asserts that the majority of historians have accepted the conclusions of W. Drumann and P. Groebe in *Geschichte Roms* (1906), 785 and of Ginzler, *Handbuch des mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* II (1911), 208, 270-3, supported by T. Rice Holmes, *CQ* 6 (1912), 74-81.

⁵³ Abry, *op. cit.* (n. 36), 113. *Thema mundi*: Manilius IV. 791-6, Firmicus Maternus III. 1.

⁵⁴ P. S. Fossing, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems and Cameos in the Thorvaldsen Museum* (1929), No. 1197.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, No. 1596; E. Zwierlein-Diehl (ed.), *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien* II (1979), No. 811.

SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

Aries	♈	Libra	♎
Taurus	♉	Scorpio	♏
Gemini	♊	Sagittarius	♐
Cancer	♋	Capricorn	♑
Leo	♌	Aquarius	♒
Virgo	♍	Pisces	♓

PLANETS

Sun	☉	Moon	☾
Saturn	♄	Venus	♀
Jupiter	♃	Mars	♂
Mercury	☿		

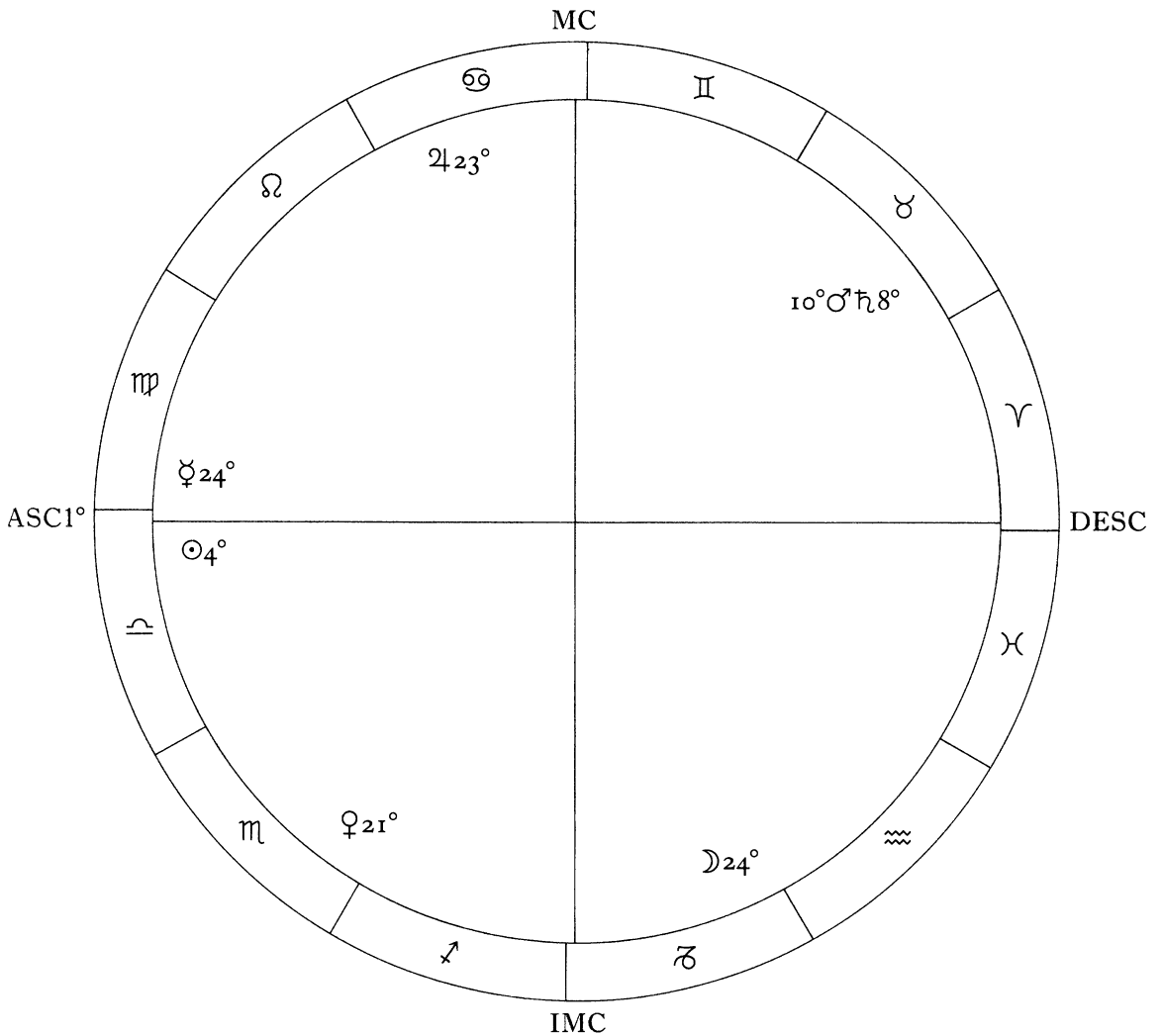


FIG. 1. NATAL HOROSCOPE OF AUGUSTUS 22 SEPTEMBER 63 B.C., 5.30 A.M.

difficult to identify are visible.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Augustus had two obelisks placed in front of the shrine of Caesar Augustus, the Caesareum, in Alexandria, and set on two newly-made bronze bases in the form of crabs, which could represent the sign of his Midheaven.⁵⁷ Artists or their patrons could select different elements from Augustus' horoscope to emphasize, as astrologers could — they could accept more than one birth-sign.

But there is one more startling revelation of Capricorn's role. As Brind'Amour noted, there is a common astrological method of calculating conception, 273 days before the birth, or ten sidereal revolutions of the moon.⁵⁸ If we allow symmetry in setting the time at dawn, Augustus was conceived at 7.05 a.m. on 23 December 64 (see Fig. 2). The Ascendant is then in 1° Capricorn, the sun in 8° Capricorn, the Moon in 25° Capricorn and Mercury in 8° Capricorn. A conjunction of the luminaries and Mercury with the Ascendant in Capricorn on the Winter Solstice, the moment when the Sun begins to rise again!

The reconstructions of Abry and Brind'Amour are wonderfully apt illustrations of the variety of symbolic possibilities in a horoscope. There are some doubts, however, which need to be addressed. Can we accept the arguments which give the Julian date of 22 September? And can we accept this date as identical with the equinox? Strictly speaking, the equinox would not have fallen on the date of Augustus' birth: when it was not floating around because of the erratic intercalations of the pontiffs, it would have fallen on 26/27 September, as Caesar's experts had planned.⁵⁹ However, both the issue of the coincidence of the birth with the equinox, and considerations of the precise date need to be contextualized. There was obviously a variety of theories around about when the equinox fell, though 24 September seems a favoured date, Varro's system offered an alternative.⁶⁰ In addition, surviving horoscopes⁶¹ show that astrologers were rarely concerned with the problems resulting from the obliquity of the ecliptic, and therefore would not necessarily have noticed, in calculating the horoscope, whether or not it was properly the equinox. They would simply have relied on whichever theories they had heard. It is worth noting that most surviving horoscopes assume that the Cardines are 90° apart if they pay attention to individual degrees at all, as opposed to whole signs. So it would not have been obvious that this was an unusual type of horoscope.

In general, any reconstruction is made uncertain by the fluidity of astrological theory, for there were a variety of ways in which the signs could be arranged in the zodiac: that is, they began from different vernal points.⁶² Furthermore, there are a number of different ways of calculating the conception-date. The very source used by Brind'Amour mentions another.⁶³ We can only say that the two reconstructions might have been potential options for Theogenes and his ilk.

In addition to the fluidity of astrological theory, it is important to understand the fluidity of ancient chronology for ancient astrologers. It is necessary to set the whole enquiry in the concrete context of a particular astrologer dealing with Augustus' horoscope. There are a number of points at issue here: first, the prevailing ignorance about the calendar, which was not so fundamental to orientation as it is today. The pontiffs, after Julius Caesar's death, failed to keep to the rules, presumably because they did not understand them, and Augustus failed to correct the problem for thirty six years.⁶⁴ The failure to implement the Julian calendar indicates that Augustus' understanding of such matters, presumably like everyone else's, was limited. So, which date would Augustus have given for his birthday? In the *Res Gestae*, on other inscriptions, and in a letter to his grandson, it was the *IX Kal. Oct.*, as in Suetonius and Dio.⁶⁵ These latter obviously saw no difficulty, since they felt able to give the exact number of days Augustus lived, as if the pre-Julian date was exactly the same as the Julian. Would Augustus have given a different date before the Julian reform, another before his own reform,

⁵⁶ Catalogue, G. Sena Chiesa, *Gemme del Museo di Aquileia* (1966), No. 1502.

⁵⁷ Pliny, *HN* xxxvi.69; Bowersock, op. cit. (n. 31), 384–5.

⁵⁸ Censorinus, *De Die Natali* 11.8; Varro ap. Aulus Gellius 11.10.8.

⁵⁹ It was only after the Council of Nicaea, and in the Gregorian attempt to reconstruct that calendar, that the equinox fell on 23 September, or 22 September in leap years. Schutz, op. cit. (n. 31), 446–7.

⁶⁰ *De Re Rustica* 1.28.1, see Brind'Amour, op. cit. (n. 30), 15ff.

⁶¹ See those in O. Neugebauer and H. B. Van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes* (1959).

⁶² *ibid.*, 4.

⁶³ Censorinus, *De Die Natali* 11.11. See also Vettius Valens 1.23.

⁶⁴ In 8 B.C. a decree of Augustus, engraved on a bronze tablet, ordered the suspension of leap years for twelve years to remove the discrepancy: Brind'Amour, op. cit. (n. 30), 11.

⁶⁵ *CIL* XII, 329f.; Aulus Gellius xv.7.3. Suet., *Aug.* 5.1; Dio Cassius LVI.30.5.

SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC				PLANETS			
Aries	♈	Libra	♎	Sun	☉	Moon	☾
Taurus	♉	Scorpio	♏	Saturn	♄	Venus	♀
Gemini	♊	Sagittarius	♐	Jupiter	♃	Mars	♂
Cancer	♋	Capricorn	♑	Mercury	☿		
Leo	♌	Aquarius	♒				
Virgo	♍	Pisces	♓				

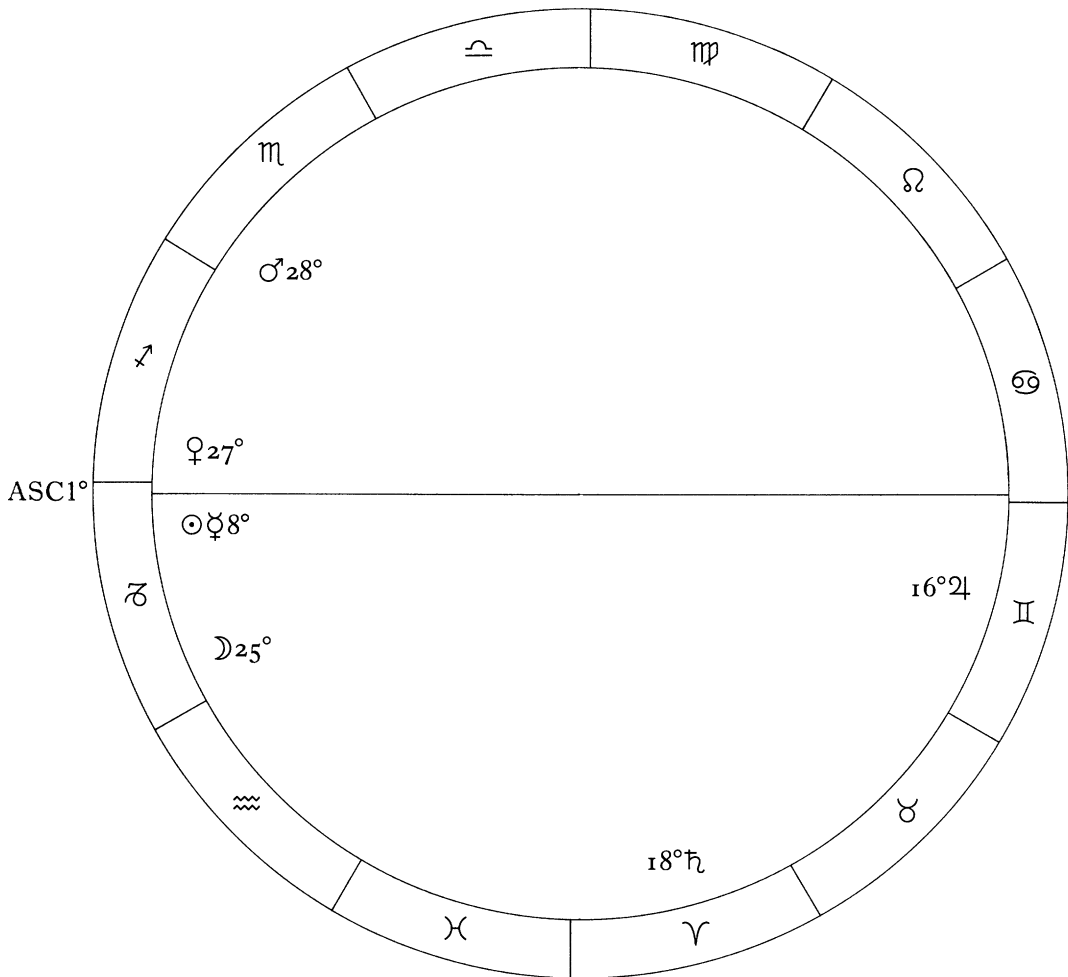


FIG. 2. CONCEPTION HOROSCOPE OF AUGUSTUS 23 DECEMBER 64 B.C., 7.05 A.M.

and even a third afterwards? We know from letters of Cicero before and after the reform that Cicero kept the same designation for the date of his birthday.⁶⁶

Let us return to the hypothetical astrologer. If he was asked to cast a horoscope at some time after the Julian reform, would it have been a problem to do so on the basis of a pre-Julian date of birth? He would have looked up his tables based on either the original Egyptian or the reformed Alexandrian calendar. It should be said first that there was variation in the tables available, and their accuracy was questionable. More importantly, though, accurate dates of birth were not essential to the enterprise of the ancient astrologer. When the hour of the birth was not exactly known, as must frequently have been the case, the astrologer was quite prepared to look for a horoscope *appropriate to the circumstances of the client*. The case of Tarutius' horoscope of Romulus actually exemplifies this technique:

Tarutius thus did what he was asked, and after considering what had happened to Romulus, and what he had achieved, and put it together with the length of his life, the manner of his death and so on. . .⁶⁷

Now, an astrologer asked to provide an astrological identity (an interpreted horoscope) for an Octavian or Augustus in the process of seeking or consolidating legitimation would adjust to fit the great leader — picking out the links with Rome, Romulus, the beginning of the world, or whatever else seemed appropriate. Astrologers would compete with each other to offer more appropriate symbols.

Astrologers were able to exploit the flexibilities of their system, and they would doubtless have exploited the ambiguities surrounding the time of Augustus' birth to their advantage. It may well be that they would have produced a horoscope like those of Abry and Brind'Amour, since it offered the most potential. We should keep the creativity of astrologers in mind as we consider the role of astrological symbolism in Augustan self-presentation.

V. THE MEANING OF CAPRICORN

Augustus' 'Horologium'

Possibly the most striking instance of Augustus' use of Capricorn was to be found in the Campus Martius. It was described by the elder Pliny:

The divine Augustus put the [obelisk] in the Campus to marvellous use, so as to mark the sun's shadow and thereby the lengths of days and nights. A pavement was laid down for a distance appropriate to the height of the obelisk, so that the shadow cast at noon on the shortest day of the year would exactly reach the edge. The bronze rods put into the pavement were meant to measure the shadow day by day as it gradually became shorter and lengthened again. It is a thing worth studying, contrived by Novius Facundus. He placed on the pinnacle a gilt ball, at the top of which the shadow would be concentrated; otherwise the shadow would lack definition. He is said to have understood the principle from observing the shadow cast by the human head.⁶⁸

Edmund Buchner produced a reconstruction of this instrument from a variety of information, including existing sundials, Vitruvius' instructions on how to construct them, the obelisk itself, which now, heavily restored, stands in Piazza Montecitorio, and a sphere in the Museo delle Terme, which he judged to be the globe from the top of the obelisk.⁶⁹ Since

⁶⁶ *Ad fam.* XIII.42.2 and VII.5.3.

⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 12: 'Ἐποίησεν οὖν τὸ προσταχθὲν ὁ Ταρούτιος, καὶ τὰ τε πάθη καὶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐπιδῶν, καὶ χρόνον ζωῆς καὶ τρόπον τελευτῆς καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα συνθεῖς. . .

⁶⁸ Pliny, *HN* xxxvi.72: 'Ei (obelisco) qui est in campo divus Augustus addidit mirabilem usum ad deprendendas solis umbras dierumque ac noctium ita magnitudines, strato lapide ad longitudinem obelisci, cui par fieret umbra brumae confectae die sexta hora paulatimque per regulas, quae sunt ex aere inclusae, singulis diebus decre-

sceret ac rursus augesceret, digna cognotu res, ingenio Facundi Novi mathematici. Is apici auratam pilam addidit, cuius vertice umbra colligeretur in se ipsam, alias enormiter iaculante apice, ratione, ut ferunt, a capite hominis intellecta.'

⁶⁹ E. Buchner, *Die Sonnenuhr des Augustus, Nachdruck aus RM 1976 und 1980 und Nachtrag über die Ausgrabung 1980/81* (1982). Globe: E. Buchner, 'Die Kugel der Sonnenuhr des Augustus, Kat. 110', in Heilmayer et al., op. cit. (n. 24), 244–5.

the Middle Ages, when building work was done in the Campus Martius, bronze lines and *signa caelestia* have been uncovered, as well as parts of the obelisk: fragments were incorporated into houses. These were excavated in 1748 and restored forty years later.⁷⁰ In Buchner's reconstruction the paved area on which the shadow of the obelisk fell was enormous, extending to about half the area of St Peter's Square. He reconstructs the height of the obelisk used as the gnomon at 29.42 m, or one hundred Roman feet.⁷¹ It was the first obelisk to be brought from Egypt, and Pliny tells us that Augustus had the ship which brought it laid up in dry-dock for all to see.⁷² The inscription made it known that Egypt had been brought under the sway of the Roman people, and that Augustus had dedicated the monument to the Sun.⁷³ The inscription dates the dedication to 10/9 B.C. On the top was a globe, with another small obelisk on it to make the end of the shadow even more precise, if Buchner's identification is correct.

Buchner, having made his calculations, then began to excavate with the German Archaeological Institute in Rome. His most startling find came in the cellar of No. 48, Via Campo Marzio, where eventually the part of the meridian line intersected by the line between Virgo and Aries was uncovered. The Greek letters of the zodiac signs were revealed. From the level, it was clear that this was not the Augustan instrument. Buchner suggested that it was a Domitianic restoration, on a slightly smaller scale (72 rather than 75 m in length), made after the flooding of the Tiber and the fire of A.D. 80, using the original materials, in an attempt to compensate for the rising of the Tiber.⁷⁴ Pliny mentions that in his own time it had not functioned for thirty years, which was probably a result of the siltation.⁷⁵ Indeed, the shape of the letters was consistent with an Augustan origin, and one showed signs of having been levered up. This startling find seemed to substantiate Buchner's argument for the whole shape of the horologium, though, as we shall see, there are doubts.⁷⁶

Buchner's most interesting claims concern the relationship to the other monuments in the Campus Martius, and the importance of the imperial life-cycle. He reconstructs the obelisk as turned 18½ degrees off true north, in order to face towards Augustus' Mausoleum, begun fifteen years before. The horologium was dedicated in 9 B.C., the year Augustus was fifty, on Livia's birthday. On Augustus' birthday, the autumnal equinox, the sun's shadow would move right along the equinoctial line during the day till it pointed directly towards the Ara Pacis in the evening. This Buchner sees as a kind of visual representation of the idea that Augustus was born to bring peace to Rome, an idea conceived by Kraft to explain numismatic material which will be dealt with later in this paper. Buchner argues that the internal orientation of the Ara Pacis is related not only to the equinoctial line, but also to the Tropic of Capricorn line, the line demarcating the furthest extent of the shadow. This line he relates to Augustus' conception, following the conception theorists. Bowersock was actually convinced that the excavations settled the question in favour of the conception theory; his view was that a monument dedicated to the Sun could not give such prominence to Augustus' Moon-sign. However, the reconstruction allows a role for the birthday as well as the day of conception. If Buchner's general reconstruction is right, since the sundial is also related to Augustus' Mausoleum and Ustrinum, here was a graphic display of the link between the life-cycle of Augustus and the seasons.

But there are a number of question-marks over the reconstruction which have been raised in a recent article by Michael Schutz.⁷⁷ First of all, he questions the reconstruction of the height of the gnomon. Going back to the reports of the excavation, and to a contemporary picture of the raising of the obelisk, he points out that the most detailed contemporary accounts point to a considerably higher base than Buchner allows.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Schutz questions Buchner's siting of the obelisk, pointing out that it has been done quite arbitrarily to make the equinoctial line fit with the Ara Pacis. If Buchner is right to assume that the obelisk stayed where it was, then the meridian line should have been found three metres east of where it was found, to substantiate his reconstruction. From the line found, Schutz calculates the

⁷⁰ A. M. Bandini, *De Obelisco Caesaris Augusti e Campi Marti rudibus nuper eruto* (1750).

⁷¹ Buchner, op. cit. (n. 69), 8.

⁷² Pliny, *HN* xxxvi.70.

⁷³ *ILS* 91: 'Imp. Caesar divi f. Augustus/Pontifex Maximus . . . Aegypto in potestatem populi Romani redacta soli donum dedit.'

⁷⁴ E. Buchner, in Heilmeyer *et al.*, op. cit. (n. 24), 244.

⁷⁵ Pliny, *HN* xxxvi.73.

⁷⁶ Buchner's version was still accepted by W. Gundel, *Zodiakos. Tierkreisbilder im Altertum. Kosmische Bezüge und Jenseitsvorstellungen im antiken Alltagsleben* (1992), 149–50.

⁷⁷ Schutz, op. cit. (n. 31).

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 455–7.

obelisk's position at about four metres south-west of Buchner's.⁷⁹ In addition to this, Schutz points out that the angle at which the obelisk was turned westwards from the meridian line was measured carefully in 1748, and found to be 15° 10' degrees rather than 18° 37'. So the proposed precise relationship with the Mausoleum and the Ara Pacis is destroyed. Most important of all, Schutz throws doubt on whether the instrument was a sundial, in the sense of a clock, at all. The shadow, he calculates, could not have reached the edges of the lines of Buchner's proposed clock: at 80 m the globe's shadow would have been an ellipse of 3 by 1 cm.⁸⁰ The only evidence of its being more than a meridian-instrument, with only a meridian-line, was the report of bronze lines being found under San Lorenzo in Lucina. But this turns out to be a garbled version of the eighteenth-century find of the base. As for the line found, as Hübner had already pointed out, it did not record days and months, but rather the progress of the sun through the zodiac: Buchner's 'day-lines' are degrees.⁸¹

So what is left of this monument? We do have an instrument whose function was astronomical and astrological, since it displayed the position of the sun in the zodiac day by day, as well as the time of noon. The link with the other Augustan monuments is no longer a precise one, though some significance may still be attached to their setting in the same general area.

The importance of Capricorn remains clear, though the line of the Tropic of Capricorn, even in Buchner's reconstruction, would have been off the paving. Its importance is clear from Pliny, who tells us that the paving was laid out so that it would stop at the point the shadow reached at noon on the winter solstice.⁸² Thus the label of Capricorn must have been just at this point where the sun began to rise again. For those who could read the Greek at least (for we have no evidence that there were Latin versions opposite the Greek), the connection between Capricorn and the rebirth of the sun was made visible. This was a powerful message. As Augustus' birthday inaugurated a new era for numerous Eastern cities, and was chosen for the dedication of restored temples,⁸³ so his conception and birth were linked with the zodiac sign inaugurating the end of the dark days and the beginning of the new year. In fact, it was not only his conception and birth: his principate was also inaugurated when the sun was in Capricorn (13 January 27).⁸⁴

There are, apart from the rebirth of the sun, a number of themes here which recur in association with Capricorn in the enormous range of artistic productions in which it is found (some of these are detailed in the Appendix). In interpreting the theme of the zodiac sign in the coinage, Kraft pointed to one significance of Capricorn *felix* (to recall Manilius' designation — see above, p. 39): in 30 B.C. the Senate had declared the birthday of Augustus as a lucky day, to be celebrated annually, while that of Antony became an unlucky day.⁸⁵ Plutarch records the story that an Egyptian scrutinizer of natal horoscopes told Antony that his birth-daimon was afraid of Octavian's — their stars were set against each other.⁸⁶ So Kraft reads the message of the coins with the Capricorn type — Augustus was born (under Capricorn), according to a formula originating with Cicero 'natus ad reipublicae salutem (to save the Roman state)'.⁸⁷ This is the suggestion which was taken up by Buchner in his interpretation of the connection between the 'horologium' and the Ara Pacis.

However, Capricorn had more associations even than Buchner could offer, and different connotations became prominent over time. Kraft argues that Capricorn appears as early as 41/40 B.C., and a number of glass-pastes and cameos seem to originate from this time.⁸⁸ The role of Capricorn as ruler over the West is especially relevant to the period when Antony was the enemy. In Manilius' chorography Capricorn rules over Spain, Gaul, and Germany. Horace simplifies, referring to Capricorn as the ruler of the Western sea: '*tyrannus /Hesperiae Capricornus undae*'.⁸⁹

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 455.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, Abb. 5.

⁸¹ W. Hübner, *Trierer Zeitschrift* 46 (1983), 335.

⁸² Pliny, *HN* xxxvi.72.

⁸³ A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Time for Augustus: Ovid, Augustus and the Fasti', in M. Whitley, M. Whitley and P. Hardie (eds), *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (1987), 221–30.

⁸⁴ T. Hölscher, *Jahrbuch des Zentralmuseums Mainz*

12 (1965), 62; cf. Rubens, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 24: it was then that he received the name of Augustus and other honours.

⁸⁵ Dio Cassius *LI*.19.1.

⁸⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 33.2.

⁸⁷ K. Kraft, *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 17 (1967), 20–1.

⁸⁸ See Appendix.

⁸⁹ Horace, *Odes* II.17.17–20; cf. Propertius *IV*.1.85f.

Eugene Dwyer pointed to the significance of the commentary on Capricorn preserved from the work of Nigidius Figulus, the learned friend of Cicero credited with warning Octavian's father that his newborn son would rule the world.⁹⁰ This work associates Capricorn with Pan and his role in restoring the rule of the gods, saving the world from the tyranny of Typhon, which obviously fits well with the era after Actium. Dwyer goes further, and suggests that this is a Hellenized version of the myth of the murder of Osiris by Seth and the revenge taken by Horus, so that the righteous revenge of the son-figure is called to mind. So Capricorn may first of all have symbolized Octavian's just revenge on the killers of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar.⁹¹ This use of Egyptian myth shows the kind of individual creativity one could expect of a consultant astrologer, whether Nigidius ever connected it with Octavian or not.

But the wide range of associations with which Capricorn is found — the conquest of Egypt, the globe and world domination, the Apolline laurel-wreath, the *corona civica* and the saving of citizen lives, the cornucopia of abundance and the *aurea aetas*, Victoria, and so on — suggests not so much that Capricorn drew its power from a known and pre-existing set of connotations as that it was the focus of continued improvisation over time, progressively accumulating a richness of symbolical meanings.

VI. CONCLUSION

The answer to the old problem about Augustus' horoscope turns out to be that the wrong question was asked. If the question is asked whether the role played by Capricorn in Augustus' horoscope was that of the sign of the Moon or of conception, the answer is first, that astrologers would never have concentrated on one role, and secondly that Capricorn was not the only important feature of the horoscope. In fact, Kepler approached this understanding when he remarked: 'I think that the coins were stamped in that way, not to vaunt this constellation, but rather the whole nativity. . . as when someone uses a part for the whole, or the sign for the signified'.⁹²

Secondly, if the question is asked, 'What did Capricorn mean?', we can even less expect a single answer. For emperors, the reason that astrology was so attractive was not simply a desire to see their destiny inscribed in the stars so much as the polyvalency and density of its symbols. A logo like Capricorn was just what the modern advertising executive might have recommended. Certainly, Augustus' successors seem to have recognized its power. Tiberius, in his twentieth year, issued Augustan coin-types, and he was followed sporadically by other emperors, especially where their legitimacy was in question.⁹³ Galba used it in 68,⁹⁴ and he was followed by Nerva⁹⁵ and Pescennius Niger in his rebellion against Septimius Severus.⁹⁶ There seems a certain irony in this last emperor, who barely lasted a year in the wars of succession, attempting to use Capricorn in conjunction with the themes of the *aurea aetas*, and of a return to the order of the cosmos, with legends such as 'Aeternitas Augusti', 'Saeculi Felicitas' and 'Felicitas Temporum'. The Flavians too appear to have exploited the Capricorn logo for the connection with Augustus, since the dynastic connections were lacking, though they could at least lay claim to the sign, as Vespasian took power, Titus was born, and Domitian began his rule while the sun was in Capricorn.⁹⁷ They too wanted to be seen to inaugurate a new era. Others, like Hadrian, found it useful to recall the first emperor by means of Capricorn.⁹⁸ The theme recurred in imperial art up until at least the third century.

The topic of the use of Capricorn by subsequent emperors brings us to another obvious question which should not have a straight answer. Though I have indicated the different contexts, and by implication the different audiences, for these depictions of Capricorn, I have

⁹⁰ E. J. Dwyer, 'Augustus and the Capricorn', *Röm. Mitt.* 80 (1973), 59–67. Text of Nigidius [Swoboda, 122–5], 66–7.

⁹¹ Dwyer, op. cit. (n. 90), 62.

⁹² op. cit. (n. 5), XIII, 315.

⁹³ e.g., Capricorn within the *corona civica*, *BMC* I, 29, No. 57ff.; 60, No. 66f.; 158, No. 289 n. Kähler, *RE* VIII, 419, suspects the presence of Capricorns in the pediment of a Tiberian triumphal arch in Orange.

⁹⁴ *BMC* I, 300, No. 44ff.; perhaps also *BMC* I, 56.

⁹⁵ *BMC* III, 12, No. 78.

⁹⁶ *BMC* V, 78, No. 304, pl. 13, No. 15.

⁹⁷ Vespasian, *BMC* II, 32, No. 171; 45, No. 251ff.; 57, No. 332; 58, No. 340; 245f., No. 128f. Domitian, *BMC* II, 59, No. 347. Titus, *BMC* II, 226, No. 21; 229, No. 84.

⁹⁸ *BMC* III, 294, No. 440. Cf. Antoninus Pius *BMC* IV, 224.

not engaged with the old question of authorial intentionality. The usual opposition is between seeing these imperial representations as part of a carefully orchestrated propaganda programme on Augustus' part, and as the spontaneous effusions of a populace reacting to power.⁹⁹ This dichotomy is best avoided, like those dismissed above. However, it seems hard to avoid some notion of Augustus' input into the dissemination of his astrological backing; doubtless his successors had some role in defining their image in this way.

If Capricorn was a logo, then it was devised to sell a new product, albeit a modification of a line of products which had long been available: that product was monarchy. It is striking that Augustus was the first to bring the sign to prominence: there are rare Hellenistic appearances, and one Roman coin of 80 B.C., only one of many types.¹⁰⁰ This is surely to be connected with Augustus' raising the profile of astrology so dramatically. As we saw, according to Dio, he actually published his horoscope in an edict. If there really was some kind of decree, there could have been no more official endorsement of astrology. But in stamping the coins with the sign of Capricorn Augustus allusively gave official sanction to the art. Then the poets under official patronage rushed to incorporate astrological allusions in their works, while Manilius actually produced one of the very few technical works in Latin and dedicated it to Augustus.

It was no accident that astrology came to such prominence at this time, for it reflected the political shifts which were taking place. It had emerged in the Roman world as individual generals began to dominate the scene, no longer effectively held in check by the Republican system. Now that process culminated in astrology's elevation by the princeps. Publishing one's horoscope, or even birth-sign, was a profoundly monarchical statement. Keeping a personal astrological adviser was also a sign of individualized power. So the state diviners, the anonymous teams under the control of the Senate, gave way to the prominent individual astrologers of these generals, and then emperors and would-be emperors, as Republic collapsed into Empire. Sole rulers needed individualized guarantees, and they needed something more subtle than the yes or no answers of traditional state divination. The subtleties of Augustus' horoscopes, and the plasticity of the element in them he elevated to centrality, offer an illustration of the ways astrology could form an important part of imperial rhetoric.¹⁰¹ The relationship which Augustus established between emperors and astrology was not without its risks, but few of his successors felt able to reject the use of a source of such persuasive power.

APPENDIX. REPRESENTATIONS OF CAPRICORN: COINS, TERRACOTTAS, SCULPTURE,
PAINTING, AND KLEINKUNST

Kraft argues, following Alföldi, that Capricorn is invoked for Augustus against Antony on one coin as early as 41/40 B.C., minted by Q. Oppius, a prefect of the fleet based at Cyrene.¹⁰² Here Capricorn is now difficult to see, behind the neck of the figure perhaps to be identified as the Venus of the Julii. It was seen as a point in favour of the Moon-theorists that the zodiac sign appears with the half-moon as an alternative to appearing with a star.¹⁰³ However, the date of this coin is disputed, some placing it as early as Sulla, when a Q. Oppius is known, and others later.

If this evidence is problematic, glass-pastes and cameos, though not precisely dateable, show signs of belonging to the early years. Examples show Capricorn with a bearded Octavian,¹⁰⁴ or Octavian's head over a ring (Caesar's ring, pointing to his position as heir), with Capricorn, corn-ears, and poppy.¹⁰⁵ Another shows Capricorn, corn-ears, and a poppy, symbols of fertility and agricultural

⁹⁹ A dichotomy neatly deconstructed by A. Wallace-Hadrill, *JRS* 76 (1986), 66ff.

¹⁰⁰ It appears once on denarii of L. Papius, *BMCR* 1, pp. 374, 3014.

¹⁰¹ For more detailed discussion of the inter-relations between the imperial system and astrology, see Barton, op. cit. (n. 46), *Power and Knowledge*.

¹⁰² Kraft, op. cit. (n. 87), 21, on *RRC* no. 550/2a-d. Kraft follows A. Alföldi, 'Commandants de la flotte romaine à Cyrène', in J. Heurgin, G. Picard and W. Seaton (eds), *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'épigraphie et de l'histoire offerts à J. Carcopino* (1966), 34, but Laf

franchi, *Historia* 9 (1935), 42 and M. Crawford, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic. Italy and the Mediterranean Economy* (1985), 196-7, date it to 88 B.C., while Friedländer *BB*. 11 (1865), 147 and M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas* (1946), 62, date it to 36-31 B.C.

¹⁰³ *RRC* no. 550/2a-d.

¹⁰⁴ Glass-paste, M.-L. Vollenweider, *Die Steinschneidekunst und ihre Künstler in spätrepublikanischer und augusteischer Zeit* (1966), 60.

¹⁰⁵ Zwierlein-Diehl, op. cit. (n. 55), No. 81, Taf. 36; C. Maderna Lauter, 'Glyptik', in Heilmeyer *et al.*, op. cit. (n. 24), 466, Kat 241.

renewal, above a handshake, plausibly referring to reconciliation with Antony.¹⁰⁶ Hölscher has even identified another glass-paste, with the head of Octavian placed above the intertwined signs of Capricorn and Leo, as dating from the period of reconciliation with Antony, conjecturing that Leo was Antony's conception-sign.¹⁰⁷ There is also a gem showing Ceres and a cornucopia between the opposed profiles of Capricorn and Taurus, perhaps representing Caesar.¹⁰⁸ Vollenweider has also identified the boy riding Capricorn over the waves as a representation of the young Octavian.¹⁰⁹ Maderna Lauter suggests that such glass-pastes were cheap enough to distribute widely among partisans.¹¹⁰ Capricorn could early have become the badge of Augustus' side.

It is only after Actium that Capricorn definitely makes an official public appearance on Augustan coins. The first clearly datable example was on the obverse of a denarius from the Eastern mint of 28, where a small Capricorn appears under the neck of Augustus, with the crocodile of Egypt and the legend 'Aegypti Capta' on the reverse.¹¹¹ The connection with the conquest of Egypt in the obelisk and its base here reappears. Another set of coins seem to connect Capricorn with the theme of world domination. Asian tetradrachms were produced between 27 and 20 B.C. showing Capricorn with a cornucopia on its back, and a globe between its feet.¹¹² From the first, provincial as well as Roman coinage depicted Capricorn. Kraft suggests that a coin from the Spanish mint of 19 or 16/15 B.C. depicts the goddess of birth Eileithyia with Capricorn; this naked female figure holding a veil above her head is often seen as Aurora, which could, of course, refer to the dawn birth of Augustus.¹¹³ In the case of this coin, the sign could be linked with birth or the rebirth of the sun.

Augustus was also born to be the 'vindex libertatis populi Romani'. 'Libertatis Vindex' was the legend on the Asian cistophorus of 28 B.C.,¹¹⁴ produced at the same as the Egyptian victory types. It was followed in 27 by two series of cistophori with Capricorn as one of three reverses, a series traced to Chios by Woodward.¹¹⁵ In both the 'Libertatis Vindex' coin and the Capricorn coin the reverse is always surrounded with an Apolline laurel-wreath, which seems to have been specifically designed in opposition to the Dionysiac ivy-wreath on Antony's coins.¹¹⁶ Antony, according to Dio, claimed that while others wanted to rule over the people, he wanted to free them, a claim which needed to be faced head on.

The sign is also found in conjunction with the *corona civica*, one of several honours given to Augustus by the Senate in 27 B.C. (under Capricorn) in Spanish coin-issues both of Augustus, and of Tiberius in his memory.¹¹⁷ At this time he also received the laurels (already mentioned above) and the golden shield. Capricorn was also found on coins from the Eastern mint and from Western mints with the legend 'Signis Parthicus Receptis',¹¹⁸ referring to his diplomatic victory over the Parthians of 20 B.C., an achievement meant to wipe out the shame of three defeats (*Res Gestae* 29), the last two of which were associated with Antony. While Augustus was born to save the state then, Antony was born to destroy it.

Capricorn is also shown on coins together with globe, rudder, and cornucopia,¹¹⁹ the marine and terrestrial attributes of the goddess Bona Fortuna, reminding us of the role of the Lot of Fortune in the horoscope mentioned above. Capricorn itself was a half terrestrial, half marine being, and read with the globe can easily be referred to Augustus' power over land and sea. These coins appeared first in the East, and from 20 B.C. in the West. For Hölscher, the frequent association with the cornucopia and peace makes Capricorn the guarantor of the *aurea aetas*. Abry points out that Capricorn was the house of Saturn in astrological doctrine, and Saturn presided over the Golden Age: 'redeunt Saturnia regna'.¹²⁰

Paired Capricorns are found on a large number of antefixes; some of these are dated as late as the second century, but there are also rarer Augustan models.¹²¹ On these the goddess Victoria holds a pair of Capricorns by their tails, or is simply depicted between them. On the most common type, Victoria stands on a globe from which the Capricorns project. This heraldic style of arrangement Hölscher connects with the statue-trophy Augustus erected in the newly-dedicated Curia after his Actium-triumph in 29 B.C.¹²² Certainly it may represent an Actium trophy of some sort, but, as Hommel points out, the doubling of mythical creatures in this heraldic style is quite common.¹²³ Valérie Huet has suggested to me that there is a significant difference between the single Capricorns and the pairs, and that the doubling of opposed Capricorns may evoke Janus, whose head faces both ways. This would

¹⁰⁶ M.-L. Vollenweider, *Die Porträtgemmen der römischen Republik* (1972-4), Taf. 146, 4; Maderna Lauter, op. cit. (n. 105), Kat. 242.

¹⁰⁷ Hölscher, op. cit. (n. 34), 63, n. 33; A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der Geschnittenen Steine im Antiquarium* (1896), No. 5182; Vollenweider, op. cit. (n. 106), Taf. 143, 23.

¹⁰⁸ Furtwängler, op. cit. (n. 107), No. 3612.

¹⁰⁹ Vollenweider, op. cit. (n. 104), 60-1.

¹¹⁰ Maderna Lauter, op. cit. (n. 105), 444.

¹¹¹ *BMC* 1, 106, No. 650-4, pl. 16, 1-3.

¹¹² *BMC* 1, 113, No. 696; 698.

¹¹³ *BMC* 1, 62, No. 349-50.

¹¹⁴ W. Trillmich, 'Munzpropaganda', in Heilmeyer et al., op. cit. (n. 24), Kat. 320.

¹¹⁵ A. M. Woodward, 'The cistophori series and its place in the Roman coinage', in R. A. G. Carson and C. H. V. Sutherland (eds), *Essays in Roman Coinage presented to Harold Mattingly* (1956), 152.

¹¹⁶ Kraft, op. cit. (n. 87), Taf. 2.6.

¹¹⁷ *BMC* 1, 29, No. 57ff.; 60, No. 66f.; 134, No. 109ff.; 139, No. 129; 158, No. 289 n.

¹¹⁸ Eastern: *BMC* 1, 110, No. 679f.; Western: *ibid.* 56, No. 305ff. and 62, No. 344ff.

¹¹⁹ *BMC* 1.62, No. 346f., pl. 7.3.

¹²⁰ Abry, op. cit. (n. 36), 115.

¹²¹ Hölscher, op. cit. (n. 34), 59-61, pls 15, 16.

¹²² T. Hölscher, *Klio* 67 (1985), 81-102.

¹²³ P. Hommel, *Studien zu der römischen Figurengiebeln der Kaiserzeit* (1954), 63.

certainly be an appropriate association, recalling both the New Year, or new era, and the closing of the gates of Janus on 11 January 29 to symbolize the post-Actium peace. Interestingly, the doubling of the Capricorns does appear on anniversary coin issues, though never on Augustan coins.¹²⁴

The context of these antefixes is important. Hölscher suggests that the antefixes are not mainly from official public contexts such as temples, but from houses all over central Italy, arguing that they exemplify people's identification with Augustus' new era, mirroring the official themes on coins. This heraldic motif may also be found on a *lararium* in the House of Menander at Pompeii, suggesting a connection with the imperial cult.¹²⁵

In most cases, where Capricorn is displayed, it does not seem to represent a spontaneous individual reflection of public themes, but rather the statement of a link with the imperial house. The heraldic style of the double, opposed Capricorns supporting a *clipeus* is found on a fresco on one wall of the Room of the Planisphere, off a portico in Stabiae; here roof-tiles connect the building with Narcissus, imperial freedman.¹²⁶ Many examples are from temples of the imperial cult, as with altar-reliefs from Rome and Bologna (where the Capricorns actually merge into their cornucopiae),¹²⁷ and the capital from the temple of Augustus in Puteoli, built by Agrippa's architect.¹²⁸ Another relief from Carthage may have been linked with the imperial cult.¹²⁹ There was also an army connection. The numerous funerary monuments found by Espérandieu with heraldic Capricorns were often near legionary camps all over Gaul; sometimes the link with Legion XXII Primigenia (founded in A.D. 39 by Caligula) is clear, though not all can be so ascribed. In fact there were five legions with Capricorn as their emblem in the area.¹³⁰ From Pannonia Inferior there is a gravestone of the latter half of the first century A.D. with Capricorns, globe, and lunar crescent from the legionary camp of Ulcisia, north of Budapest,¹³¹ which presumably relates to one of these five legions.¹³² A sarcophagus from the same province now in Budapest (Capricorn with globe) may be similarly explained, as may a tombstone from Piedmonte with Capricorn and lunar crescent.¹³³ However, Cumont links the frequent appearance of Capricorn on tombstones with its role as the gate through which souls ascended to the sky. There are only late attestations of this idea, but Cumont traces it to Numenius. It is anyway clear that the sign was widely disseminated, in at least these sorts of contexts from Augustus onwards.

The final type of artistic production to be considered is that of gems. Unlike the glass-pastes, possibly manufactured for political recruitment, they were obviously designed for restricted circulation. Some of the motifs from the coins recur, while others such as the association of Augustus with Neptune tend to be restricted to the gems. The Actium victory cameo, a costly sardonyx piece, shows a togate Augustus in a quadriga drawn by tritons across the sea.¹³⁴ But there are familiar motifs — the front of the chariot is decorated by a *corona civica*, and the outermost tritons hold up a globe. The left one is surmounted by Victoria bearing a crown, the right by two Capricorns bearing the *clipeus* surrounded by a laurel crown. Here is also the heraldic motif. A less costly sardonyx cameo, dated to A.D. 10–14 was one of a popular type, showing a pair of opposed Capricorns supporting Augustus' head on the *clipeus*, on a portrait medallion, itself surrounded by a laurel-crown.¹³⁵ Most famous of the gems showing Capricorn is the Gemma Augustea,¹³⁶ which shows the potential of gems to present a complex variety of themes. This precious article certainly belonged to a rich owner, perhaps even a member of the imperial

¹²⁴ e.g., Vespasian, *BMC* II, 58, No. 340; 245, No. 128f.

¹²⁵ The house probably belonged to the Poppaei Sabini, perhaps the family of Nero's wife. A. Maiuri, *La Casa del Menandro e il suo tesoro di argenteria* (1932), 36, incorrectly describes the paired Capricorns as hippocamps, and is followed by G. K. Boyce, 'Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii', *MAAR* 14 (1937). Unfortunately I have found no better photograph than his pl. 35. See Hommel, *op. cit.* (n. 123), p. 61.

¹²⁶ O. Elia, *Pitture di Stabia* (1957), 40, pl. 14. Most of the wall-painting is Flavian.

¹²⁷ Bologna: K. Lehmann-Hartleben, 'Ein Altar in Bologna', *Röm. Mitt.* 42 (1927), 163–76 pl. 21. centre; Rome: *ibid.*, pl. 20.

¹²⁸ E. von Mercklin, *Antike Figurenkapitelle* (1962), 25, no. 616, cf. H. Fuhrmann, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 56 (1941), 609, pl. 118; 612f. E. Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule romaine* (1908–), VIII, 6397 was identified as coming from the façade of a temple of the imperial cult in Cologne, but Hommel, *op. cit.* (n. 123), argued that it was a soldier's tomb.

¹²⁹ A. L. Delattre, *Musées de l'Algérie et de Tunisie* 8.2 (1899–1900).

¹³⁰ H. Ritterling, *RE* 122 (1925), 1372–1820.

¹³¹ Ulcisia (Szentendre): F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire* (1942), 229 no. 11.

¹³² Espérandieu, *op. cit.* (n. 129), I; VII; X; XIV s.v. See especially: 747: from Narbonne (funerary?); 5584: from Sparsbach, with the infant Heracles strangling a snake; 5591: stele-fragment from the early first century; 8830: funerary stele from Maastricht. There is a variety of material from Moguntiacum, clearly related to the fact that Capricorn was the sign of Legion XXII Primigenia: 6397: statue (see above); 7330: stele of L. Callidius, freedman of L. Primigenius, with facing Capricorns, roses above a star and garland; 7354/7364: large monument in five fragments with Capricorns and cornucopiae combined (with globe?); 7367 with the bull of Legion VIII; 8517 with cornucopia and medallion, probably with the image of Nero; 8518 with triumphant Mars(?). Hommel, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 62, lists further examples.

¹³³ Budapest: H. Kähler, *Die römischen Kapitelle des Rheingebietes* (1939), 30, n. 1; Piedmonte: Cumont, *op. cit.* (n. 131), 161, n. 1.

¹³⁴ F. Eichler and E. Kris, *Die Kameen im Kunsthistorischen Museum* (1927), 50–1, pl. 7; Maderna Lauter, *op. cit.* (n. 105), 453, dates it to the late Augustan period.

¹³⁵ G. M. A. Richter, *Catalogue of Engraved Gems of the Classical Style* (1920), No. 649.

¹³⁶ Eichler and Kris, *op. cit.* (n. 134), pl. 7; N. Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (1986), No. 501.

household.¹³⁷ Here the sign of Capricorn is linked with a number of themes typical of Augustan self-presentation. It is on a disk with rays on it, perhaps the sun or the Julian star, between the heads of Roma (or maybe Oikumene) and Augustus, whom she crowns with the *corona civica*. Other familiar features are the cornucopia, and perhaps Oceanus (in front) and Tellus (with cornucopia), though they are not securely identified. The context of the piece is also disputed, but Tiberius is most likely to be the figure descending from a triumphal chariot. Hölscher suggests that it is his birth-sign, Scorpio, on the trophy being erected by a Roman legionary, directly below him. As counterpart of Capricorn, it suggests astral backing for the whole dynasty — from Julian star to Germanicus (centre-left).

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¹³⁷ J. Pollini, *Studies in Augustan Historical Reliefs* (Unpub. diss., Berkeley, 1978).