The prerogative to imply personal authority over a topic cannot be restricted to authors and researchers, but extends to those in positions of power and control, as they attempt to validate their decisions and policies. This frequently involves evoking past traditions that rulers consider to be important to the population and to have fallen into neglect or disuse. This practice had become common by the late Republic in Rome, with noble families proudly restoring the temples and public buildings dedicated by their ancestors or dedicating new temples and public buildings to newly favoured gods, usually with the wealth won in war (Bailey 115-16; Beard, North, and Price 44; Eck 138; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 13).

The collapse of the Republic into the chaos of civil war, which finally ended in 29 BC with the young Augustus in control of the Roman Empire, was commonly blamed on the negligence and disregard of the gods by our sources (Beard, North, and Price 68, 77, 118; Halliday 163-64; Rose 105-06; Zanker 102). In order to appease the gods Augustus initiated a wide-ranging religious reformation program involving the erection and rebuilding of almost one hundred temples to numerous state deities and the restoration of various priesthoods (Augustus Res Gestae 19-20; Eck 49; Hooker 130; Littlewood 185-88; Wissowa 76). Many of these deities, priesthoods, and temples were traced back to the Regal period. This paper will explore the authority that Augustus utilised in order to carry out this restoration.

In 31 BC, Augustus and Agrippa defeated Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium, making Augustus the most powerful man in the Roman world (Augustus, Res Gestae 25; Dio 50.23-34; Eck 42-44; Littlewood 180; Velleius Paterculus 2.85; Plutarch Ant. 65-66; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 32; Suetonius Aug. 17-18). Upon his return to Rome in 29 BC, he initiated a religious reformation and restoration which continued until his death in 14 BC. In this process, he tells us, he built or restored at least 100 temples (Augustus, Res Gestae 19-21). In addition to this, he restored a range of sacred offices which had been unfilled or forgotten—the Flamen Dialis, Fratres Arvales, Salii, Luperci, Feticales—increasing the social prestige of these priesthoods in order to ensure that they continued to be filled (Augustus Res Gestae 10; Bailey 174; Beard, North, and Price 130; Halliday 165; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 119; Rose 86; Stamper 130; Suetonius Aug. 31; Wissowa 76; Zanker 103). In a similar manner, he increased the stature of the priestesses of Vesta, the Vestal Virgins, by granting them a range of further privileges not available to ordinary women (Beard 17; Rose 107; Suetonius Aug. 31; Wildfang 101; Wissowa 76; Worsfold 70; Zanker 207).

Augustus’ power had evolved over time. From the death of his great uncle, Julius Caesar, in 44 BC, when Augustus was posthumously adopted as his son and heir, he had quickly seized control of a number of offices and positions that steadily increased his power in the Roman government, culminating in the final confrontation with Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC (Eck 148; Suetonius Aug. 26-27). Returning to Rome in 29 BC, he held the office of consul, became a member of the college of pontiffs (47 BC), the college of augurs (41-40 BC), quindecimvir sacris faciundis (37 BC), and septemvir epulonum (16 BC),
the major priestly colleges of Rome (Beard, North, and Price 186; Eck 16, 29; Suetonius Aug. 26-27). While maintaining this power, he propagated the belief that he had brought peace to Rome, through public honours and by closing the gates of Janus (Augustus Res Gestae 13; Beard, North, and Price 208; Eck 44-45; Evans 138; Rehak “Aeneas or Numa?” 198; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 100; Zanker 104). Although, in 27 BC, as leader of the victorious Caesarian faction, Augustus officially ended the triumvirate and returned his power to the Senate and People in return for control of several provinces, with large standing armies for a period of ten years, his position and influence never abated. He was awarded public honours and the name Augustus as a sign of thanks from the Senate and maintained his office as consul until 23 BC, when he traded this position for tribunician powers and effective imperium over all the provinces (Eck 51, 96; Suetonius Aug. 26-27). In 12 BC, with the death of Lepidus, Augustus became Pontifex Maximus, officially holding the role which he had effectively been performing since 29 BC (Beard, North, and Price 186; Eck 28, 139-40; Halliday 68-69; Stamper 131; Suetonius Aug. 16, 31; Wissowa 76).

This accrued political power demonstrated his character, epitomising one aspect of the traditional authority expressed by Roman historians—his justifying his actions as being carried out for the benefit of the state (Augustus Res Gestae 34; Bailey 174; Eck 47-48; Halliday 161; Marincola 260). Augustus also imitated his successful predecessors, particularly the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius. Numa was celebrated for the extended peace of his reign and for introducing the Roman people to organised religious rituals (Beard 12; Cicero De Nat. Deo. 3.5; D.H. 2.76.2-6; Livy 19.1-2, 4-5; Marincola 12-15; Plutarch Numa 8.1-3; Rehak “Aeneas or Numà?” 196; Flavius Vapiscus of Syracuse 2.1-4). Roman historians, particularly those writing during and immediately following the Augustan period, linked these two concepts by attributing the peace of Numa’s reign to the newly established religious order and the laws he instituted (D.H. 2.76.3; Livy 19.1-2, 4-5; Plutarch Numa 8.1-3). Many of Augustus’ religious restorations and reformations dealt with cults which had long been attributed to Numa and had passed out of traditional use.

Although he had been urged to take the position of Pontifex Maximus, which was held for life, in 36 BC with his defeat of Sextus Pompey and the betrayal of Lepidus, Augustus had piously refused to take the office while Lepidus lived, only assuming the post upon his death in 12 BC (Beard, North, and Price 188-89; Eck 28; Suetonius Aug. 16, 31; Wissowa 76). The Pontifex Maximus was the chief religious official who was in charge of ensuring the correct continuation of religious rites by overseeing that the sacrifices carried out on behalf of the State were carried out as tradition demanded and by supervising the Vestal Virgins. With Lepidus in semi-exile, returning to the city only when major religious occasions demanded his presence for large public festivals, Augustus had effectively been fulfilling this role since 29 BC, carrying out the day-to-day duties of the Pontifex Maximus. The creation of the office of Pontifex Maximus was attributed to the reign of Numa, who systematically organised the religious system of Rome and who held this position himself. In his organisation of the religious system, Numa deliberately divided up the religious duties of the king, placing the administrative duties under the care of the college of pontiffs, led by the Pontifex Maximus, and the execution of worship under a range of flamines and priesthoods (D.H. 2.64.2-3, 73.1-4; Halliday 68; Livy 1.20.1-6; Plutarch Numa 9.1-6, 12.3).
One of the first institutions which Augustus claimed to restore was the Fetial priesthood. These priests, established by Numa, acted as the ambassadors of Rome. When a dispute with a foreign body occurred—through the breaking of treaties by either the Romans or their neighbours or through cultural misunderstandings—two of these priests, called the *verbenarius* (carrier of herbs, which symbolised peace and the sanctity of the position) and *pater patratus populi Romani* (the one who is acting as a father to the Roman people, their representative), would be sent to negotiate terms to restore the pax, peace. If a new treaty was reached, they would return it to Rome to be presented to the people and ratified by the senate before being stored with the Vestal Virgins. If negotiations broke down, they would return to Roman territory and cast a spear across the border in order to declare a just war (Beard, North, and Price 26-27; D. H. 2.72.1-9; Halliday 71-72; Plutarch *Numa* 12.3-5; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 118-19). As the Roman territory grew larger, this became impractical and a portion of the Campus Martius was designated to be perpetually foreign territory (Beard, North, and Price 132-33). In both cases, they invoked Jupiter, who was the god of the oath, and Janus Quirinus, the god of beginnings and endings, in this case of the beginning and end of conflict. Their purpose was to ensure that Rome only entered into just wars approved and supported by the gods (D.H. 2.72.4). Although references to the continued practice of the rites of the priesthood appear in the Republic, it appears that the college had fallen into disuse in the civil war period. In 32 BC, before the final confrontation with Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus revived the priesthood, becoming a member of the college himself (Augustus *Res Gestae* 7; Beard, North, and Price 186). This ensured that the Roman people would perceive the ensuing battle as being divinely supported and correctly begun.

The Salian priesthood was also attributed to the reign of Numa. The legend went that during Numa’s reign a terrible pestilence struck Rome. Numa prayed to the gods for a cure and in response to this an ancile, a bronze shield of ancient Italian design, fell from the sky as a gift from Mars which would end the epidemic. In this period, Mars was a god of fertility while simultaneously fulfilling his role as a god of war. Numa immediately ordered eleven copies to be made in order to protect the original, all of which were placed in the care of the Salii, a group of priests created for this purpose. Numa also consecrated the spot where it had landed and decreed that water from the nearby spring should be used by the Vestal Virgins in their daily cleansing of the temple (Beard, North, and Price 1; Curran 32-33; D.H. 2.70.1, 71.1-4; Halliday 102-03; Livy 1.20.4; Plutarch *Numa* 8.1-3). In order to honour Mars and prevent a return of the pestilence, the Salii were instructed to annually perform a sacred dance and sing through the streets of Rome in March in the garb of an archaic Italian warrior, earning them the reputation of being the ‘leaping’ priests, from which they derive their name (Augustus *Res Gestae* 10; Curran 32; D.H. 2.70.2-5; Halliday 102; Livy 1.20.4; Plutarch *Numa* 8.3-5; Rose 65; Takács 41). The Senate had Augustus’ name added to the ritual song, firmly connecting him to this ancient cult and its founder and connecting his personal safety to a continued freedom from pestilence (Augustus *Res Gestae* 10; Halliday 165; Littlewood 181).

When he became Pontifex Maximus, Augustus was disinclined to move into the humble house of the office, the Regia, as tradition demanded. Instead, he made part of his own home public property, establishing a shrine to Vesta there and decreeing the use of the Regia to the Vestal priesthood (Beard 17; Ovid *Fasti* 4.945-50; Wildfang 101; Worsfold 29). This priesthood, established by Numa at the start of his reign, was believed
to be essential for the continued safety and success of the Roman state. Made up of six virgins who served for a period of 30 years, these priestesses took part in a wide range of religious rites mostly dealing with purification and fertility, the most important being the tending of the sacred hearth of the state (Cicero De Leg. 2.20; Aulus Gellius N.A. 1.12.10, 7.7.1-4). If the fire went out, the Vestal supervising would be flogged by the Pontifex Maximus and the fire restarted in archaic fashion, by reflecting sunlight through a concave mirror, feeding it only new wood (Plutarch Numa, IX.6-8; Parsons 176). Numa also established the fate of a Vestal who did not remain virgin (although he never had cause to enact the punishment in his reign) decreeing that the unchaste Vestal be buried alive. Vestals had been granted privileges that were attributed to Numa, including the rite to conduct their own business affairs and write their own wills (Aulus Gellius N.A. 1.12.9, 18). To these privileges Augustus added the same rights which he had granted to women who had borne three children after he had difficulty finding candidates for a vacant position (Dio 56.10.2-3; Nock 255; Wildfang 101). With the state cult of Vesta within his home, tended by his wife, Livia, Augustus and his household were even more closely connected to the successful future of the Roman empire, safeguarding the future fertility and military success of Rome. As long as their house prospered, so too did Rome.

Worship of Janus as a god of beginnings and peace was attributed to the reign of Numa as well. Janus was the household god of the doorway, looking in and out, which evolved into a representation of beginnings and endings and of a god looking both to the future and the past. Numa placed this god’s month at the start of the calendar and built the Temple of Janus. This temple had symbolic significance for Rome. If the gates of the temple were open, Rome was at war. They were only closed in times of peace. Numa, having built the temple, closed the gates for the entire 40 years of his reign (Beard, North, and Price 1; [Dio] Cassius Cedrenus I., p259f., [Dio] Sonaras 7.5; Littlewood 181, 86; Livy 1.19.1-3; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 100; Rose 30; Suetonius Aug. 22; Takács 28, 31). In the c. 600 years that stretched between him and Augustus, the Temple of Janus had only been closed on one other occasion, in the aftermath of the First Punic War (Livy 1.19.1-3; Suetonius Aug. 22). Augustus proudly proclaims that the Senate closed the temple three times while he was princeps (Augustus Res Gestae 13; Livy 1.19.1-3; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 100; Suetonius Aug. 22; Zanker 103), following his return to Rome in 29BC after the defeat of Antony and in 25BC after various rebellions were quashed (Livy 1.19.1-3; Velleius Paterculus 2.38.3; Suetonius Aug. 22). The date of the third closure is unclear and debated in the modern scholarship.

In addition to the cults in which both rulers played an integral part, the lives of the two men were similar in a range of ways. Both came to power at the height of civil unrest. Numa succeeded Romulus, and Rome was involved in an internal power struggle between the Roman and Sabine branches of the city ([Dio] Cassius Ioann. Antioch., fr. 32M; Evans 126; Gabba 84; D.H. 2.62; Plutarch Numa 2.4-3; Rehak “Imperium and Cosmos” 118; Weinstock “Pax and the Ara Pacis” 261). Augustus came into power following the assassination of Julius Caesar, primarily by manipulating the divide between those who supported Caesar and those who assassinated him (Eck 9-11, 13-15; Suetonius Aug. 10-18; Weinstock Divus Julius 367). Both deified their predecessors: Numa declared Romulus to have ascended into heaven as the god Quirinus ([Dio] Cassius Ioann. Antioch., fr. 32M; D.H. 2.63.3; Plutarch Numa 2.3, 7.4); Augustus claimed the sighting of a comet to mean that his adoptive-father had joined the divine ranks (Eck 11; Weinstock Divus Julius 370). Both instituted reforms in the calendar. Numa inserted two months at
the beginning of the year, January and February, and set out the religious festival days ([Dio] Cassius Cedrenus I., p259f, [Dio] Sonaras 7,5; Cicero De Leg. 2.29; Florus 1.2.3; Livy 1.19.6-7; Ovid Fasti 3.151; Plutarch Numa 18.1-3; Rehak “Aeneas or Numa?” 198; Wissowa 434; York 16, 20-21). Augustus formalised the reforms initiated by his great-uncle Julius and renamed a month in honour of his deified father (Rehak “Aeneas or Numa?” 198; Suetonius Aug. 31; Wissowa 434). Both are portrayed as reluctant to rule, doing so only at the insistent urging of the Senate and people (D.H. 2.60.1-2; Livy 1.18.6-10; Plutarch Numa V.1; Rehak “Aeneas or Numa?” 198). Both made land settlements to the people of Rome—Numa to the poor and Augustus to the veterans (Augustus Res Gestae 16, 28; Eck 19-20, 29, 110; D.H. 2.62.4, 74.1, 76.1; Plutarch Numa 16.3-4).

Augustus had developed a strong base from which to rule Rome. His political power was tempered, and so made acceptable for the Roman people, with their dislike of monarchy, by his continuous claims to be acting for the benefit of the Republic and by claiming to restore power to the Senate in 27BC. It was by imitating Numa Pompilius that Augustus gained the authority to carry out religious reforms under the guise of restoration. The many and various commonalities suggest that not only did Augustus imitate the life of Numa, in order to secure his own power and the internal peace of the Roman empire, but also suggest that the educated classes at Rome were comparing the two great men. While few direct comparisons were made, the feeling that Augustus was a second Numa becomes clearer when comparing the detailed sources outlining the lives of the two men. Whether or not Augustus was a pious man, he was able to convince the people of Rome that he was a supporter of their traditions through this imitation. This further reinforced the image of a man acting on behalf of the state, an image which Augustus was keen to propagate.
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