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# Representation of Eagles on Reverse of Augustus' Coinage

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#### **ARTICLE INFO** Abstract

#### **Keywords:**

Emperor Augustus; Roman States; Golden Eagle / Aquila; Jupiter; Thunderbolt. The coinage in the era of Emperor Augustus was distinguished by the depiction of many animals and birds on the reverse of the coins in Egypt and the Roman Provinces such as the bull, crocodile, hippopotamus, pig, Ibis, eagle.

Each of these animals and birds had religious symbols specific to each of the Roman provinces and its own religious symbol. The eagle was one of the powerful birds that was depicted on coinage in the era of Emperor Augustus in many forms; rather it was one of the first patterns that Emperor Augustus ordered to be minted in Alexandria. The researcher used the historical descriptive methodology to analyze and describe the depiction of the eagle on the coin of Emperor Augustus

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# Objective of research

- 1. Study the depiction of the eagle on the reverse of Augustus' coinage in Egypt and the Roman Provinces (Alexandria, Rome, Gaul / Lugdunum).
- 2. Explain the importance of the eagle as a symbol of strength and victory.
- 3. Determine the relationship of golden eagle and god Jupiter.

## Introduction

The eagle was known from the early Ancient Egyptian civilization, it was inscribed as a Hieroglyphic sign (Nephron perenopterus) Egyptian Vulture & the long-legged buzzard (*Buteo Ferar*)<sup>1</sup>. It appeared in the Ancient Egypt Art from Proto - Dynastic period (Lions Pallet)<sup>2</sup>, but the most famous in the arts was the female vulture (eagle) in the image of the goddess *Nhbt* the White, the goddess of Upper Egypt<sup>3</sup>. The linguistic use of the vulture form

<sup>۲</sup> صلاية الاسود، على رضوان، (۲۰۰٤)، تاريخ الفن في العالم القديم، ص ٩٥ / ١٠؛ Cialowicz, K., M., (1991), Les Palettes (١٧ / ٩٥ صلاية الاسود، على رضوان، (۲۰۰٤)، تاريخ الفن في العالم القديم، ص ١٥٠ رقم ٨ وص ١٥٢؛ على رضوان، (۲۰۰٤)، تاريخ الفن في العالم القديم، ص ١٥٠ رقم ٨ وص ١٥٢؛

Hanning, R., (2006), Agyptisches Worterbuch II, Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwishenzeit, Teil 1, p. 1, 2, p. 3088; Hawas, Z., (2007), King Tutankhamun, the treasures of the Tomb, AUC - press, p. 129, 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gardiner, A., (1973), Egyptian Grammer, London, sign list, No. G. 1 - 4, p. 467, 129; Mike Markowitz, (2021), Eagles on Ancient Coins in, <a href="https://coinweek.com/eagles-on-ancient-coins/">https://coinweek.com/eagles-on-ancient-coins/</a> 6 / 5.

increased in the Greco-Roman era in temples of the ancient Egyptian style and became: 3, i, i3, ij,  $^c$ ,  $^c$ hm, w, m, my, r, h, t, tiw, ty, ty, ty.

The golden eagle (Aquilla - chrysaetos) was known since the sixth century BC in Greece<sup>6</sup>. Although the Greeks were present in Egypt since the 26th Dynasty, the currency in Egypt did not refer to the eagle and had a mark of *nfr*, *nbw*, *htr* .... etc.

The eagle was depicted on the Roman era's coins in the fourth century BC, 336 - 323 BC, where the god Zeus / Jupiter was depicted on the reverse of the coin, seated and holding an eagle in his right hand (Fig. 1)<sup>7</sup>.

Since the beginning of the imperial era, the Romans quoted the symbol of the eagle from the coinage of Ptolemy I<sup>8</sup>, but rather they developed the forms of its depiction. The eagle in itself was not a symbol of god Jupiter<sup>9</sup> because it is high in the heaven<sup>10</sup>, but rather a symbol of strength and courage, it also represents for the Romanian military army, military legions, as his loss expresses a great disaster, *Aristotle* (Historian / philosopher) gave him the title of "god among birds"<sup>11</sup>, and it symbolized the power of Roman authority extraordinary<sup>12</sup>.

Development was done in form in the second and third centuries  $AD^{13}$ . The eagle continued to be depicted on Roman coins until the Byzantine era ( $4^{th}$ :  $7^{th}$  century AD), when the eagle symbolizes victory in Byzantine and Coptic art, that is, the victory of Jesus Christ and the Christian religion, and it is written AETO $\Sigma$ . It was also one of the four sacred creatures surrounding the throne on which the Virgin Mary and her son, Jesus Christ<sup>14</sup>, seated. In addition, the eagle was used in the style of complete sculpture and stone fillings in Constantinople<sup>15</sup>; also, it was depicted on mosaics<sup>16</sup>.

## Eagle / Aquila in Augustus' coinage

The eagle in the era of Emperor Augustus was a symbol of strength, courage and victory, as well as a symbol of the god Jupiter<sup>17</sup>. It also had a military significance, as it represented military legions, its loss represented disaster:

**Doc. 1**: A bronze drachma weighed 4.5 grams; was minted in Alexandria / Egypt, dating back to 30 - 27 BC, size 1.50 mm, for victorious Emperor Augustus. On obverse is a bare head of Augustus turning toward to right, the text reads: **ΚΑΙΣΑΡ.Σ ΑΥΤΚΡΑΤ.ΡΣ, ΘΕ.Υ** /

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Daumas, F., et-al, (1988), Valeurs Phonetiques de Signes Hieroglyphiques d' Epoque Greco- Romaines, p. 292, No. 1/1162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Wilson, E., (1997), Aptolemaic Lexikon, A Lexicographical study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu, p. 1-c.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Mike Markowitz, (2021), Eagles on Ancient Coins in, <a href="https://coinweek.com/eagles-on-ancient-coins/">https://coinweek.com/eagles-on-ancient-coins/</a> 1/5, 2 / 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Reinfeld, Von F., (1970), Der Münzkenner, Stuttgart, p. 30, Abb. 51, Abb. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Reinfeld, Von F., (1970), p. 15, Abb. 11, Abb. 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Stevenson, S. W., Smith, C. R., et-al, (1889), A Dictionary of Roman coins "Repulican and Imperial, London, p. 15.

p. 15. <sup>10</sup> Hayes, S., J., (2014), The Symbol of the Eagle and Thunderbolt in Antiquity and their Appropriation by Revolutionary America and Nazi Germany, p. 2, 3.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;' مروة فاروق مصطفي بدوي، (٢٠١٧)، نشر مجموعة نقود سكندرية من العصر الروماني محفوظة بالمتحف المصري، مجلة معهد الدراسات العليا للبردي والنقوش وفنون الترميم، اعمال المؤتمر الاول - الجزء الاول - الدراسات اليونانية واللاتينية، جامعة عين شمس، القاهرة، ص ٢٩٠ ـ ٢٩١.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Başak, M., Ö., (2020), Reading the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome, Turki, p. 93, 94, fig. 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Reinfeld, Von F., (1970), Der Münzkenner, Stuttgart, p. 33, Abb. 54.

<sup>ً &#</sup>x27; عزت قادوس، محمد عبد الفتاح، (۲۰۰۲)، الاثار القبطية والبيزنطية، الأسكندرية، ص ١١٨. ° نعمت اسماعيل علام، (١٩٨٠)، فنون الشرق الاوسط في الفترات الهلينستية والمسيحية والساسانية، ص ٨٣ ـ ٨٤.

١٦ نعمت اسماعيُّل علام ، (١٩٨٠)، ص ٨٣ ، شكل ٧١.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Bowman, Alan. K., (1986), Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC – AD 642, London, p.183;

ب. كوملان، (١٩٩٢)، الاساطير الأغريقية والرومانية، ترجمة احمد رضا مراجعة محمود خليل، القاهرة، ص ٢٧، شكل ٢؛ امين سلامة، (٢٠٢١)، الاساطير اليونانية الرومانية، المملكة المتحدة، ص ٢١.

- **YI.Y:** "Caesar the Autocrator, son of god". On the reverse is an inscription of a standing eagle on a thunderbolt, facing left in front of him is the *cornucopia*<sup>18</sup> and in his back is letter  $\Gamma = 3$  year (Fig. 2)<sup>19</sup>.
- **Doc. 2**: Bronze Diobol weighted 1, 41 grams; was minted in Alexandria / Egypt, dating back to 30-28 BC, weight 15, 42 G., D. 26 mm. On the obverse is depicted a laurel head of Augustus, facing right, a text: **ΘEOY YIOY** = son of god. On the reverse is depicted an eagle standing on thunderbolt, facing to left, in frame is *cornucopia*, behind is a letter  $\Pi = year \ 8$ , and the text refers to KAI**ΣAPOΣ** = *Caesar Autocrator* (Fig. 3)<sup>20</sup>
- **Doc. 3**: Bronze Drachmae was minted in Alexandria / Egypt, dating back to 30-28 BC, weight 8, 21 G. On the obverse is depicted a bare head of Augustus; facing to right, a text is  $\Theta EOY\ YIOY = son\ of\ god$ . On the reverse is depicted an eagle standing on thunderbolt; facing to left in front of *Cornucopia* behind a letter  $\mathbf{M} = \text{year } 40 \text{ (Fig. 4)}^{21}$
- **Doc. 4**: Bronze Drachmae was minted in Alexandria / Egypt, dating back to 30-28 BC, weight 18, 59 G. On the obverse is depicted a laurel head of Augustus, facing right, a text refers to:  $\Theta$ EOY YIOY= son of god. On the reverse is depicted an eagle standing on thunderbolt, facing left, in the frame is cornucopia, behind is a letter  $\Pi = year \ 8$ , text refers to  $KAI\Sigma APO\Sigma = Caesar Autocrator(Fig. 5)^{22}$
- **Doc. 5**: A bronze coin was minted in Alexandria / Egypt, Dimension 0, 8 mm. in size, a style of (Fig. 2), but on the reverse below an eagle is the letter  $\mathbf{M} = \text{year } 40^{23}$ .
- **Doc. 6**: A bronze coin was minted in Alexandria 1 mm. in size, the same style as (Fig. 2). On the reverse and obverse are letters  $\mathbf{L} / \mathbf{MA} = \text{year } 41^{24}$
- **Doc. 7**: A golden coin / Aureus was minted in Rome ? After 16 January, 27 BC, it is weight 7.82 g. On the obverse is a bare head of Augustus, turning toward the right, in front of him is a text that reads: **CAESAR.COS.VII**: *Caesar-the seventh consulate*. On the reverse is an eagle standing on an oak wreath, spreading its wings, turning toward the left, and its claws surrounded by a letters **L S**=year 6 and laurel plants behind it, a text reads: **AVGVSTVS**: *Augustus*(Fig. 6)<sup>25</sup>.
- **Doc. 8**: Semis<sup>26</sup> coin was minted in what is called the Germanus coin, which is a copy of coins of Emperor Augustus. On the reverse is the eagle, it is very few in the states, but it was minted again in the year 12 BC after the death of Agrippa who died in 12 BC (His friend, Commander and the husband of his daughter Julia), for saying that Augustus, Rome and imperial states are safe; fine and strong. On the obverse, the head of Augustus, turning toward to right, is depicted wearing a laurel wreath tied at the back with an ornament, on reverse is

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Bernnan P., et-al, (2007), Faces of power, Faces of power, Imperial Portraiture of Roman Coins, University of Sydney, p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Reginald Stuart Poole, LL. D., (1892), Catalogue of the coin of Alexandria and the Nomes, p. 1, N. 1, pl. XXV-I, ۲۹۱ - ۲۹۰ ص ۲۹۰ : (۲۰۱۷) ص مروة فاروق، (۲۰۱۷): ص

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> https://www.wildwinds.com/coin/ric/augustus/Emmett\_01.jpg 2024/3/16.

https://www.wildwinds.com/coin/ric/augustus/Milne\_01.jpg 2024/3/16.

https://www.wildwinds.com/coin/ric/augustus/RPC 5001.jpg 2024/3/16.

Reginald Stuart Poole, LL. D., (1892), Catalogue of the coin of Alexandria, p. 1 (N. 2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Reginald Stuart Poole, LL. D., (1892), Catalogue of the coin of Alexandria, p. 1 (N. 4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Pannekeet, C. G. J., (2014), Bronze Coins minted in Gaul and Italy in the era of Octavian/Augustus, 44 BC - 14 AD, Slootdorp, the Netherlands, p. 47 (upper).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Semis ½ assess: Brennan P. et-al, (2007), Faces of power, p. 14.

an eagle standing on a thunderbolt, spreading its wings and turning toward the left, a text refers to the place "**GERMANVS**" (Fig. 7)<sup>27</sup>.

**Doc. 9**: Semis bronze coin was minted in Lugdunum / Lyon, dating back to the year 10 - 12 BC, it is D. 19 mm and weights 81.2 g. On the obverse is the head of Augustus, wearing a laurel wreath turning toward to right, on the left is a text: **IMP**: (*Imperator=Emperor*), on the right, text: **CAESAR**: *Caesar*. On the reverse is an eagle spreading its wings, turning toward the left, in a frame the inscription **AVGVSTVS**: *Augustus* it is believed that the eagle is in readiness who is representing Emperor himself (Fig. 8)<sup>28</sup>.

**Doc. 10**: A silver coin was minted in Lugdunum / Lyon. On the obverse is depicted a bare head of Emperor Augustus; in a frame a text reads as before. On the reverse is an eagle spreading its wings, standing on an oak wreath (Fig. 9)<sup>29</sup>.

**Doc. 11**: Consecratio A bronze coin was minted in Rome 34 - 37 AD in the reign of Emperor Tiberius, on obverse depicted the head of Emperor Augustus as Divi / god (Divius Augustus) after his death, where before the ceremony of death on 14 AD. An eagle goes around Augustus, then flew to the *Pantheon*: then it sat on a letter A of Agrippa's name, after that, lightning melted in the name of Augustus, on reverse was depicted an eagle faced right, spreading his wings, standing on the globe - between the letters S C the symbol of the Senate Council, which declared that Augustus was deified among the gods in sky after his death (Fig. 10)<sup>30</sup>.

#### **Conclusion**

The eagle / Aquilla was one of the most important symbols that symbolized the power of authority, courage, and victory in the Roman Empire, and it was a basic symbol of the god Jupiter, the lord of the heaven, just like the eagle, although according to some historians, it was considered a sign of the death of Augustus when it perched on the name of Agrippa; based on the objectives mentioned in the research, the following results were drawn:

**I.** There are some representations of the eagle on the coin of Emperor Augustus, including:

- The eagle is standing strong, facing left on the thunderbolt, with the wings on both sides of the body (fig. 2 fig. 3 fig. 4 fig. 5).
- The eagle is standing, facing left, spreading its wings and holding an oak wreath in its claws (fig. 6 fig. 9 fig. 10)
- The eagle is standing, facing left, spreading its wings, the claws appear as if it is walking (fig. 7 fig. 8)
- II. Inscriptions and signs surrounding the eagle on the coin of Emperor Augustus:
- The signs of the two letters **S C**, meaning the Senate Council, appeared around it (fig. 6 fig. 10)
- The *Cornucopia*, a symbol of horn of blessing, appeared before him (figs. 3 4 5.
- The letters meaning the consulate (COS. VII) (Fig. 7)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Pannekeet, C. G. J., (2014): p. 47 (middle).

<sup>28</sup> Pannekeet, C. G. J., (2014): p. 47 (lower - right).

<sup>28</sup> Pannekeet, C. G. J., (2014): p. 47 (lower - right).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Başak, M. Ö., (2020): p. 144, fig. 39.

**III.** The depiction of letters symbolizing the years of minting the coin a special letter coin minted in Alexandria:

No.	Symbols	$Year = \Gamma$	Fig.
1	Γ	3	2
2	S	6	7
3	П	8	4,5
4	M	40	4, 6
5	MA	41	Doc. 6

**IV.** This section of the article should appear under the title "Discussion" once the Docs have been presented, but in the coins of the eagle were minted in Germany, Spain, or Rome, the numbers are not found in the form of Greek letters.





Fig. 1

After: Mike Markowitz, Eagles on Ancient Coins June 25, 2021

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Fig. 2

Bronze coin minted in Alexandria 30-27 BC, obverse depicts Caesar Autocrator, reverse depicts an eagle standing on thunderbolt.

After: Reginald Stuart Poole, LLD., Catalogue of the coins of Alexandria and the nomes, 1892, p.1, n.1, pl. XXXV-1.



Fig. 3

Bronze drachmae minted in Rome/ Alexandria 30-28 BC, obverse depicts the bare head of Caesar Augustus, reverse depicts an eagle standing on thunderbolt.

Egypt, Alexandria - Ancient Greek Coins - WildWinds.com, Emmett 1.2024/3/16.



Fig. 4

Bronze drachmae minted in Rome/ Alexandria 30-28 BC, obverse depicts the bare head of Caesar Augustus, reverse depicts an eagle standing on thunderbolt.

Egypt, Alexandria - Ancient Greek Coins - WildWinds.com, Milne 1.2024/3/16.



Fig. 5

Bronze drachmae minted in Alexandria/Egypt 30-28 BC, obverse depicts the bare head of Caesar Augustus, reverse depicts an eagle standing on thunderbolt.

Egypt, Alexandria - Ancient Greek Coins - WildWinds.com, RPC 5001.2024/3/16.



Fig. 6

Aureus was minted in Rome 27 BC, obverse depicts the bare head of Augustus the 7<sup>th</sup> Consulate, reverse depicts an Eagle on an oaken wreath.

After: Pannekeet C.G.J., 2014, p.47.upper.



Fig. 7

Semis coin minted in Germanius 12 BC, obverse depicts the laurel head of Augustus, reverse depicts an Eagle and its head pointing to the left.

After: Pannekeet C.G.J., 2014, p.47.middle.



Fig. 8

Semis coin minted in Lugdunum / Leon / France 12-10 BC, obverse depicts the laurel head of Augustus, reverse depicts an Eagle pointing to the left.

After: Pannekeet C.G.J., 2014, p.47.lower/right.



Fig. 9

Silver coin minted in Lugdunum / Leon / France, obverse depicts bare head of Augustus, reverse depicts *aquila* (Legendary Eagle) holding a wreath.

حسين الشيخ، ١٩٩١، شكل ٣٤. صـ ٢٨٤، رقم: ٩.



Fig. 10

Coin of defied Augustus was minted in Rome reign of Tiberius 34 - 37 AD<sup>r</sup>1

After: Başak, M. Ö., (2020): p. 144, fig. 39

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# مجلة اتماد الجامعات العربية للسياحة والضيافة (JAAUTH)

الموقع الإلكتروني: http://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/

# تمثيل النسور على ظهر عملة أغسطس

محمود حسن محمد رشاد عنايات محمد أحمد فاتن حمدي العليمي رضوي محمد شليح قسم الارشاد السياحي – كلية السياحة والفنادق – جامعة قناة السويس الارشاد السياحي بالمياحي بالمياحي السياحي بالمياحي المياحي ا <sup>7</sup>قسم الارشاد السياحي – كلية السياحة والفنادق – جامعة الأسكندرية

#### الملخص

#### معلومات المقالة

# الكلمات المفتاحية

الأمبراطور أغسطس؟ الولايات الرومانية؛ Aquila / النسر جوبيتر ؛

منجل والنسر إلخ ... كان لكل من هذه الحيوانات والطيور الرموز الدينية الخاصة بكل ولاية من الولايات الرومانية والرمز الديني الخاص بها، كان النسر من الطيور القوية التي تم نقشها على العملة في عصر الامبراطور اغسطس بالعديد من الاوضاع بل كان من أول الطرز الذي أمر الامبراطور الصاعقة.

# (JAAUTH)

#### أهداف البحث المجلد ۲۷، العدد ۱،

(4 + 7 +) ص ۱۲۱-۱۷۵.

١. يهدف البحث الى دراسة ظهور النسر على ظهر العملة في مصر والولايات الرومانية.

اغسطس بسكها في الاسكندرية، استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التاريخي لتحليل ووصف

تميزت العملة في عصر الامبراطور اغسطس بظهور العديد من الحيوانات والطيور على

ظهر العملة في مصر والولايات الرومانية مثل الثور، التمساح، فرس النهر، الخنزير، طائر ابو

شرح أهمية النسر كرمز من رموز القوة والانتصار.

تصوير النسر على عملة الإمبراطور أغسطس.