

## Commemorating Augustus: A bimillennial re-evaluation

18th-20th August 2014

University of Leeds,

Recent publications by Barbara Levick, Karl Galinsky and others demonstrate the ongoing strength of contemporary interest in the historical Augustus. But while the reception histories of figures such as Nero, Julius Caesar and Elagabalus have benefited from focused large-scale scholarly investigations, Augustus' remains seriously under-explored. Given the controversial nature of his career and the widely variant responses which he has provoked, this is a serious barrier to a full 21st-century understanding of Augustus. We cannot see him clearly for ourselves until we have explored the full range of his past receptions and their impact on our own view.

The bimillennium of Augustus' death on 19th August 2014 is the perfect opportunity for a systematic assessment of his posthumous legacy and a re-evaluation of his current significance. *Commemorating Augustus*, a major international conference running over the bimillennium itself, will bring together experts from a wide range of disciplines to undertake this work. The aim is to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and enable new perspectives through a shared focus on a single iconic figure.

The over-arching questions which will define the conference and its debates include:

- What range of responses to Augustus has been expressed between his death and the present day?
- Who has generated them, when, where and how?
- How has Augustus' equivocal and contradictory career been received in different cultural contexts?
- How and to what effect have receptions of Augustus reflected cultural exchange and interaction between past and present, and between contemporary cultures?
- How do 21st-century assessments of Augustus reflect those of the past?

### Invited speakers and conference venue:

Invited speakers include:

Mary Harlow (Leicester), Ray Laurence (Kent), Valerie Hope (Open University), Alison Cooley (Warwick), Steven J. Green (Leeds), Shaun Tougher (Cardiff), Russell Goulbourne (Leeds), Barbara Levick (Oxford: keynote 1), Martin Lindner (Göttingen), Lucy Moore (Leeds Museums), Karl Galinsky (Austin Texas: keynote 2, provisional) and more.

For their titles / topics, please see <http://augustus2014.com/conference>.

The conference will take place in Devonshire Hall, a self-contained University of Leeds residence in the style of an Oxbridge college. A selection of papers offered at the conference will be published afterwards in the form of an edited volume.

### Call for papers and suggested topics:

Proposals are now invited for papers which explore the conference's major questions through specific aspects of Augustus' death and posthumous reception. Papers

should be 20 minutes long, and will be followed by 10 minutes for discussion. Topics might include:

- Augustus' preparations for his own death
- Augustus' funeral, burial and deification
- Responses and reappropriations by Roman emperors up to late antiquity
- Early Christian responses to Augustus – e.g. Origen, Orosius, John Malalas
- Medieval political responses and reappropriations – e.g. Holy Roman Emperors, Philip II of France, Cola di Rienzo
- Renaissance / early modern political responses and reappropriations – e.g. Charles II, Louis XIV, House of Hanover, electors of Saxony / kings of Poland
- Modern political responses and reappropriations – e.g. Napoleon, Mussolini
- Explicit and implicit evaluations in political thinking – e.g. Petrarch, Machiavelli, Bodin, Justus Lipsius, Erasmus, Thomas Elyot, Montesquieu, Jonathan Swift
- Augustus in European literature – e.g. Dante, Montaigne, Fontenelle, Voltaire, Pierre Corneille, Heinrich von Kleist, Balzac
- Augustus in English literature, especially of the 'Augustan age' – e.g. Ben Jonson,
- Donne, Dryden, Pope, Robert Graves, John Williams, Allan Massie Art and architecture – e.g. images of Augustus, emulation of his buildings
- Augustus in modern popular culture – e.g. novels, films, television, comics, computer games, tourism and Augustan monuments
- Changing scholarly evaluations of Augustus – e.g. Thomas Blackwell, Gibbon, Mommsen, Meyer, Betti, Last, Buchan, Syme, Millar, Zanker, Levick, Galinsky
- The 21st-century Augustus – current perspectives, their relation to past views of Augustus and the implications of passing judgement on a historical figure.

A fuller list of suggestions is available at <http://augustus2014.com/conference>; though neither is exhaustive, and proposals for papers on topics not listed are welcome.

#### Submitting an abstract

If you are interested in offering a paper, you should first email Dr. Penny Goodman ([p.j.goodman@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.goodman@leeds.ac.uk)), indicating the general topic which you wish to explore. This is to pre-empt overlaps between papers. A title and abstract (c. 300 words) will then be required by **1st December 2013**.

The wider *Commemorating Augustus* project will launch officially with a half-day colloquium at Leeds on Friday 10th May 2013. Details of this colloquium, including speakers and abstracts, are available at <http://augustus2014.com/colloquium>. Anyone considering developing a paper for the bimillennial conference is warmly encouraged to attend the colloquium in order to find out more about its remit.