

Caesar Augustus, formerly known as Octavian, was the nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. He was a member of the second triumvirate alongside Marc Antony and Lepidus, and was himself emperor between 27 BCE and 14 CE. Many scholars consider his reign as the beginning of the Roman Empire and the end of the Roman Republic. He led Rome during what was very possibly the peak of its power. As such, he is one of the most famous people of western history. However, by looking at coinage that he personally allowed to be distributed during his reign, it is possible to gain an understanding of how he wanted to be portrayed rather than simply how history has treated him.

The obverse of this coin features Augustus, facing right, encircled by the letters “*CAESAR AUGUSTUS TRIBUNIC POTEST.*” This shows partially how he wanted to be known. Quite simply, this gives his name, and the fact that he is ruling with tribunician’s power. In other words, he is ruling rightly according to the rules of Rome. On the reverse, the letters “SC,” which show that the senate permitted the creation of these coins, stand prominently in the middle surrounded by the letters “*C ASINIUS GALLUS III VIR AAA F F.*” All of these letters are meant to give Augustus legitimacy based on the people who support him. They also simply give the coins legitimacy. The abbreviations stand for “*Triumviri, Auro, Argento, Aere, Flando, Feriundo,*” meaning “One of, or all, the three Roman Magistrates appointed to superintend the coinage of money<sup>1</sup>.” C Asinius Gallus is simply the name of another powerful Roman who was consul in 8 BCE, during Augustus’ rule<sup>2</sup>. All of these things are meant to show that Augustus is doing things in a

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<sup>1</sup> [forumancientcoins.com](http://forumancientcoins.com) under heading “III VIR AAA F F”

<sup>2</sup> [catalog.perseus.org](http://catalog.perseus.org) under Gallus, C. Asinius.

legitimate way, and in accordance with Roman laws. This was a very important pursuit for Augustus, as he and his predecessor had both been accused of trying to take too much power for themselves.