

Natus rei publicae, « né pour la République »: le *dies natalis* d'Auguste au regard de ses précédents tardo-républicains (Pompée, César)

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Abstract

The public celebration of the emperor's *Dies Natalis* is one of the many expressions of the Roman "imperial cult" that dates back to the reign of Augustus. Modern scholarship usually identifies Julius Caesar as a precedent in the introduction of this festival at Rome but the potential role of *imperatores* at the end of the Republic has been overlooked in this context. This article aims to fill this gap by examining the staging and evolution of the *Dies Natalis* of three political figures: Pompey, Julius Caesar and Augustus. This study highlights that the core concept of birth is also an integral part of the *imperatores'* ideology of military victory and that it becomes, under Augustus, associated with the celebration of the return of peace after the civil wars. A range of different practices and discourses – including personal memoirs, architectural constructions, worships of the gods and political honors for their birthday, omens surrounding their birth and coincidence of their birthday with other significant events – convey the message that their own *Dies Natalis* commemorates the divine *felicitas* they enjoy, in order to legitimize their claims to supreme powers well beyond the institutional framework of the Roman Republic.