

Student Handout 3- Power in the Roman Empire

In the column below, there are excerpts from a primary document, “The Deeds of the Divine Augustus,” in which Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome, celebrates his own deeds. Read each of the passages from this document. Check off which type of power you think it represents. For example, if it has do with taking an army to fight another country, you could check off both military and foreign. You may work with a partner.

<p align="center">The Deeds of the Divine Augustus, By Augustus, Written 14 C.E. Translated by Thomas Bushnell, BSG</p> <p align="center">The excerpts below from “The Deeds of the Divine Augustus,” describe power and authority in the Roman Empire. It explains how he subjected most of the world known to the Romans to the rule of the Roman people. This document was inscribed on two bronze pillars, which were set up in Rome.</p>						
<p>Excerpts from the Deeds of the Divine Augustus</p>	<p>Military (war, armies, soldiers)</p>	<p>Economic (money, taxes, food)</p>	<p>Cultural (art, religion, architecture)</p>	<p>Legal (Laws, courts, crime)</p>	<p>Foreign (other nations, treaties, peace, trade)</p>	<p>Domestic (life in Rome, food, work, business)</p>
<p>2. I drove the men who slaughtered my father into exile with a legal order, punishing their crime, and afterwards, when they waged war on the state, I conquered them in two battles.</p>						
<p>3. I often waged war, civil and foreign, on the earth and sea, in the whole wide world, and as victor I spared all the citizens who sought pardon. As for foreign nations, those which I was able to safely forgive, I preferred to preserve than to destroy.</p>						
<p>8... I conducted a lustrum, after a forty-one year gap, in which lustrum were counted 4,063,000 heads of Roman citizens. <i>(A lustrum was kind of like a ceremonial blessing after a census, a counting of the population).</i></p>						
<p>18. ... when the taxes fell short, I gave out contributions of grain and money from my granary and patrimony, sometimes to 100,000 men, sometimes to many more.</p>						

<p>20. I rebuilt aqueducts in many places that had decayed with age, and I doubled the capacity of the Marcian aqueduct by sending a new spring into its channel. (<i>aqueduct=channel that carried water to people</i>)</p>						
<p>21. I built the temple of Mars Ultor on private ground and the forum of Augustus from war-spoils. I built the theater at the temple of Apollo...</p>						
<p>22. Three times I gave shows of gladiators under my name and five times under the name of my sons and grandsons; in these shows about 10,000 men fought. ...Twenty-six times...I gave the people hunts of African beasts in the circus, in the open, or in the amphitheater; in them about 3,500 beasts were killed.</p>						
<p>25. I restored peace to the sea from pirates. In that slave war I handed over to their masters for the infliction of punishments about 30,000 captured, who had fled their masters and taken up arms against the state.</p>						
<p>26. I extended the borders of all the provinces of the Roman people which neighbored nations not subject to our rule. I restored peace to the provinces of Gaul and Spain...</p>						
<p>31. Emissaries from the Indian kings were often sent to me, which had not been seen before that time by any Roman leader.... the kings of the Albanians, of the Iberians, and of the Medes, sought our friendship through emissaries.</p>						

Stop and Jot: *How would you describe the power of an emperor? How does this seem different from decision making during the Roman Republic?*