



## [Ovid, \*Fasti\* II.119-144](#)

Augustus is made *pater patriae*

**Name of the author:** Ovid

**Date:** 1 BCE to 8 BCE

**Place:** Rome and Tomis

**Language:** Latin

**Category:** Roman

**Literary genre:** Poetry

**Title of work:** *Fasti*

**Reference:**

II.119-144

### **Commentary:**

This passage commemorates the senate's granting of the title *pater patriae* (father of the country) to Augustus on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2 BCE. Ovid expresses his concern, however, at his own ability to convey through elegy this monumental event (199-125). Ovid compares Augustus to Romulus (137-144), who was honoured twelve days later at the Quirinalia on February the 17<sup>th</sup> (II.475-508). Indeed, Octavian had toyed with the idea of taking Romulus as a title before he decided instead on Augustus, likely because of the fratricidal associations with Rome's mythical founder. Incidentally, Ovid chooses not to elaborate on this unpleasant aspect of Romulus's story, instead maintaining as far as possible a more honourable image of him, focusing particularly on his deification (see [Metamorphoses XIV.805-828](#)). This said, in verse 134 there is a clear reference to the episode of the murder of Remus: "the walls you gave to the city were such as Remus could overleap." As Carole Newlands states, the "deflation" of Romulus, the first *pater patriae*, who was the model for Augustus in terms of military conquests, civic organisation, and eventual deification, only elevates Augustus to a higher status than his mythical predecessor (Carole Newlands, *Playing with Time*, p. 189). Romulus is second to Augustus in every way – first and foremost, because the extent of Romulus's conquests was limited to a few territories, whereas Augustus is said to rule over the whole world: "all that exists beneath the canopy of Jove is Caesar's own" (138). Moreover, Romulus was a rapist while Augustus brought chastity, he kept wrongdoers around him, while Augustus banished them, and he ruled with the sword, while Augustus implemented laws (139-141). The main difference between Augustus and his ancestor, however, is that Augustus is the father not only of his *patria*, but also of the whole world (129), a title which assimilates him to Jupiter, the father of the gods. Indeed, [Fasti I.587-616](#) closely related Jupiter and Augustus, arguing that the name Augustus embodies within it the very notion of the empire's expansion (*augere* = "to increase/grow"), and its connection to augury (*augurium*) evokes divine blessing and power, which the poet prays will be realised through Jupiter's aiding and extension (*augmentation*) of the emperor and his rulership).

Keywords in the original language:

- [deus](#)
- [honor](#)
- [lex](#)
- [nomen](#)
- [pater](#)
- [pater patriae](#)
- [populus](#)

Thematic keywords in English:



- [deification](#)
- [expansion](#)
- [father \(emperor as\)](#)
- [father of the fatherland](#)
- [father of the world](#)
- [Jupiter](#)
- [law](#)
- [Remus](#)
- [Roman domination](#)
- [Roman power](#)
- [Romulus](#)
- [senate](#)
- [universal rule](#)

**Bibliographical references:** Newlands, Carole E., [Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti](#) (London: Cornell University Press, 1995)

Hinds, Stephen, "[Arma in the Fasti](#)", *Arethusa* 25 (1987) : 81-153

Fantham, Elaine, "[Ceres, Liber, and Flora: Georgic and Anti-Georgic Elements in Ovid's Fasti](#)", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 38 (1992) : 39-56

**Other sources connected with this document:** Text

## [Ovid, \*Fasti\* I.527-536](#)

The legacy of the house of Augustus

- [Read more about Ovid, Fasti I.527-536](#)

Text

## [Ovid, \*Fasti\* I.587-616](#)

Octavian receives the title of "Augustus"

- [Read more about Ovid, Fasti I.587-616](#)

Text

## [Ovid, \*Metamorphoses\* XIV.805-828](#)

The ascension of Romulus to heaven

- [Read more about Ovid, Metamorphoses XIV.805-828](#)

Text



## [Ovid, \*Fasti\* III.415-428](#)

Augustus is given the title of High Priest

- [Read more about Ovid, \*Fasti\* III.415-428](#)

**Realized by:**

[Kimberley Fowler](#)



**Source URL:** <http://www.judaism-and-rome.org/ovid-fasti-ii119-144>