

Not Just by Jove: The Emperor in Roman Oaths<sup>1</sup>

1. Augustan Oaths

A. P. Tebt. 382r (30 BCE – 1 CE)

Καίσαρα Αὐτοκράτορα θεοῦ υἱόν

“by Caesar Imperator son of God”

B. BGU 2590 = SB 12312 (25 CE)

θεὸν Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα θεοῦ υἱόν

“by the **god** Imperator Caesar son of God”

C. P Rein. 99 (30 BCE – 14 CE)

Καίσαρα Αὐτοκράτορα θεοῦ υἱόν Δία Ἐλευθέριον Σεβαστόν

Caesar Imperator son of God **Zeus Eleutherios** Augustus

2. Family in Oaths

A. The Lex Irnitana (91 CE)

*ut is iuret per Iouem et diuom Aug(ustum) et diuom Claudium et diuom  
Vespasianum Aug(ustum) et diuom Titum Augustum et genium imp(eratoris)  
Caesaris Domitiani Au[g(usti)] deosque Penates*

“by Jupiter, the divine Augustus, the divine Claudius, the divine Vespasian Augustus, the divine Titus Augustus, the *genius* of emperor Caesar Domitian Augustus, and the divine Penates”

B. TPSulp 117 (26-62 CE)

*per Iouem et numen divi Augusti*

“by Jupiter and the divinity of the divine Augustus”

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<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own.

C. P. Oxy. 483 = M. Chr. 203 (108 CE)

**Θεοὺς Σεβαστοῦς** καὶ τὴν Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Νέρουα Τραιανοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Δακικοῦ τύχην καὶ **τοὺς πατέρας θεοῦς**

“**by the divine *Augusti*** and the *genius* of Imperator Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacius and **the gods of the fatherland.**”

D. Suetonius *Cal.* 24.2

*Nec umquam postea [...] nisi per numen Drusillae deieravit.*

“Nor afterward [...] did he [Caligula] ever swear except by the divinity of Drusilla.”

E. Cassius Dio 59.11.3

αἱ τε γυναῖκες αὐτήν, ὅσάκις ἂν μαρτυρῶσί τι, ὀμνύωσι.

“Women, however often they testified, should swear by her.”

F. Cassius Dio 60.5.2

ταῖς τε γυναίξιν ὄρκον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ποιῆσθαι κελεύσας.

“He [Claudius] bid that a woman’s oath be made by her [Livia’s] name.”

G. P. Oxy. 255 (48 CE)

[Τ]ιβέριον Κλαύδιον Καίσαρα Σεβ[αστόν] Γερμανικὸν Αὐτοκράτορα

“by Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator”

### 3. The Gods in Oaths

A. W. Chr. 463 (c. 94 CE)

*per **Jovem Optimum Maximum** et *genium* sacratissimi Imperatoris Caesaris Domitiani Augusti Germanici*

“by **Jupiter Optimus Maximus** and the *genius* of the most sacred Imperator Caesar Domitian Augustus Germanicus”

B. SB 14304 = P. Corn. 17 (145-146 CE); P. Bad. 75 b (147 CE)

τὴν Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Τίτου Αἰλίου Ἀδριανοῦ Ἀντωνίνου Σεβαστοῦ Εὐσεβοῦς τύχην καὶ **τὸν τοῦ νομοῦ θεὸν Ἡρακλέα**

“by the *genius* of Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrian Antoninus Augustus Pius and **the god of the nome, Heracles.**”

C. P. Fam. Tebt. 33 = SB 7602 (151 CE)

τὴν Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Τίτ[ο]υ Αἰλίου Ἀδριανοῦ Ἀντωνίνου Σεβαστοῦ  
Εὐσεβοῦς τύχην [καὶ θεὸν μέγιστον Ὄσειραντί]ον

“by the *genius* of Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrian Antoninus Augustus Pius and **the great god Oseirantinoos**”

D. Herc. LXV (62 CE)

*per Iovem et numina [deorum] et genium Neronis Claudii Caesaris [Aug.]*

“by Jupiter and **the divinities of the gods** and the *genius* of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus”

#### 4. The *Genius* Oath

A. Pliny *Pan.* 52.6

*Simili reverentia, Caesar, non apud genium tuum bonitati tuae gratias agi, sed apud numen Iovis optimis maximi pateris.*

“With similar reverence, Caesar [Trajan], you do not suffer thanks for your benevolence to be given to your *Genius*, but they are given to the divinity of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.”

B. Plautus *Capt.* 977<sup>2</sup>

*Per tuom te genium obsecro, exi, te volo.*

“I beseech you through you and your *Genius*, come out, I want you.”

C. Horace *Ep.* 2.1.16

*iurandasque tuom per numen ponimus aras.*

“We set up altars to be sworn over by your divinity.”

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ter. *Andr.* 289-91.

D. Emperors who received *genius* or τύχη oaths

	Total oaths	Percentage of Oaths by <i>Genius</i> or Τύχη	Number of <i>Genius</i> oaths (= number of Latin oaths)	Number of Τύχη oaths	Number of Oaths by name
Caligula	1	100%	1	0	0
Claudius	14	7%	1	0	13
Nero	14	7%	1	0	13
Vespasian	16	63%	8	2	6
Titus	1	100%	0	1	0
Domitian	17	18%	1	2	14
Trajan	33	36%	0	12	21
Hadrian	53	62%	1	32	21
Antoninus Pius	61	70%	0	43	18
Marcus Aurelius (with or without co-emperors)	18	94%	0	17	1
Avidius Cassius	1	0%	0	0	1
Commodus	18	94%	0	17	1

E. 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE inscription from Perge (Jameson 1965: 55)

*G]enio civitatis*

Τύχη τῆς πόλεως

“Spirity of the city”

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