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Autokrator, King of Upper and Lower Egypt

One of the major changes that the Roman conquest brought into Egypt was the replacement of the Ptolemaic king with a prefect directly appointed by Augustus. Nevertheless, the emperor was regarded as a full-fledged pharaoh: he received the royal titlature and his images were carved on temple walls all over the province. Therefore, even if the ruler distanced himself from Egypt, pharaonic kingship didn't disappear; on the contrary, it lasted even more than three centuries.

The paper aims to discuss the traits of the Egyptian kingship under Augustus as expressed by his hieroglyphic titlature, which was the model for those of his successors, focusing in particular on the Throne name. The issue of the Roman titlature has been the subject of intensive study in the last decades: the current view is that changes in its contents attest a direct intervention of Augustus aimed at “Romanising” them, most notably in the case of the Throne name, distinguished by the onomastic element *Autokrator*. This might have caused the inexorable decline of the Egyptian kingship.

This interpretation, which heavily depends on the view of Romanisation as an entirely top-down process, considers neither the authors and the audience of the titlature nor the historical context where it was created and used. An approach which takes into account all the participants in this process and their cultural context would result in a more balanced view. Comparing the epigraphic evidence of the Roman titlature with that of the Ptolemaic period I will show that the peculiarity of the Throne name of Augustus is strictly related to the inner developments of the hieroglyphic titlature in the 1st century BC. It will therefore become clear that Augustus' reign marked the transition to a new and long-lasting phase of the history of Egyptian kingship.