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論文

Reconstructing the Foundations of Roman Religion and Secular Time

ローマの宗教と世俗的な時間の基盤を再構築

Mark E. Field

Abstract

This paper examines how the evolving Roman political regime, later known as the Principate, used religious innovations and the Julian Calendar to support and enshrine a new system of government and its ideological *raison d'être*.

摘要

この論文は、後にプリンシペートとして知られる進化するローマの政治体制が、新しい政府システムとそのイデオロギー的存在意義を支持し、祀るために宗教的革新とユリウス暦をどのように利用したかを考察します。

I. Introduction

A lesser-known poet Albius Tibullus (55BCE-19BCE) supposedly coined the Latin phrase “*Urbs Aeterna*.” Whereas the more well-known poet, Publius Vergilius Maro (70BCE-19BCE), aka, Virgil, the author of the *Aeneid*, in tribute to the city and his benefactor, designated Roman rule of the Mediterranean “*imperium sine fine*.”^[1] Putting the two together we have the sobriquet, “Rome, the eternal city, empire without end.” This is, of course, no small statement, and perhaps this type of invocation by Rome’s literati at the dawn of what we now call the “Common Era”, CE, is one of the many reasons why Rome still casts a long shadow over the psyche of “Western Thought” and “Cultural Identity”.

The city still stands, but it has changed greatly over the past two millennia even though its ancient ruins provide a constant reminder of past greatness. The empire has technically ended or fallen twice: once in the west in CE476 with the capture and

imprisonment of the last Emperor of the Western Roman Empire, Romulus Augustulus, and the crowning of the Germanic Christian King of Italy, Odovacer.^[2] Then again almost one thousand years later when the walls of Constantinople, the New Rome, the Christian Capital of the Roman Empire in the east, finally fell to the Muslim Turk's cannons in CE1454. Both these events were recorded according to the unifying measurement of time known as the Julian Calendar, the eponym of the Roman aristocrat, politician, military general, and in the end *Pontifex Maximus* (High Priest) and *Dictator for Life* of the Roman Republic, who established it, Gaius Julius Caesar, aka Julius Caesar or just Caesar.

Caesar is not usually counted among the official emperors of Rome; that honor is reserved for his adopted son Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, later known as Augustus. However, it was Caesar's dual role as *Dictator* of Rome and *Pontifex Maximus* of the Roman State Religion that allowed him to reform the Roman *Fasti*, i.e., the Roman calendar into a manageable instrument for marking time that is still with us today. Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus was a young man when his famous father was assassinated on March 15th 44BCE. It took him many years to gain full control of Rome and its possessions, but in 27BCE Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus reestablished the Republic of Rome in a new guise with all the traditional public offices intact, but with a new role for himself not as a tyrannical dictator, but as the *Princeps*: the first citizen or first among equals, managing a centralized administration that oversaw a vast multiethnic conglomerate of peoples.

Rome started out as just one of several small settlements on the west coast of the Italian Peninsula, but as it grew and became more powerful its self-conception evolved beyond its first incarnation as a city-state and regional power. The city of Rome would become the center of power for the known world, and its elite citizenry would become the guardians of peace around the Mediterranean Basin and across the African and European Continents from the Straights of Gibraltar to Damascus and from Britain to Asia Minor. Under the *Pax Romana*, the Peace of Rome, Roman Legions (armies) would build the Roman Roads connecting major settlements by land and protect the trade routes across the Mediterranean Sea and along the major rivers of Europe.

Before Rome's empire took its final shape it went through a series of bloody internal power struggles between its patrician, founding families. In this paper, we will look at: 1) the mythical and religious foundations of the Roman Republic, 2) the reforms to the traditional Roman calendar known as the Roman *Fasti* instigated by Julius Caesar, 3) the battles for dominance between republican forces and the heirs of Julius Caesar, and 4) the political system known as the principate that utilized republican political and religious offices to centralize Rome power.

II. The Roman Republic and its Self-image: Memorial Days in the Roman Fasti

There are several early myths related to the foundation of Rome visible in the Roman *Fasti*, Rome's original lunisolar calendar. Rome was initially ruled by kings supported by the leading citizens of the city, later collectively known as the Patrician families, or founding fathers. The four most important memorial times regarding the transition from monarchy to the republic are: the *Lupercalia* observed on February 15th, the *Quirinalia* held on February 17th, the *Regifugium* commemorated on February 24th, and the *Parilia* celebrated on April 21st.

The *Lupercalia* was an ancient rite that started at a cave called the *Lupercal* at the south-west corner of the Palatine Hill, where according to legend the flooded Tiber River deposited the twins, *Romulus*, and *Remus*, who were raised by a wolf, *lupus* in Latin. The wolf was supposedly the sacred animal of the god *Mars*, and *Mars* was the god of the earliest settlers on the Palatine Hill of Rome.^[3] The city established by *Romulus* on the seven hills (Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal, and Viminal) next to the Tiber River, was of course, his namesake.

The *Quirinalia*, the festival for the god *Quirinus*, was held by the cult of *Quirinus* at its temple on the Quirinal Hill. The origin of the god *Quirinus* is somewhat obscure, but *Quirinus* was later associated with *Romulus* himself. The Latin term *Quirites*, which was an expression that referred to Roman citizens in their civic capacity, seems to point to the evolution of communal deities in the Roman Pantheon from their earlier ancestor worship.

The *Regifugium*, the flight of the king held on February 24th, was important in two respects. First it celebrated the departure of the last king of Rome leading to the establishment of a new form of political control, the *Res Publica*, the Latin root that is the basis of the modern English word Republic. Second, the *Regifugium* ceremony could be repurposed when necessary to intercalate an additional month to recalibrate the Roman lunar calendar to the seasons of the tropical solar year.

The *Parilia*, supposedly named after the male-female deity *Pales*, the shepherd's deity associated with Rome's pastoral roots, was one of the oldest and best documented festivals of the year celebrated on April 21st. It was also known as the Birthday of Rome or the anniversary of the foundation of Rome.^[4]

The new year for many ancient agricultural societies often began in the spring around the Vernal Equinox. The god *Martius* (Mars) is usually thought of as the god of war, but originally *Mars* was also associated with vegetation. Consequently, prayers and sacrifices for the prosperity of vines and fruit trees and the growth of seed crops were most often

addressed to *Mars* in his month, *Mensis Martius* (March). March 1st was originally New Year's Day for the Romans. It was the day when the sacred fires of the goddess *Vesta* that protected Rome were rekindled, and fresh laurels were fixed to many buildings with special religious significance. On March 14th, an *Equirra*, horse-race, was also held to celebrate the festival of *Mars*.^[5]

Most early societies counted years starting from some major event, but over time it became common to count years according to the reign of kings. The use of regnal years was the standard across the empires of the Fertile Crescent from Persia to Egypt. Since the Romans abolished kingship rather early in their mythical history, Roman years were recorded by the names of the two highest elected officers of the Republic, the *Consuls*, until CE537 when the emperor Justinian reintroduced a regnal dating system. There is widespread agreement among scholars that procedural reforms, which caused the two elected *Consuls* to assume office on January 1st, were initiated in 153BCE. Before the reforms, *Consuls* took office on March 15th from at least 222BCE, and before that they could and did enter and leave office on any day. The *Consuls* in Republican times were primarily military leaders, and so being ready for campaigning season was the most important issue. Apparently, guerilla warfare in Spain that required the attention of Roman Legions who had to march to the Iberian Peninsula around the Mediterranean Sea on foot forced the innovation to be enacted.^[6] From that time forward, the civil year would have begun on January 1st and the god *Janus* received the first sacrifice of the *Consuls*' year in office.^[7]

Mensis Ianuarius (January) was named after the god *Janus*, the god of doors or gates. The earliest Rome religion was centered around the family and the home. The earliest communal deities in the Roman Pantheon were an outgrowth of the worship of dead ancestors in the home where the *paterfamilias*, father of family in the home, was essentially the head priest of the family cult.^[8] The most sacred and important parts of the house were the door (*ianus*) and the hearth (*vesta*). Consequently, in Roman religious custom the god *Janus* and goddess *Vesta* were the first and last deities to be invoked in religious ceremonies. *Janus*' spiritual role as the guardian of entrances and the invocation of *Janus* and *Vesta* as the first and last deities in both public and private religious rituals point to the home and family as the foundation of Italian civilization and religion.

After the last Roman king was banished and the Roman Republic was established, the *Rex Sacrorum*, the king of sacrificial acts, lived in the *Regia*, the house of the king, and symbolized the head of the State. The role of *Rex Sacrorum* as the head of the State would have been analogous to the *paterfamilias*. The *Rex Sacrorum* was the only priest to serve the god *Janus*; there was no other priest or priestess for *Janus*. The other deities in the Roman

pantheon had their own, *Flamines*, high priests, and their wives served as the deity's high priestesses, *Flaminicas*. In the ancient order of the priesthoods, the *Rex Sacrorum* came first, followed by the *Flamines Maiores*, the three great priests, the *Flamen Dialis* (of Jupiter), *Flamen Martialis* (of Mars), and *Flamen Quirinalis* (of Quirinus), and then the *Pontifex Maximus* with his *patria potestas* (paternal powers) over the *Vestal Virgins* (the handmaiden of the goddess *Vesta*, who tended the sacred fires that protected Rome mentioned earlier). This hierarchy of priesthoods followed by the *Vestal Virgins* appears to reflect the traditional hierarchy of the family: father, sons, and then daughters. Moreover, the final position of the *Pontifex Maximus* seems to symbolize the *Vestal Virgins'* role as the possessions of the father.^[9] The importance of the *Rex Sacrorum* and *Pontifex Maximus* would be inverted over time, and by the middle Republic the *Pontifex Maximus* was at the top of the hierarchy and had his office in the *Regia*. Moreover, the office of *Pontifex Maximus* had fewer constraints for Patricians with political aspirations, such as the prohibition of holding secular office for the *Rex Sacrorum* and the multiple duties required of the *Flamines* and their wives.^[10]

Significant historical events such as military successes could be recorded in the early Roman *Fasti*, but also community tragedies like the first sacking of Rome known as the “Gaulish Catastrophe” noted down on *Quinctilis* (July) 18th as *Dies Alliensis*.^[11] The building of cultic structures to commemorate these events or honor deities, i.e., establishing temples to gods as physical markers of the communal interest, were common practices in the Republican period that would continue into the imperial era.^[12] The three great priests mentioned earlier in the ancient order of the Roman priesthoods were the representatives and guardians of the gods, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, and *Quirinus*. Each of these gods had their own hill in Rome and temple cults associated with them, the Capitoline Hill of *Jupiter*, the Palatine Hill of *Mars*, and the Quirinal hill of *Quirinus*.^[13] Collectively, the gods *Jupiter*, *Mars*, and *Quirinus* are sometime referred to as the *Archaic Triad*, pointing to the earliest roots of the Roman state religious cults.^[14]

The Ides of September, on the 13th of the month, was the foundation day of the Capitoline Temple and the Feast of *Jupiter* held there. Apparently, the feast took the form of a common religious meal where magistrates and senators served as representatives of the state and people of Rome.^[15] *Jupiter*, the king of the gods, and his companions in the Capitoline Temple *Juno*, his wife, and *Minerva*, the goddess of crafts, war, and wisdom, equivalent to *Athena* in the Greek Pantheon, were at the center of Roman state religion from around 300BCE onward and are sometimes referred to as the *Capitoline Triad*.^[16]

III. Julius Caesar's Renewed Roman Calendar

Julius Caesar was a product of the patrician society he grew up in. He attained his fame and fortune through family and social connections and rose to prominence by attaining important political as well as religious offices. Moreover, he was a brilliant self-publicist who used his writings to help advertise his military achievements and solidify his reputation as a military and political leader.

As Rupke pointed out, “raising the profile of events by appropriate timing” and instilling “additional meaning into particular days” was nothing particularly new,^[17] but something, perhaps, Caesar excelled at, and later imperial regimes would follow and model their actions after. Caesar's campaigns against the optimate (conservative patricians) forces that opposed him started with his crossing of the Rubicon River on January 11th 49BCE, before he reformed the *Fasti*. January 11th was also *Carmentalia*, the celebration of the Goddess *Carmenta*, a birth-goddess associated with spells, prophecies, and superior knowledge that “transforms the owner of the knowledge into a divine person,”^[18] Since Caesar was eventual deified, this could have been part of his plan or may just have been a coincidence. Four years later, on March 17th 45BCE, Rome's civil war finally ended with Caesar's victory over his optimate foes at the Battle of Munda in Spain. The arrival of Caesar's message to Rome declaring the end of hostilities on the eve of *Parilia*, April 21st the Birthday of Rome was probably not just happenstance, though. The timing of the arrival must have given his victory the aura of a new foundation of the city.^[19]

It is not certain if Caesar's calendar reform project was part of his overall campaign to enhance his reputation and solidify his power. His critics like Cicero certainly must have thought so since Cicero complained in his memoirs how even the stars now move at Caesar's command.^[20] Nonetheless, Caesar was probably the only one who would have dared to make the needed reforms to the traditional Roman *Fasti* to align it with the topical solar year and the seasons of the northern hemisphere. Caesar's efforts gave us the Julian Calendar that serves as the basis of most modern calendars in use today.

Julius Caesar was the *Dictator* of Rome from 46BCE until his death in 44BCE. Julius Caesar held at least two other religious offices simultaneously, he had been the *Pontifex Maximus*, chief priest since his election in 63BCE. He had also been elected in absentia to be an *augur*, a kind of Roman priest responsible for interpreting auspicious and inauspicious natural signs, in 48BCE. He would have formally taken his office as an *augur* by the beginning of 46BCE after his return to Rome.^[21] Julius Caesar may have met the Alexandrian astronomer, Sosigenes during his time in Egypt.^[22] Julius Caesar appointed a commission of mostly foreign experts headed up by Sosigenes to develop the new calendar. It was Julius

Caesar dual roles as *Dictator* and *Pontifex Maximus* that allowed him to enact his calendar reforms. In other words, Julius Caesar inaugurated and defined the Julian Year as *Dictator*, but it was Caesar as the *Pontifex Maximus* who ensured that it worked almost seamlessly with the pre-Julian calendar. The reforms started with an edict known as the *dictator iterum*. The *Senate* was informed of this edict but played no part in making the decision to enact it or the reforms that followed.^[23] The year 46BCE was eventually referred to as the *annus confusionis ultims*, the last year of confusion, but the process of reshaping the calendar was done very prudently. Moreover, Julius Caesar took the utmost care to respect existing religious institutions when configuring the reforms.

The first step was to reestablish a precise synchronicity with the solar year, with the spring equinox fixed on the new civil calendar as March 25th. To do that 46BCE needed to be extend from the usual Republican year of 355 days by 90 days to 445 days in total. Apparently, in addition to inserting the traditional intercalary month after February, two additional intercalary months were inserted between November and December. The precise method of how this was done is still obscure. However, inserting days without consequence, i.e., intercalated periods of time with no sacral or legal obligations that were *momentum temporis*, or just a moment in time near the end of these months was probably called for. Such moments in time, which would not have changed the basic dating structure at the end of months, based on counting the number of days before the first day of the next month known as the Kalends, would probably have been the trick.^[24]

The reformation of the new Julian months must have been simple in comparison to the intercalation process. The *Fasti* of the Republic had twelve months. Five months were named after gods: *Ianuarius*, *Martius*, *Aprilis*, *Maius*, and *Junius* (January, March, April, May, and June). Six were numbered as months five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten, *Quinctilis*, *Sextilis*, *September*, *October*, *November*, *December*, (July, August, September, October, November, and December). There was one additional month *Februarius* (February) named after a purification tool called a *februum*.^[25] Originally, there were four months of 31 days *Martius*, *Maius*, *Quinctilis*, and *October* (March, May, July, and October), seven months of 29 days *Ianius*, *Aprilis*, *Iunius*, *Sextilis*, *September*, *November*, and *December* (January, April, June, September, November, and December) and one month with 28 days *Februarius* (February).^[26] February, which had always been used for intercalation, retained its 28 days and its position as solar synchronizer with the leap year month of 29th day. What we call a leap year in English was initially known as the *bisextilis annus* or bissextile year, since the 24th of February, i.e., the 6th day before the Kalends of March was originally repeated twice. Two days were added to *Ianuarius*, *Sextilis*, and *December* (January, July, and December) to make

them 31 days, and one day was added to *Aprilis, Iunius, September, and November* (April, June, September, and November) to make them 30 days.^[27] Once the calendar was implemented it was apparently accepted with no significant enthusiasm or resistance. However, birthdays for anyone born in those exceptionally long intercalary months must have been problematic since their birthdays would never occur again.^[28] Julius Caesar lived through the first full year of his namesake, 45BCE, but was assassinated on March 15th, 44BCE, the Ides of March.

VI. Following in Caesar's Wake: The Caesarian Battles for Dominance

After his final victory at Munda, Caesar was made *Imperator* and *Dictator* for life by the *Senate*. The *Senate* may have had little choice in granting both honors, traditionally *dictators* were only given absolute power for a finite period to deal with an emergency and *imperators* were hailed as 'imperators' or 'commanders' by their legions.^[29] The office of *dictator* was abolished after Caesar's death,^[30] but the *Senate* would grant *imperator* status to many more people once this precedent was set.

Apparently, Caesar had taken to regularly wearing the laurel wreath, normally reserved for generals during the ritual of a triumphal parade to the city after a foreign victory. Supposedly, this was an effort to cover up his balding head, but many Senators felt Caesar really wanted to be king. Kingship was anathema to the patrician oligarchic families that traditionally controlled Rome collectively through the *Senate* since the Republic was founded after the flight of the king mentioned earlier.

During the *Lupercalia* celebrations of February 15th 44BCE, Marcus Antonius, who was also one of the two *Consuls* for the year, tried to put a diadem, a symbol of kingship on Julius Caesar's head. More people applauded Caesar's refusal of the diadem than the offering of it, pointing to the antipathy toward kingship among the Roman elite.^[31] The incident would lead to Caesar's assassination one month later by Senators who Cicero would later call "freedom fighters."

Caesar had been scheduled to leave Rome on March 18th 44BCE on a campaign against Dacian tribes that had made incursions across the Danube River before he was murdered by his fellow patricians on the Ides of March, March 15th. His great nephew, Gaius Octavian, who was going to be Caesar's master of the horse or second in command during the campaign, was already in Apollonius on the west coast of the Adriatic Sea preparing for the campaign when he received word of Caesar's death.^[32] The "freedom fighters" and their supporters probably assumed that with the *dictator* gone, Rome could easily return to its Republican norms. However, with almost 90 years of intermittent civil wars and extralegal paramilitary score-settling, that was probably never very likely especially since Roman

Legions swore an oath of loyalty to their general, not the *Senate*.

Initially, Marcus Antonius was Caesar's heir apparent. He also held a leading legal position as one of the *Consuls* for the year, and he had Marcus Aemilius Lepidus installed as *Pontifex Maximus* in 44BCE after Caesar's death.^[33] Antonius was given Caesar's papers by Caesar's wife and took control of Caesar's wealth as well.^[34] Not long after the assassination, a public funeral for Caesar was held in the Forum. This was a ceremony Marcus Antonius was supposed to preside over that quickly got out of control when the crowd took over and demanded Caesar be deified and sacrifices be made to him immediately.^[35]

Not long after, it was discovered Julius Caesar had filed a new will in the care of the *Vestal Virgins*, in which he had adopted his eighteen-year-old great nephew, Gaius Octavian as his son and left most of his property and wealth to his new son, Octavian, apart from his bequest to the people of Rome.^[36] The young Octavian arrived back in Rome as a private citizen and met with Marcus Antonius. In the meeting Octavian asked Antonius for his inheritance, but the request was refused. Marcus Antonius, who had little respect for the boy, was for the moment in the stronger position.^[37]

As the year 44BCE passed, Antonius' relations with the *Senate* continued to sour and Cicero's opposition to Antonius grew stronger as the latter began to press his position as heir to Caesar and even promote his supposed role as the head priest of the deified Julius Caesar, according to Cicero's accounts.^[38] Behind the scenes, Octavian continued to strengthen his relationship with Cicero and the *Senate* to aid in his own struggle with Antonius over his inheritance and role as Caesar's heir. Octavian publicly stressed that Antonius' withholding of the inheritance was preventing Octavian from giving the people of Rome their legacy from Julius Caesar, although Octavian did despite this hold memorial games for Julius Caesar for the people in the summer of 44BCE.^[39] In November 44BCE, Octavian made a speech in the Forum next to a statue of Julius Caesar that had already been placed there and proclaimed his name to now be Caesar along with "his hopes of attaining his adoptive father's honors."^[40]

Throughout the autumn of 44BCE, Octavian and Antonius had both tried to enlist Julius Caesar's veterans to their respective sides. Overall, Octavian had been more successful winning the hearts and minds of these soldiers with his name and generous bonuses. But none of these soldiers wanted to fight their former comrades. As his tenure as *Consul* was running out, Antonius led a small army north to take over Cisalpine Gaul from its Governor Decimus Brutus, who had been one of Julius Caesar's assassins.^[41]

To the great surprise of many on December 20th, 44BCE, Cicero, the Republican

constitutionalist and frequent critic of the deceased *Dictator* Julius Caesar gave his third Philippic speech to the *Senate* praising the young Gaius Caesar (Octavian) for his ‘godlike intelligence and courage’ in investing his inheritance to raise a force of powerful veterans (Julius Caesar’s former troops) to ensure ‘the survival of the Republic’. Moreover, on January 1st, 43BCE, Cicero made and carried out a motion in the *Senate* that made Gaius Caesar a *propraetor* and a member of the *Senate* without serving as *praetor* first.^[42]

In early 43BCE, Gaius Caesar and his private army of Julius’ former veterans headed north to make common cause with the *Senate* against Marcus Antonius, whom the *Senate* had declared a public enemy of the people with encouragement from Cicero’s silver tongue.^[43] Initially, Gaius Caesar had to give up command of his Legions to the *Consuls* who out ranked him. However, by the time Marcus Antonius had accepted defeat and retreated across the Alps to Gaul, both *Consuls* for 43BCE were dead from the Battle at Mutina.^[44]

Although the *Propraetor* Gaius Caesar had led only two legions north in support of the *Senate’s* cause against Marcus Antonius, after the demise of the two *Consuls*, the *Propraetor* found himself in control of eight legions. Moreover, once in control, he and his veteran legions had no intention of fighting under the command of Decimus Brutus, one of Julius Caesar’s assassins, against Marcus Antonius, one of Julius Caesar’s loyal lieutenants, even though the *Senate* had ordered just that. The *Senate* had managed to further damage its standing with the troops and the *Propraetor* by awarding a triumph to Decimus Brutus for their victory and reducing their promised war bounty by fifty percent.^[45]

Marcus Antonius had found many old friends and allies in the provincial governors of Gaul on the other side of the Alps including Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. Decimus Brutus and his beleaguered legions had initially pursued Antonius across the Alps. However, they were forced to retreat from Antonius and his reinforcements only to find Gaius Caesar and his legions waiting to finish them off back in Italy. After the majority of Decimus Brutus’ forces abandoned him, he tried to flee to Macedonia and his fellow assassin, Marcus Brutus, but Decimus was killed by Gallic tribesmen during his escape.^[46]

With both consulships vacant in the summer of 43BCE, Gaius Caesar sent a message to the *Senate* demanding he be named *Consul*. The *Senate* initially agreed but then recanted and tried to take his mother and sister hostage. They escaped to the sanctuary of the Temple of *Vesta* where no man expect the *Pontifex Maximus* could enter though. Gaius Caesar then brought his legions to Rome to rescue his family. On August 19th 43BCE, Gaius Caesar was elected *Consul* for the first time with his relative Quintus Pedius as *co-Consul*.^[47] After the newly elected *Consul* Gaius Caesar had the necessary legislation passed to confirm

his adoption and receive his inheritance from Julius Caesar's estate that Marcus Antonius had blocked, Gaius Caesar made sure the citizens of Rome received the money Julius had bequeathed to them. He also ensured that the *Senate* paid out the war bounties to the legions in full.^[48]

In the aftermath of Julius Caesar's assassination in 44BCE, the *Senate* had arranged an amnesty for Caesar's murders.^[49] In the fall of 43BCE, the *Consul* Quintus Pedius had the *Senate* pass legislation that made the murder of Julius Caesar a crime once again and his assassins outlaws. A special court was established, and all the accused were found guilty in absentia, even those serving as governors in the provinces like Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius.^[50]

With Brutus and Cassius still at large in the east preparing a large army to counterattack, Gaius Caesar negotiated a power sharing agreement between Marcus Antonius, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, and himself. A triumvirate or dictatory commission of three was proposed to make and repeal laws and nominate officeholders. The commission would last for five years and nominate all the *consuls* and other officeholders in advance. In addition, the proscription or purge of some two thousand wealthy elite Romans would be enacted to eliminate their physical opposition and to confiscate their property to support the coming civil war against Brutus and Cassius. In late 43BCE, this constitutional arrangement was approved by a people's assembly in Rome to go into effect in the coming year.^[51]

On January 1st, 42BCE, a religious ceremony that would have political ramifications for centuries to come was held, the official deification of Julius Caesar.^[52] The triumvirs swore an oath that Julius Caesar's acts were sacred, and binding and he had become a god. The entire *Senate* made the same oath, and the foundation to a small temple dedicated to Julius Caesar was laid on the spot where the crowd had cremated his body in the Forum in 44BCE.^[53] Apparently, *Consul* Marcus Antonius had requested the renaming of the *Menius Quintilis* to *Menius Julius* in honor of Caesar's birthday on July 12th in early 44BCE while Caesar was still alive. It seems the change was, in fact, carried out despite Caesar's assassination on March 15th, or perhaps because of the impromptu unofficial deification by the crowd, since months could supposedly only be named after gods up until that time.^[54] In 42BCE Caesar's birthday was supposed to have been made a public holiday in which Senators and their sons were required to participate in the celebrations. However, the *Senate's* decree may have been fudged a bit since the celebration day, July 5th, was supposed to be *sacer Iovi et Divo Iulio*, sacred to Jupiter and the god Julius.^[55] Nonetheless, during the first games sponsored by the young Octavian in July 44BCE to honor his murdered father, the world

received a spectacular celestial confirmation of Julius Caesar's apotheosis when a comet tracked across the sky for seven straight days, a sight many believed to be Caesar's soul being taken to heaven.^[56] It is not quite certain when Octavian started actively promoting the idea of himself being *divi filius*, or a son of a god, but after Caesar's official deification Octavian took on the official title of *Gaius Julius Caesar Divi Filius Imperator*.^[57]

Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius had left Rome in the summer of 44BCE to take up governorships of small island provinces in the east, but quickly abandoned their insignificant posts. Over the next two years, they rallied legions from around the eastern Mediterranean: Macedonia, Greece, Syria, and Egypt. By the late summer of 42BCE these forces were assembled on two hills above the town of Philippi near the Black Sea on the eastern end of Via Egnatia, the military highway that led from the Adriatic Sea to Byzantium and Rome's rich eastern provinces. Over the first three weeks of October 42BCE, two of the largest Roman armies to ever face each other fought a series of inconclusive battles with both Octavian's and Cassius' camps being overrun and looted by Brutus' and Antonius' legions respectively. Both Octavian and Cassius survived the battles, but Cassius ended up taking his life in shame, while Octavian took to his sick bed and lived to fight another day. By October 23rd, Brutus' forces had been almost routed and retreated to wooded hills above Philippi. The following day, with the remainder of his troops preparing to surrender, Brutus also committed suicide.^[58]

After Philippi, Antonius initially went to Athens, then headed to Syria to fortify the eastern frontier against a possible invasion by the Parthians (Persians). In 41BCE, Cleopatra, the queen and pharaoh of Egypt, came to Asia minor to meet Antonius to get reacquainted. The affair between Antonius and Cleopatra has become legendary, and its initial phase drew Antonius away from his duties as the protector of Syria and into Cleopatra's arms in Egypt. While Antonius was indisposed, the Parthians overran Syria and invaded Judea, capturing the High Priest and Ethnarch of the Jews, Hyrcanus, and mutilating him so he could no longer serve as the religious leader of the Jews.^[59]

While Marcus Antonius was enjoying himself in Alexandria, Octavian was having to fight off an insurrection led by Marcus Antonius' wife, Fulvia, and his brother Lucius Antonius, a *Consul* for 41BCE. In early 40BCE Lucius Antonius surrendered to Octavian while Fulvia escaped to Athens to meet Marcus Antonius. It is not clear if his wife and brother's rebellion was sanctioned by him, but apparently Antonius blamed her for the fiasco, and this resulted in her depression, illness, and death shortly after Antonius left her to return to Italy.^[60]

Antonius sailed for Brundisium in southern Italy with 200 ships and a small army.

Antonius seems to have been preparing for a final showdown with Octavian, but once again the legions in Italy were reluctant to fight each other, and a series of negotiations resulted in what became known as the Treaty of Brundisium in September 40BCE. The treaty renewed the Triumvirate and established Octavian's control over the west, including Gaul which he had recently taken, Antonius in the east from Macedonia eastward, and left Lepidus responsible for a tiny bit of north Africa. The accord was finalized by banquets where Octavian wore Roman and military attire and Antonius sported exotic Asiatic and Egyptian fashion. The pact was then sealed with a wedding in Rome between Antonius and Octavian's sister, Octavia.^[61] The triumvirs followed this up with the Treaty of Misenum in 39BCE with Sextus Pompeius, the son of Julius Caesar's rival Pompey the Great, whose ships had been blocking the delivery of grain to Rome.^[62]

The Treaty of Misenum not only brought grain flowing back to Rome it also allowed for the return of some patrician exiles that had fled the capital after proscriptions and failed insurrections. The agreement only provided for the return of one quarter of the property that had been confiscated in their absence though. Tiberius Claudius Nero was a *praetor* in 41BCE, who had participated in Lucius Antonius failed insurrection and then escaped to Greece. In the summer of 39BCE, Tiberius Claudius Nero returned to Rome to much diminished circumstances with his young son Tiberius and pregnant wife Livia Drusilla in tow.

Roman marriages were often entered or exited due to considerations beyond romance, as Octavia's marriage to Antonius shows. In this context, it should not be so surprising that once Octavian took a liking to Livia Drusilla, Tiberius Claudius Nero divorced her without much fuss, and Livia quickly agreed to marry Octavian. The only real complication was the fact that Livia was pregnant with Tiberius' child. Although the *College of Pontifices* was consulted and apparently gave their approval so Livia could take up residence with Octavian almost immediately, the actual wedding did not take place until January 17th 38BCE, three days after she gave birth to a second son, Drusus.^[63] Although Octavian undoubtedly married for love there were political advantages as well. Since Octavian was still seen by many patricians as a provincial new man despite his famous name, Livia's patrician ancestry and their marriage brought a sense that the ruling class was coming to terms with the alternative world that was being formed by Octavian.^[64]

Octavian's luck in love did not follow him into many of the sea and land battles he waged over the next eighteen months, but each time he escaped with his life to fight another day. Despite these missteps, Octavian and Antonius met in mid 37BCE and extended for another five years the triumvirate that had expired on December 31st 38BCE. Antonius

also agreed to support Octavian's final assault on Sextus Pompeius' stronghold in Sicily, and then returned to the east. Lepidus agreed to lend a hand and would send his legions from North Africa to Sicily too. The key to the victory was the ships Octavian's fateful friend and military advisor, Marcus Agrippa, secretly build and brought to the battle though and by early September 36BCE Sextus Pompeius' forces had been routed. Sextus escaped to the east as his father had after his defeat by Julius Caesar some years earlier, but in 35BCE Sextus too was eventually captured and killed. Lepidus suffered a stranger, if less gruesome fate. Having had a good war and feeling a bit underappreciated by the other two triumvirs, he laid claim to Sicily as his own. However, once again the soldiers made the final choice, and after they deserted Lepidus, he had no choice but to surrender to Octavian. Lepidus was permanently out as a triumvir, he returned to Italy as a private citizen and a luxurious house arrest/retirement in the seaside resort of Circeii not far from Rome. Although it must have pained Octavian, Lepidus was also allowed to retain his position as *Pontifex Maximus*, the high priest of Rome, which Julius Caesar had held until his death on the Ides of March 44BCE and used to reform the Roman Calendar.^[65]

Word of victory at Naulochus, Sicily arrived in Rome before Octavian did. He most likely timed his arrival to coincide with his twenty-seventh birthday on September 23rd 36BCE. The *Senate* had voted to award him many honors and he chose to accept three of them: an annual festival to commemorate the victory, his statue in the Forum decorated with nautical gear, and most importantly the honor of *tribunicia sacrosanctitas*, which meant he now had the same protections as a tribune of the plebs, whose person was *sacer*, sacred and untouchable according to traditional law. Octavian made sure his friends and supporters received honors and rewards as well.^[66] Rome's goal in war had always been spoils and profit, and this victory was no exception.

Although many of Octavian's legions wanted to be discharged after their victory at Naulochus in the fall of 36BCE, only those who had fought at Mutina and Philippi were allowed to do so. Octavian quickly announced that the other legions would be needed in a campaign against the unruly tribes of Illyricum (the east coast of the Adriatic Sea extending northward to the Danube River).^[67]

Octavian spent much of the next two years campaigning in Illyricum to enhance his military reputation with the help of Marcus Agrippa. His sea forces cleared the eastern Adriatic of pirates, and his endeavors on land helped eliminate hostile tribes that might hinder the movement of troops to the east. The pacification of Illyricum would, of course, be a good thing in general, but the exercise also helped to train his legions for the final showdown with Antonius that would come sooner or later. On January 1st 33BCE, Octavian

became *Consul* once again, and a war of words would soon ensue.^[68]

Antonius finally set off on his long-delayed invasion of Parthia in the late spring of 36BCE. His goal was to besiege and capture the capital of Phratta in the southern Caucasus Mountains after taking control of Armenia along the way. His late start meant he could have no setbacks, or he would be forced to campaign in winter, which Roman legions were ill-prepared to do. Unfortunately, the Parthian defector Antonius had trusted turned out to be a double agent. This made his slow, poorly guarded baggage train with his siege equipment an easy target for a well-informed Parthian force to destroy. What made matters worse, the supposedly obedient Armenian king and his forces deserted Antonius in his time of need too, a disaster that forced his army to march back towards Syria through heavy snowstorms. Antonius lost nearly a third of his forces, or nearly twenty thousand men, on their journey back. After the battered army arrived in Syria, they were fully resupplied by provisions sent from Egypt by Antonius' ally and lover, Cleopatra. Antonius then return to Cleopatra's capital, Alexandria.^[69]

Antonius' dispatches back to Rome had portrayed his expedition as a success, and although Octavian probably knew the truth to be otherwise: "victory celebrations were staged, sacrifices conducted, and festivals held." During Antonius' campaign, Octavia had returned to Rome with their children. Now Octavian sent Octavia back to Antonius' headquarters in Athens to join her husband. Octavian also sent large stores of supplies for Antonius' troops, money, gifts for his officers, and a fully equipped Praetorian Guard (a general's personal bodyguard) of two thousand men. Superficially thoughtful gestures that were, no doubt, insulting on many levels. Upon Octavia's arrival in Athens, she was greeted with a terse message to send on the soldiers and war supplies, and then go back to Rome.^[70] In the spring of 34BCE, Antonius set out on the offensive in the east once more. Armenia was invaded and two sons of the Armenian king who had betrayed Antonius in the previous campaign were taken hostage. Then Armenia was made a Roman protectorate ready for trade and liable for taxation. A minor success, but success, nonetheless. Antonius' dispatch to Rome was not treated with the same excitement this time, though.^[71]

It is important at this point to review how Rome had acquired its various holdings around the Mediterranean Sea, and the underlying meaning of Octavian having control of the Latin-speaking west and Antonius leading the Greek-speaking east. Until the Punic Wars, Rome had been mostly concerned with its neighbors on the Italian Peninsula. Alexander the Great had conquered and unified the eastern Mediterranean and Near East under his divine kingship, but battles of succession amongst his generals following his death in 323BCE had divided his conquests into three Greek-speaking empires: the Ptolemy Empire in Egypt with

its capital in Alexandria, the Seleucid Empire in Mesopotamia with its capital in Antioch, and the Macedonian Empire in Greece and Asia minor. Rome's early encounters with the eastern idea of the ruler/conqueror being divine happened in Sicily after the overthrow the Carthaginian government in Syracuse, and then later in Greece after the defeat of Philip of Macedon. In both instances, the Greek-speaking populations welcomed the victorious general as a "Savior" and established festivals, games and even priesthoods in his honor. As Roman power became more permanent in the region, the goddess *Roma* was conceived and worshipped in the cities of the Hellenic East in much the same way as the goddess, *Fortuna* since Roman proconsuls changed almost yearly. The city of Smyrna built the first Temple of *Roma* in 195BCE, and other cities followed suit with Temples of *Roma* and games called *Romaia* as Rome started acquiring other bits of the Hellenic world of the eastern Mediterranean as protectorates. The enthusiastic worship of Roman leaders in the Greek-speaking world did not stop entirely though, and the extent to which it was encouraged or discouraged was dependent on the Roman leader and his length of stay in the east.^[72]

After Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great's army in 48BCE, Pompey escaped to Egypt, and Caesar followed. Caesar supposedly became furious when Egyptian officials of the male heir to the Pharaoh's throne Ptolemy XIII brought him Pompey's head. However, this gave Julius Caesar a reason to insert himself into Egyptian politics and punish Ptolemy XIII by making his sister, Cleopatra, the ruler of Egypt under his supervision. Ptolemy XIII rebelled and Caesar's forces annihilated Ptolemy XIII and his troops.^[73] Caesar also had an affair with Cleopatra while in Egypt, and Cleopatra bore a child Ptolemy XIV, also known as Caesarion.^[74]

Eastern monarchs like the pharaoh had often proclaimed their divine status while still alive. Although the Romans understood divine kingship was a common practice in the Hellenic world, it was something that could not be tolerated in their leaders at home, at least not yet. The whiff of it in Julius Caesar's behavior in 44BCE was what really led to his assassination. Nonetheless, associating leaders with the gods was part of the eastern way.

Apparently, Marcus Antonius, the Roman aristocrat and soldier, began to style himself as the Greek god *Dionysus* with the Egyptian equivalent *Osiris*, as his romance and alliance with Cleopatra evolved, since she was depicted as *Isis*, *Osiris'* wife, or *Aphrodite*, *Dionysus'* lover. After Antonius' victory in Armenia in 34BCE, he returned to Alexandria and held a series of celebrations, the most famous of which, later known as the Donation of Alexander held at Alexandria's gymnasium, granted different parts of Rome's eastern provinces to Cleopatra and her children, many of which Antonius had fathered. Of course, Antonius as the Roman triumvir with his legions was in ultimate control and could take

these back at any time. Nonetheless, the display was used to great effect in Octavian's propaganda campaign against Antonius from 33BCE onward. Much of Octavian's war of words was directed at Cleopatra as the evil foreign queen that had seduced the once great Roman general, who had gone native and lost his way.

The triumvirate expired at the end of 33BCE, and two of Antonius supporters took up their offices as *Consuls* in 32BCE. Antonius had sent a dispatch for them to present to the *Senate* in his defense and to attack Octavian for his actions. Octavian demanded they publish all of Antonius's dispatch, but they did not, presumably because it would not have casted Antonius in the best light of Roman public opinion. Although Octavian was essentially a private citizen and had no right to do so, his personal authority was still sufficient that when he called the *Senate* into session in mid-February 32BCE, the *Consuls* and Senators showed up. Octavian, surrounded by a bodyguard of supporters and veterans with concealed daggers, took a seat between the two consuls and mildly defended his actions and then accused Antonius and the *Consuls* of more improprieties.^[75]

Both *Consuls* and a good number of Senators secretly left Rome to join Antonius in Ephesus in Asia Minor, where he was preparing for war with Octavian. Many of Antonius' supporters from Rome were dismayed to find Cleopatra with him, and they advised him to send her back to Alexandria, but she ended up staying on. The elite patrician society of Rome, which Antonius was a part, was quite exclusive and although sexual tristes with a foreign queen would not raise an eyebrow, marriage to a foreign queen would be out of the question. Having her accompanying him on campaign effectively as a co-general of a Roman army would have been unheard of. Antonius' refusal to send Cleopatra away was unsettling to his patrician Roman supporters and one early supporter and advisor, Lucius Manatius Planeus, decided to quietly slip away back to Rome.

In the early summer of 32BCE, Antonius also decided to divorce Octavia and sent word to Rome she should leave his family home there. Octavian's war of words against Antonius and Cleopatra had been effective thus far, but Antonius' dismissal of a faithful wife for a foreign queen had a seriously negative impact on Roman public opinion.^[76] This, along with his lackluster military performance against the Parthians in Mesopotamia, had darkened Antonius' reputation in Rome.

After Lucius Manatius Planeus returned to Rome, he presented himself to Octavian with secret information about Antonius that had to be exploited despite the impropriety involved. Antonius had apparently filed a new will with the *Vestal Virgins* and Octavian had it seized and read publicly. Although the *Senate* was initially outraged by Octavian actions, the document provided proof of Antonius' plans for his children with Cleopatra and his desire

to be buried in Alexandria with her, in addition to the claim that Ptolemy XIV Caesarion was Julius Caesar's child and heir. It was clear that Antonius was no longer a respectable Roman patriot, and the *Senate* voted to deny Antonius the office of *Consul* that he was scheduled to receive the following year.^[77] To avoid being accused of restarting civil war in his final conflicts with Marcus Antonius, Octavian used religious rituals at the Temple of *Bellona* to give himself the pretext of a *bellum iustum*, a just war against Cleopatra and Egypt rather than a civil war against Antonius.^[78]

The Battle of Actium is almost anticlimactic in comparison to the buildup. In Antonius preparation for war, he had amassed the entire sea power of the east, thirty Roman style legions and over ten thousand calvary and another ten thousand light armed infantry. However, most of these soldiers were Greek-speaking easterners and many of the latter were levies brought by eastern monarch under Antonius control.^[79] By the end of 32BCE, Antonius and Cleopatra had set up their headquarters in Patrae on the Gulf of Corinth. The bulk of their fleet was based on the Gulf of Ambracia a bit farther north, and their main forces were distributed along the west coast of Greece, with the largest parts at Actium in the north and Methone in the south.^[80]

Once they knew where Antonius' assets were, Octavian and Marcus Agrippa set out with two forces in early 31BCE before the normal campaigning season. Agrippa, in charge of most of the naval force, sailed south and managed to take the stronghold at Methone and disrupt Antonius' supply lines from Egypt. Octavian crossed the Adriatic with his land forces and moved south to set up a commanding presence on the northern hills overlooking Actium before Antonius even arrived. Octavian initially tried to entice Antonius' ships into battle outside the gulf, but apparently the ships thus far had been used mostly for transporting troops by sail and lacked enough oarsman to maneuver effective in sea battles. Once Antonius and Cleopatra arrived in late April, Antonius tried to lure Octavian into battle on the plains, then attempted to cut off Octavian's water supply to his hill camp but found little success. With his ships and troops effectively blocked and confined in a crowded space at the mouth of the gulf, as the hot summer months passed an epidemic started to take its toll on Antonius' forces. In early August, Antonius sent a fleet to break the blockade and then meet up with his forces to the south, but Agrippa's fleet drove them back and the army remained trapped. After a lackluster calvary engagement produced no results, client kings and their forces as well as Roman senators began escaping Antonius' diseased camp, either fleeing or defecting to Octavian's side. Antonius then began burning his excess ships so his enemies could not use them later and consolidated his oarsmen into the remaining ships to break through the blockade. Approximately twenty thousand legionaries were loaded on

to his remaining ships for the breakout, and perhaps as many as fifty thousand legionaries were put under the command of a trusted colleague of Antonius with orders to march north into Macedonia if the fleet managed to break free. The fleet was divided into four squadrons of around sixty ships. Three squadrons were to actively engage the enemy ships waiting outside the gulf while the fourth squadron with the queen's flagship and ships containing Antonius' war chest of gold and silver hung back waiting for the right time. Generally, warships engaged in battle with oarsmen only, leaving their heavy cumbersome sails behind on land. But Antonius had instructed his captains to take their sails, so an escape would be possible. During the sea battle in the morning of September 2nd, Antonius' ships fought well and managed to draw Agrippa's ships to the north and south flanks, leaving an opening in the center that Cleopatra's squadron darted through and sailed swiftly south out running Octavian's sail-less ships after the afternoon winds had changed. Antonius' flagship was too enmeshed in the fight on the northern flank to escape, but he transferred to another ship and sailed south after the queen with a small group of ships. Antonius may have hoped more of his ships would be able to break free and follow him, but Agrippa and Octavian's larger fleet prevailed, forcing some ships to surrender and others to retreat into the gulf. The next day, those that had retreated surrendered as well. The army that was supposed to head north to Macedonia had no idea their general had abandoned them until a couple days later. They waited for his return, but after several days they negotiated a deal with Octavian to be treated as if they were part of the victorious army. A position they, no doubt, felt they would have been in had their celebrated general not escaped without them.^[81]

After Cleopatra and Antonius escaped back to Egypt in the fall of 31BCE, Octavian took his time planning his final conquest of Egypt. Legions formally loyal to Antonius would invade Egypt from the west and Octavian would lead an army from Syria down to Egypt from the east. Octavian's forces encountered little resistance on their approach to Alexandria and on August 1st, 30BCE when Antonius set out to make his final stand; his fleets defending the city surrendered without a fight while his cavalry deserted, and soldiers ran away. With nothing left, Antonius returned to Cleopatra's palace and tried to commit suicide but lived long enough for her to see him one last time. After Octavian entered the city, she supposedly committed suicide as well.^[82]

V. Augustus' Reconstructed Republic and Religious Innovations

Historians have many names for the different political eras of Rome: Republic, Empire, Principate, and Dominate.^[83] However, these are modern constructs trying to describe types of administrative systems. The Romans referred to their city and government

as the *SPQR*, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, i.e., the *Senate* and People of Rome,^[84] emphasizing not just a political system per se, but also a human network involved in a mission. From the *Regifugium*, the flight of the king, onward, the *Res Publica*, the ‘common cause’ or the ‘public thing’ embodied the idea that to be ruled by a king, *rex*, was the antithesis of liberty, *libertas*.^[85] This was a concept that was later borrowed and secularized in the late eighteenth century during the American and French Revolutions in their fights against the divine rights of kings.

The *Res Publica*, Roman Republic, was never a secular entity, though. It was always an oligarchic system that used religious rituals as problem-solving tools to balance the interests of its competing constituencies and validate political decisions once they were made.^[86] As Rupke pointed out “divine powers” that no one speaks to or beseeches to listen have no power. Invocations and rituals, inscriptions and visual images, religious infrastructure and audible priests are all aspects of religious communication that go into forming group identity for human participants and enhancing human agency by drawing on unseen powers.^[87] Many activities moderns would not think of as having religious significance such as games, triumphal parades, and war itself, entailed communication with deities to ensure their assistance and the success of endeavors ahead, or to express gratitude for the success of feats the deity’s support helped to achieve. Of course, public communication with deities would always have a human audience as well, and this was what made such communication part of the ‘common cause’ and enhance the potential human agency of the person or persons summoning divine support.^[88]

Patrician men would normally build their careers by holding a variety of religious and political offices as they worked their way up. Octavian was from an equestrian family (a knight just below the patrician class) from outside of Rome and was plucked out of obscurity by his great uncle Julius Caesar’s untimely death. Caesar’s will had made Octavian his son, and the crowd at his funeral had demanded Caesar be made a god. As the *divi filius*, the son of a god, Octavian had gained the allegiance of many of Caesar’s veterans that allowed him to attain political control through military power outside of Rome. To obtain the support of the ruling class to maintain his political control and help him administer Rome and its possessions, he needed to know the right people and develop networks of support for his rule. Priesthoods and the religious institutions he fostered would provide the means for developing those networks of support. That is probably why in Octavian’s Deeds, *Res Gestae*, overviewing his greatest accomplishments, he emphasized that over 170 priests stood with him at Actium in 31BCE.^[89]

Octavian had been appointed a *pontiff* in 47BCE while Caesar was still alive and

was co-opted as an *augur* after Caesar's death in 43BCE. After the Treaty of Misenum, he became a member of other traditional priesthoods like the *epulo*, the college of priests in charge of sacrificial banquets. Around the same time, Octavian would become a member of *quindecimvir sacris faciundis*, the college of 15 priests that guarded and interpreted the sacred Sibylline Books for the *Senate* that were kept in the Temple of *Apollo*.^[90] *Apollo* would become one of Octavian's patron gods, and after lightening had struck his home on the Palatine hill, he had it demolished, and a new Temple of *Apollo* was built in its place. Late after his victory at Actium in sight of the great temple to *Actian Apollo*, Octavian would allow a bronze statue of *Apollo* in his likeness to be erected in the porticos of *Apollo's* temple on the Palatine hill.^[91] In 36BCE, a grateful *Senate* purchased a series of building next to *Apollo's* temple on the Palatine for Octavian to serve as his home. It is from this array of structures on the Palatine that the modern word "palace" comes from. Next to Octavian's residence was a small hut built of natural turf with reed walls and a thatched roof that was believed to be the carefully preserved home of *Romulus*, the founder of the city.^[92]

Later he put efforts into restoring the *Arval brethren*, the college that performed sacrifices to *Dea Dia* for good harvests and other lesser-known priesthoods that had lost membership and purpose during the civil wars. While his membership in the older priestly orders helped solidify his relationship with traditional patrician families, he packed the restored priesthoods, including one with mythical connections to Rome's founder *Romulus*, with new patrician senators recently elevated from the equestrian class like himself.^[93]

In 29BCE Octavian returned to Rome and in late summer he celebrated three triumphs: the first for his victories in Illyricum in 35 and 34BCE, the second for victory over Cleopatra at Actium in 31BCE, and the third for his conquest of Alexandria and all of Egypt in 30BCE. His nephew Gaius Claudius Marcellus, and his stepson Tiberius Claudius Nero rode with him in his triumphal chariot just as he had ridden with Caesar in his triumphs.^[94] Traditionally, the triumph was a ceremony that senatorial generals were allowed to have after foreign conquests. However, the triumph was also when the general dressed up like *Jupiter* and impersonated the god, the Roman state ceremony closest to deification.^[95] This was a ceremony that would eventually be reserved for only the head of state and his family, i.e., the emperor and the imperial family that was yet to be clearly defined. After Octavian's triumphal celebrations were over, the doors of the Temple of *Janus* were closed, signifying Rome was finally at peace and giving the end of the Civil Wars additional religious significance.^[96]

With control over the wealth and resources of Egypt, Octavian was the undisputed leader of the Roman world and all its possessions. In Egypt, Octavian, the son of the deified

Divus Julius would have become pharaoh, the son of all the Egyptian gods and goddesses just as Alexander the Great. Moreover, to maintain effective government, Octavian's divine kingship as pharaoh meant Egypt would become his personal domain. Meanwhile, Rome's eastern provinces would have welcomed their new savior and liberator, expressing their gratitude for being "delivered from confusion and oppression." Eastern cities would take on the name of Caesarea in Octavian's honor, coins would be minted with images of the goddesses of Victory and Peace, his supposed companions, and temples would be erected for him, but only in unison with the goddess *Roma*, according to Octavian wishes.^[97] Nonetheless, he would still need to devise ways to maintain power within Rome while appeasing the *Senate* to avoid the same fate as Julius Caesar.

In the 'First Settlement' with the Roman *Senate* in 27BCE, Octavian laid down all his offices and the Republic was supposedly restored.^[98] At the same time, the *Senate* gave him a new title, Augustus, 'the revered one' that hit a perfect combination of power chords echoing both a poetic association with *Romulus* and the rich religious allusions of an *augur* without any connotation of kingship.^[99] It apparently did have significant connections to divinity as well with the adjective *augustus* being synonymous with *sanctus* and *divinius*. In the same year, the *Senate* voted to have the doors of Octavian's house on the Palatine hill decorated with laurels symbolizing a permanent triumph. A law was also passed renaming the month *Mensis Sextilis* as *Mensis Augustus* in his honor although he did not accept this honor until much later.^[100] Augustus became Octavian's proper name and title, but he would adopt the more modest title of *Princeps*, "the leading citizen" for everyday use, which had well-respected precedents in the title *princeps senatus*, the leader of the *Senate*. In addition, Augustus was persuaded to accept the governorship and proconsular authority over Spain, Gaul, and Syria with command over twenty frontier legions, roughly eighty percent of Rome's armed forces. With the *Senate* and people back as the sole source of legal authority that it had always been, and Augustus still in command of the military power that had made it all happen, the *Princeps* left Rome for the provinces to take care of tribal unrest on the frontier and wait to see how the new constitutional arrangement fared. Augustus first spent time in Gaul reasserting Roman authority there and conducting a census before moving on to northern Spain, which was still experiencing guerilla resistance to Roman authority in the north. While on campaign in Spain, his litter was scorched by lightning and the fright of the incident, and perhaps the stress of the campaign forced him to spend most of 25BCE in convalescence at hot springs in the Pyrenees. Later, Augustus would erect a Temple to *Jupiter Tonans*, Jupiter of the Thunder, on the Capitoline hill overlooking the Forum in thanks for his escape from this second lighting strike.^[101]

In 24BCE, the *Princeps* returned to Rome. Rome was experiencing another epidemic and the weakened first citizen fell ill again and appeared near death, which exposed a serious problem of succession. The *Princeps* had been grooming his nephew, Marcellus, to succeed him, but he was still much too young. At what appeared to be Augustus' deathbed, he gathered his leading supporters including Agrippa and handed over the *breviarium imperii*, a book detailing Rome's military and financial resources to his *co-Consul*, Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, and his seal symbolizing his authority to Agrippa. Despite everyone's expectation including his own, Augustus recovered.^[102]

While still convalescing in early 23BCE, Augustus prepared for a second settlement to handle the deficiencies of the first. Octavian/Augustus had held the office of *Consul* every year between 31BCE and 23BCE retaining the power of *Imperator*. However, holding the highest elected office continuously not only deprived many other senators from attaining the honor. It also smacked of tyranny. If Augustus wanted the full support of the ruling class including participation in public office and administration, the prestige and rank that stimulated the desire to attain public office known as the honors race needed to be restored albeit managed. On the other hand, an incident in 25BCE where one of the other provincial governors started a war with neither the permission of the *Senate* that had the legal right to authorize it, nor the approval of the *Princeps*, who had no such power, pointed to the unbridled power of governors with proconsular powers that needed to be controlled.

On July 1st, 23BCE, Augustus resigned as *Consul*, and in return was given *tribunicia potestas*, tribunal powers. He had possessed *tribunicia sacrosanctitas*, the same legal protections that a tribune of the plebes had against physical violence without holding office since 36BCE. Now Augustus also had the same powers of a tribune to propose and veto laws in the *Senate* without holding the office of tribune of the plebes. In addition, he was granted *imperium maius*, greater power, i.e., the power to command that even superseding the power to command of provincial governors within their provinces. The legislative prerogative of tribunal powers would be the key to establishing the date of Augustus' reign and the reign of all future emperors. Normally, *imperium* was lost when one crossed the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of Rome, except for the annual officeholders like the *Consuls*. The *Senate* had voted that Augustus' *imperium* would be continuous across the territories of the *SPQR* and inside the city as well. Agrippa, who during Augustus' illness had become indispensable to the new regime's survival, was also granted *imperium proconsulare*, proconsular powers outside of Rome, as a sort of imperial co-regent. Agrippa would later be awarded *tribunicia potestas*, the same tribunal powers as the *Princeps* in 18BCE.^[103]

Augustus sent Agrippa to the East later in 23BCE while Augustus stayed behind in

Rome. His nephew Marcellus, who had ridden in his triumphal chariot, died at the end of the year and Marcellus was the first of the family to be enshrined in the great Mausoleum of Augustus on the Campus Martius.^[104] Then Augustus had to deal with a food shortage that followed the flooding of the Tiber River. Apparently, during this period the Roman masses demanded Augustus be made *dictator* to deal with the problem and threaten to burn down the *Curia*, Senate House, if the *Senate* did not vote for his appointment. Legally, dictatorship had already been abolished and, politically at least in terms of Augustus' relationship to the *Senate*, this would have been impossible, so the *Princeps* employed the theatrics of tearing his clothes in disgrace and baring his throat to the crowd, saying he would rather be stabbed to death than accept the role of *dictator* to quell the riots. After he established a grain supply commission that he led, he then personally financed the shortfalls of grain to end the famine. Before Augustus finally left Rome in the fall of 22BCE to relieve Agrippa at what had become their headquarters in the East on the island of Samos, he also arranged for Agrippa to marry Julia, Augustus' daughter from an earlier marriage before Livia, and Marcellus' widow, who was still relatively young, but childless. Agrippa was now the *Princeps*' son-in-law.^[105]

Augustus spent the next three years in the East. His penultimate goal was to establish peace with the Parthians, but his closer presence, while invasion plans of Armenia were being made, must have been welcome to *Roma's* and Augustus' eastern devotees. The formal cult to Augustus under his Greek equivalent title *Sebastos* developed steadily as temples continued to be built, priests appointed to his cult, and yearly festivals and games such as the *Romaia Sabasta* were established in his honor.^[106] Apparently, Augustus made a sharp distinction between provincial requests to honor his god-king status and requests from Roman citizens in cities like Ephesus and Nicaea, though. These cities were allowed to erect shrines to *Roma* and his deified father, *Divus Julius*, and worship his father, but were not permitted to worship Augustus directly.^[107]

Augustus chose his stepson Tiberius, who had also ridden in his triumphal chariot in 29BCE, to lead the Roman Legions in 20BCE against Armenia. Armenia was easily subdued, and Tiberius crowned its new Pro-Roman king himself. The Parthian Emperor quickly sued for peace and handed over the Roman army standards (eagles on poles that were used to guide Roman Legions in battle) that had been lost in the catastrophic Roman defeat of Crassus, Julius Caesar's fellow triumvir, in 53BCE and others that Antonius had lost in 36BCE in his failed invasion of Parthia. Relations between the two empires slowly improved for some years to come after that.^[108]

Although the return of the standards and the new cold peace with Parthia was more

of a diplomatic victory than a military feat, Rome still saw it as one. Augustus' homecoming to Rome on October 13th, 19BCE would become known as *Augustalia* and celebrated annually thereafter. Rather than a full triumph from the *Senate*, he accepted an arch with a statue of himself driving a *quadriga*, a chariot drawn by four horses, in the Forum next to the temple of *Divus Julius*. To avoid the triumph, it seems that Augustus had entered the city earlier than expected, at night, and this appears to have been related to a tragedy that happened on his way back to Rome. Evidently, the great poet Virgil had met Augustus in Athens, and traveled with him as far as Brundisium, where Virgil suddenly died with his greatest work, the *Aeneid*, still unfinished. Although Virgil had supposedly requested the poem be burned upon his death, Augustus, who was familiar with the epic and keenly aware of how it depicted his family and mythical heritage at the center of the Roman historical narrative, intervened and entrusted two other poets to make the final preparations for publication.^[109]

Augustus apparently had not made a formal succession plan yet, which would have been fundamentally inconsistent with the role of the *Princeps* as just the leading citizen or first among equals. Although Marcellus and Tiberius had both ridden in his triumphal chariot, he had not adopted either of them, and Augustus and Livia had never been blessed with children of their own. Any *paterfamilias* including Augustus would need heirs at some point though, and with Marcellus dead and Tiberius not of Augustus' bloodline, Augustus formally adopted his two grandsons from the union of Agrippa and Julia in 17BCE as his sons and heirs.^[110]

In the same year, ten years after the restoration of the Republic and Octavian taking on the title Augustus, the *Ludi Saeculares*, or Secular Games, were staged in Rome after the *quindecimvir sacris faciundi* consulted the Sibylline oracles to check if it was an auspicious time.^[111] Secular in its modern usage normally denotes something that is non-religious in nature; however, these games were loaded with religious significance. The archaic usage of *Saeculares* means something closer to once in a lifetime or generation. These secular/generational games were conceived to be celebrated once every 110 years, but the next one staged by Emperor Claudius was only about sixty years later, and the following one held under Emperor Domitian was only 40 years after that. The first one with Augustus and Agrippa as the priestly masters of the *quindecimviri*, who sacrificed two bulls at the Temple of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*, was meant to inaugurate a new golden era of Rome,^[112] a major theme within Virgil's *Aeneid*. The Secular Games culminated at the Temple of *Apollo* with a hymn written by Horace and sung by children praising the goddess *Diana*, *Apollo's* twin sister and the protector of childbirth, the *Senate's* decrees promoting

parenthood, a rich harvest of young boys and girls, and Rome's traditional values centered upon the family.^[113]

Augustus and Agrippa would spend much of the next three years outside of Rome. Augustus was in the north pacifying the northern frontier along the Rhine and Danube Rivers with the help of his two stepsons, Tiberius, and Drusus as legates, while Agrippa watched over things in the eastern provinces. Apparently, Augustus understood the burden of Rome's empire really required co-rulers and, when their *imperium* was renewed for another five years after their return to Rome in 13BCE, Agrippa was also awarded *imperium maius*.^[114]

In the same year, the former triumvir, Lepidus, who by *mos maiorum*, tradition, held the office of *pontifex maximus* for life, finally died. *Pontifex Maximus* as head of the official state religion was the chief priest of the *Penates*, the household gods Aeneas had brought out of burning Troy to Italy. The office of *pontifex maximus* had also been bequeathed to Octavian in Caesar's will, which Augustus had prized dearly due to the religious nature of his power. Augustus' long-overdue election to the office was a matter of course, and the popular assembly to witness his ordination as *Pontifex Maximus* was held on March 6th, 12BCE.^[115]

Agrippa had left on campaign in the Balkans in late 13BCE but apparently returned to Italy via Brundisum the following spring due to health reasons. He supposedly suffered from severe gout and endured painful treatments, something he had hidden from Augustus. Agrippa fell ill in Campania on his way to the capital and Augustus rushed to his colleague's side once he heard the news,^[116] but Agrippa passed away before his arrival, barely two weeks after Augustus became *Pontifex Maximus*. This was, of course, a devastating blow to Augustus and his family, but a serious loss for Rome as well. Agrippa's ashes like Marcellus' were placed in the Mausoleum of Augustus, and according to the prevailing religious beliefs Agrippa like Marcellus and other great republican heroes before them, took his place amongst the stars.^[117]

The ordination of Augustus as *Pontifex Maximus* was entered into the Roman calendar as one of the most sacred dates in the year. It also required immediate alterations in Augustus' residence. Traditionally, the *Pontifex Maximus* officially resided at the *Domus Publica*, the State House, next to the Temple of *Vesta* on the *Via Sacra* near the *Regina* on the Forum. However, Augustus did not want to leave his residence on the Palatine hill next to the relics of *Romulus* and the Temple to *Apollo* he had built. He subsequently turned over the *Domus Publica* to the *Vestal Virgins* and made part of his official residence public domain. Within this public space in the residence, he had erected his own altar and a shrine to *Vesta*

like the one in the Forum equipped with a *palladium*, which safeguarded the sacred fires. These new monuments would become the center of the State Religion. By making part of his house public domain, he was effectively establishing his private household worship as an official part of the Roman State Cult, which not only included *Vesta* and the *Penates*, but also the *Genius* (attending spirit) of August and his *Lares* (guardian deities).^[118]

The customs of pouring libation to the *Genius* of August at both private and public banquets had supposedly been common for several years prior; however, the offering of sacrifices to his *Genius* for Augustus' safe return to the city, etc., was not recognized by him or officially sanctioned in formal state ceremonies until he became *Pontifex Maximus*.^[119] After becoming the chief priest of the Roman State Religion, Augustus established religious networks down to the street level of the city with conscious efforts to link the *Genius Augusti* directly with the local community *Lares* between 12BCE and 7BCE. The city was reorganized into fourteen regions encompassing 265 *Vici* (neighborhoods). *Vicomagistri* (neighborhood leaders) were treated as the local priests responsible for the public religious communication with the *Compita Lares* (local crossroad guardian deities). Augustus in his role as *Pontifex Maximus* transferred his cult to local communities, which in turn recognized the transmutation as local historical events, commemorated with lavished marble altars, inscriptions, and visible iconography of Augustus, which ensured the symbolic and visual presence of the *Genius Augusti* and the *Lares Augusti* in the cult ceremonies of the local *Compita Lares*.^[120] The *Compita Lares* had ancient roots, and the worship of the new cult, which included *Genius Augusti* and the *Lares Augusti* spread quickly throughout Italy. Inscriptions and sacrificial scenes on altars of the *Vici* of many towns and crossroad shrines of the *Pagi*, the countryside, attest to widespread sacrifice of pigs to the *Lares* of Augustus and bulls to the *Genius* of Augustus.^[121]

Later in 12BCE, Tiberius was sent to the Balkans to pick up where Agrippa had left off in campaigning along the Danube and Drusus was dispatched to continue his command of the legions along the Rhine. In 11BCE Tiberius was recalled to Rome, and Augustus forced him to divorce his wife Vispania, who he was apparently quite in love with, so he could marry Agrippa's widow and Augustus' daughter, Julia. The reluctant Tiberius dutifully divorced and married as commanded, probably with no small measure of prodding from his mother, Livia. However, the ill-fated match eventually would just deepen the well of resentment Tiberius held for his heartless stepfather. After Julia bore a child that died in infancy, Tiberius came to loath his stepsister/wife and abandoned their martial relationship entirely.^[122]

The prestige and preeminence of the House of Augustus continued to rise as more

great monumental art and commemorative days accumulated to accompany the poetry that celebrated not only the *Princeps*, but his family and heritage.^[123] On January 30th, 9BCE (most likely Livia's fiftieth birthday), the *Ara Pacis*, the Altar of Peace was dedicated across from the Mausoleum of Augustus on the Campus Martius next to the Tiber River.^[124] The Campus Martius, Field of Mars, initially used to train young patrician males in the martial arts of combat must have been a huge relatively empty space at the time. Agrippa completed the Patheon at the center of many beautiful monuments on the Campus Martius in 25BCE. Originally, Agrippa wanted to consecrate it to Augustus, but he refused, so it was dedicated to his divine ancestors, the goddess *Venus Genetrix* that the Julian clan had long claimed as their matron, the god *Mars* who was said to be her lover and thus the family's ancestral father, and, of course, *Divus Julius*.^[125] The altar and its square enclosure with its two entrances were made entirely of marble, and the reliefs on the outer walls inspired by the decorative marbles of the Patheon depicted a funeral procession led by Augustus and Agrippa followed by other notable relatives in what later writers would sometimes refer to as the divine family, such as Livia and Augustus' adopted sons, Gaius and Lucius. Outside the Altar of Peace was the *Horologium Augusti*, the Sundial of Augustus, with its Egyptian obelisk that casted its shadow into the entrance to the altar twice a year at the spring equinox on March 25th that Julius Caesar synchronized his calendar to, and at the autumn equinox on September 23rd, Augustus' birthday.^[126]

It was probably during the building of the Altar of Peace and its Sundial after Augustus had become *Pontifex Maximus* that he and the *College of Pontiffs* would have realized the bissextile leap year was not being applied properly and the calendar was drifting away from its synchronizing point of March 25th as the spring equinox. Lepidus and the college probably did not understand the new leap year system well, and simply followed Caesar's plan to the letter, but misinterpreted the meaning due to the Roman tradition of inclusive counting with dates. This would have meant that the 4-year leap year was interpreted to mean that an extra day was to be inserted every three years rather than every four, which was what was done until Lepidus' death. The practice of the 3-year leap year was discontinued from 12BCE when Augustus became the *Pontifex Maximus* himself and stepped in to remedy the error by suspending all leap years until CE4, and after that the bissextile year was added every fourth year as Julius Caesar had initially intended.^[127]

For four years from 12BCE until 9BCE, Tiberius and Drusus fought along the respective frontiers of the Danube and Rhine Rivers. Tiberius apparently had an easier time of it since the Pannonian tribes failed to unite against their common enemy, and the remorseless Roman policy of deporting captured combatants and selling them into

slavery was effective in purging dissent and plugging the last gap along the Danube, for a while anyway. Drusus had more difficulties in the northwest. He was relatively successful in fostering the loyalty of the Gallic tribes under the auspicious of *Roma* and Augustus, as affirmed by the inscriptions on the great Altar to Augustus at the temple of Lugdunum (modern Lyon) of all sixty names of Gaul's tribes and their symbolic self-images. However, real subjugation of the Germanic tribes on the eastern side of the Rhine proved more elusive. Drusus embarked on consecutive annual campaigns and achieved one victory after another and eventually defeated the Macromanni in their homeland between the Elbe and Danube Rivers, impressive feats without permanent significance. Drusus' strategy of annual campaigns proved to be merely raids rather than real conquests since his forces withdrew to the safety of Gaul every winter despite building fortresses in the wilderness.

Impermanence is part of the human condition though, and in the late summer of 9BCE tragedy struck the Augustan house once again when Drusus had a riding accident that broke his leg, and some lesser-known complications eventually led to his death. Tiberius heard the news of the accident in northern Italy while reporting on his Pannonian campaign to Augustus. Tiberius rushed to his brother's summer camp in southern Germany on horseback over the Alps with just one Gallic guide and supposedly made the trip in just a couple days. Drusus died shortly after Tiberius reached his brother's side. There was nothing else the bereaved elder brother could do but accompany Drusus' body back to Italy. Tiberius led the procession and leading men from towns and cities along the way as well as his soldiers carried Drusus' coffin. Augustus and Livia met Tiberius and the funeral parade in northern Italy and escorted them to Rome as crowds came out to follow, and as they journeyed across Italy pyres were lit to honor the dead man. Drusus was given a magnificent sendoff in Rome. His body was laid in state in the Forum where Tiberius gave a eulogy. Augustus offered another eulogy to his stepson at the *Circus Flaminius* (the Circus of Jupiter). After his body was cremated at the *ustrinum* next to the Mausoleum of Augustus, his ashes were installed in the Mausoleum of Augustus along with the other family members, and Drusus too was released to the stars. Drusus was one of the *Consuls* of Rome in the year of his death. In the same year, Augustus took measures to strengthen and improve the functions of the *Senate*. Two regular meetings were henceforth scheduled every month, specifically on days when other legal and business matters were not; attendance records of senators began to be strictly kept, and fines for non-attendance were increased. Drusus had always been one of Augustus' favorites and there has been some speculations about whether these changes were part of Drusus' wishes posthumously fulfilled.^[128]

In 8BCE, Augustus formally accepted several additions to the calendar that supported

the development of the cult of the *Genius Augusti* and its formal worship within Rome. Although Augustus' birthday had been a public festival for some time and circus games had been organized to celebrate on the initiative of the city *Praetors*, in this year his birthday was formally entered into the calendar with celebrations on par with traditional festivals of the great gods, including sacrificial victims to his *Genius*. He also formally accepted the renaming of the *Mensis Sextilis* as *Mensis Augustus* and August 1st the day he entered Alexandria as the chief festival commemorating his rise to power. These two new great festival celebrations were analogous to the celebrations of eastern god-kings' birth and coronation days.^[129]

In 7BCE, Augustus' tribunal powers and his *imperium maius* were renewed for 10 years, and Tiberius served as a *Consul* for a second time.^[130] Tiberius was first elected as Consul in 13BCE and had been awarded a triumph in 12BCE. After his marriage to Julia in 11BCE, he would also become the guardian of young Gaius and Lucius as well as a third son Julia bore after Agrippa's death named Agrippa Postumus.^[131] As the only surviving adult male in the family, Tiberius was in effect being asked to fulfill all Agrippa's duties and act as a co-ruler without being awarded the same official powers and recognition as Agrippa had been given. What's more, it was one of his stepsons who was presumed to be Augustus' ultimate successor once they reached adulthood, not him.

In 6BCE, Tiberius was finally promoted to *collega imperii* and awarded for five years *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium maius* the same powers as Augustus had as his co-ruler. Augustus had tried to keep Gaius and Lucius in the public eye, supposedly thinking they would benefit from being seen with Augustus just as he had gained greatly from being associated with the popularity of Julius Caesar. Evidently, they had indeed become popular, but they had also grown spoiled and precocious from all the attention. It has been posited that one of Augustus' motives for finally elevating Tiberius was to warn the boys, Gaius and Lucius, nothing was set in stone yet, and that they should not assume too much. Whatever the actual reason may have been, necessity seems to have been part of the decision. Nonetheless, Tiberius had apparently grown tired of the family dynamic and his place in it. So, he accepted the official powers, and then suddenly announced shortly thereafter he was tired and intended to retire from public life, which is what he did, living in a sort of self-appointed exile on the Island of Rhodes for some years to come.^[132]

In 5BCE, Augustus stood for *Consul* so he could officiate over Gaius' coming-of-age ceremony. Due his popularity and association with the *Princeps*, Gaius was unexpectedly elected as *co-Consul*, though Augustus vetoed the appointment. Gaius was only fifteen years old, and in Augustus' opinion did not yet deserve the honor. Gaius was awarded a

priesthood and allowed to attend meetings of the *Senate* instead. Gaius was also allowed to be seated in places normally reserved for senators at public events and banquets. In 4BCE Gaius was made *princeps iuventutis*, a new honorary title meaning ‘leader of the youth’ that also made him the honorary president of the *equites*, the knight, the obvious antecedent of what later generations would call the “prince”.^[133] In 4BCE and 3BCE Augustus undertook some legal reforms making it easier to bring charges against provincial governors for extortion of provincial residents and set up some additional colonies for retired military veterans.

In 2BCE Augustus became *Consul* for the thirteenth time to preside over Lucius’ coming of age ceremony, and Lucius would have also been designated *princeps iuventutis*. On February 5th of the same year, the *Senate* awarded Augustus what he considered to be his highest honor, *Pater Patriae*, Father of the Country. Cicero was first given the honor in 63BCE, and after his victory at Munda that ended the civil war in 45BCE, Julius Caesar was presented with an equivalent honor, *Parens Patriae*.^[134]

Now Augustus held all the honors his famous father had once held. The *Pater Patriae* signified the *Senate*’s recognition of Augustus as the *Paterfamilias* of the Roman state family, and the spokesmen for the *Senate* began the award with a prayer for Augustus and the future of his house. By special decree of the *Senate*, the title *Pater Patriae* was inscribed in the *Curia*, the *Senate* House, the vestibule of his residence on the Palatine hill, and on his statue driving a *quadriga* in the new Forum of Augustus where the Temple of *Mars Ultor* was erected inside the sacred boundary of Rome known as the *pomerium*.

The Temple of *Mars Ultor*, Mars the Avenger, was dedicated on August 1st, 2BCE. The temple was built to be a center for the army and the preparation of war. Consequently, it would serve as the focal point of many important martial ceremonies like the induction of young men of military age, the starting place where generals would embark for foreign wars, the storehouse of formerly lost and later recovered legionary standards like the ones Augustus retrieved from the Parthians, and where the *Senate* would deliberate the awarding of triumphs. The dedication had been forty years in the making. After the battle of Philippi, Octavian had vowed to build a temple to *Mars*, and this new temple combined the worship of Augustus’ divine ancestors with the new cult of the *Genius Augusti*. Like the Pantheon outside the *pomerium*, on the Campus Martius, three gods were enshrined in the Temple of *Mars Ultor*: *Mars*, its chief divinity, his companion, the goddess *Venus Genetrix*, and their son, the *Divus Julius*, whose death his father *Mars* had avenged. *Mars* was the god most closely related to the *Genius* of Augustus. *Mars*’ powers were associated with fertility as well as war, and bulls were the usual victims of sacrifices to both *Mars* and the *Genius Augusti*. An altar

at the temple or perhaps within the precinct of the Forum was the site of many sacrifices to the *Genius* in later times. *Mars* as the god of war had long been kept outside the *pomerium*, a sort of perimeter of sacred peace. The dedication of the Temple of *Mars Ultor* at the new Forum of Augustus meant that Augustus' divine ancestor now had an honored place within Rome's sacred boundaries. It also meant that now the temple of *Mars Ultor* and the temple of *Apollo* on the Palatine hill usurped some of the traditional prestige and privileges of the nation temple of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* on the Capitoline hill.^[135]

The festivities that followed the dedication of the temple were apparently quite spectacular. The two leaders of the youth, Gaius and Lucius, organized and hosted horse races and the staging of the Troy Games that their younger brother, Agrippa Postumus, and other youths from good families participated in. There were gladiator contests including the spectacle of battles to the death with thirty-six crocodiles, but the highlight must have been the restaging of the sea battle of Salamis between Greek patriots and Persian invaders with triremes and biremes ramming each other on an artificial lake excavated near the Tiber River. As in the actual battle, the Greeks won the day despite the odds being against them.^[136]

VI. The Final Acts

Augustus had perhaps reached the pinnacle of his life after his assumption as *Pater Patriae* and dedication of the Temple *Mars Ultor* in 2BCE. He had achieved everything Julius Caesar had and a bit more. His relentless pursuit of a male heir of his bloodline and unquestioned control over the members of his household would lead to many unhappy returns though.

It seems later in 2BCE, evidence of Julia's marital infidelity with Ilullus Antonius, the son of Marcus Antonius by his first wife Fulvia came to light. Scandals of sexual improprieties while still being married to Tiberius would have been very embarrassing for Augustus in itself, given his promotion of traditional family values, but the affair with Antonius' son seems to have had political implications as well, involving perhaps a plot to end the *Princeps'* life. The details are a bit obscure, but it seems that Augustus was so infuriated, shocked, and ashamed that he refused to go to the *Senate* or receive visitors for some time. The *Senate* was informed of the situation in a letter read out to them by a *Quaestor* on his behalf. Without consulting either of them, Augustus then arranged for Tiberius and Julia's divorce. Julia was subsequently sent into exile, and Augustus never saw his daughter again and never forgave her. He also decreed she should never be interred in the Great Mausoleum after his death. Other men known to have been associated with Julia were also exiled to various parts of the Empire, but Ilullus Antonius was either executed

or forced to commit suicide. Tiberius was probably privately delighted by his divorce, but publicly he sent letters urging reconciliation between his former wife and the *Princeps*. In 1BCE, Tiberius' *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium maius* were quietly allowed to expire.^[137]

Augustus had continued to strengthen the military defense of Rome's frontiers. A fleet to patrol the Rhine had been established, and Rome had proclaimed its power and supremacy against occasionally restless tribes with annual campaigns under competent career generals from base camps along the river.^[138] The eastern frontier was a different matter though, with a series of client kingdoms under Roman supervision abutting the Parthian empire to the east. Augustus had planned to send Tiberius to the east to check on the situation in Armenia before his abrupt resignation. Despite Tiberius' requests to return to Rome after his divorce, Augustus refused due to his strong resentment towards Tiberius for abandoning his duty. With no other adult family member to rely on, Augustus promoted the 19-year-old Gaius with the *imperium* Tiberius had surrendered and dispatched Gaius to the east. Gaius set up his headquarters on the island of Samos just as his biological father, and adoptive father and grandfather, had done on their military expeditions to the east. In CE1, Gaius became a *Consul* and led a minor campaign against the Nabataean Arabs, which got the Parthians attention as intended. The Parthians subsequently sent diplomatic delegations to Rome and an acceptable diplomatic solution to the succession of the throne of Armenia was reached. In CE2, Gaius met the young king of the Parthian empire at a finely managed conference on an island in the Euphrates River where the two young princes exchanged pledges and banquets. In the eventual diplomatic compromise, Parthia accepted Armenia to be within Rome's sphere of influence and the two empires to be in friendly relations, with the Euphrates as the acknowledged border between them.^[139]

In the same year, another family tragedy stuck at Augustus' dynastic plans when Lucius died of an illness in Marseilles on his way to begin his military service in Spain.^[140] In CE3, succession plans in Armenia were disrupted by a series of unexpected deaths there too that led to a revolt, and Gaius was wounded in a city siege. Gaius seemed to recover from his injury but being caught unawares in a ruse used by the city representative involved in the attack, had shaken Gaius' confidence, which led to his depression despite the capture of the city. Initially, Gaius had wanted to retire to private life in Syria, but Augustus insisted he return to Rome first. Gaius started his journey back home with the strong intention to retire to private life, but he died at the age of 23 in southwestern Turkey on route in early CE4.^[141] Augustus planned succession was gone.

What Gaius and Lucius had thought of their mother's fall from grace no one really knows, but the boys were adopted quite young and grew up in Augustus' home under

his tutelage, and they may have had little contact with her.^[142] Agrippa Postumus would have only been around ten years old when his mother was banished. Apparently, Augustus had not adopted him like his bothers, so Postumus could carry on Agrippa's family name, but in the wake of his brothers' deaths he would become a Caesar too.^[143] Postumus had apparently been a very unruly child, prone to outbreaks of rage, and lacked the character for public life.^[144] Nonetheless, when Augustus finally adopted the 44-year-old Tiberius in CE4, he also adopted Postumus as well. At the same time, Tiberius adopted his late brother Drusus' son and Augustus' great nephew, Germanicus.^[145]

Augustus characterized his adoption of Tiberius as *reipublicae causa*, 'for reasons of state', and Tiberius was again promoted to *collega imperii*, but this time his *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium maius* were awarded for ten years.^[146] Tiberius was soon back in his former role commanding the Roman legions defending the northern frontiers first along the Rhine from late CE4 and then along the Danube from CE6 through CE8 to ensure a secure line of defense running from the Black Sea to the North Sea.^[147]

Unfortunately, attempts to establish a Rome province east of the Rhine in what the Romans called Germania ended in CE9 with the annihilation of three Roman legions, roughly 15,000 men, led by *Proconsul* Publicus Quinctilius Varus in an ambush by supposedly friendly Germanic tribes.^[148] Tiberius was sent back to the far north and spent the next two years reorganizing the Rhine defenses and punishing hostile tribes on the other side of the river. In CE12, Tiberius was finally back in Rome and allowed to celebrate a triumph for his earlier victories along the Danube. In CE13, Tiberius' tribunal and imperial powers were made fully equal to Augustus' and were extended for another ten years along with Augustus'. A coin with Augustus on one side and Tiberius on the other was also minted in preparation for the predestined transfer of power at some point.^[149]

Augustus died in his month, on August 19th, CE14. He had spent some time and effort preparing for his final departure. He left three important documents to go with what would be his final act of apotheosis: the detailed instructions for how his funeral was to be carried out, the document detailing the accomplishment of his life he wished to be remembered for later known as the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, the Acts of the Deified Augustus, and the final version of the *breuiarium imperii* providing the numbers of serving troops throughout the empire, the accounts of tax revenues due for collection, the public exchequer and privy purse, as well as the freemen and slave secretaries responsible for the accounts who could provide further details.^[150]

After his adoption, Agrippa Postumus continued to be a violent and unpleasant character and he was finally sent into guarded exile on the island of Planasia in CE7.^[151]

In the early summer of CE14, Augustus supposedly felt remorse for his grandson's exile and visited him on the island, which in some accounts were supposedly both tearful and hopeful of a possible restoration.^[152] Nonetheless, Augustus had probably given specific orders during his visit that Agrippa Postumus was to be executed to preclude any potential rival to the proven adult heir immediately following word of Augustus' passing. This was in accordance with his long-held position that "too many Caesars is not a good thing" and best avoided.^[153]

Augustus' funeral procession started at his house on the Palatine and most of Rome came out to witness it, with troops lining the streets to keep the public in order. The funeral parade would have been managed by a *dominus funeris*, the funeral master with the help of lictors dressed in black. First went trumpeters playing mourning music, followed by noble children singing funeral hymns praising the great man. There are several accounts that Augustus' last words before his death resembled the closing speech of a mime performer saying something to the effect that: 'If the performance had any merit, please clap, and send us out joyfully'. Whether that did, indeed, happen, it is impossible to say, but clowns and mimes led by an actor imitating the speech and gestures of the deceased often followed the musician and singers, and one may have been part of Augustus' own funeral. The wealthy always freed some slaves in their will, so Augustus' recently liberated slaves with special caps signifying their new freedom would have preceded his coffin. His coffin was carried on a bier with a couch made of ivory and gold, cloaked with purple and gold cloth bearing a wax effigy of the *Princeps* in triumphal costume displayed on the top while his body inside his coffin was hidden underneath. The bier would have been escorted by one statue of the *Princeps* in gold and another of him driving a triumphal chariot. Statues of his ancestors and leading Romans from the past as well as images personifying the nations he had added to Rome's possessions, would have been carried along in the procession. However, a likeness of Julius Caesar was supposedly not included due to his deified status, perhaps another case of the "too many Caesars" principle. The family in mourning attire would have walked in the rear. Senators, Knights, and the Praetorian Guard attended. The procession stopped at the Forum where Tiberius and his son Drusus, named after his father's late brother, gave eulogies to their *Paterfamilias* and Rome's *Pater Patriae*. The *Princeps*' funeral procession then passed across the *pomerium* through the *Porta Triumphalis*, the same gate that triumphal parades entered the city through. Augustus departed the *pomerium* heading for his Mausoleum on the Campus Martius to become a god.^[154] After his funeral, the *Senate* voted for Augustus' "consecration" the declaration of divinity that made him a god just like *Divus Julius*.^[155] No other Roman leaders would ever have months permanently renamed after

them. Although young Emperors born into the purple like Caligula and Domitian apparently tried, the changes never held.^[156]

VII. Conclusion

Although there had been no recent Roman precedence for the peaceful transition of power since most of the recent leaders of Rome like Sulla, Julius Caesar and even Augustus himself had come to power by force of arms, Augustus' adoption of an adult male heir to take over immediately upon his death, endorsed by the acquiescence of the *Senate*, would become Rome's favored model of succession over the next 250 years or so. Tiberius already had the Tribunal and Imperial Powers that Augustus had possessed, and once he became *Pontifex Maximus* in March CE15, he would have the complete set of powers he needed to hold office until his death in CE37.^[157] Tiberius' reign and relationship with the *Senate* would be quite different than the old master's, who created the role with many contradictions. Relations would be friendly at first albeit slightly confused thanks to his communication style, and then later quite adversarial due to mutual suspicions.^[158] Tiberius' full title upon his death contained references to both Caesar and Augustus, and all his offices: *Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti filius Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribuniciae Potestatis, Imperator, Consul* as most later full Emperor's posthumous titles would.^[159] Many later military leaders would be raised to *Imperator* status by the acclaim of their legions and later assassinated by rivals or killed on the battlefield. The acclamation of *Imperator* by one's legions was just a kind of ticket to enter the lottery to become a real emperor for later Imperial hopefuls. The Senatorial approval granting both *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium maius* made it official, and the assumption of the priestly office of *Pontifex Maximus* was what set an *Imperator* on his path to apotheosis.

Until his death, Augustus had been the undisputed leader of Rome and its possessions. The Roman Imperial Cult with the worship of *Divus Julius* and *Genius Augusti* and all the other deities associated with the Imperial Cult would continue to spread throughout the domains of what we call the Roman Empire. Augustus, though, in theory was not even a god on earth during his lifetime; the cult was directed at the silhouetted attending spirit of the *Genius*. The cult may have had all the characteristics of a Hellenistic ruler cult, and the *Genius* may have only been a thin veil for the *Princeps* himself. It was, nonetheless, a veil that allowed for all the same sacrifices and festivals that any of the other greater gods in the Roman pantheon enjoyed, which the *Pontifex Maximus* and his college controlled within Rome, while leaving the edifice of the *Res Publica* intact. The *Pontifex*

Maximus became in effect the high priest of his own cult. However, the *Genius* would always lack a temple, an honor neither Augustus nor most future emperors ever attempted. The appropriate place of sacrifice and worship was always at an altar at the shrine of other gods.^[160] This is something that would, in time, cause conflict later down the road with older and newer forms of monotheism around the *Pax Romana*. But the measure of time would still be Caesar's calendar, and his calendar would continue to be part of the honorific language of power for centuries to come. Moreover, it was instrumental in integrating the new revolutionary ideological and religious structure of the Principate into daily life following Augustus' reformation of the Republic.^[161]

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