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SECOND EDITION

ROUTLEDGE

ROMAN IMPERIAL BIOGRAPHIES

AUGUSTUS

PATRICIA SOUTHERN

AUGUSTUS

The first emperor of Rome holds a perennial fascination for anyone with an interest in the Romans and their Empire. Augustus was a truly remarkable man who brought peace after many years of civil war and laid the foundations of an Empire that lasted for nearly five centuries. Even today the Roman world still underpins modern society. This revised edition of *Augustus* incorporates new thinking on many aspects of his rule, and how he achieved such power. The image that he projected of himself and his achievements was benign, hopeful and heroic, but behind this carefully orchestrated self-promotion he was subtle, clever, scheming and ruthless. He has been labelled as a saviour and as a mafia boss. This account of his life shows how he successfully combined the two extremes.

Patricia Southern is an expert on the history of Classical Rome, and has written extensively on the subject, with titles including *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (2001), *Domitian: Tragic Tyrant* (1997) and *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (2007).

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AUGUSTUS

Second edition

Patricia Southern



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To the memory of Mum and Dad,
 who bought me books and
took me to museums, castles and
forts when I was not old enough
 to visit them myself.
And for C.M.D., J.T. and co.,
 and T.D.R.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This is a book about a man – an extraordinary man who may not have become extraordinary if he had not lived in extraordinary times. No biography can be written without taking into account the social, economic and political background and the times through which the individual lived, but Augustus poses several particular problems. Despite his talent for self-advertisement his character is only rarely revealed. Portraits of him abound, most of them contemporary and some of them reverential and posthumous, but in all of these portraits he is perpetually young and vigorous, never allowed to age even when he reached his seventies. Thus the real person was deliberately veiled, screened from public scrutiny by an orchestrated facade that was not necessarily false, but which was tailored to circumstances, and adapted accordingly when circumstances changed. The longevity of the man himself and his early entry into political life automatically ensure that the subject will be a large one, and this is compounded by the fact that Octavian-Augustus did not simply act against a background, or within the confines of the political development of the state; for most of his life he was the embodiment of the state. This means that a biography must also become a history of the transformation of the Republic into the Empire, a task which would require many years and at least 20 volumes to complete properly. Full debate of all issues is impossible in one volume, and would become monotonous or even misleading. As the saying goes, ‘L’art d’ennuyer est l’art de tout dire.’ The phrase loses some of its panache in translation, but none of its meaning: the way to bore people is to say everything.

The amount of modern literature is staggering – around 250 items in a bibliography published in the 1970s, and a vast growth has taken place since then. Most of the papers and books dealing with the Augustan age are quite specialised, covering one or two aspects of political, social or economic history, suggesting solutions for specific problems, or describing particular works of art or literature, and their relevance to political themes. The entire corpus is too vast to survey, though in fairness, Kienast can be said to have achieved it in his book on Augustus, with clear text and monumental references. The author makes no claims to the sort of completeness for which Kienast aimed. The main purpose of the present volume is to tell the story of Augustus in chronological sequence; it

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

is primarily a biography and not a discussion of the finer details of administration. The text can be read as an entity without reference to the notes, or alternatively the notes to each paragraph can be used as a sort of starter pack to find further information. In dealing with a subject so thoroughly documented in secondary literature, a selection must be made in order to simplify matters, but simplification entails disregard of some specialisms and of much detail. For this reason, the art and literature of the Augustan period are only cursorily surveyed in this book; these subjects have been covered by experts whose in-depth studies render any further additions redundant. Besides, the art and literature reveal only one facet of the man, and it is to the man that this book must give its attention. Even when limited to these human parameters, the task was daunting even to the ancients. Velleius Paterculus, writing in AD 30, encapsulates the problems faced by anyone trying to write about Augustus:

To tell of the wars waged under his command, of the pacification of the world by his victories, of his many works at home and outside of Italy would weary a writer intending to devote his whole life to this one task. As for myself, remembering the proposed scope of my work, I have confined myself to setting before the eyes and minds of my readers a general picture of his principate.

(*Compendium of Roman History* 2.89.6. Loeb translation
by Frederick W. Shipley)

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

‘Two thousand years ago’ has become a generic term to describe the Roman Empire, somewhat imprecisely because Rome endured for well over ten centuries on her own account, but the year 2014 really does mark a two thousand year anniversary, since Augustus died in AD 14. He is perennially famous, like Caesar, even for those people who have no particular interest in Roman history, justly so, because Augustus was the man who forged the Empire out of the turmoil of the late Republic.

It is gratifying, and terrifying, to be asked to produce a second edition of *Augustus*, gratifying because it means that the first edition cannot have been all that bad, and terrifying because work on Augustus never ceases, so there is a large amount of reading and assimilating to do before anything can be added or altered. Several sections have been augmented in the light of more recent literature, one or two sections have been altered, and the structure of the paragraphs and notes has been changed. Some paragraphs were far too long, without even the excuse of youthful enthusiasm to justify them (middle-aged enthusiasm does not have quite the same cachet), and the notes attributed to each paragraph were cumbersome to use. These have now been split up and the numbers denoting each note have been distributed throughout the text at points where they are most relevant. The chronological approach has been retained, because lives are not led on thematic principles but in a succession of hours, days and months, and to deal with Augustus’ reign under thematic headings, grouping the long-term developments together for ease of reference, can give the impression that Augustus worked to a master plan that he had conceived very early, putting it into effect by gradual stages. He may have discerned very clearly and all at once what needed to be done, but it cannot be said that he progressed remorselessly and unerringly towards his multiple goals in a direct line. The thematic approach takes no account of the long passage of time, the flexibility, the opportunism, the ruthlessness, the occasional retreats and regroupings and changes of course that attended Augustus during his reign. On the other hand, in a chronological account, it is more difficult to piece together the stages of evolution of political and military institutions, so appendices have been added in this edition to illustrate a few of the themes that do not readily slot into a chronological sequence without much backtracking and repetition.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

There is a line of T. S. Eliot, the gist of which is that you can come back to the place where you started, and know it for the first time. In looking at Augustus again for the second edition, the experience has been somewhat similar, and a bit like meeting an old casual acquaintance and gradually coming to a better understanding. Hopefully some of this understanding, nowhere near complete, will transfer to the pages of this book.

Patricia Southern
Northumberland
2013

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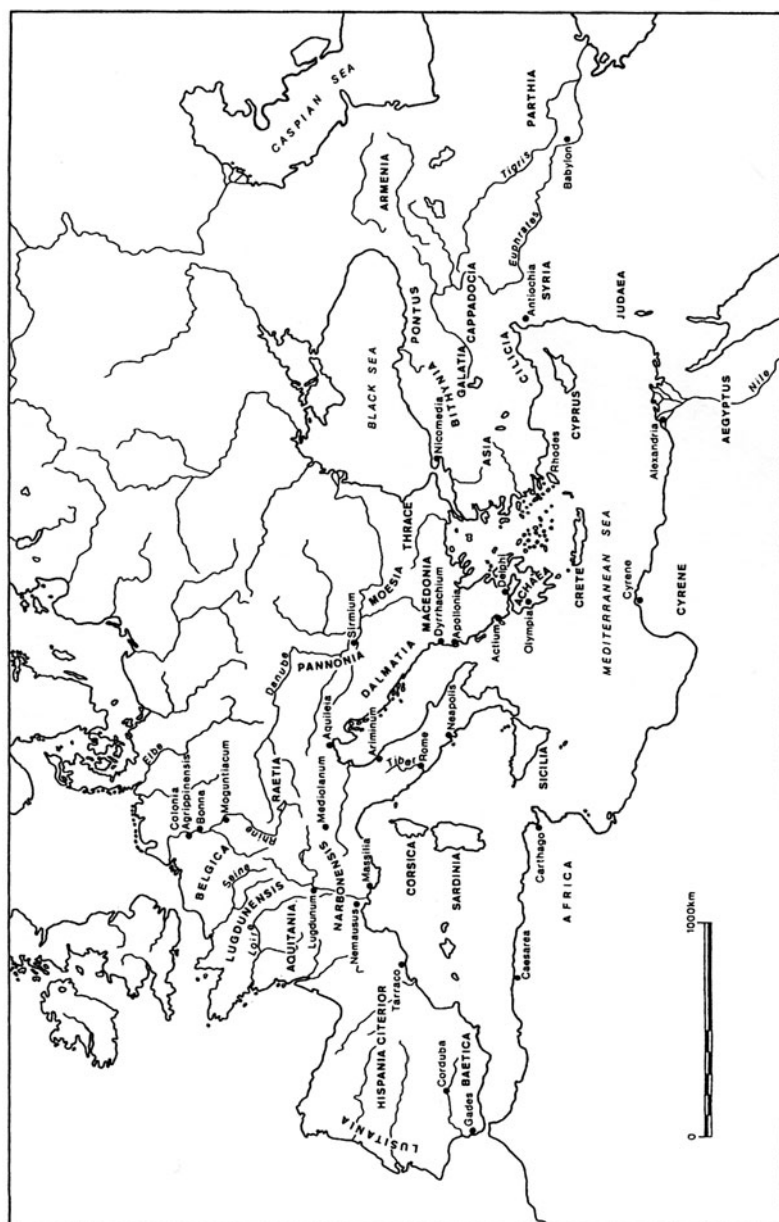
My thanks to all those people who have helped me in my studies of the Romans, and particularly in the writing of this book. I owe an unpaid debt to the late Charles Daniels, who always made time to listen, and without whose encouragement I would never have written anything. Similarly there is another as yet undischarged debt to Professor Anthony Birley, whose assistance in reading the drafts for the first edition was invaluable in saving me from errors, and whose expenditure of time and patience was limitless. The talents and patience of Graeme Stobbs are very gratefully acknowledged for drawing the maps, and Jacqui Taylor devoted time and effort to drawing the coins that are so valuable in illustrating political history and its attendant propaganda. Thanks are also due to Amy Davis-Poynter of Routledge, facilitator extraordinaire, for permissions to reuse photographs. Photo credits are given in the captions to the illustrations. Errors may be in evidence and are acknowledged as all mine.

ABBREVIATIONS

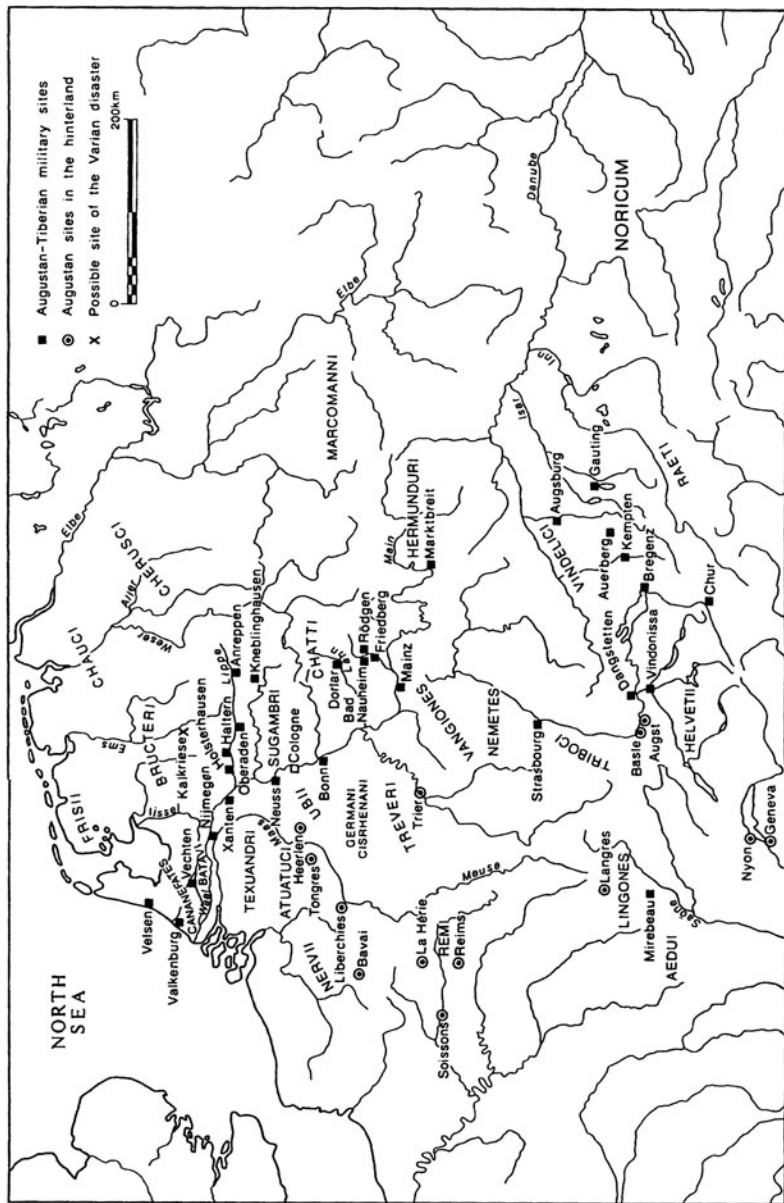
<i>AE</i>	L'Année Epigraphique
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i> . Ed. H. Temporini, 1972 to date
Appian <i>BC</i>	<i>Roman History: The Civil Wars</i>
Appian <i>Ill.</i>	<i>Illyrica</i>
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome
<i>BMC</i>	<i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> . Volume I, <i>Augustus to Vitellius</i> . Ed. H. Mattingly. London, 1923. Reprinted 1965
<i>BMCR</i>	<i>Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum</i> . H. A. Grueber. London, 1910
Caes. <i>BAfr.</i>	<i>African War</i>
Caes. <i>BC</i>	<i>Civil War</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
Cic. <i>ad Att.</i>	<i>Letters to Atticus</i>
Cic. <i>ad Fam.</i>	<i>Letters to his Friends</i>
Cic. <i>ad M. Brut.</i>	<i>Letters to Marcus Brutus</i>
Cic. <i>Phil.</i>	<i>Philippics</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>EJ²</i>	Ehrenberg, V. and Jones, A.H.M., <i>Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn 1976
EPROR	<i>Etudes Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> . Ed. H. Dessau. Berlin, 2nd edn 1954–55. 3 vols
Josephus <i>AJ</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> . 1st edn. Berlin, 1897–98

ABBREVIATIONS

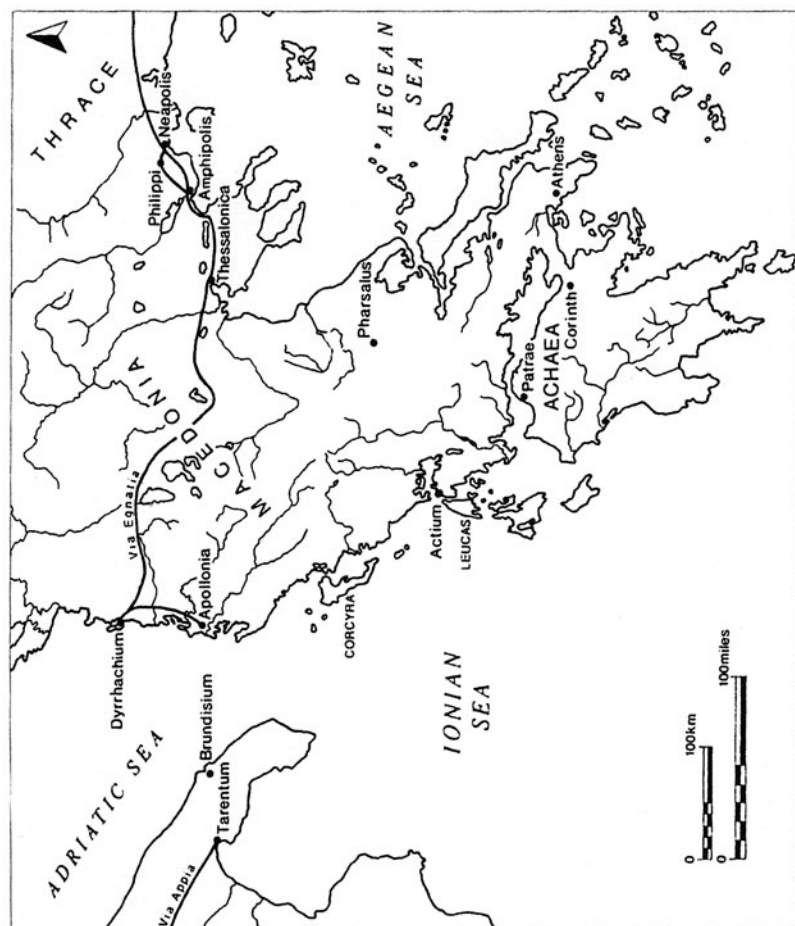
<i>PIR2</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> . 2nd edn. Berlin and Leipzig, 1933 to date
Pliny <i>NH</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
Plut. <i>Ant.</i>	<i>Life of Antony</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Eds G. Wissowa, A. Pauly, W. Kroll, K. Witte, K. Mittelhaus and K. Ziegler. Stuttgart and Munich, 1894–1980
<i>RFIC</i>	<i>Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica</i>
<i>RG</i>	<i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</i>
Seneca <i>de Benef.</i>	<i>De Beneficiis</i>
Seneca <i>de Clem.</i>	<i>De Clementia</i>
Suet. <i>Aug.</i>	<i>Life of Augustus</i>
Suet. <i>Claud.</i>	<i>Life of Claudius</i>
Suet. <i>Iul.</i>	<i>Life of Julius Caesar</i>
Suet. <i>Tib.</i>	<i>Life of Tiberius</i>
Tac. <i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annals</i>
Tac. <i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
Vell. Pat.	Velleius Paterculus, <i>Roman History</i>
<i>ŽPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



Map 1 The Roman world at the end of Augustus' reign.



Map 2 Augustan Germany showing the likely site of the Varian disaster in AD 9 at Kalkriese.



Map 3 Greece and Macedonia, where the Romans fought the decisive battles of their civil wars at Pharsalus, Philippi and Actium.

OCTAVIUS TO OCTAVIAN

The man who can justifiably be called the founder of the Roman Empire, the heir and successor of Julius Caesar and the Master of Ceremonies as the Republic was transformed into the Principate, was born simply Gaius Octavius, just before sunrise on the ninth day before the Kalends of October in the consulship of Marcus Tullius Cicero and Gaius Antonius, which translates into modern terms as 23 September 63 BC. On that day, the elder Gaius Octavius, proud father of his newborn son, was late for a meeting of the Senate, where Cicero was urging the punishment of Lucius Sergius Catilina.¹ The date came to possess some significance for Octavius, 23 September being also the birthday of the god Apollo.

Octavius' names change as his personal history progresses, culminating in the title Augustus, awarded as an honour in 27 BC, but soon adopted as a name. In his boyhood he was known as Gaius Octavius, then in his late teens, he took the name Gaius Julius Caesar, as the adopted son of the general and Dictator, carefully avoiding Octavianus, or Octavian as the modern world knows him. The use of that name would clearly signify his origins as a member of the Octavii, adopted into another family. His connection with Gaius Julius Caesar (Figure 1.1) was far more important than his true family origins, because the Octavii were relatively humble and therefore obscure. They were new men (*novi homines*) from Velitrae (modern Velletri), a Volscian town about 25 miles southeast of Rome.²

The plebeian family of the Octavii were not senators with a long list of ancestors who had held office or more significantly, had reached the consulship. The possession of consular ancestry was what really counted at Rome, closely followed by the accrual of vast personal fortunes, so the early Octavii were outsiders on two counts, being non-senators and not fabulously wealthy, comparable to Marcus Licinius Crassus or Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus. Octavius' father, also called Gaius Octavius, showed early promise when he entered the ranks of the Roman Senate as one of the junior magistrates, but he would always have been counted as a *novus homo*, a new man, a term which, in the snobbish class-ridden society of Rome, indicated the lack of distinguished ancestors. Unfortunately Octavius' father died before he reached the consulship, though it was admitted among his contemporaries that he would have succeeded in gaining it.



Figure 1.1 Head of Caesar from Turin, portraying him as an older man, slightly balding, which may be a more accurate portrait than the idealised versions.

Source: Photo by David Brearely.

Somewhat paradoxically, the lack of family distinction and its consequent notoriety was perhaps not such a disadvantage for the future Augustus. If the elder Gaius Octavius had been able to demonstrate a more spectacular background, it would have been better documented, or at least more firmly imprinted upon living memory, but such unequivocally documented fame would have made it more difficult, when the time came to create the legend that surrounded him, for Augustus to refashion himself, or diplomatically to forget certain events and features of his life. His early obscurity was useful to him when he came to power, for the princeps was impenetrable by design, and by implication he was almost perfect. All human failings, save for the acceptable anecdotal foibles, were expunged from the record. ‘Accentuate the positive’ might have been a principle established by Augustus when he came to give an account of his reign. He composed his *Memoirs* (also called *Autobiography* in some modern works) probably in the 20s BC, relatively early in his reign, which lasted for nearly another two decades. This work is now lost but much of it may have been used by Nicolaus of Damascus, whose eulogistic biography probably goes much further in accentuating the positive than ever Augustus did. But in his *Memoirs* Augustus did not try to hide his humble origins, commenting that he came from a family that never rose higher than equestrian rank. It was wise to make this assertion, because there were too many people who would be able to remember the elder Gaius Octavius, and if Augustus had tried to pretend that he came from the consular nobility it would have been laughable, bringing him no credit at all, but rather the opposite, for attempting deliberate falsification. His honesty won him the support of the equestrians, and Suetonius describes how the equestrians of Rome celebrated his birthday for two days, each year.³

There was a change of policy later in his reign. By the time when the *Res Gestae* was composed, with both eyes firmly focussed on posterity, the honing of the legend was almost complete. His original family is not mentioned, and he begins his account with the words ‘At the age of nineteen I raised an army at my personal decision, and my own expense, and with it I liberated the state, which had been oppressed by a dominant faction.’ He includes his own name only as that of Augustus, the honorary title bestowed on him by the Senate, and excludes any reference at all to his mother Atia or his father Gaius Octavius, or to his stepfather Lucius Marcius Philippus, consul in 56 BC, with whom he had grown up from the age of about seven. Not even his wife Livia appears anywhere in the document, though her son Tiberius merits an entry.⁴ The Octavii were not necessary any more, and were passed over in silence.

When the propaganda machinery was in full flow, a little fictionalised biography entered the legend concerning the Octavii of Velitrae. They were connected with the family of the same name from Rome, whose lineage went back to the time of the wars with Hannibal. This connection is not proven beyond doubt, the Octavii of Rome were never as important as the Augustan propagandists would have us believe. Suetonius admitted that Augustus in his *Memoirs* merely noted that he came from an old and wealthy family, from which his own father was the first to enter the Senate. Modern authors have pointed out that Augustus’ main concern was to stress his descent from Julius Caesar, and not to draw too much attention to his municipal origins.⁵ To many people, noble ancestry is comforting and more acceptable than humble origins, and throughout history efforts have been made to find the relevant antecedents for parvenu leaders who found themselves in positions of power after the upheaval of civil or external wars.

The paternal connection

Gaius Octavius, later to become Augustus, was the son of Gaius Octavius and his second wife, Atia. He was sometimes also known as Thurinus, but the reason for this nomenclature is not certain. Suetonius gives two versions of the origin of the name, bestowed on Octavius either because his ancestors came from Thurii, or because his father, just prior to taking up his appointment as governor of Macedonia, defeated an army of runaway slaves near Thurii, and wished to _commemorate the victory by naming his son after it.⁶ Marcus Antonius used to insult Octavian by calling him the Thurian, asserting that his great-grandfather had a rope-walk or rope factory at Thurii, and Suetonius reports a graffito on the base of bronze statue of Augustus implying that his father was a dealer in bronze. The connection with low-class activities such as rope-making and bronze-dealing of course casts aspersions on Octavian’s ancestry, since the reputation of senators depended on the fact that they never sullied their hands by engaging in work, which was in fact prohibited.⁷

The elder Gaius Octavius had been married first to Ancharia, by whom he had a daughter, called Octavia Major, to distinguish her from her half-sister Octavia Minor, daughter of Gaius and his second wife Atia. Octavia Major was some years older than Octavius, and was already married by about 70 BC, to Sextus Appuleius. She had two sons, Sextus Appuleius, made consul in 29 BC, and Marcus Appuleius, consul in 20 BC, both of them clearly benefitting from their relationship to Octavius, and presumably loyal to him. Thus the young Octavius had a half-sister and a true sister, also older. Octavia Minor was probably born in 70 BC, around the time when her stepsister was getting married. Sisters were potentially useful when Octavius-Octavian was rising to power, for forming marriage alliances with prominent Romans. Octavia Minor was first married, at some time before 54 BC, to Gaius Claudius Marcellus, and had two daughters and a son, Marcus Claudius Marcellus. The elder Marcellus was opposed to Caesar, but in 49 BC he joined him, without playing a prominent part in the civil war. He died, probably in 40 BC. According to the law, a widow could not legally marry until ten months after the death of her husband. A child born within eight or even nine months after the death would be considered the offspring of the deceased, but the imposition of a gap of ten months served to remove any doubts about paternity of the child. In the case of the widowed Octavia the law was bent a little. With somewhat unseemly haste, she was paired off with Marcus Antonius when he and the future Augustus were the most important men in the Roman world, assiduously dividing it up between them. The marriage did not last, but perhaps an enduring liaison was never the intended result. The failure of the marriage alliance served to highlight the virtuous nature of Octavia, and by association that of her brother, contrasting unfavourably with the outrageous behaviour of Antonius.

The Octavii fortunately acquired considerable wealth, probably from relatives or business ventures. Without abundant funds, a family might still live well, but no individual could hope to rise to political prominence in the Roman world unless he had a source of considerable income, usually derived from ownership of land and the profits of agriculture. There are hints in the biography of Augustus by Nicolaus of Damascus that estates were bequeathed to the family,⁸ but although the Octavii most probably did own lands, they were not among the most powerful landowners. It is more likely that they obtained the bulk of their profits from their banking and money-lending business at Velitrae, which had been a Roman colony since the fifth century BC. In Rome itself the Octavii would have been considered unimportant, since they were plebeians of equestrian or middle class rank, not yet having obtained any of the magistracies at Rome and therefore not senators. But at least they were members of the aristocracy of their home town. Suetonius says that there were many indications that the family of the Octavii was a distinguished one at Velitrae.⁹ One of the streets in the busiest area of the town was named after them, and there was an altar consecrated by an ancestral Octavius whose claim to fame derived from his prompt improvisation during a sacrifice to Mars. The proceedings were

interrupted, so the story goes, by news that troops from a neighbouring town were about to attack, so Octavius quickly gathered the entrails of the sacrificial beast, offered them to the god in their unprepared state, went off to battle, and won. Such was the legend. In the event of his failure, of course, he would have gone down in history as an unprincipled, sacrilegious type who ignored the religious rites and whose fate should be a warning to all. Nothing succeeds like success, so the people of Velitrae were sufficiently pleased with the action of Octavius to decree that henceforth all sacrifices to Mars should be conducted in the same hasty manner, and the remains of the sacrificed animals should be offered to the Octavii.

During the lifetime of Augustus and afterwards, the association with Velitrae was ineradicable, so deeply rooted that many people were prepared to state that Octavius, the future princeps, was born there, and that he spent his youth there. Suetonius reports the legend that Octavius was born at Velitrae, adding the story that there was a small room in the house of the Octavii, supposedly Augustus' nursery, that no-one could remain in without some mishap.¹⁰ However, it is certain that he was born in Rome, at the Oxheads (*ad Capita Bubula*) on the Palatine Hill, not far from the *Sacra Via*, which runs from the bottom of the Palatine to the Senate House in the Forum Romanum.¹¹ It is disputed whether or not he grew up in Velitrae or Rome. Nicolaus of Damascus implies that he spent his youth in the city, and Suetonius, in telling various anecdotes about the young Octavius, has him appearing in Rome, at least on certain occasions, when various senators saw him and recognised the prodigy child who had appeared to them in dreams.¹² On the other hand Nicolaus of Damascus may be contradicting himself when he says that after the death of his grandmother Julia, when he was 11 or 12 years old, Octavius was brought up by Atia, as though, for some of the time at least, Atia had not been the only person to look after him. It may simply mean that Octavius divided his time between his grandmother and his mother, or that he lived some of the time in Rome and some in Velitrae.¹³

When Octavius was born in 63 BC, his father was just moving on from his equestrian origins, and had become a senator. An inscription summarises the career of the elder Gaius Octavius. It is not a contemporary document, but was set up some time after the elder Octavius' death as part of the Augustan legend.¹⁴ It was found in the sixteenth century, and has since been lost, but the text was fortunately recorded, and is taken as reliable. It shows that Gaius Octavius had served in the armies twice as military tribune, which was the customary first rung on the career path for aspiring senators, or the sons of senators who had not yet entered the Senate. The military tribunes are to be distinguished from the annually elected plebeian tribunes, who protected the interests of the lower classes. The political career of Octavius' father was made possible by his family's accumulation of the necessary wealth to enable him to embark upon the senatorial ladder. It was considered very ignoble to be poor, so in his own memoirs Augustus would naturally lay great emphasis on wealth, but the way in which this wealth was accumulated is not clearly elucidated. The

sources are very contradictory.¹⁵ Families did not automatically become senatorial, however well connected they were. There was a strict census qualification for admission to the Senate, and the numbers of senators were controlled. All prospective and existing senators had to be able to show that they possessed the minimum funds, set at 400,000 sesterces in Gaius Octavius' day, increased to 1,000,000 or 1,200,000 in the early Empire.¹⁶ Senators were usually ejected from the Senate if they fell below the census qualification. Having attained the necessary qualifying fortune, Gaius Octavius was elected to the quaestorship, the most junior magistracy, perhaps in 70 BC, when Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Licinius Crassus were consuls and were putting the finishing touches to undoing the legislation of Sulla, all designed to shore up the oligarchy and make the Senate almost unassailable.

The quaestors served for one year, as most of the Roman magistrates did. Their duties mainly concerned administration of the treasury and financial records at Rome, or in the provinces some quaestors would serve as financial officials on the staff of a provincial governor. While he was Dictator, Lucius Cornelius Sulla had made the quaestorship the legal first stage of the senatorial career, and this measure was not repealed by later officials. Candidates had to be at least 30 years old, and therefore hopefully mature, before they could stand for office, and there was a similar minimum age for all the successive magistracies. Gaius Octavius was around 35 when he became quaestor, his late start possibly owing to the time it took for his family to accrue sufficient wealth.

After serving his year as quaestor, Gaius Octavius senior was elected as one of the two plebeian aediles, entering on the second rung of the ladder to promotion. He served for the year of office with another senator called Gaius Toranius, who was appointed one of the guardians of the young Octavius' inheritance, but allegedly appropriated much of the money. Octavius was said to have been content with what was left, but this may be the reason why Toranius was proscribed when Octavian and his fellow triumvirs set about eliminating rivals.¹⁷ As aedile, the elder Gaius Octavius would be responsible for the care and repair of all public buildings and roads, the administration of markets and the control of weights and measures. Although the aediles fulfilled useful and necessary functions, ensuring that the city of Rome and its buildings and roads were kept in reasonable working order, it was not a compulsory stage in senatorial careers. More politically important than the care of buildings, the aediles were responsible for putting on games and shows. If they performed this part of their tasks really well they could become famous and popular with the people, ensuring political support for their future careers. The next step after serving as quaestor and aedile was usually to stand for the praetorship, an office with mostly legal responsibilities. When the young Gaius Octavius was two years old, his father, by this time a popular figure in Roman political life, was elected praetor, in 61 BC, by the voters who placed him first in the poll, which indicates his growing popularity. Gaius Octavius had presumably done a splendid job as aedile, pleasing the people of Rome.¹⁸

After this appointment, Gaius Octavius was appointed governor of Macedonia, where he fought against and defeated a tribe called the Bessi, acquiring military success and paving the way for fame in Rome, most probably followed by election to the consulship. As governor, Gaius Octavius conducted himself with credit, at least in the opinion of Cicero.¹⁹ His achievements, modest enough, would have led to a consulship, and ennobled the family and eased the way for the young Octavius to embark on his own career as the son of a senator.²⁰ But it was not to be. Octavius senior returned to Italy in 59 BC, but never reached Rome to stand for the elections, dying at Nola before he saw the city again. Octavius was four years old.²¹

The maternal connections

The stepping stones to political eminence in Republican Rome did not consist solely of possession of a sizeable fortune and successive tenure of the various military and civilian posts that preceded the ultimate goal of the consulship. It was absolutely vital to seek connections with eminent men. Above all it was necessary to marry well, thus forming alliances with the leading politicians, or failing that, then at least with influential families. This is, to some extent, what Gaius Octavius had done in 65 when he chose Atia as his second wife. The mother of the future Augustus was well connected, being the daughter of Marcus Atius Balbus from Aricia, and his patrician wife Julia, the younger of the two sisters of Gaius Julius Caesar, who at that time was a rising politician, but had not yet given any firm indication of the eminent position that he eventually attained. The other Julia was married twice, to the equestrians Quintus Pedius, and Lucius Pinarius. The two sons of these marriages, nephews of Julius Caesar, were associated with him, but they were not rapidly promoted by him. Pedius served as one of his legates in the 50s BC, but he did not reach the consulship until 43 BC, after Caesar was assassinated.²² In 44 BC, the younger Pedius and Pinarius, Caesar's nephews, were to be revealed as his heirs, receiving smaller shares of his fortune than Gaius Octavius, who as his great-nephew was a third generation relative. There is no answer to the question why Caesar preferred the younger of his relatives, the ostensibly insignificant Octavius.

The father of Marcus Atius Balbus was a native of Aricia, 15 miles south of Rome on the Via Appia. On his mother's side of the family, Balbus was related to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, but he had not profited from this relationship to become an influential man in the entourage of Pompeius. Suetonius asserts that Atius could display a long line of senatorial ancestors, which is probably bending the truth quite a lot. He was probably under the influence of the Augustan legend, forged about a century before Suetonius took up his pen.²³ It was Caesar who was rapidly gaining political distinction, so from the young Gaius Octavius' point of view the pre-eminent family connections were with the Julii, not the Pompeii, and this fact would probably have been impressed upon him from the moment he was born. Though he was not closely associated with Julius Caesar

until he was in his teens, he would have been fully aware of him via his mother and his grandmother Julia. In Roman society, both ancestry and also the current family group were supremely important, even if those groups did not rank among the most significant dynasties. In many cases records were kept in a family archive, documenting who did what, and where, and how they did it. Busts and portraits of the deceased, and portraits of predecessors were carried in funeral processions, and speeches were made about their deeds. In the modern world, genealogical research is becoming more and more popular, largely because official records are now widely available, but also because most ordinary people probably know very little even of their great-grandparents. Family tradition normally only extends to grandparents, and therefore third generation offspring have to fill the gaps in knowledge from other sources. Modern landowners and farmers generally know more about their ancestors, though they probably do not approach the mind-set of the Romans concerning their ancestral origins.

Roman politics during Octavius' formative years

On 23 September 63 BC when Octavius was born, his father turned up late for the meeting of the Senate. The debate that day concerned the punishment of Lucius Sergius Catilina. Cicero was consul in that year, with Antonius Hybrida as colleague, the uncle of Marcus Antonius. The candidate who lost in the elections, not for the first time, was Catilina, and Cicero devoted all his time and energies as consul to rooting out what he saw as a conspiracy to overthrow the state, headed by Catilina. Modern scholars have cast some doubt on the reality of this threat to the state, but Cicero was never in any doubt and he never afterwards let anyone forget that he had saved the whole Roman world when he secured the condemnation of Catilina and his associates. During the debates in the Senate about the punishment of the conspirators, one of whom was Lentulus Sura, the stepfather of Marcus Antonius, the senator Gaius Julius Caesar spoke against execution of the conspirators, advocating instead house-arrest under close guard in various parts of Italy. He almost got beaten up for appearing to side with the so-called conspirators. Caesar later criticised Cicero for having authorised the death penalty, and may well have had something to do with Cicero's exile at the hands of the tribune Clodius.²⁴

Caesar had just become Pontifex Maximus,²⁵ and was also engaged in ardent left-wing politics, typified by his prosecution, in partnership with Titus Labienus, of Gaius Rabirius for his part in the death of the tribune of the plebs Saturninus, nearly four decades earlier.²⁶ Saturninus had been an associate of Gaius Marius, who was Julius Caesar's uncle by marriage to his aunt Julia. Marius' career had started brilliantly when he saved Italy and Rome from the attacks of the tribes of Cimbri and Teutones at the end of the second century BC, but it had ended ignominiously in a bloodbath, poised on the verge of civil war, only averted by Marius' sudden death. The ostensible point at issue in this trial of Rabirius was not the connection with Marius, though this cannot have escaped Caesar's

contemporaries, but the sacrosanctity of tribunes, a theme that Caesar brought up more than once in his career. Saturninus had been done to death in spite of his supposed sacrosanctity. Caesar milked this for all that it was worth, not primarily to ensure the future health and safety of tribunes of the plebs. He had other motives. Other politicians had started their careers by prosecuting someone, not always on legitimate charges and not always successfully. By bringing about the prosecution of Rabirius, Caesar ensured his own political importance and he gained popularity in some quarters. Caesar was becoming a force to be reckoned with, but at the moment he could not hope to stand alone. He had not amassed enough money or gained spectacular achievements to be able to forge ahead without support. Later, when he allied himself to Marcus Licinius Crassus and Pompeius Magnus, he would lay the foundations of the road that brought his great-nephew Gaius Octavius, known to the modern world as Octavian, to supreme power.

As a young child, Octavius possibly knew more of the exploits of his great-uncle Julius Caesar than he did of his own father, whom he cannot have known very intimately, and in any case the career of Gaius Octavius had been very brief. From the end of 61 BC until late in 59 he was absent as governor of Macedonia. The sources do not inform us that he took his family with him to his province. It was generally agreed that he was on the threshold of a consular career, but his death on his return journey to Rome put an abrupt end to his career. At the age of four, Octavius can scarcely have appreciated in an emotional sense the loss of someone who had only been in his life for the first two or three years, nor can he have fully appreciated until much later that his father's potential consular career had been cut short. Whatever he knew of his father can hardly have derived from his own personal memories, but would have been built up gradually from his family history and tradition, possibly embellished by his own later reinterpretation.

Since Caesar was consul in the year when Gaius Octavius died, and was consequently in Rome, it is more than conceivable that he visited his niece Atia to offer condolences. There is no evidence that he concerned himself with the welfare and upbringing of his four-year-old great-nephew Octavius at this stage, but it is not out of the question. Until he left Rome to take up his post as governor of Gaul in 58, Caesar may have been a frequent visitor at Atia's house.

Perhaps in 58 or 57 BC, or more likely in 56, Atia married again.²⁷ Her new husband was Lucius Marcius Philippus, a senator who had been praetor in 62, and governor of Syria for a year, from 61 to 60 BC. He was consul in 56 with Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus. When Atia remarried, her connections with the patrician Julian family would enhance her marital value, but Philippus was thoroughly noble in his own right. Since such noble alliances were of paramount importance, without doubt Caesar himself would have expressed keen interest in Atia's future. Any potential suitor would need to be vetted by him, even at a distance from Gaul where he would have been at the time of Atia's remarriage. At best, a new alliance might be of assistance to him, and at worst

he would need to ensure that he would not be compromised during the rest of his political career by any unfortunate marriage that his niece might make. Philippus was not exactly a Caesarian partisan. He was attached to the powerful elite known as the *optimates*, ‘the best men’, by the marriage of his daughter Marcia, from his previous marriage, to the intransigent Marcus Porcius Cato, one of Caesar’s constant opponents, possibly the most determined of them all. But Philippus was not truly interested in political advancement to the same degree as either Caesar or the leading *optimates*, and he trod a careful path between factions in Rome. Most likely, Caesar knew his man by this time, and was not unduly worried by Atia’s remarriage. Philippus remained on the sidelines of the political scene, and if he was not highly distinguished, neither was he completely extinguished; he neither antagonised nor actively supported either Caesar or the *optimates*, and diplomatically remained neutral during the civil war between Pompeius and Caesar. This is the man who became stepfather to the young Gaius Octavius, possibly influencing him on how to deal with factional strife and stay alive while still retaining some credit. If so, Octavius was to prove a far better survivor than ever Philippus had been.²⁸

During his early years, as mentioned above Gaius Octavius may have lived for some of the time with his grandmother Julia, possibly at Velitrae, with alternate periods at Rome with Atia and his stepfather Philippus. When his grandmother Julia died he delivered the funeral oration for her, probably aged about 11.²⁹ It was his first public appearance. The content of the speech that Octavius made is unknown; it would not necessarily be absolutely accurate, since the main purpose was aggrandisement of the family.³⁰ He would have known, or been told at this time, that Caesar had also made a similar funeral oration for his own aunt Julia, the wife of Gaius Marius, and he had done so at a time when connection with Marius was downright unhealthy, if not actually lethal. Funeral speeches were as much political gestures as they were acts of piety.

According to Tacitus, the young Octavius was educated by Atia.³¹ Tacitus compared the older, and in his opinion better, methods of child rearing, listing the most exemplary role models as Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, Aurelia, the mother of Caesar, and Atia, the mother of Augustus. By the time that Dio took up the theme of Octavius’ education,³² the stories of Octavius’ childhood had passed right through hyperbole to emerge as fabulous legend. Stories proliferated, mostly consisting of prophecies of a glorious future. There were many prodigies and omens at the time of his birth, and it was said that both his mother and his father, and also various senators, saw Octavius in their dreams, usually accompanied by omens which clearly prophesied that he would one day rule the world. In more modest dreams it was simply foreseen that he would reorganise the state.³³ Dio says that Caesar took the boy under his wing, and ensured that he was educated suitably for world rule. This is retrospective padding. Octavius was educated, certainly, and he may have learned much from Caesar, but it is questionable whether he was given lessons in world domination, which is what is implied by Dio’s statement.

More prosaically Octavius would have been educated as were other Roman boys. He may have been supervised more closely than many other children, if Nicolaus is to be taken at his word.³⁴ According to his eulogistic biography, both Atia and Philippus took a keen interest in Octavius' development, inquiring of his tutors each day what he had learned, how well he had conducted himself and with whom he had associated. The intention was to portray Octavian as the sober, conscientious, obedient model son and scholar, but to modern readers it sounds like a regime that would have quickly driven Octavius to distraction and then rebellion. The fact that he did not rebel only emphasises the essence of Nicolaus' portrayal.

Almost certainly, Octavius would be trained as an orator, in both Latin and Greek. Suetonius asserts that Augustus could neither speak nor write Greek with any fluency, but he is contradicted by the elder Pliny who says that he could.³⁵ Concerning his later education, Dio tells us that Octavius was put through military service, and instructed in politics and the art of government. There is no solid evidence for this, only the retrospective assumption that somewhere along the way, Octavius had learned all these things. As a young boy, he could not have received any education at first hand from Caesar, but since the two of them probably got to know each other properly when Octavius was 15 or 16 years old, perhaps they made up for lost time. As proconsul of Gaul, Caesar remained in post for a decade, far beyond the usual length of time granted to a provincial governor. This he did by means of legitimate extensions to his term of office, gathering fame and fortune as he defeated and subdued tribe after tribe in Gaul, and by invading the island of Britain twice, in 55 and 54 BC. It is not known how closely Octavius followed the career of his great-uncle, but as a young child he could scarcely have been unaware that Julius had been consul, most especially as it had been such a turbulent year, dubbed by the people as the consulship of Julius and Caesar, because Caesar had so totally eclipsed his colleague Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus.

As the years went by, Octavius would probably hear from his mother and stepfather, and friends of the family, that his great-uncle was steadily gaining fame for himself during the conquest of Gaul. Letters most probably arrived from the great man himself. Octavius would also know that Caesar's daughter Julia was married to Pompeius Magnus, and that the wealthy Marcus Licinius Crassus was somehow associated with these two men. A very young child cannot be expected to be politically aware, but he would hear the names and titles, and make something of the information as he grew up.

The late Republic: the rise of the great generals and extraordinary commands

During the late Republic the Roman political scene was dominated by three men, Pompeius, Crassus and Caesar, acting in concert in a combination misleadingly known to modern scholars as the 'First Triumvirate', a title which

bestows on the loose, unofficial, alliance a sense of legally supported and sophisticated organisation that it never possessed.

In order to place the union of Caesar, Pompeius and Crassus in context it is necessary to review the chief events of the previous 50 years and more, for it was not simply the latest round of civil wars that formed the inheritance of Augustus when he put into effect his so-called restoration of the Republic in 27 BC. For many years, before the conflict between Caesar and Pompeius erupted, the Republic had reeled and recovered from successive wars, riots and disturbances. Some scholars would place the beginning of the end as far back as the wars with Hannibal at the end of the third century BC, or with the agrarian legislation of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC, while others find one of the causes of collapse in the Social War in 90 when Rome's allies rebelled against her dominance. The so-called Social War derives from the Latin term for allies, *socii*. The allied troops fought well for Rome but did not receive the same rewards, and were generally treated as inferiors, so they finally lost patience with their unequal status and Rome's constant and costly demands on their military services. The answer, belatedly, was to extend Roman citizenship to the allies, with its legal privileges and higher status. Shortly after this, the prolonged struggle between Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla began. It was more or less restricted to Rome and Italy, but it was bloody, setting faction against faction on a more serious level than ever before. All the events cited above formed significant successive stages in the history of Rome. Combined with these, there were external threats from powers beyond Rome, and in combating them, the Romans adapted their customary forms of government, leading to the extraordinary commands and the growth of personal power that characterised the late Republic.

When Sulla made his infamous march on the city to wrest the command against Mithridates from Marius, it was the first time that a Roman magistrate had secured control of the government by means of an army, and furthermore he was not brought to trial for the murder of his opponents.³⁶ He secured the command against Mithridates in the east, but the war was prolonged and while he was absent his opponents regained control in Rome, under Gaius Marius and Cornelius Cinna, who set about destroying Sullan partisans with such vigour that it turned into a massacre, an irremediable stain on the hitherto glorious career of Marius. On Sulla's return, he was appointed Dictator for an unlimited term, with supreme powers, which he used to suppress his enemies with brutal determination. After he had set the state in order according to his oligarchic tenets, he laid down his powers and retired. But the rot had set in; his measures to secure the state did not long survive him, because he himself had set the example of how to obtain and wield power at the head of an army. Thereafter, personal interests, shifting allegiances and extraordinary commands became more common. Individuals could now gather power into their own hands supported by their armies. Generals and soldiers shared a mutual dependence. The generals could not hope to succeed without their troops, and the soldiers depended on their generals to ensure that on discharge they would receive

money or land grants so they could make a living after their military service. If the senators had been less short-sighted and somewhat more sympathetic to the needs of veterans, then the generals returning to Rome after their various wars would not have been forced to adopt strong measures to extract settlement policies for their discharged soldiers. In the event, the Senate as a body remained intransigent, but then, having forced their generals into a corner where their reputations were at risk because they were unable to fulfil their promises to the soldiers, the senators found themselves quite unable to resist the escalating pressure.

The career of Pompeius illustrates the point. When Sulla returned to Rome in 83 BC, after the campaign against Mithridates, he embarked on another campaign against the adherents of Marius, who was now dead. Pompeius raised a private army to fight for Sulla. Some years later, in Spain, Pompeius defeated Sertorius, the self-exiled ally of the deceased Gaius Marius. Then in 70 BC Pompeius obtained the consulship, in spite of being well below the minimum age, and without having held any of the qualifying offices. Pompeius had commanded armies for 12 years, and after such a successful career it was unthinkable to force him to start at the bottom of the political ladder by holding the relevant junior magistracies before proceeding to the consulship.³⁷ What Pompeius had done at such an early age could be emulated. Octavian was only 19 when he became consul for the first time, never having held any of the offices, and unlike Pompeius, he had no track record of military success either. The fact that Pompeius had his army behind him was extremely persuasive – and a lesson for the future, because he did not have to use it to gain what he wanted. The simple potential threat worked for him. Pompeius duly became consul, with Marcus Licinius Crassus as his colleague. Crassus had also raised his own army to assist Sulla against the Marian partisans, and had fought a hard battle outside one of the gates of Rome, emerging victorious while the soldiers of the Marian party very nearly overcame Sulla himself. Despite this military success, and his victory over Spartacus and the slave army in 73 BC, Crassus never could equal, let alone surpass, the military reputation of Pompeius.³⁸

Pompeius as consul then set about reversing the legislation that Sulla had passed. Most notably he and Crassus restored the powers of the tribunes of the plebs, which Sulla had tried to curtail. Previous magistrates had made efforts to restore the tribunate but Pompeius and Crassus put the finishing touches to the legislation. This was the only occasion during their consulship that they co-operated so closely. Pompeius used the tribunes soon afterwards to push through the necessary legislation to obtain his special commands.³⁹

After his consulship, Pompeius (Figure 1.2) did not seek a province, as most consuls did, usually because they needed to recoup the money that they had borrowed to fund their election campaigns, and there were various ways to extract money from whatever province they were given. Instead of angling to become a consular governor, Pompeius took on monumental tasks that transcended provincial boundaries. His extraordinary commands, first against the



Figure 1.2 This coin with a portrait of Pompeius Magnus was issued by his elder son Gnaeus, probably from his base at Cordoba in Spain, before he was defeated at the battle of Munda in 45 bc.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

Mediterranean pirates, and then against Mithridates in the east, were much more glorious than a mundane post as provincial governor, and they created precedents that would be useful when Octavian-Augustus was establishing control over the provinces and the armies after the conclusion of the civil war against Antonius and Cleopatra.

Without launching into a detailed description of Pompeius' campaigns, the relevant features can be highlighted. The command against the pirates had long been necessary, because every time the pirates became active, the food supply was interrupted. A pirate ship had even attacked the port at Ostia. Against such a bold, daring and mobile opponent many reputations had been lost, largely because the Senate authorised only inadequate piecemeal measures, not backed up by sufficient resources.⁴⁰ Two members of the family of Marcus Antonius, Octavius' future rival, had already tried to tackle the pirate problem. Antonius' grandfather, also named Marcus Antonius, had enjoyed some success in temporarily putting an end to pirate raids in 113–112 bc, but in 71 bc, the son of this successful general, Marcus Antonius' father, was killed while fighting the pirates from his base in Crete.⁴¹ What was plainly required was an all-embracing command, combining naval action to round up the pirate ships on the sea, and armies operating on land to flush them from their bases, the whole to be controlled by a single authority. The political manoeuvring that was necessary to bestow this command on Pompeius involved the tribune of the plebs, Aulus Gabinius, who introduced a bill to outline the nature of the problem and to advocate the measures that would be necessary to combat it. The bill named no specific commander, but it stretches credulity somewhat to imagine that Gabinius and Pompeius had not conferred about the pirate command. The people made it clear that they wanted Pompeius, who characteristically remained in the background, protesting that he was tired, and that there were other commanders equally well qualified for the task. It was not good form to be seen to be agitating for so much power.

When the law was passed officially appointing Pompeius in 66 BC, the price of corn immediately fell in Rome, underlining the depth of popular faith in his abilities to bring the situation under control. He had clearly thought through the whole campaign, and was fortunate in that the massive resources and powers that he demanded were granted to him. He commanded the whole Mediterranean, including land forces all around it, and was given 500 ships, more than had originally been asked for. The vast operation was controlled through 24 *legati*, or legates. In some sources Pompeius is said to have had 25 legates, but the slight discrepancy is not the important factor. Instead of answering to the Senate, these legates reported directly to Pompeius himself. This procedure was perfectly logical if the command was to be co-ordinated and to work properly, since it would have been cumbersome and self-defeating to have all the commanders reporting back separately to the Senate and awaiting instructions. Close co-ordination and fluid communications were vital for the command of such a huge territorial area and such a large number of soldiers and sailors. But Pompeius' command set a precedent that made the senators very uncomfortable.

Another feature that unsettled the Senate was that Pompeius' command extended up to 50 miles inland in all coastal provinces around the Mediterranean, probably with greater powers (*imperium maius*) than the provincial governors, though this is much debated. The ancient sources confuse the issue. Velleius Paterculus says that Pompeius held *imperium aequum*, like Marcus Antonius' father in 74–71 BC,⁴² but Tacitus, describing the command of Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo under the emperor Nero, compares his *imperium maius* with that of Pompeius during his Mediterranean command.⁴³ The debate about *imperium aequum* and *imperium maius* emerges again in connection with the powers of Augustus and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.⁴⁴

Whether he held powers that were equal to, or greater than, the provincial governors around the Mediterranean, Pompeius held more power than anyone had ever possessed before. In a time of great danger when the tribes of the Cimbri and Teutones had threatened to invade Italy, Gaius Marius had been elected to the consulship several times in succession, without having to return to Rome for the elections, but his command was limited to the north of Italy and to Gaul. Sulla had commanded several legions in the war against Mithridates, and as Dictator in Rome he had wielded more arbitrary power than any of his predecessors. But Pompeius was in charge of very nearly the whole Roman world, the only restraint on him being the time limit that was set on his command, which was to last for three years.

In the event Pompeius required less than two months to round up the pirates, chase them from the sea and from their land bases, and try to remedy their problems by settling them on land around the Mediterranean, thus providing them with an alternative livelihood. The successful campaign against the pirates was highly beneficial to Rome, but it also served as a springboard for the even more prestigious command that Pompeius already had in his sights, against Rome's sworn enemy Mithridates. Although Pompeius' success against the

pirates was total, it could only be temporary. In subsequent decades the problem broke out again, not least under his own younger son Sextus Pompeius, isolated from Rome after the victories of Julius Caesar over the Pompeians at Pharsalus, Thapsus and Munda. Sextus Pompeius was not exactly a pirate, but he took to the sea and could and did threaten Rome's food supply. It took several attempts and some defeats before Octavian and his admiral Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa eradicated the problem of Sextus and his navy.

It is worth outlining Pompeius Magnus' pirate campaign and the way in which it operated, since it clearly foreshadows Augustus' system of provincial government and legionary commands, via legates serving Rome but answerable to one man. The appointment of deputies to deal with aspects of a very large command may be only common sense, but Pompeius showed the way that it could be done within the framework of Roman government. Gaius Octavius had no first-hand knowledge of the events, because the campaign against the pirates took place three years before he was born, but when he came to power, many of his entourage would be old enough to remember the command and the way in which it was administered. There were reciprocal advantages to being able to select, appoint and command legates, in that there was opportunity for patronage and the creation of a loyal following, since advancement was in the gift of the commander. The time limit on such vast power was also a useful device, because it lessened the perceived threat to the authority of the Senate. If Augustus came to these conclusions independently of Roman historical precedent, Pompeius had already been there before him.

The opposition that Pompeius had aroused when he received his extraordinary commands in the Mediterranean and against Mithridates was still not subdued when he returned to Rome in 62 BC. Even so, he did not march on the city at the head of his troops. Rather than embroil the state in civil war, Pompeius laid down his command and disbanded his army. Perhaps he thought that the weight of his prestige would be sufficient to persuade the Senate to co-operate with him on the matter of veteran land grants and senatorial sanction for his administrative measures for the eastern provinces. If so, he would live to regret such optimism. For three years he could make no headway. His arrangements for the newly conquered eastern provinces, and for the client kingdoms, were debated endlessly, with ratification always deferred; authorisation for his promised distribution of land to his soldiers was not forthcoming. His accumulated prestige was deliberately eroded, and since there was no tremendous danger from which the state needed to be saved, he could not recover his pre-eminence by dashing off to do something heroic.

Undoubtedly competent on the military battlefield, on the political battlefield Pompeius Magnus was beginning to look foolish. Disgusted and at his wits' end, the erstwhile hero Pompeius threw in his lot with Gaius Julius Caesar, whose election to the consulship in 59 owed much to Pompeius' support. Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus was elected as Caesar's colleague, which reveals that the combined weight, not to mention their capacity for bribery, of Pompeius, Caesar

and Crassus, who were still secretive about their alliance, was not yet influential enough to control the elections entirely. Caesar quickly neutralised Bibulus' feeble opposition, leaving the field clear for the promotion of the personal designs of each of the members of the three-man combine. The arrangement was one of mutual support; Caesar needed Pompeius for his political stature, because his own standing did not yet equal that of the greatest soldier in Rome. Pompeius needed Caesar because he required an energetic consul with few scruples, who would push through the necessary ratification of his plans, before his veterans turned nasty and the eastern provinces and client kingdoms began to disintegrate. Crassus joined the group for reasons which are less clear. He was the only serious rival to Pompeius, and their rivalry persisted for life, but Crassus could not afford to let the alliance of Pompeius and Caesar eclipse his own political standing. He could not beat them so he joined them, and this applied equally well to the other two.⁴⁵ All these three men were concerned, first and foremost, with their own interests. This was not an official triumvirate like that formed by Marcus Antonius, Octavian and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus some years later. That was sanctioned by law, albeit extorted at the points of several swords. The alliance of Pompeius, Caesar and Crassus was unofficial, but the people of Rome recognised it for what it was, and dubbed it the 'Three-Headed Monster'.

In 59 Caesar forced through legislation with scant regard for either his colleague Calpurnius Bibulus or the finer points of law. His land bill had been very carefully considered, and efforts had been made to smooth over all the problems that had surfaced when land bills and veterans settlements had been introduced in the past. One of the most important factors was to avoid compulsorily ejecting existing land owners in order to appropriate farms for the returning soldiers, so Caesar proposed to buy as much land as possible from all those who were willing to sell. The cash for this was already available in the coffers, since Pompeius had vastly enriched the state as well as himself during his campaigns in the Mediterranean and in the east. If this method did not provide enough land, Caesar proposed to use lands that were already vacant, so no-one would have to be evicted, creating hostile groups of discontented people and a potential problem for the future. The opponents of Pompeius and of Caesar could not seriously object to the clauses of the bill, but Cato attempted to talk it to death, much as the senators had kept debating Pompeius' requests without coming to a conclusion. Caesar lost patience and made a grave mistake by arresting Cato and throwing him into prison, where many senators followed him, declaring that they felt more comfortable in prison with Cato than in the Senate with Caesar.

By the end of his consulship, Caesar had shackled the opposition. He cemented the alliance with Pompeius by arranging a marriage in spring 59 between the latter and his daughter Julia; it seems to have been a successful arrangement, and a marriage with more affection than a political arrangement warranted. For the time being, it was hardly noticeable that the so-called 'Triumvirate' existed, and from 59 to about 50 BC it was not at all inevitable that it should all end in tears with the outbreak of the civil war with Caesar and Pompeius at the head of

two opposed factions.⁴⁶ Relations between the three members started to break down while Caesar was engaged on the conquest of Gaul, but the rift was repaired. Pompeius found himself isolated and attacked. Crassus did not help him. Having severed some of his aristocratic connections, Pompeius had only a narrow choice of allies, and was thrown once more into the arms of Caesar and Crassus. In 56 BC the three men met at Luca (modern Lucca) to thrash out their difficulties and make plans for the future. They perhaps did not confer all at the same time, since there is some evidence that Caesar met with Pompeius and Crassus separately, but the results would probably not have been significantly different if the conference had been a triple affair round the same table. Pompeius and Crassus were to be consuls for 55; they were more certain now of their grip on the elections. Caesar obtained, via the *Lex Pompeia Licinia* which was passed when the two took up their consulship, an extension of five years on his command in Gaul. After their joint consulship, provincial commands would follow for Pompeius and Crassus. Pompeius received command of Spain, but did not leave Italy, choosing instead to govern his province via subordinates, a novel arrangement, and an important precedent for Augustus, who governed the provinces via his appointed legates.

Marcus Licinius Crassus received the Parthian command, where he hoped to achieve the military glory that had so far eluded him, but he came to grief in 53. His death has been highlighted as one of the reasons why the unofficial three-headed alliance broke down, leading to an inevitable rift and then civil war between Caesar and Pompeius. Another contributory factor is said to have been the death of Julia the year before.⁴⁷ Gruen has challenged this conclusion, pointing out that there was no reason why political co-operation could not have continued, and that it was neither Crassus nor Julia who welded the three men together.⁴⁸ After Julia's death, Caesar offered Octavia, sister of Octavius, in marriage to Pompeius. The great man refused her and looked elsewhere; this need not mean that he was turning away from Caesar entirely, but it was a significant move, indicating that Pompeius intended to go it alone or change direction.

Whatever the reasons behind the declining relations between Caesar and Pompeius, conditions worsened after 53, eventually but not yet inevitably leading to war. It is certain that Crassus' death loosened his political alliances; most important, it left his clients, the group of people who traditionally attached themselves to senators, without a leader. One of Crassus' sons died with him at Carrhae; the other, Marcus Crassus the younger, was a confirmed Caesarian. Many of Crassus' followers joined Caesar's *clientelae*, thus creating an imbalance between him and Pompeius.⁴⁹ But it was to take another four years or so before the political wrangling between them reached the critical stage.

The road to civil war

From the age of 11–14, Octavius would witness and take note of the political manoeuvring at Rome as it became increasingly obvious that a war between

Caesar and Pompeius was brewing. As a close relative of one of the chief protagonists, it would hardly have been possible to remain neutral, because even the most mundane family affairs took on a political flavour. In this connection he would have taken note of the current exploits of his great-uncle. He could not have been indifferent to the debate that centred on the termination of Caesar's command in Gaul, and the legislative technicalities that surrounded it. The major problem was that Caesar needed the consulship immediately after his proconsulship, so that he could step from one appointment to the next without giving up his *imperium*. Any gap between the Gallic command and the consulship would leave him at the mercy of prosecution by anyone who cared to bring a charge against him, and throughout his career, especially during his consulship in 59, he had made so many enemies and behaved in such a way as to give them all plenty of scope to prosecute him for any one of his dubious acts. It was not necessarily true that anyone would dare to prosecute him, nor was it a foregone conclusion that if Caesar was brought to trial he would be condemned. However, if he was prosecuted he would have been forbidden to stand as a candidate for the consulship until after the court proceedings ended. Even if he was acquitted it would mean a delay of one more year before he could achieve his second consulship. But Caesar was not prepared to give up or to compromise in his determination to preserve his power intact and uninterrupted. He therefore desired to be allowed to stand for the consulship *in absentia*, and in order to obtain this concession, he required collaborators in Rome. As sole consul in 52, Pompeius did co-operate with Caesar, who was allowed to stand for the elections without appearing in person at Rome, much as his uncle Gaius Marius had done while stationed in the north to prepare for the fight against the Cimbri and Teutones. Having supported Caesar, Pompeius then passed a law, the *Lex Pompeia de iure magistratum*, requiring candidates to present themselves in person for the elections. This has been interpreted either as double dealing or as forgetful incompetence, or both; Syme accused Pompeius of hoping that his little deception would not be noticed, and then of making dubious amendments when he was found out, but as Gruen suggests this seems too far-fetched, and credits Pompeius with less intelligence than he possessed. It was perfectly acceptable for Pompeius to pass this law, since it did not affect Caesar, whose case, examined and sanctioned by the people, would be regarded as a legitimate exception. Pompeius simply wanted to ensure that after Caesar the practice of standing for the consular elections *in absentia* did not become a habit.⁵⁰

Next came the *Lex Pompeia de provinciis*, which stated that there should be a five-year gap between the tenure of a magistracy at Rome and the government of a province. This meant that the men who were currently in office in Rome would not be the ones who were eligible for provincial governorships the following year, which in turn meant that until the first five years had elapsed, governors would have to be chosen from among the ex-consuls and ex-praetors who were qualified for, but did not necessarily aspire to, this sort of appointment. Thus Cicero was obliged to become governor of Cilicia, very much

against his will, because for Cicero the only possible life was in Rome itself. More pertinent to Caesar's problems, it would not now be necessary to wait until a magistrate had completed his current term of office in Rome before sending him to take over in Gaul; any of the available pool of men of consular rank could be appointed to succeed Caesar the moment his command expired, thus exposing him to a short term as a *privatus*, when he would definitely have to give up his *imperium*. The *Lex Pompeia de provinciis* has been used as proof that Pompeius meant to disrupt Caesar's future plans, but Caesar's command was an extraordinary one, sanctioned by a law, and was not affected by the Pompeian legislation on provincial government. In acknowledging Caesar's special position, and allowing him to flout the laws he was establishing, Pompeius was looking to the future, to try to ensure that no-one else could emulate him. There was no very determined effort to oust Caesar from his position, since Pompeius inserted a clause into this law to safeguard him, treating him as a legitimate exception, just as he had dealt with Caesar in the previous law.⁵¹

Pompeius himself was, as sole consul, also a legitimate exception. His position has been described as both anomalous and unprecedented, and it was not entirely to his credit that he had achieved it in a time of upheaval. He had employed his usual tactics of not actively seeking office himself, but allowing others to agitate on his behalf, while he waited until the situation became so intolerable that in the end the Senate was forced to ask him to take up the reins of state. In the constitutional difficulties of 53 BC, the Senate did not favour any of the candidates for the consulship, and cancelled the elections for the consulships of 52. Disorder prevailed, and the supporters of Pompeius insisted that he should be made Dictator; others clamoured for the joint rule of both Pompeius and Caesar. The senators reacted badly to this last idea, and hastily reached a political compromise proposed by Cato; they appointed Pompeius sole consul, a blatant contradiction in terms, and an exercise in careful terminology in order to avoid a more emotive title.⁵² According to the law, a sole consul ought not to exist. If one of the consuls died in office, it was customary to appoint another man for the remaining term, so that the principle of collegiality was not compromised. Pompeius undertook to appoint a colleague when peace was restored, and he did so in the person of his new father-in-law Metellus Scipio, but his sole consulship was not the only unusual feature of Pompeian politics: Syme and Gruen point out that Pompeius held Spain in an anomalous and arbitrary fashion.⁵³

Octavius perhaps took note of the extent to which the Senate would tolerate the reality of power, provided that it was decently masked by appropriate titles that retained a veneer of legality. Whatever the title bestowed upon him, it had to be recognised that Pompeius was the only man apart from Caesar who could restore order, but the Senate shrank from appointing him Dictator. Too many could remember Sulla. Apart from the constitutional and legal limitations that distinguished the powers of a consul (who was subject to tribunician veto) from the comprehensive powers of a Dictator (who was not) it was almost purely an argument of semantics. With the accumulation of powers accruing to him, and

by dint of his prestige and *auctoritas*, Pompeius was Dictator in all but name. He was chief magistrate at Rome, without a colleague, and he was at the same time absentee governor of Spain, employing deputies to govern for him. He had access to armed force if he so desired while still consul, which was quite unconstitutional at this time, since the consuls were supposed to lay down their military powers when they entered the city. If Octavius learned much from Caesar, he surely learned one or two useful lessons from Pompeius, and from the interaction between Pompeius and the Senate. If not handled too arbitrarily, and allowed to exercise some power, or at least to imagine that they could do so if they wished, most senators were tractable enough.

In 51 it was rumoured that Caesar intended to enfranchise the Transpadane Gauls, which would increase his *clientelae* immeasurably, and men at Rome began to worry. The consul Marcus Marcellus challenged the enfranchisement, precipitating agitation to recall Caesar from Gaul.⁵⁴

But Caesar was not yet ready to return to Rome. He had just defeated Vercingetorix, and the siege of Alesia was over, but the war was nowhere near conclusion; he would need much more time to settle affairs in Gaul. If his five-year term agreed at Luca were to be taken seriously it meant that his proconsulship should not terminate until the early months of 50; it is unlikely that the *Lex Pompeia Licinia* contained a clause that specifically recorded a terminal date. Even though Marcellus' attacks became more pertinently directed towards Caesar, any discussion of his recall was deferred until 1 March 50.

The termination of Caesar's command was always the crucial point. Caesar himself later claimed that he had been allowed to stand for the consulship in 49 for election to office in 48. This does not sit well with the evidence.⁵⁵ For reasons which can only be guessed, Caesar did not choose to stand for the consular elections as early as 50, when he might have expected that his term of office would come to an end. From then onwards, the support of Pompeius for Caesar steadily waned. He rejected the idea that Caesar could hold *imperium* in his province and be consul at the same time, despite the fact that he had set the precedent himself. Gruen affirms that 'one cannot divide Rome into Caesarians and Pompeians even as late as the year 50', but despite the absence of a definite polarisation of factions, there was already a growing body of resentment against both dynasts. All attempts at compromise were blocked by the tribune Gaius Scribonius Curio, who swept aside all alternative suggestions in order to propose a compromise of his own, namely that both Pompeius and Caesar should lay down their commands simultaneously.⁵⁶ The Senate voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion (370 to 22), and the people displayed unequivocal enthusiasm for it, but the proposal was never implemented, despite its obvious popularity.

The *optimates* were determined to block Caesar, and the one sure method of achieving their aim was to bring Pompeius into their own camp. As part of the plan, Gaius Marcellus inflated rumours that Caesar was about to invade Italy, and as consul he theatrically entrusted Pompeius with the safety of the state. Pompeius took command of the troops in Italy and began to talk of war. It was

the only way to preserve his pre-eminence and his partisans. Affairs were rapidly coming to a head. Some attempt at negotiation was still feasible, but all proposals failed. Pompeius was prepared to accept Caesar's offer to give up his armies and provinces, except for two legions and command over Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul, but the consuls would not agree to this proposal. Next, Curio brought a letter from Caesar, suggesting that he would give up his command if Pompeius did the same, but he added threats that if Pompeius retained his armies, he would not give up his own, and instead he would avenge the wrongs done to him and his country. This incendiary talk was seen as a declaration of war. Appian documents the succeeding uproar. The Senate appointed Lucius Domitius as Caesar's successor, declared Pompeius protector of Rome, and Caesar an enemy of the state. The tribunes M. Antonius and Q. Cassius were thrown out of the Senate House, and instantly made their way to Caesar disguised as slaves.⁵⁷ By the time that Antonius and Cassius reached him, Caesar had already crossed the Rubicon, the boundary between his province and Italy. It was such an insignificant stream that nobody knows exactly where it ran, but the monumental importance of crossing this rivulet constituted a declaration of war. Ever alive to the value of inflammatory propaganda, especially since he was now committed to fighting a war, Caesar showed the tribunes to the troops in their dishevelled condition, explaining that after all their heroic deeds, the only reward that the Senate thought fit for himself as commander, and the soldiers, was to label them public enemies. This was his sole means of justifying what was nonetheless a putsch. It was also very effective in rousing the troops.

After the battle of Pharsalus and the defeat of Pompeius, Caesar declared for posterity that 'they would have it so', thus placing all the blame on the enemy and exonerating himself from any intention to start a war.⁵⁸ He may not have been exaggerating unduly. Motives for the civil war between him and Pompeius derived as much from the machinations of other self-interested parties as from the will of either of the generals, but the situation quickly escalated to the point where neither party could back down. Caesar insisted that he was forced into war, that he fought for freedom from monopolisation of power by a faction, and that his prime concerns were defence of the constitution and the rights of tribunes.⁵⁹ In reality it was a struggle for personal survival with powers intact. Survival *per se* was hardly important. For the Romans fear of death was far outweighed by fear of loss of prestige and *dignitas*.⁶⁰ The state had become too small for both Pompeius and Caesar; neither could subordinate himself to the other, and given that both of them stood at the head of a complex and widespread series of alliances that formed powerful factions, the inevitable conflict could not be confined to the purely personal sphere.

Caesarians and Pompeians

Caesar crossed the Rubicon, the river that marked the boundary of his province, beyond which he could not legally travel at the head of troops, at the beginning

of January 49. He moved so fast that he took Rome by surprise. Pompeius was quite unprepared to meet Caesar in the field, and since he was far too good a general to be unaware of this fact, or to risk fighting a battle before he was ready, he retreated to the south, finally leaving Italy altogether. He embarked at Brundisium, and sailed across the Adriatic to Dyrrachium where he gathered his army and those senators who remained loyal to him.⁶¹ Deprived of an army to fight, Caesar spent a few days in Rome. He would be in a great hurry, and very busy, but it is not impossible that he and Octavius met briefly at this time. Nicolaus of Damascus says that when the war began, Atia and Philippus sent Octavius out of harm's way to one of their country estates, though it is not specified where. Cicero attests that Philippus owned estates at Astura and Puteoli.⁶² Even if he did not meet with Caesar, Octavius would watch and learn.

One of Caesar's first acts was to seize the treasury (*aerarium*) to finance his immediate needs. This money had been lodged there long ago in the history of the Republic, after the disastrous invasion of Italy by the Gauls. The money was dedicated to the defence of Rome against a similar threat, and anyone who removed it, for any other purpose than for making war against the Gauls, would find himself under a public curse: there may have been at least the hint of a smile on Caesar's face when he pre-empted criticism by pointing out that since he had defeated the Gauls, he was presumably exempt from the effects of such a curse.⁶³

The few senators who had remained in Rome probably did not put up much resistance to Caesar, but this is understandable, since he was backed up by thousands of battle-hardened troops who would not hesitate to execute whoever their general pointed out to them. There were some arrangements to be made for the defence of Italy and neighbouring provinces before Caesar could leave Rome. He left Marcus Antonius in charge of troops in Italy, appointed his adherents to commands in Sicily, Sardinia, Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul, and then turned first to Spain, where Pompeius' legates, Marcus Petreius and Lucius Afranius, commanded armies. Caesar declared that he was going to meet an army without a leader, and he would then go to Dyrrachium to meet a leader without an army.⁶⁴ After initial reverses, he defeated the lieutenants of Pompeius in August 49 at Ilerda.⁶⁵

On his return to Rome, Caesar was supreme, but not everyone was cowed by his power. Cicero recounts popular demonstrations against Caesar in the theatre,⁶⁶ in the spring of 49. Otherwise, as the war in Spain progressed, and when Caesar turned his attention to Pompeius himself, it was business as usual at Rome. The praetor Lepidus proposed that Caesar should be made Dictator, and the Senate agreed.⁶⁷ Utilising this office to obtain what he wanted quickly and without fuss, Caesar made appointments of magistrates and priests for the following year, then he abdicated, since as Dio pointed out, he already possessed all the authority and functions that he could possibly require, backed up as he was by his armies. He was elected consul for 48, and left Italy on 4 January that same year for the war against Pompeius. He did not return to Rome until

September 47. After his defeat at Pharsalus, Pompeius fled to Egypt, where he was murdered by a nervous palace staff, who thought to please Caesar and avoid a Roman war on their own territory. There was already a war between Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy, and when Caesar arrived in pursuit of Pompeius, he took charge, remaining in Egypt long enough to stabilise the political situation there. This was highly relevant to Roman interests, since most of Rome's corn supply could be found in Egypt; as a potential acquisition this ancient kingdom was far too valuable to ignore. Once he had established Cleopatra as Queen, Caesar conducted a campaign against Pharnaces in the east.

Octavius comes of age

In the meantime, in Rome, Octavius assumed the *toga virilis* on 18 October, at the age of 15. An idealised portrait of him as a youth gives some idea of his appearance at around this age (Figure 1.3). The coming of age was a public, formal ceremony, during which boys laid aside the *toga praetexta* that marked their youth, and became officially enrolled as adult citizens. The normal age was 17, which was also the age when military service began, and the legal age at which a man could be prosecuted. In the early Empire, the lowering of the age of the assumption of the *toga virilis* was regarded as a distinction of honour, and Augustus' grandsons Gaius and Lucius assumed it at the same age as Octavius, at 15. Nicolaus of Damascus gives Octavius' age as only 14 when the ceremony took place, but the evidence from Suetonius weighs against this.⁶⁸

According to Dio, the ceremonial dressing was marred by a potentially bad omen, which Octavius turned to good account. While he was putting on his tunic, the seams came apart and it fell to the ground. With great presence of mind, Octavius said, 'I shall have all the senatorial dignity at my feet.' The story



Figure 1.3 Idealised portrait bust of the young Gaius Octavius as a teenager. It was probably produced when he was much older, or possibly even after his death.

Source: Courtesy Vatican Museums.

is most probably a later interpolation, but it is not at odds with Octavius' character, since it illustrates a quick mind working at its manipulative best.⁶⁹ Though he was now officially a man, Octavius was still subject to parental discipline, according to Nicolaus; Atia seems to have retained strict control of her son, not allowing him to go out except on legitimate business, and making him sleep in the same apartment as before.⁷⁰ No adolescent resentment is recorded, but that would be in defiance of the legend. One can only speculate whether ambition already smouldered under the surface of this strict control, waiting with calculated patience for an opportunity to burst into flame. If he harboured such feelings, Octavius controlled them well; self-control was his hallmark in later life, and he seems to have regretted bitterly the few occasions when he lost it. Perhaps he began to practise it whilst still very young.

Shortly after assuming the *toga virilis* he took up his first official tasks. Nicolaus tells us that the people elected him to one of the priesthoods, as *pontifex* in place of Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus who had died. Behind this bland statement there lurks a covert fact or two which were not emphasised in Nicolaus' narrative. The election was at the request of Julius Caesar, and therefore not quite as spontaneous as Nicolaus suggests, and Domitius Ahenobarbus had not simply died, but had been killed at Pharsalus. Nicolaus glossed over these reminders of the civil war between Pompeius and Caesar, concentrating instead on the glorification of his subject. The office of *pontifex* was a high honour, and one which Octavius took very seriously. He was conscientious in the performance of his duties, though according to Nicolaus he had to undertake them all after dark, because being a remarkably attractive youth, this was the only way that he could avoid the unwelcome attentions of women, thus preserving his chastity. The difference between the values of our own era and those of the world of Augustus is indicated by the probability that modern readers greet this statement with snorts of derision.⁷¹

Julius Caesar returned to Rome in September 47, and remained until the end of the year. He had been appointed Dictator for the second time, after the battle of Pharsalus, probably with fuller powers than before, but with a fixed term of office, due to expire in October 47. The exact details are uncertain, but he seems to have relinquished the Dictatorship at the prescribed time. He was elected consul with M. Lepidus as his colleague, for 46. Since he was not due to take up office until 1 January, and had probably renounced the Dictatorship the previous October, it might seem that he was potentially powerless, but in reality he was still supreme because he had not relinquished his proconsular *imperium* and the command of his armies. Technically, he could not wield proconsular power in the city, and was supposed to lay down command of his troops the moment he crossed the *pomerium* or city limits, but somehow no-one thought to raise the legal niceties with him. Secure in his position as first man in Rome, he threw himself into the task of restoring the state. There was much to do, and for Caesar it was a race against time, because he could not postpone for very long the impending war against the remnants of the Pompeian armies in Africa.

In a great rush, he restored order in the city, conducted elections of the magistrates for the last few months of 47, and tried to ease the parlous economic situation which had been the direct cause of rioting in Rome. Marcus Antonius, Caesar's master of horse (*magister equitum*) was currently out of favour because he had been far too brutal in quelling the riots. Heitland blames Antonius for needless brutality in quelling the riots in Rome, but Plutarch, followed by Gelzer, points out that Antonius acted only when the Senate authorised him to do so. Antonius was forgiven only when he went to meet Caesar on his return from Spain.⁷²

It was not only the civilian population who were discontented. Caesar's veteran soldiers, assembled in Campania for the coming African war, decided that they had fought long enough without the just rewards that had been promised to them but had never yet materialised. It is human nature, after throwing all energies into something for sustained periods without much tangible profit, to look up once in a while and ask, 'Why am I doing this?' Caesar showed no sign of ever stopping, and by now the soldiers wanted a deadline. When their discontent came to a head, they marched on Rome to confront Caesar. He met them calmly, listened to their requests for discharge, and then addressed them, not as *commilitones*, fellow soldiers, but as *quirites*, citizens, and with that one word brought them back to unswerving loyalty.⁷³

Whether or not Octavius was present, he could not fail to have heard the story. It is not too fanciful to suggest that Caesar elaborated upon it over dinner, or at some other occasion, and Octavius would have learned a valuable lesson in man-management. Caesar called the soldiers' bluff, and they knew him well enough to realise that he would go ahead without them, recruit new troops and probably still win the war against the Pompeians in Africa, thus depriving the original war-weary Caesarians of the victory and the booty.

It can never be known whether Caesar took the time to discuss the political and military situation with Octavius, but he did take the time to promote him, by having him appointed *praefectus urbi*, city prefect, during the celebration of the *Feriae Latinae*. In the Greek sources, the terminology for the post of city prefect can be easily confused with that of the master of the horse (*magister equitum*), leading some scholars to assume that Octavius had been given this latter post in 47, at the age of 16, which would have been far too responsible a position and would clearly have been anomalous. The confusion arises because some ancient sources do state that Caesar designated Octavius *magister equitum*, but the context for this is 44, just as Caesar was about to set out on the campaigns against the Dacians and Parthians.

The religious festival of the *Feriae Latinae* dated back to the conquest of Alba Longa during the early Republic. All the magistrates, including the tribunes of the plebs, left the city to perform the ceremonies at the Alban Mount, and in the intervening period, the priests took over the official functions of the consuls. The office of prefect of the city was originally created to oversee public order in Rome while the magistrates were absent. It was a purely honorary appointment,

but since the holder of the office became token head of the government for one or two days, he would be under the public eye and marked out for greater things in the future. The duties were primarily to conduct legal business. According to Dio it was quite usual in Republican times for adolescents to be appointed to the office during the celebrations of the *Feriae Latinae*.⁷⁴ It was only in the reign of Tiberius and later emperors that the permanent city prefect was created, fulfilling much more important and extensive functions, quite separate from the duties carried out by the prefects of the *Feriae Latinae*, who continued to be appointed during the Empire, alongside the usual *praefectus urbi*. In the late Republic, the tasks would not be too onerous, and would provide valuable administrative experience.

The career structure followed by most Romans embraced both civil and military posts, usually in a predictable succession. It was considered vitally important for Roman youths to gain experience of military affairs as soon as possible, so Caesar proposed that Octavius should accompany him on his expedition to Africa,⁷⁵ where he planned to make war on the Pompeians. Unfortunately Octavius was constantly plagued by ill-health, and was unable to take advantage of his great-uncle's offer. The continual illnesses documented throughout Augustus' life defy clear explanation. The precise medical conditions have not been described, and in any case, the illnesses may not have sprung from the same cause; viruses and food poisoning may have been to blame on some occasions, and there were probably some periods of total exhaustion and possibly sunstroke. On this occasion, Atia protested and Caesar did not pursue the matter, so as not to endanger the boy's fragile constitution. He could not wait to fight the war, but perhaps he thought he could afford to wait to take the young man under his wing.

Caesar left Italy in December 47 and was absent for seven months. He won the battle of Thapsus on 6 April 46 and the news reached Rome on 20 April, but after the battle there was much to occupy the victors, so Caesar remained in Africa until July 46.⁷⁶ The Senate granted him fresh honours, more extensive than before. A festival of thanksgiving to last for 40 days was voted to him after the news of the victory reached the city. It was decided possibly by popular election, that he should be Dictator for ten years, and *praefectus morum* for three years. The latter appointment was something new; it was clearly derived from the powers of the censor, and presumably gave him the means of controlling the membership of the Senate.⁷⁷

More extravagantly, a statue of Caesar with a globe at his feet was erected in the Capitoline Temple, with an inscription reminding onlookers of his divine descent from Venus. Very soon after the erection of this statue, Caesar had the inscription removed, so it is known only from secondary reports by ancient authors, whose own sources are not established. The text and even the language are unknown. Although Latin would have been the obvious choice, some authorities insist that the inscription may have been in Greek. It seems to have described Caesar as *divus*, or the equivalent in Greek, implying that he was a living god,

and not just of divine descent.⁷⁸ Perhaps he thought that this was going a little too far, or even that it was tempting fate, begging the gods to put him firmly in his mortal place. Some authors suggest that the opposite is true, and that Caesar was disgruntled because it was not enough for his ambitions; but one may wonder what earthly honours were left to Caesar after deification whilst still alive.⁷⁹ More honours may have been voted to him in addition to those listed here, but he may have refused them. Dio says that he includes in his list of honours only those that Caesar accepted, which does suggest that some discretion may have been exercised in choosing which to take on and which to reject. Suetonius thoroughly disapproves of the honours, proclaiming them too great for mortal man.⁸⁰

Octavius was closely associated with Caesar from the summer of 46 onwards, and Nicolaus of Damascus makes much of this association.⁸¹ He may have been influenced by the material included in Augustus' *Memoirs* which possibly also laid great emphasis on the connection with Caesar at this point in Octavius' career.⁸² The *Memoirs* were written at a comparatively early stage, before Augustus had become the elder statesman in his own right. Later in his life he played down the Caesarian antecedents to his long reign, but in the early days he used the association to enhance his reputation, almost as a prop, since by reminding the relevant people of Caesar he won their support. As a youth he accompanied his great-uncle everywhere, to the theatre, to banquets and other social gatherings: he received military decorations (*dona militaria*) and even rode behind Caesar's chariot in the triumph celebrated after the African war, despite the fact that he had played no part in it.⁸³

In this context, Nicolaus states that Caesar had now adopted Octavius and regularly conversed with him as if he was his son.⁸⁴ If this is correct, then the adoption as Caesar's heir came as no surprise to Octavius in 44 BC, and it implies that his performance in deliberating about accepting the inheritance was a charade. It is perhaps more likely that Nicolaus anticipated the date, or possibly Augustus himself speculated whether Caesar had made his decision as early as this, which was converted into fact when Nicolaus came to write it down.

Octavius certainly seems to have developed a certain influence with the great man, if Nicolaus is to be believed, but this is probably retrospective embellishment of the legend. Naturally, the prudent Octavius employed this influence only for the benefit of others, and not for his own gain. People approached him to intercede on their behalf with the Dictator, but Octavius was careful not to ask for favours at inopportune moments, thus displaying the intelligent diplomacy that he scarcely ever lost throughout his life. In one instance, he was particularly successful when he intervened on behalf of his friend Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, whose brother had been taken prisoner while fighting on the Pompeian side in Africa. Caesar was known to be ill-disposed towards these particular captives since many of them had fought against him in more than one war. On occasion he allowed himself to be persuaded to release one or two of them, so Agrippa's brother went free.⁸⁵ Significantly he did not reach the same heights as

Marcus Agrippa himself; Octavius perhaps knew where favours had to stop. The chief interest of the story lies in the fact that he and Agrippa were not simply acquaintances at this time, but firm friends, and had no doubt been so since their schooldays.

During the long hot summer of 46, Caesar turned his attention to the many administrative tasks left unfinished because of the wars. He had been engaged in the reconstruction of his Forum and temple to Venus Genetrix behind the Senate House, which had been burned down in 52 BC. In his grandiose designs, he proposed to rebuild the Senate House but not on exactly the same plot, in order to make room for his new Forum, but permission to move the building had not yet been forthcoming from the senators. Although the Forum and temple complex (Figures 1.4 and 1.5) was not yet finished, Caesar dedicated the buildings in 46 BC.

Among the most famous achievements in this year was the reform of the calendar. The old calendar was based on a lunar reckoning, and every two years an extra month had to be inserted to keep the record straight. This intercalation had been grossly neglected in the turmoil of the civil wars, so that the seasons no longer matched the months that were normally associated with them. Caesar introduced a calendar based on a solar year, still in use nowadays, with 365 days to each year and one extra day inserted every four years. In order to adapt the

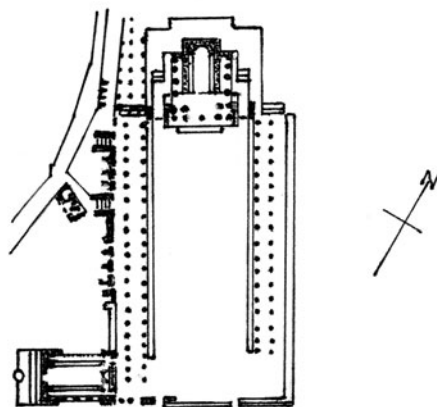


Figure 1.4 Plan of the Forum of Caesar, which was unfinished at Caesar's death. Before the battle of Pharsalus Caesar vowed a temple to Venus Victrix if he should win the battle, but when he finally built it he changed the dedication to Venus Genetrix, the mythical ancestress of the Julii. The temple stands at the northwestern end of the Forum. The whole complex, including the Senate House, was completed by Augustus.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

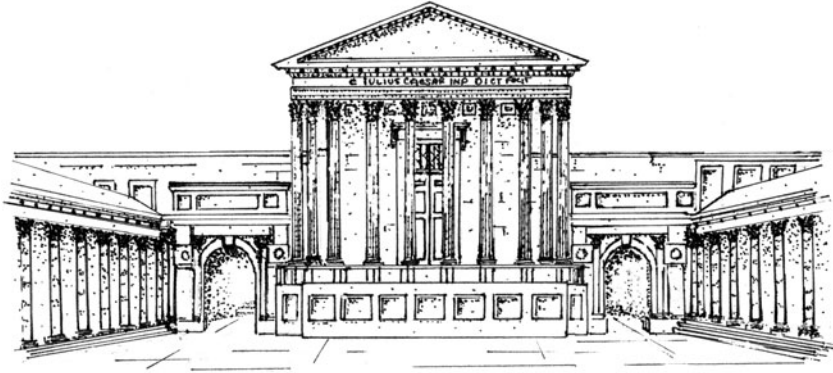


Figure 1.5 Reconstruction drawing of the temple of Venus Genetrix enclosed by the Forum of Julius Caesar.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

Roman calendar to this new way of reckoning, it was necessary to lengthen the year 46 BC by a total of 67 days, so that the seasons lined up with the months again; Caesar had already added the extra lunar month in February, but that was not sufficient, so he added two more between November and December, so that the seasons could begin properly in winter at the Kalends of January.⁸⁶

In the summer Octavius was entrusted with the direction of the theatrical productions designed for the benefit and entertainment (one might also add distraction) of the populace. He attended all the performances, and at the end of his tasks fell ill, probably as a result of sunstroke. Suetonius notes that Augustus could never withstand the effects of the sun and never went anywhere without a hat.⁸⁷ It is likely he had learned this precautionary measure the hard way, and as a youth had for a short while scorned the protective value of hats. Whatever the ailment, he was dangerously ill. It is recorded that Caesar was extremely concerned, on one occasion leaping up from his dinner to go and sit by his young kinsman's bedside.⁸⁸ Octavius recovered, but not in sufficient time to accompany Caesar to Spain, where Gnaeus Pompeius, the elder son of Pompeius Magnus, had assembled a large anti-Caesarian force. The threat was serious, so Caesar left Rome at the end of the year without allowing enough time to conduct the elections of the magistrates for 45. As a temporary measure Caesar was appointed sole consul. Since he was already Dictator, he scarcely needed the powers, but this may have been a political stopgap,⁸⁹ or at least a deliberate ploy to defer the decisions about who should or should not become consul until he returned.

As soon as he was well enough, Octavius set out on his own initiative to follow Caesar, accompanied by a few friends, among whom no doubt Agrippa was included. This was the first time that Octavius showed his mettle, for it was no light undertaking to travel without a huge retinue for armed protection to a

distant theatre of war, through terrain that was mostly hostile. He seems to have arrived too late to witness the battle of Munda, but the details are obscure. Suetonius and Velleius Paterculus simply inform their readers that Octavius followed Caesar to Spain, and Dio is more verbose but just as vague, and seems to think that Octavian was present at the battle of Munda. The legend was so inflated by the time he wrote his history that Dio probably never questioned Octavian's alleged importance at Munda.⁹⁰

A significant omen allegedly took place during the Munda campaign, presaging the future importance of Octavius. When trees were being cleared in preparation for laying out his camp, Caesar refused to cut down a palm tree, because he considered it to be an omen of victory. A shoot sprang up from it immediately, and within a few days grew taller than the original tree. According to the legend, Caesar took this for a sign that he would be succeeded by none other than his sister's grandson. This can be discerned as retrospective embroidery, especially by Dio, who locates the palm tree episode on the actual battlefield, whereas Suetonius says that the trees were cleared in and around Caesar's camp so as to make it easier to lay it out, and this occurred before the battle was fought.⁹¹

If Caesar entertained any thoughts on the significance of the palm shoot, they would have remained private, or at least they would have been confined to his immediate circle. If he had declared in public, as early as the summer of 45 BC, that the omens revealed that Octavius would succeed him, the events of 44 after the arrival of Octavius in Rome would probably have taken a very different course. The anti-Caesarians would probably have treated the youth Octavius with rather less contempt, and would not have tried to use the young man as a weapon to rid themselves of Antonius; instead they would probably have tried to eliminate him immediately.

Nicolaus of Damascus does not mention the fighting at Munda at all, as he surely would have done if his hero Octavius had played even the smallest active part in the battle. Nicolaus makes it clear that Octavius joined Caesar in the seventh month after the campaign began. Since the victory was won in the fourth month, Octavius could not have been in the battle, and he was in Spain only for three months at the most, from June to perhaps the end of August, when Caesar began the journey back to Rome.⁹² In his account of the Spanish episode, Nicolaus does not pretend that Octavius gained any military experience, but instead he lays emphasis on the conversations that Caesar held with his great-nephew, when they discussed current problems and Caesar asked for his opinion, which he gave intelligently, concisely and without straying from the point. The young Octavius does seem to have possessed a certain incisive judgement, skilfully avoiding saying too much or too little, just as he avoided either offending or becoming too closely involved with people who might later compromise him. He was aware even then that every deed, every word, contributed to the formation of his reputation, and once a word was spoken or an action performed, it could not be undone, so he was careful to confine his actions and his utterances to those areas where they might conceivably count for something.

According to Nicolaus, Octavius was already giving no little thought to the foundations of a good reputation at home. There is no good reason to doubt this. Nicolaus' text more than likely derives from Augustus himself, either as a product of conversations with Octavian-Augustus, or from the written *Memoirs*, or perhaps both. Nicolaus relays to the world the portrait of the young Octavius as the older and wiser Augustus wished him to be portrayed. Looking back on his early behaviour, Augustus would be in a better position than anybody else to recognise his own most pertinent and salient traits, without which he could not have survived, let alone achieved anything significant, though perhaps he did not foresee at this stage the heights to which his reputation would eventually climb.

Caesar remained in Spain until the end of the summer 45, attending to the administration of the provinces, and perhaps quite consciously laying the foundations for future imperial government. He settled time-expired veterans, and Spanish tribesmen who had fought loyally for Rome, in newly founded colonies and in existing cities, especially harbours and ports on the east coast of Spain, which were then elevated to colonial status.⁹³ While he and Octavius were at New Carthage an embassy arrived from Saguntum. They were desperate to clear their city of certain charges laid against it, and chose Octavius as their spokesman. He reasoned so well and so modestly with Caesar that he effected the pardon of the Saguntines, thus earning their undying gratitude. Nicolaus details more of the same adulation about Octavius' modesty, charm, intelligence, and his influence with Caesar, but all these points have already been made and it would appear superfluous if not sickening to repeat them.

The most important aspect of the Spanish episode is that Nicolaus no doubt stressed what Augustus himself presented as the salient points. During these few months with Caesar, Octavius participated in the foundation of colonies, received embassies, shared in the administration of the provinces and helped to deal with the settlement of the veterans and the Spanish troops. In Augustus' own eyes, with the benefit of hindsight and some adjustment and manipulation, it was his conduct during these few months that really laid the foundation of Octavius' association with Caesar. When he came to write his *Memoirs*, Augustus no doubt partially reworked the legend, cherry-picking the acceptable points but ignoring the doubtful ones. It is perhaps significant that Nicolaus of Damascus is the sole surviving source for the Saguntine embassy and gives the most rounded portrayal of this whole episode of Augustus' life, no doubt drawing heavily upon Augustus' *Memoirs*. From the very start of his career it was in Octavius' own interests to highlight the fact that from around 47 BC he had gradually become Caesar's personal choice as successor. It did not matter if the enumeration of all examples of Caesar's favour were retrospective. At the beginning of his career he needed to shore up the legitimacy of his adoption and inheritance from Caesar. Later on, he could afford to shed the association, or at least tone it down. Thereafter the succeeding historians embroidered the legend even more. Canfora discusses the way in which Augustus himself and then other authors presented and developed the story of the rise of Octavius through Caesar's favour.⁹⁴

On the journey back to Rome, Marcus Antonius joined the party in northern Italy, and travelled in Caesar's carriage.⁹⁵ Octavius travelled in the next carriage with Decimus Brutus. Clearly Antonius was now restored to favour, and it would be interesting to know the main topics of his conversations with Caesar at this point, but they have not been recorded. Nor have the conversations of Octavius and Decimus Brutus; they were presumably very circumspect, polite and sincerely plausible, which would have perhaps have gone some way to explaining how, after the murder of Caesar, Octavius managed to convince the assassin Decimus that he was fighting disinterestedly for the Republic, when they joined forces against Antonius at Mutina.

Before the main party reached Rome, Octavius left to proceed more quickly to the city.⁹⁶ He was met by a young man claiming to be the grandson of Marius, who wanted to persuade Caesar to recognise his family connections. The man was an impostor, but he had collected a large following, influential and popular, and potentially riotous. He even approached Cicero to defend him on some charge or other, but Cicero had refused to be drawn into close association with him, even though he seems at first to have believed in the Marian connections of the pretender. In fact many people had been taken in by him, so presumably the new Marius was quite plausible.⁹⁷

Octavius avoided a potentially embarrassing situation, neither recognising the claims of the false heir, nor receiving him, until Julius Caesar as head of the family, and more importantly, head of state, should return and pronounce judgement on the matter. Cautious as always, he kept all avenues open; he did not reject Marius out of hand, thereby inflaming the populace who supported him, and perhaps creating irretrievable difficulties for himself if the man should prove to be genuine and to gain favour with Caesar; nor did he accept him, which would have offended the nobility and probably alienated Caesar. It would have been quite easy for an 18-year-old to succumb to external pressure, and to have blundered unwittingly into a compromising situation, but Octavius' cautious reserve was a prudent survival technique and the product of an astute mind, one which perhaps weighed the evidence more deeply and thought further ahead than many others.

Before he entered the city, in September 45 Caesar went to one of his estates, at Labici, southeast of Rome. There he wrote his will, according to Suetonius.⁹⁸ He left a quarter of his estate to his male relatives Lucius Pinarius and Quintus Pedius, and the other three-quarters to Octavius, whom he adopted in a clause appended to the will. Once written, the will would be lodged in the temple of the Vestals, and none of the contents would be revealed until March 44 after Caesar's assassination.⁹⁹ Nicolaus hints that the adoption by Caesar was already a fact some time before 45, but he is the only source for this assertion,¹⁰⁰ so it cannot be known whether Octavius had any knowledge of what was contained in the will. His degree of surprise, when he found himself heir to Caesar in more senses than the purely financial, can only be guessed. In September 45, no-one could have predicted that Caesar's ascendancy would be over in less than

six months, and most especially no-one could have imagined that the resultant vacancy would one day be filled by a taciturn youth who was constantly ailing.

At the end of 45 the Senate could not do enough to honour Caesar.¹⁰¹ They authorised religious ceremonies, games and races, and the dedication of yet more statues in his name. A new temple was to be built to *Libertas*,¹⁰² and a new palace was to be erected on the Quirinal Hill for the use of the Dictator. The month Quintilis was to be renamed July to commemorate him. He was permitted to wear triumphal clothing on official occasions, and a laurel wreath at all times. Such exaltation was gratifying enough, and served to underline Caesar's supremacy, but honours by themselves would have been quite empty and almost meaningless without the real powers that were willingly voted to him. He was to be Dictator (Figure 1.6) for 10 years and consul for the same period. He was granted the use of Imperator as a hereditary name, which has an important bearing on the later use of the title by Augustus and successive emperors. Dio and Suetonius both say that Caesar took Imperator as a *praenomen*, and Nicolaus of Damascus implies that Caesar had already adopted the name before the date given by Dio, but he may have been referring to the use of the name as a *cognomen*. Imperator was the normal imperial title by the time Dio described it, and he relates it to the list of honours bestowed on Caesar after Munda. Suetonius gives no indication of date. Caesar placed the title on a coin of 44 BC (Figure 1.7) together with his own portrait. Syme discusses the hereditary implications of the *praenomen* Imperator, concluding that Octavian adopted the name to enhance his power, to monopolise the glory of the *triumphator*, but not as an official title denoting power *per se*.¹⁰³



Figure 1.6 Silver denarius of 44 BC, showing Caesar as Dictator for the fourth time. Portraits of individuals regularly appeared on coins in the eastern provinces, but the Romans did not tolerate the practice, limiting their coin portraits to the gods and goddesses. Just before his assassination Caesar issued coins bearing his own image, an innovation that would shock people, but which was taken up by succeeding emperors.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.



Figure 1.7 Silver denarius of Caesar showing him with the title of Imperator, which had been voted to him as a hereditary name.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

Caesar held yet another triumph, though not without opposition from the tribune Pontius Aquila, who pointedly remained seated instead of rising to greet him as everyone else did. Caesar was annoyed, but confined himself to irritable sarcasms, and otherwise left Aquila alone. He had harped upon the theme of tribunician sacrosanctity more than once, and had never been ashamed to use his defence of it to support his actions. More pertinently, tribunician sacrosanctity had been granted to Caesar himself, so it would have been more than just ironic if he had indulged himself in vindictive punishment of a tribune simply for opposing him. In any case he had no need for such demonstrations of power. He had complete control of the finances and the armies and could appoint whoever he desired to any of the magistracies, though he prudently declined to appoint all of them. Under this heading, a tidy compromise was reached by a law of the tribune Lucius Antonius, granting Caesar the right to recommend half of the candidates for all the magistracies except the consulship, but even that office was almost entirely under his control, as demonstrated by the fact that the consuls of 44 were to be Caesar himself and Marcus Antonius. In practice this apparent reluctance to appoint all of the magistrates was short-lived. It was becoming clear that for the security of Roman interests, more wars would have to be fought against the Dacians and the Parthians, though sceptics have suggested that these projected wars would provide an excuse for Caesar to extract himself from an impossible and self-generated situation at Rome.¹⁰⁴ Since the command against the Parthians was readily voted to him, Caesar also accepted the right to appoint all magistrates for the next three years, by which time it was thought that the wars should have been satisfactorily concluded. In the interval, Rome would be in the hands of Caesar's henchmen until his return, and through them he could continue to direct Roman affairs.¹⁰⁵

With regard to Octavius, Caesar gradually began to promote him, as noted by Suetonius and Dio, but it must be acknowledged that these authors wrote

with the benefit of hindsight, and it is not at all certain that contemporaries of Caesar attached any great significance to the advancement of his great-nephew at this stage.¹⁰⁶ By a law of the tribune Lucius Cassius, Caesar was authorised to create new patricians, and among others he elevated Octavius, though Nicolaus of Damascus erroneously gives the credit for making Octavius a patrician to the Senate.¹⁰⁷ At some time towards the end of 45, Caesar sent Octavius to Apollonia on the coast of Macedonia to complete his education, along with a few friends, such as Vipsanius Agrippa, Gaius Maecenas and Salvidienus Rufus. He took with him Apollodorus of Pergamum as one of his teachers; this was the man who taught him how to exercise patience and self-control.¹⁰⁸ The choice of the region and the city of Apollonia cannot have been made purely for its opportunities for erudition; had that been the sole aim, then surely Athens would have been the first choice. It was not merely coincidental that five legions were stationed in Macedonia, and according to Appian, many of the officers were regular guests of Octavius, who took part in training the troops. Military experience was just as important as academic pursuits, and up to now Octavius had received little in the way of military knowledge.¹⁰⁹

As part of his preparations for the Dacian campaign, Caesar designated Octavius *magister equitum* in place of Lepidus. Appian says that it was for one year. Dio implies that although Octavius had been designated to the post, he did not take it up.¹¹⁰ This appointment has been the subject of debate by various authors who have doubted that such a responsible office could have been given to someone so young and inexperienced as Octavius. Appian says that the office was an annual one that Caesar passed around among his friends, which creates the false impression that the office was one of little importance and could be given to almost anyone. In that case, there should be no problem about allowing Octavius to fill the role, but Appian's statement is not to be taken at face value, since there was considerable importance attached to the appointment. Marcus Antonius had been *magister equitum* when he quelled the riots in Rome, some said too brutally. Lepidus, who preceded Octavius as holder of the office, was not an insignificant figure.

Attempts have been made to explain away the appointment of Octavius on dubious linguistic grounds. Long ago, Victor Gardthausen, in his monumental study of Augustus, pointed out that in Greek, the terms for *magister equitum* and *praefectus urbi* are easily confused. Utilising this factor, Schmitthenner argued that the designation to the post of *magister equitum* was highly unlikely because it was too high an office for a boy of Octavius' age, and therefore it is more probable that there was some misunderstanding between the appointment of the 16-year-old Octavius as city prefect during the celebrations of the *Feriae Latinae*, and his later and possibly erroneous designation as master of the horse.¹¹¹ More recently, the case has been restated that Caesar did indeed designate Octavius to be his *magister equitum*, despite the silence of authors such as Suetonius on this important issue. Gesche contradicts Schmitthenner's theory by pointing out that Pliny described the office in Latin, and he would have been familiar enough with the

terminology to avoid all confusion. Dio makes it quite clear that Octavius was to succeed Lepidus as master of horse.¹¹² The implications of the appointment are enormous, and have great bearing on the adoption of Octavius as Caesar's son. At the very least, such a public honour underlined Caesar's interest in the boy, but what cannot be discerned is how many people besides Caesar knew that this interest in Octavius extended as far as making him his heir to his property and his name. Badian suggests that the public nature of the appointment could have left little doubt among Caesar's contemporaries that he intended to adopt Octavius, but this argument is capable of some refinement. Although it may have drawn attention to the fact that Caesar favoured his great-nephew and was actively promoting him, it is likely that the young man was regarded as merely one among many stronger contenders for a share in Caesar's power.¹¹³ Caesar's intentions may or may not have been known to Octavius himself before he left Rome at the end of 45 BC, but the official story implies that he had no inkling of it.

Tradition states that when Octavius had been at Apollonia for only a few months, news was brought by a slave of Atia that Caesar had been murdered.¹¹⁴ Few other details were known, and it was only when he arrived in Italy that Octavius learned of the adoption, which entitled him, if he so wished, to style himself Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. This combination of names followed the customary Roman fashion, indicating that Octavius had been adopted into the family of the Julii Caesares from his original family of the Octavii. But Octavius completely ignored the last of these names, laying great emphasis upon his connection with Gaius Julius Caesar. He immediately began to style himself as such.¹¹⁵

Any author who writes of the future Augustus is constrained to point out that neither of the names by which he is known in age-old tradition were those which he used of himself, but he was content to let the name Augustus play its part. The private man behind the official facade did not let the mask slip very often, and his mask was at first that of Caesar. Thus 'Octavianus' was never used by the young man himself, and in fact he would have taken exception to it. But this name is so deeply embedded in modern consciousness that it seems mere pedantry to insist on the use of any other. The name Octavian has the advantage of distinguishing the first Augustus from the original Gaius Julius Caesar, who was brought down by his assassins on the Ides of March 44. It is one of the ironies of history that the assassination occurred close to the statue of Pompeius, in the meeting hall of the theatre complex that he had built for the glory of Rome and his own name, eclipsed for all time by those of Caesar and his heir.

Notes

- 1 Suet. *Aug.* 5; 94; see also Vell. Pat. 2.36.
- 2 The history of the Octavii at Velitrae is given by Suet. *Aug.* 1.
- 3 Suet. *Aug.* 57.1; Levick 2010, 4.
- 4 Shipley 1924, 337. The full title of Augustus' account of his reign is *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (RGDA), which translates somewhat prosaically as *Things Done by the Divine*

- Augustus*. According to Suet. *Aug.* 101 the *RGDA* was deposited with the Vestal Virgins, along with three other documents, one of them summarising the state of the provinces and Rome itself, another being instructions for his funeral, and the third one his will. After Augustus' death in AD 14 these were read in the Senate. The text of the *Res Gestae* was originally inscribed on bronze tablets attached to pillars outside Augustus' mausoleum in Rome, but these disappeared long ago. There were inscribed copies on most temple walls throughout the Empire, so the text, in both the Greek and Latin versions, survives in a few copies, the most complete being the version from Ancyra, the inscription being named for the place as *Monumentum Ancyranum*, the alternative name for *RGDA*.
- 5 Suet. *Aug.* 2. Earl 1980, 11; Carter 1982, 92.
 - 6 Suet. *Aug.* 7. Shuckburgh 1903, 3 n.1 opts for the ancestral connection with the town of Thurii, but Carter 1982, 95 prefers the explanation of the battle against the slaves. Suet. *Aug.* 3 suggests that the slaves were former associates of Catilina.
 - 7 Suet. *Aug.* 70.2; Levick 2010, 19 n.7.
 - 8 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 2.
 - 9 Suet. *Aug.* 1.
 - 10 Suet. *Aug.* 6.
 - 11 The name Oxheads given by Suet. *Aug.* 5 may refer to a street, but Shuckburgh 1903, 2 n.1 thinks it is more likely derived from a house, perhaps with a frieze of carved ox heads around it.
 - 12 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 3 and Suet. *Aug.* 94 imply that Octavius grew up in Rome.
 - 13 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 3 says that Octavius gave the funeral speech for his grandmother when aged nine; Quintilian 12.6.1 states that he was 12; Suet. *Aug.* 8 says he was in his twelfth year.
 - 14 *ILS* 47.
 - 15 Vell. Pat. 2.59.2; Suet. *Aug.* 2.3; 41.1; Dio 54.17.3; 54.26.3; 54.30.2. Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 2 refers to ancestors leaving their estates to the elder Gaius Octavius.
 - 16 For the raising of the senatorial census qualification see Wiseman 1971, 66.
 - 17 *ILS* 47; Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 2; Appian *BC* 4.12; Suet. *Aug.* 27.
 - 18 Vell. Pat. 2.59.2, with just a hint of Augustan propaganda.
 - 19 Cicero *ad Q. Fr.* 1.1.21; 1.2.7; Suet. *Aug.* 3.2.
 - 20 Suet. *Aug.* 3.2; Levick 2010, 4.
 - 21 Suet. *Aug.* 4. Some authors have opted for 58 BC for the death of Octavius senior. Suet. *Aug.* 8 says the child Octavius was four years old when he lost his father, which implies that the death occurred any time between 23 September 59 BC and Octavius' fifth birthday on 23 September 58 BC.
 - 22 Cic. *ad Q. Fr.* 3.1.22. Gruen 1974, 115–16, 119 n.93 notes that a man called Titus Pinarius served with Caesar in Gaul.
 - 23 Suet. *Aug.* 4.1; see also Wiseman 1971 for the origins of the Atii.
 - 24 Stockton 1971, 110–42; and Everitt 2001, 82–108; 133–35. Suet. *Iul.* 14.1 describes how Caesar spoke against execution of the conspirators.
 - 25 Vell. Pat. 2.43.1; Gruen 1974, 77; 80–81.
 - 26 Gruen 1974, 277–79 and Stockton 1971, 91–97.
 - 27 There does not seem to be agreement about the date among modern authors, but Shuckburgh 1903, 3 n.2 points out that the marriage could not have taken place before the middle of 57 BC, because Philippus was in Syria until then, when Aulus Gabinius replaced him.
 - 28 Lucius Marcus Philippus: *PIR*2 M 241a. Syme 1939, 128 describes Philippus as having a disposition towards political neutrality and a fair measure of guile, but his background was impeccably noble.
 - 29 See note 13 above.

- 30 Carter 1982, 97.
- 31 Tac. *Dialogues* 28.5.
- 32 Dio 45.1–2.
- 33 Suet. *Aug.* 94.
- 34 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 3.
- 35 According to Suet. *Aug.* 89.1 Augustus could not speak Greek very well, but Pliny *NH* 35.91 says that he could. Suet. *Aug.* 98.4 contradicts himself; see Baldwin 1983, 131.
- 36 Jones 1970, 8. The triumvirs perhaps outclassed him in causing deaths of fellow Romans without punishment.
- 37 Gruen 1974, 43–44.
- 38 Gruen 1974, 40–41; 82–88 with references; Seager 1979, 83–84; 121–24; Southern 2002, 54; 157 n.6.
- 39 Seager 1979, 24.
- 40 On piracy in general see de Souza 1999. For Pompeius' command and the political run-up to it see Seager 1979, 28–39; Greenhalgh 1980, 77–95; Southern 2002, 59–65; 158–61 nn.18–32.
- 41 Rickman 1980, 50–51; Southern 2010, 26–27.
- 42 Vell. Pat. 2.31.1.
- 43 Tac. *Annals* 15.25; see also Seager 1979, 35–36; Southern 2002, 61; 160 n.23.
- 44 Ameling 1994 17–18; 22.
- 45 Gruen 1974, 62–120; Vell. Pat. 2.44.3 gives Crassus the minor role, in that he is portrayed as using the other two members of the alliance to gain a pre-eminence that he could not gain single-handed.
- 46 Appian *BC* 2.10–23.
- 47 Appian *BC* 2.19; Vell. Pat. 2.47.2.
- 48 Gruen 1974, 450.
- 49 Gruen 1974, 453 admits that the removal of Crassus upset the balance among the *clientelae*. The younger Marcus Crassus served with Caesar in Gaul, but disappeared in 49 BC; Gruen 1974, 192 says he was 'obviously a victim of the war'.
- 50 Syme 1939, 40; Gruen 1974, 455–57.
- 51 Gruen 1974, 457–60.
- 52 Gruen 1974, 153–54.
- 53 Syme 1939, 42; Gruen 1974, 451.
- 54 Appian *BC* 2.24–37; Gruen 1974, 102; 461–63; 466–68; 482–83.
- 55 Gruen 1974, 475–76.
- 56 Appian *BC* 2.27; Vell. Pat. 2.48.1.
- 57 The uproar in the Senate, and the flight of Antonius and Cassius is described by Appian *BC* 2.32–33. Vell. Pat. 2.48.3–5 blames Curio for 'applying the flaming torch which kindled the civil war'.
- 58 Suet. *Iul.* 30.4; Gruen 1974, 494.
- 59 Caesar insisted that he waged wars to protect the sacrosanctity of tribunes, but for a discussion of his real motives see Suet. *Iul.* 30.1.
- 60 Syme 1939, 48 notes that to the Romans, *dignitas* was far more important than life.
- 61 Dio 41.13 accuses Pompeius of desertion. Vell. Pat. 2.48.2 laments that if Pompeius' death had occurred two years earlier, he would have preserved his high reputation to the grave.
- 62 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 4; Cic. *ad Att.* 12.16; 12.18; 14.11.2.
- 63 Appian *BC* 2.41. Dio 41.17 detects despotic tendencies in Caesar's theft of the Treasury.
- 64 Suet. *Iul.* 34.2.
- 65 Caesar *B Hisp.*; Dio 41.20–25; Appian *BC* 2.42–43.

- 66 Cic. *ad Att.* 10.12a.3.
- 67 Dio 41.36 says that Caesar as Dictator did not commit any act of terrorism; see also Scullard 1970, 141.
- 68 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 4 says that Octavian was 14 years old when he assumed the *toga virilis*; Suet. *Aug.* 8 implies he would have been 15.
- 69 Dio 45.2.
- 70 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 4.
- 71 Cic. *Phil.* 2.71; 5.17; Caes. *BC* 3.99; Suet. *Nero* 2; Vell. Pat. 2.59.3. According to Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 5 and Suet. *Aug.* 79, Octavius performed all the ceremonies after dark, because he was extremely attractive to women.
- 72 Heitland 1909, 32–33; Plut. *Ant.* 9.2; 10.1; 11.1; Gelzer 1968, 261.
- 73 Cic. *ad Att.* 11.20.2; 21.2; 22.2; Caes. *BAfr.* 19.3; 28.2; Appian *BC* 2.92.3; Dio 42.52.1–2.
- 74 Dio 49.42; see also Kienast 1982, 3.
- 75 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 6.
- 76 Caes. *BAfr.* 9; Cic. *ad Fam.* 9.2. The battle of Thapsus was fought on 6 April and news of it reached Rome on 20 April. Heitland 1909, 333 says that Caesar spent a total of 180 days in Africa.
- 77 Suet. *Iul.* 76.1. Dio 43.14 says that he was elected to this office, Gelzer 1968, 278 n.1 agrees that there was probably some kind of popular election. The post of *praefectus morum* was a hitherto non-existent office, which clearly had the powers of the censorship; see Gelzer 1968, 288; Meier 1995, 432.
- 78 J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Historia* 7, 1958, 84; Gelzer 1968, 278.
- 79 According to Taylor 1931, 65 nn.13–14 Caesar did not notice the statue at first, and had it taken down as soon as he did, but not from motives of modesty or prudence.
- 80 Dio 42.19.4; 43.14.7; Suet. *Iul.* 76.1.
- 81 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 7–12.
- 82 Much of the information on Octavius' association with Caesar is unique to Nicolaus, and most probably derives from Augustus' *Memoirs*.
- 83 It was normal practice for youths such as Octavius to be given *dona militaria* and a prominent place in the triumph of a relative: Kienast 1982, 3.
- 84 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 8.
- 85 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 7.
- 86 Suet. *Iul.* 40.
- 87 Suet. *Aug.* 82.
- 88 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 9.
- 89 Meier 1995, 451–52.
- 90 Suet. *Aug.* 8; Vell. Pat. 2.59.3; Dio 43.41.
- 91 Dio 43.41; Suet. *Aug.* 94.11; for discussion see Canfora 2007, 247–48.
- 92 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 10; Canfora 2007, 249.
- 93 Gelzer 1968, 296–98 describes Caesar's administrative measures in Spain, and the founding of colonies, concluding that Caesar's administration had all the elements of monarchic imperialist policy.
- 94 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 1; Canfora 2007, 251–54.
- 95 Plut. *Ant.* 11.
- 96 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 14.
- 97 Shuckburgh 1903, 13–14; Cic. *ad Att.* 12.49; 14.6; 14.8 says, 'I thought Caesar had got rid of him', and that it was Marcus Antonius who eventually put Marius to death.
- 98 Suet. *Iul.* 83.1–2; Gelzer 1968, 306.
- 99 The will and its relevance to Octavius and the legal aspects are discussed in depth by Schmitthenner 1952; see also Chapter 2 of this book.

- 100 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 8.
- 101 The honours to Caesar are discussed by Gelzer 1968, 315 and Meier 1995, 473–75.
- 102 Dio 43.44.
- 103 Dio 43.44. Suet. *Iul.* 76.1; Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 8; Syme, ‘*Imperator Caesar*; a study in nomenclature’, *Historia* 7, 1958, 172–88.
- 104 Meier 1995, 456–58 accuses Caesar of wanting to abandon the problems of Rome.
- 105 Dio 43.51.3; 51.6.
- 106 Suet. *Aug.* 2; Dio 45.2.7.
- 107 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 15. Enrolment of new patricians is mentioned by Tacitus *Annals* 11.25, Suet. *Iul.* 41, and Dio 43.47.3.
- 108 Suet. *Aug.* 89. Octavius took his own teachers with him.
- 109 Shuckburgh 1896, 16.
- 110 Appian *BC* 3.9; Dio 43.51.7.
- 111 Schmitthenner 1952, 6.
- 112 Gesche 1973, 470; Pliny *NH* 7.147; Dio 43.51.8.
- 113 Badian 1990, 36.
- 114 Suet. *Aug.* 8; Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 16; Vell. Pat. 2.59; Appian *BC* 3.9; Dio 45.3.
- 115 After the murder of his great-uncle, according to Appian *BC* 3.11 Octavius called himself ‘Caesar son of Caesar, instead of Octavian son of Octavius, and he continued to do so ever after’.

CAESAR, SON OF CAESAR

It is to Octavian's credit, and a tribute to his cautious common sense, that on receiving the news of Caesar's assassination, he did not march into Italy at the head of the Macedonian legions, as some of colleagues at Apollonia allegedly urged him to do.¹ According to Nicolaus of Damascus, after the news of Caesar's assassination arrived, Octavian and his friends spent most of the night discussing what course of action to take. Different advice was given by different people, but Octavian postponed any decision until he could hear what his more mature friends had to say.² The passage in Nicolaus' account is redolent of a retrospective outlook and some manipulation of the story, no doubt deriving from Augustus' *Memoirs*, in which he presented himself as shrewd and wise, waiting for the counsel of older men.

The officers with the troops at Apollonia, some of them high ranking men, were ready to follow Octavian if he so commanded, declaring themselves ready to protect him, but he declined their offers.³ Nicolaus says that tribunes and centurions from the cavalry and infantry came to him, some for the sake of serving him, but others were hoping for personal gain.⁴ This weary cynicism reflects either a precocious knowledge of human nature on the part of the teenage Octavian, or somewhat jaundiced experience acquired by the time Augustus wrote his own life story. Octavian declined the offers of assistance from the tribunes and centurions, even though he was possibly in some trepidation about returning to Italy. He could not know for certain the exact circumstances in Rome. The messenger sent by his mother had left the city immediately after the murder of Caesar on 15 March, but in the interval between the despatch and receipt of Atia's letter, anything could have happened, and even now the situation could be steadily worsening day by day. There was every possibility that Octavian and his friends may have been in some personal, physical danger from any one of several sources, most especially if the conspirators had gained supreme power, and had determined to eradicate all Caesar's most prominent allies and family members by proscriptions.

In these circumstances, it would have been easy for Octavian to persuade himself that he required at least a substantial bodyguard for support and protection when he landed in Italy. But that could have precipitated a tremendous

over-reaction. It would not have been appropriate to show his hand too soon, and would have been an ineradicable false move, a blunder, even, if it turned out that he was not under any threat. So he took only a few friends with him, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, and most probably Gaius Maecenas. The small party landed uneventfully on the Italian coast, about 20 miles south of Brundisium, cautiously avoiding the main port in case the troops there were hostile, or there was a price on Octavian's head which unfriendly persons might be eagerly waiting to collect. Travelling on foot to the small town of Lupiae, Octavian and his friends stayed in lodgings for a short time.⁵ At Lupiae, Octavian met some people who had been in Rome at the time of Caesar's assassination and his funeral, and from them he learned about the situation in the capital. Marcus Antonius and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus were in command of troops and in charge at Rome, and the conspirators had been allowed to leave the city to go to Antium.⁶ Octavian was no doubt relieved to hear that he was not in any immediate danger.

He went on from Lupiae to Brundisium, and found there letters from his mother and stepfather, informing him of his inheritance of the most part of Caesar's fortune, and of his adoption as Caesar's son. Philippus advised him to refuse the adoption, and urged him not even to think of taking Caesar's name.⁷ The advice was probably well-meant, and not entirely self-seeking,⁸ though it could be interpreted as a craven plea to Octavian to avoid embroiling his family in a power struggle that could engulf them all, and was almost certain to erupt if he tried to assume even a small part of Caesar's political influence.⁹ The advice was rejected. Octavian wrote back to say that he intended to accept his inheritance. It would have been uncharacteristic of him to do this without careful deliberation.

Octavian's inheritance in March and April 44 BC

While he was in Brundisium, if not before, Octavian probably took stock of his situation, reviewing the events that had led to his present position, and contemplating the best way in which to proceed. Despite Nicolaus' assertion that the young Octavius had always taken care to create a good impression of himself in Rome, the contemporary record is virtually silent about Caesar's teenage great-nephew until after the assassination on the Ides of March 44 BC. Thoroughgoing sceptics might suggest that Augustus, once he had achieved unassailable power, exercised a rigorous retrospective censorship, which may well be true of the period of the Triumvirate and his association with Antonius, but was probably not entirely necessary for his early life; as a boy it is likely that he was a nonentity. The surviving account of his youth is no doubt exaggerated, not only written with the benefit of hindsight, but refashioned and adjusted to suit the mythology as well.¹⁰

This is not to say that there was any widespread fabrication or suppression of information for the benefit of posterity, but there was an elaboration of certain

elements which probably went unnoticed by Octavian's contemporaries. His presentation of himself as Caesar's understudy, receiving instruction and attention from the great man, was intended to show that he had been marked out as potential heir long before Caesar's will was made. There is not much substance to this claim, but Octavian's intended appointment as *magister equitum* as the successor of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus is one of the key points. The fact that he never took up the post may have negated the impact of this appointment in the eyes of contemporaries, who had enough to occupy their minds during Caesar's Dictatorships and at the time of his assassination. If Caesar had lived, and as a consequence Gaius Octavius, as he then was, had actually taken up his appointment, it may have made Caesar's friends and enemies sit up and take notice.¹¹ But Octavian had not actually become *magister equitum*, so all that was known of him in March 44 BC was that he had followed Caesar to Spain, was nearly always ill, and had been sent to Apollonia to be with the legions until Caesar arrived for the campaign against the Parthians. The main story of the play had not yet unfolded; at the beginning the performance, in Act I so to speak, there were too many large personalities at centre stage for any of the cast to pay attention to the teenage Gaius Octavius.¹²

Coupled with his lack of years, the fact that Octavian was comparatively anonymous could be turned to advantage. If he had not yet earned an excellent reputation, neither had he earned a bad one, so he had nothing to stain his name and no foolish acts to live down. Therefore his modesty, good sense, and calmness would not be interpreted as contrary to his nature. There was nothing to contradict. Until the time came to show his hand, he maintained a bland exterior, displayed no inordinate ambition for outright personal power, and proceeded with caution but not timidity. In the light of his later ruthlessly determined actions, it is impossible to see in this early behaviour anything other than a studied role-play. If such it was, he put on an act of great plausibility, allaying suspicions all round. The reality, borne out with the passage of time, was an unwavering determination to attain supreme power.¹³ But he definitely did not wish to do this by crude, overt means that would instantly arouse opposition. Caesar, getting on in years and all too aware of the shortness of time, had displayed a lack of patience in trying to reform the state. Octavian was young. He could wait. Mistakes, if not too serious, could be rectified, and prospective plans could be formed using the political equivalent of market research, probing always for the best means to obtain what he wanted without incurring implacable hostility, withdrawing sedately when he met obstruction, and regrouping to introduce his ideas again, but packaged in a different way.

Cicero was relieved to find that Octavian had not arrived with troops to try to overthrow the state,¹⁴ which reveals that at least at this point Cicero realised the potential damage that Caesar's heir, backed by troops, could achieve. If he had entertained any hopes that Octavian would retire into private life and not bother anyone, Cicero sounded the first note of dismayed suspicion when he learned that Octavian was determined to take up 'that inheritance' (*illum hereditatem*).¹⁵

It says all the more for Octavian's ability to disarm suspicion that when the time came for Cicero to argue in the Senate that the young man should be allowed to command armies to fight against Marcus Antonius, Octavian seems to have persuaded the senators as well as Cicero that he really would fight on behalf of the *res publica*. Presumably, then, his behaviour up to this point was consistently bland.

Octavian and Cicero encountered each other at Cumae when Octavian came to stay with his stepfather Philippus, whose villa was next to Cicero's. Octavian's unassuming diplomacy gave nothing away. Cicero wrote to Atticus on 21 April that Octavian was devoted to him (*mihi totus deditus*)¹⁶ and the next day he wrote: 'Octavius is here with us on terms of respect and friendship. His people call him Caesar, but Philippus does not, so I did not, either'.¹⁷ Reading between the lines, Octavian had shown no offence at being addressed as Octavius and not Caesar, even though it may have irked him; he had not insisted that all comers should use his new name, but at the same time had not discouraged those who did. If he had not yet embraced the incendiary talk of vengeance for Caesar, neither had he made a move to silence it. Later, when he was more certain of his position, he declared his intention of avenging his great-uncle, but at this time he was playing a careful and watchful game, keeping silent, preparing to carry out his plans in his own way. He had struck the right note and the correct pose from the start: in effect, a superlative performance. As manipulator and scene-setter, psychologist and actor, he was rapidly becoming expert, and would rarely if ever lose his way.

In addition to making an assessment of his own situation, Octavian would need to take into account both a character study of his great-uncle, and an analysis of the events leading up to the fateful Ides of March. Nicolaus of Damascus leaves his hero Octavian as he sets off from Brundisium to go to Rome, then the narrative breaks off, and Nicolaus devotes several chapters to an account of Julius Caesar's activities leading up to his assassination, and what happened after the event.¹⁸ This scene-setting by Nicolaus, inserted at this point in the story, would have had less impact if he had followed a chronological sequence, describing Caesar's activities, his assassination, and then the news of the inheritance and the adoption. Placed where it is, just after Octavian's departure from Brundisium, it serves to highlight his response to the situation once he arrived in Rome.

During his stay in Apollonia, Octavian was probably kept informed, by Atia if by no-one else, of Caesar's activities, and of the reactions of the Senate and people to his steadily accumulating power. He would have known of the widespread fear that Caesar intended to make himself king, and of the nervousness that this would instil into nearly everyone in Rome. Even now, modern scholars still debate whether or not Caesar wanted the title *Rex*, and whether he desired to set up a hereditary monarchy, which involves distinctly related, but different, concepts of such enormous import. Added to this is the suspicion that Caesar wanted to be made a god while still alive, which complicates the hereditary

factor, especially when the comparison is drawn with the type of divine monarchy common in the east, and most effectively in Egypt. The divinity question is dealt with more fully below, along with the debate about the deification of Caesar, where it is argued that divine honours were accorded to the Dictator while he was alive, but full deification was to be put into effect only after his death. Thus there are several problems all bound up with the monarchical tendencies of Caesar, and in equating them without the attendant discussion of all the implied nuances, some confusion can result. As to the question of whether Caesar desired to be king, with the title *Rex* and all the ancient emotional baggage that such a name carried with it, the evidence can be interpreted in several different ways and used to support several opposed opinions.¹⁹

The famous tale of the festival of the Lupercalia, when Marcus Antonius offered Caesar the crown, is ambiguous and therefore open to different interpretations. It has been used to illustrate the theory that in reality Caesar desired very strongly to be made king of Rome, but he was discouraged by the lack of popular approval; Plutarch calls the incident an experiment which failed, indicating that Caesar wanted to test public opinion, and would have accepted the crown readily if only the people had shown the slightest enthusiasm.²⁰ It must be borne in mind that Antonius might have acted purely on his own initiative and therefore the whole episode may have come as a surprise to Caesar. But it matters little whether or not he was prepared for it, because it is still quite uncertain whether he would quickly have seized the opportunity to assume the crown if the people had approved, or whether he greeted the incident with horror, privately thinking something along the lines of 'May the gods protect me from my friends!' Alternatively, in collusion with Marcus Antonius, Caesar may have engineered the event in order to refuse the offer in full view of the assembled crowd, thus hopefully disarming his critics by demonstrating that he definitely did not want to be king;²¹ if so, then that experiment failed also, because it merely increased suspicion, hydra-like, instead of putting an end to it. Thus it is possible to argue on the one hand that Caesar was genuinely averse to being called *Rex* and was therefore an unfortunate victim of escalating events manufactured by his enemies,²² or on the other hand that he schemed to try to extract from the people by a shabby and crude scenario what he wanted the most.²³

Monarchy denotes literally the rule of one person, so in this sense Caesar was already a *de facto* monarch in that he had absolute sole power. In this case the debate concerns the possibility that this had been his aim all along, from birth almost, and irrespective of whether or not he intended to give up or share his power when all his administrative measures were completed.²⁴ If he never intended to step down, then the debate extends to a secondary factor, whether he intended to create a hereditary monarchy, no matter what his exact title should be, *Rex* or otherwise. Some scholars are quite adamant that it would not have been possible for Caesar to bequeath his political power, but this is a judgement based on earthly reality and pedestrian precedent, and Caesar was not bounded by such puny restrictions. Although a realist, in his determination

he was never a man who discerned where the possible shaded off into the unachievable.

A hereditary element had already entered the scene when the Senate granted him the title *Imperator* as a name that could be passed on to his descendants; according to Dio²⁵ both this and the office of *Pontifex Maximus* were heritable. The heritable nature of *Imperator* and of the priesthood has been questioned, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the whole story is a fabrication, or more likely a misunderstanding that was incorporated into Dio's narrative because by his day the facts fitted the customary situation of the emperors. On the other hand it is certain that Caesar considered the name *Imperator* and the office of *Pontifex Maximus* supremely important, as attested by his ostentatious use of the terms on his coins and on inscriptions. It cannot be denied that there would have been considerable advantages for Caesar's successor in the acquisition by inheritance of these significant titles, but it is debatable whether he had any legal basis for such an inheritance. Dio says that the Senate bestowed on Caesar the title *Imperator* as a hereditary name, and that the office of *Pontifex Maximus* was heritable 'if Caesar should beget a son or even adopt one'. Syme and Meier agree that Octavian could not inherit Caesar's special position in politics.²⁶ But this reflects the final outcome when Augustus became sole ruler rather than the situation that pertained when Caesar was granted the titles. Augustus utilised the name *Imperator* much more effectively than ever Caesar had done, but although the people clamoured for him to become *Pontifex Maximus*, he had the grace to wait until the death of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, the holder of the highest priestly office, before assuming it himself.

It is quite feasible that Caesar entertained hopes of eventually handing over the trappings of power to Octavian, and that he hoped to survive long enough to introduce further hereditary factors, step by step, backed up by legislation sanctioned by an increasingly partisan Senate. Being a realist, his calculations most probably included the possibility that he would not be allowed to survive, in which case he perhaps knew enough of his great-nephew to be confident that he would fight to retain his inheritance, in the social, economic and political sense.²⁷ Caesar was too much the man of politics to ignore the political situation, both present and future, when he made his will. As Syme points out, on this matter there can be opinion but no certainty.²⁸

In any case, argument about what Caesar intended is purely an academic exercise. The facts are that Caesar was assassinated and eventually, by dint of determination and a favourable combination of circumstances, Octavian succeeded him. As a youth, Octavian was in a much better position to know what was in Caesar's mind for the future of Rome, but even this is not of prime importance, except that it would be of assistance to modern authors if it were possible to discern to what extent Octavian and Caesar had collaborated. If Octavian knew all along that Caesar intended that he should succeed him, then this merely explains rather prosaically his tenacity of purpose in pursuing his goal. Syme assumes that Octavian knew nothing of the adoption until he arrived in Italy,

and only then began to conceive high hopes for his destiny. If the adoption took him by surprise, then this tenacity is all the more remarkable, and reveals a degree of opportunism that does not sit comfortably with the later Augustan legend of selfless devotion to the state.²⁹

Octavian cannot have failed to take heed of the lessons of the last few months of Caesar's Dictatorship. He would probably have understood that Caesar was a man in a hurry, who was eager to push through all his plans without the dragging delay of senatorial debate; it was notorious that Caesar merely presented ideas to the Senate and then called them decrees, and that the names of witnesses who had not even been present at the meetings of the Senate somehow found themselves attached to these so-called decrees. In a letter to Papirius Paetus, Cicero wrote:

Here I am at Rome and in constant attendance in the Forum, and all the while decrees of the Senate are being drafted in the house of my dear friend who dotes on you. Whenever it occurs to him my name is put down as witness to the drafting.

Cicero goes on to say that he sometimes receives letters from various kings of whom he has never heard, thanking him for his part in their elevation, when all the while it is Caesar who has accomplished the deeds single-handed.³⁰

Dio relates the facts somewhat differently.³¹ According to his version, Caesar planned undertakings for the common weal, and did not carry them out on his own authority, but brought the matters before some of the senators, sometimes even before the entire body. The problem here is that by the time that Dio wrote, he was accustomed to two centuries of imperial rule, but when Caesar was busily drafting good ideas and impatiently pushing them through, the concept was quite novel; clearly the idea of senatorial autonomy, free debate of all issues, and corporate administration was lost on Dio. Caesar had neither time nor patience for more leisurely, tactful dealings with the Senate, entailing as it did possible objections and delays while the senators considered the proposals. He saw clearly what must be done, and set it in motion without bothering to disguise his all-embracing power.³² Perhaps he was aware that no matter how pressing, sensible, and vital his plans were for Rome, the senators felt offended if there was no chance to debate and contribute ideas; if he was aware of it he shrugged it off with characteristic disdain. He possessed a keen intellect, almost amounting to genius; even his enemies could not deny it. He thought in terms of the whole Roman world, whereas the senators shared the customary blinkered and monolithic vision which was limited to the city of Rome and their own interests, excluding everything else.³³ Through his intelligence and penetrating discernment Caesar made people nervous. No-one knew how to behave, for fear of being wrong, or simply displeasing the Dictator. People began to mistrust each other in case harmful gossip was repeated about them, or sentiments that they had not expressed were invented for them. The letters of Cicero illustrate

the uncertainty of the times. To Paetus he wrote 'It remains for me to do nothing stupid or rash in opposition to those in power; this too I think is part of wisdom'.³⁴ Cicero felt that he was being watched, when he wrote to Servilius Isauricus 'I do not write often about high affairs of state; such letters are dangerous'.³⁵

It is hardly surprising that a rigid paralysis set in. Even though Caesar's policy of *clementia* may well have sprung from genuine motives, it alienated him because it meant that everyone, quite literally, was at his mercy, never a position that anyone finds acceptable. It engendered not only fear but deep resentment. Nicolaus of Damascus devoted several paragraphs to this topic, listing all the various categories of men who resented Caesar, even though he may have treated them well.³⁶ The passage is interesting because it may well have derived from Augustus' *Memoirs*, and if so it represents his own thoughts on the matter, formed either with the benefit of hindsight after some reflection, or even contemporary incisive judgement which he never afterwards saw any reason to change. For those who opposed or feared Caesar, it was presumably the final straw when in February 44, allegedly after some hesitation, Caesar accepted the title *Dictator perpetuo*, which meant that there would be no limit to his term of office and even less likelihood that there would ever be an end to his domination.³⁷ Thus the events of the last months of 45 and the first part of 44 comprised a whole catalogue of situations to be avoided if ever Octavian found himself in a similar position of power.

Claiming the inheritance

Octavian cannot have deluded himself that claiming his full inheritance would be a simple matter, not least because testamentary posthumous adoption really only extended to inheritance of property, sometimes on condition that the legatee adopted the name of the legator. This is much less than the legally approved, full adoption as Caesar's son that Octavian required, so the matter would have to be fought out in court. Nicolaus of Damascus stresses this point early on in his narrative, describing how Octavian was, from the very first moment, determined to legalise his position through a senatorial decree.³⁸ It took some time to achieve this object, but it was too important to give up the attempt. It was the foundation of his bid for power, in fact.

There were other possibilities, which he perhaps considered briefly and rapidly rejected. He could have refused the inheritance altogether, kept his own name, and hoped to advance his career as a member of the Octavii, as though Caesar had never existed. Given the nature of Roman politics, the connection with Caesar would not have been forgotten. Octavian would probably not have been left in peace to pursue this career for very long. Among anti-Caesarians, suspicion would always attach to him, and among pro-Caesarians, there were too many men with vested interests in the pursuit of Caesarian politics to allow such a potentially useful figurehead as Caesar's great-nephew and designated heir to slip through their fingers. It was no part of the new Gaius Julius Caesar's

plan to be manipulated by others for the satisfaction of their own ends. If ends were to be achieved, they would be his own.

Alternatively he could have accepted the financial terms of Caesar's will but not the political implications, or to put it into colloquial terms, he could take the money and run. The career implications would have been the same as if he had rejected the inheritance. He probably reasoned that he would be fooling himself if he thought that by modestly retiring into private life he could avoid conflict. If Caesar's friends were in power he would have a better chance of survival and possibly of promotion, but squabbling among them for supremacy could not be ruled out. If Caesar's enemies gained power, as well they might in the volatile political life of Rome, he would be one of their potential first targets, even if they underestimated him. Youth would not necessarily save him.

All the factors pointed to the necessity of emerging supreme among Caesar's friends and enemies alike. As Nicolaus puts it, Octavian had no intention of ceding to anyone 'a name or rule as great as his'.³⁹ If this represents the thoughts of the more mature Augustus, it surely also reflects the thoughts of the youthful Octavian at the time of accepting his inheritance. Modesty was for external show, to disarm opposition; privately, there is the glint of diamond-hard realism and determination.⁴⁰

Once he had made up his mind, Octavian was consistent in his purpose. He never doubted his inheritance, and sounded a positive note from the beginning, ensuring that no-one else should doubt him. Retrospectively too, he laboured the point: Nicolaus of Damascus never let slip an opportunity to insert a word or two into his narrative about the inheritance, at times blatantly, reminding his audience that Octavian was the one to whom power had been bequeathed, and at other times subliminally, as for instance when the soldiers declared that they would protect Octavian's 'inherited rights'.⁴¹

After a preliminary period when he did not insist too blatantly on being called Gaius Julius Caesar, Octavian's attitude to his name crystallised. He designated himself as *Gaius Julius G. filius Caesar*, emphasising the fact that he was the son of Gaius, and later he called himself *divi filius*, son of the divine Caesar. His constant striving to remind all and sundry of his connection with Caesar might seem unnecessarily heavy-handed, but he knew from the first moment that if he accepted the inheritance at all, he had to accept it in full, with all that it implied; there could be no half measures. Pursuit of Caesar's power and all that it stood for would be a dangerous path to follow. If things went awry at any stage in the long road to sole power, then the next alternatives would be either to resort to the immediate use of force to gain the required results, or to face imminent elimination, or possibly both in quick succession. Once embarked upon his chosen path, Octavian could never turn back; in pursuing it he proved himself a master of opportunism, flexible, adaptable, shrewd, eminently realistic and totally ruthless.

His rise to at least a preliminary power would of necessity have to be rapid. He could not reasonably hope to step in at the exact point where Caesar left off,

but he would need legitimate office somewhere near the top of the range of the career pattern. The steady progression through the various magistracies was definitely not for the new Gaius Julius Caesar. Like Pompeius before him the ideal situation would be to enter the Senate with a high rank before he could be eliminated. The intermediate goal would be to obtain a precarious security via a magistracy and with it a limited freedom of action, always with one eye on the unwritten constitution of the *res publica*. Strictly speaking, Rome had no constitution in the modern sense. Public business, which is precisely what *res publica* means, was conducted according to custom, framed by a series of laws which could be added or subtracted as necessary, so there was a considerable amount of flexibility in the way in which the system worked. This had both advantages and disadvantages. The absence of an over-restrictive rigidity meant that it was fairly easy to adapt to new situations, but it also meant that the system could be exploited by men who were more interested in personal advancement than in the Roman state. Bending the rules of the game had been established practice for some time, often mollified by a clever use of words, as when Pompeius had been sole consul, a contradiction in terms which nevertheless satisfied the niceties of the regulations. A rise to power via constitutional means was a sound insurance policy for the future. If Octavian could achieve his aims without using military force and without antagonising the Senate, then so much the better. When he was in a position to put this into practice, later in the year, his initial intentions to work with the legal backing of the Senate are attested in his letters to Cicero, written at the end of October. These letters are no longer extant, but on 4 November 44 their contents were duly reported by Cicero to Atticus.⁴²

It is important to remember that Octavian was not alone, but was the head of what has been called a committee. Nicolaus of Damascus acknowledges this.⁴³ Alföldi debated whether the initiative in accepting the inheritance was entirely due to Octavian himself, or whether Caesar's intimates who knew something of the Dictator's plans also had a part to play.⁴⁴ A. H. M. Jones enumerates the supporters of Caesar who rallied to Octavian, such as Lucius Cornelius Balbus, Gaius Oppius, Gaius Matius, Saserna and Rabirius Postumus.⁴⁵ Almost certainly, these men and others did rally to Octavian as the heir of Caesar, and as the potential co-ordinator of Caesar's policies. Without Octavian's ready acceptance of the inheritance, his adherents would have lacked co-ordination and would have found it more difficult to pursue power for themselves, either individually, or with one of their number as leader.

Cornelius Balbus and Gaius Oppius were two of the most important, if not *the* most important, of Caesar's supporters who rallied to Octavian from the beginning. They are the men who prepared the ground for Octavian's rise to power, but they are background figures compared with the politicians, and their services are not widely known or documented. No-one besides these two was closer to Caesar in their secretarial capacity, and no-one can have known Caesar's intentions better than these two men.⁴⁶

Gaius Oppius is not so well known as Lucius Cornelius Balbus, who was one of the most influential and trusted members of Caesar's entourage. Balbus was extremely wealthy, notoriously so; he was already wealthy before he met Caesar, which was no doubt one of the main reasons why Caesar cultivated him. He was also the patron of his native city of Gades (modern Cadiz) in Spain, and of Capua in Italy. He owned sumptuous palaces and gardens, and at his death he was able to bequeath 25 denarii to every citizen of Rome. He had started out as a protégé of Pompeius, and had then become secretary and much else besides to Caesar; he knew many men among Caesar's friends and enemies and stepped carefully among them all. A man with such connections and such wealth was bound to attract enemies of his own; Cicero defended Balbus in court and his published text survives (*pro Balbo*), and in a letter to Atticus, he describes him as Caesar's crony. Relations between Cicero and Balbus fluctuated; in January 47 BC, there was a definite coolness, but by August 46, Balbus was cultivating Cicero on Caesar's behalf. While Caesar was in Spain, Balbus and Oppius managed his affairs in Rome, and when Cicero wrote a letter of advice to Caesar it had to be vetted by Balbus.

Cornelius Balbus earned respect, not all of it grudging, for his integrity in dealing with people: he did not gossip or pass judgements. There is no evidence at all to indicate what kind of service he rendered to Octavian, only some evidence that he was supremely useful, in that he was rewarded with the suffect consulship in 40 BC. This might sound routine and not at all significant, but he was not a native Roman and not a noble, and the honour was therefore correspondingly great. The fact that there is no inkling of his activities on Octavian's behalf is perhaps only to be expected, for even if they did not border on the nefarious, it is most probable that they were never intended for public consumption. Balbus was so close to Caesar and so ubiquitous that it is quite improbable that Octavian did not know him already. Potentially, Balbus could have been a dangerous adversary. If he proved to be unfriendly to Octavian, he knew so much that it would probably have been necessary to remove him permanently. This only emphasises his importance.⁴⁷

Balbus attended a meeting with Octavian in mid-April. Octavian arrived in Naples on 18 April, and on the following morning he received Balbus. The meeting cannot have been accidental. Communications would have been set up long before. Octavian told Balbus that he was determined to accept the inheritance, and presumably they discussed the advantages and pitfalls of doing so. Balbus went straight from his interview with Octavian to visit Cicero at Cumae, and Cicero relayed the news in a letter to Atticus, written that same day.⁴⁸

All that had to be established between Octavian and Balbus on 19 April 44 BC was whether they were compatible and could be of mutual benefit to each other. At this stage in the proceedings, Balbus was better known and probably more influential than Octavian himself. It has been pointed out that a great leap of faith was required to discern Augustus behind the young Octavian, more so in 44 BC than in modern times, where hindsight indelibly colours the scenario. It is

not known whether Balbus was capable of forming such a prescient view of what Caesar's heir might achieve, but he did not come down on the side of Antonius against Octavian, which perhaps speaks for his foresight. In any event, it is without doubt that whatever the outcome and duration of his association with Octavian was to be, Balbus would have devoted some serious 'quality time', as the modern idiom describes it, to planning his escape routes, with his fortune intact.

What Octavian needed most, after sounding out Caesar's friends, were three things: money, trusted agents, and knowledge. All three were to a large extent inextricably intertwined, in that none of them could be obtained or retained without the other two. Octavian seems to have solved the problem of raising immediate funds without much difficulty, indeed he never seems to have lacked money, but its origins are not very well documented.⁴⁹ Landed interests will have supplied quite considerable wealth, from estates belonging to the Octavii and to Caesar himself, and after making contact with the principals in Caesar's party, Octavian could begin to sound out the networks of wealthy freedmen and equestrians who had been attached to Caesar. Men such as these would probably supply most of Octavian's immediate monetary needs. They were not men of great political standing, but financiers and bankers whose names are in large part unrecorded.

The enormous amount of money that Octavian had at his disposal when he began to raise recruits in the late summer and autumn of 44 indicates that he must have tapped additional sources of supply. Nicolaus of Damascus says that he used the money from Caesar's war chest saved up for the Parthian campaign, which Octavian had sent for before he left Apollonia for Italy.⁵⁰ Dio sweepingly and unhelpfully asserts that Octavian had large numbers of soldiers and a great deal of money, which is stating the obvious.⁵¹ Presumably Dio did not know the sources of Octavian's cash, because by his day the truth may have undergone some alteration and adaptation.

Alfoldi interprets Dio's statement about large sums of money to mean that Octavian brought Caesar's war chest with him when he left from Apollonia for Italy, with the cash under guard, of course.⁵² But it is unlikely that Octavian could have carried the contents of the war chest with him, especially since he reached Italy with only a few friends and presumably their slaves, so as not to attract attention. Nothing would have attracted attention quite so quickly as a small number of men handling large heavy boxes with an interesting chink of coin. Exactly when this money from the war chest arrived is disputed. Kienast⁵³ thinks that the money from the war chest cannot have arrived before October 44. It is significant that it was around this time that Octavian recruited soldiers by paying them bounties.⁵⁴

If the war chest did not arrive until October, it follows that up to that date, Octavian's supplies of cash must have come from a different source. Almost as an afterthought, Nicolaus adds that Octavian also received a year's tribute from Asia, a staggering concept that the author does not elaborate upon.⁵⁵ The

amounts of money will have been extremely large and it was perhaps best not to dwell on the subject, since the tribute from Asia ought to have been paid to Rome and not to an individual. Nicolaus hastens to add that Octavian took only what was Caesar's, probably the amount earmarked for the Parthian war, and paid the rest into the public funds. This sounds suspiciously like an exercise in retrospective self-justification. The money may in truth have been paid into the treasury at some unspecified time, perhaps not exactly contemporary with its reception into Octavian's coffers: it is highly likely that Octavian regarded it for the time being as a loan, so that the borrowing and the eventual discharge of the debt were probably separated by a number of years.

Another source of money is described obliquely by Appian,⁵⁶ who explains that once Octavian arrived in Italy, men began to flock to him, among them soldiers who were convoying money and supplies to Macedonia, and other soldiers who were bringing tribute into Italy from other provinces. It is not stated directly that Octavian appropriated this money, but it is a permissible assumption that if it was offered, then he would accept gratefully and gracefully.

The supply of money will have been only one aspect of the services that Balbus and Oppius rendered to the young Caesar, just as they had rendered various services to the previous one; it is highly likely that Balbus, Oppius, and others who had served Caesar operated a wide network of agents who performed all sorts of other functions, and these may have been placed at Octavian's disposal. Agents are not synonymous with clients. The latter came in large numbers to Octavian from among Caesar's *clientelae*, but these were overt in their support of Caesar's heir and were politically orientated. Agents were different. They were not necessarily prominent on the political stage, but provided information, a most important requirement for aspiring sole rulers; as the saying goes, knowledge is power. Clients could provide knowledge too, but it would be a different kind of knowledge, because they were clearly stamped with the mark of the man to whom they were bound, and therefore people who were not well-disposed to the man in question would be careful what they said and did within two or three feet of his known clients. Agents were not overt like the majority of clients, and were only marginally political, and by the very nature of their calling, they were anonymous. Their association with Octavian would not be so obvious. If this all seems too much like the Roman version of a James Bond story, it is probably true to say that Octavian utilised men from all walks of life – soldiers, equestrian businessmen, shopkeepers, slaves and possibly some women too – all of whom could go abroad unsuspected and gather information, or whisper into the ears of potential supporters who needed just a little encouragement to bring them over to the young Caesar. This sort of activity is either directly attested in the ancient sources, or implied by reading with close attention. For instance, it is documented that Octavian's agents subverted Antonius' troops by distributing leaflets among them.⁵⁷ If this is to be taken absolutely literally, then someone had to compose the words with care; there were presumably workshops where the leaflets were copied out, printing machines not having been invented, and

men to collect bundles of them for distribution where they would be most helpful. The organisation of such a venture requires reasonable numbers of personnel, who must be trustworthy and dedicated, in order to carry out their tasks clandestinely.

Without such men, success in military or political affairs would have been well-nigh impossible. They therefore had to be gathered quickly, as soon as possible after Octavian and his friends arrived in Italy. Initially the numbers travelling with him cannot have been large. Anyone who wants to lie low cannot afford to trust many people, and cannot advertise his presence by a large following. When he was certain that he was not to be arrested or lynched, the process of collecting useful men could begin. In Brundisium and in most of the towns he came to on the way to Rome, more and more people came to him; Appian says that many of them were unknown to him, and therefore he did not know whom to trust, being aware that some of them might be secret agents working for his enemies.⁵⁸ Obviously other men besides Octavian had networks of agents, longer established than his own, and all of them eager to know what he intended to do next. Cornelius Balbus perhaps assisted him in sifting the pure from the dross, and the well-disposed from the downright dangerous.

Meanwhile, what was happening in Rome?

Rome after the Ides of March

In Brundisium and on the way home, people came to meet Octavian at all stages of his journey. During the Republic it was customary for people to travel out to meet generals and politicians returning to Rome. The numbers of men and women, or lack of them, who turned out to greet the returning hero served as a reliable gauge of his popularity. When Cicero inquired of Atticus on 11 April⁵⁹ whether a large number of people had turned out to greet Octavian, it does not necessarily mean that they all waited for him just outside Rome itself, or that Octavian had already reached the city by this date. Another gauge of popularity was the distance that people were prepared to travel to see their returning general.⁶⁰

From these people, Octavian would gather more information. He would learn, perhaps with incredulous contempt, that the murderers of Caesar had laid no plans to take over the city, or to substitute their own administration for Caesar's. In fact they had made hardly any plans at all except how to despatch his great-uncle. Cicero was very disillusioned, and said that the Liberators, as he called them, had planned with the courage of men but the understanding of boys.⁶¹ They had not fully understood what made Caesar's power possible, and in their high-minded rejection of naked power backed up by armed force they somehow forgot to substitute an alternative method of government, so they created chaos.⁶²

The rest of the news was not encouraging, and probably gave Octavian pause for thought. Rome was now firmly in the hands of the consul Marcus Antonius (Figure 2.1), Caesar's lieutenant and colleague, whom the conspirators had



Figure 2.1 Intaglio showing Marcus Antonius, resembling his coin portraits and the few sculptured heads that still exist.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

spared, much to Cicero's openly declared disappointment. Antonius had restored order, no mean task in the circumstances. He had temporarily won over the Senate by proposing that the Dictatorship should be abolished, and instead of pursuing the conspirators he had come to terms with them. He even managed to solve the conundrum posed by the murder of Caesar, namely that if he had been killed unjustly, then all his acts were valid, but the murderers should be brought to trial, but if they were allowed to go free, it implied that their actions did not constitute a crime, but a perfectly justifiable tyrannicide, and in that case all Caesar's acts were invalid. Antonius pointed out that if in strict accordance with having come to terms with the conspirators, he then took the next logical step of declaring Caesar's acts null and void, then there would be no magistrates and no effective government, and many men who had received their provincial commands at the hands of Caesar, or places in the Senate, would now be unemployed. Cicero suggested that there should be a general amnesty, which timely compromise was immediately put into effect. Even so, the conspirators felt it safer to leave the city, and Antonius did nothing to stop them. Brutus and Cassius lurked in Italy, while other conspirators went to the provinces assigned to them by Caesar.

An uneasy peace reigned while Antonius grew more and more powerful. He had persuaded Caesar's widow, Calpurnia, to relinquish to him all her husband's papers, and the Senate played into his hands by agreeing that all the Dictator's acts, including those that he merely intended, should still be valid. This gave Antonius free rein to promote ideas that may well have been his own, which he said had originated in Caesar's notes. Since he had purloined the services of Faberius, one of Caesar's secretaries, many people thought that the two of them must be acting in nefarious collusion, and consequently they doubted the authenticity of Antonius' statements, but could not prove any illegality.

Antonius probably had no further ambitions at this stage apart from remaining alive and intact; he was moderate in his suggestions and energetic in keeping the peace, but anticipation of what he might do, and distrust of his motives,

contributed to a bad press, both from his contemporaries and later authors. As a military man, he had already made his mark with Caesar's troops, and now he displayed considerable talents as a demagogue when he delivered the funeral oration for Caesar, immortalised perhaps not too far from the truth by Shakespeare. If Antonius managed to gain control of the soldiery and the populace as well he would be a formidable danger to the diehard Republicans in the Senate. All this was especially exaggerated by Cicero, who was determined (almost to the exclusion of any other idea) to stir up opposition to Antonius, seemingly without having stopped to think that if Antonius had so desired, he could have had all Rome in his pocket on 16 or 17 March, and once having won he need never have let go. This fact was conveniently forgotten after the civil wars, when Antonius had first been vilified and finally eliminated, and his memory damned. The *damnatio memoriae* of Antonius cannot be the sole reason why Nicolaus of Damascus hardly mentions him at all in his account of events before and after the assassination of Caesar.⁶³ There is no mention whatever of Antonius' success in calming the situation in Rome and avoiding the potential bloodbath that could have resulted from the action of the Liberators. Augustus could not allow any credit or respect to attach to Antonius, so he ignored him instead. In this studied omission of any mention of Antonius, except on the few occasions where avoidance of his name was impossible, Nicolaus' account presumably follows that of Augustus himself.⁶⁴

Octavian in Rome

Octavian's movements between setting off from Brundisium and his arrival in Rome are not well documented. Suetonius and Dio waste little time or text in getting their hero to Rome.⁶⁵ The only certainty, reported by Cicero to Atticus,⁶⁶ is that Octavian was in Naples on 18 April and that he met with Balbus there on the following day. It has been suggested that before he arrived in Naples on 18 April, Octavian made a flying visit to Rome.⁶⁷ This suggestion depends predominantly on interpretation of the narratives of Nicolaus and Appian, and the letters of Cicero.

Nicolaus leaves his hero Octavian at the end of chapter 18 as he sets off from Brundisium to Rome. He does not say that he travelled there directly. Then the narrative breaks off for several chapters which are devoted to an account of what happened before and after the Ides of March. This is followed by a lacuna in the text of unknown length, and so by the time Nicolaus resumes the narrative,⁶⁸ Octavian is in Rome in June or July, organising the games in honour of Venus Genetrix. These games had been instituted by Caesar in connection with the temple that he was building to this goddess.

In Appian's account⁶⁹ Octavian travels from Brundisium, with crowds of people constantly arriving to greet him. He stops at Tarracina, and then at the beginning of the next chapter he is in Rome. There are no dates for any of this, and neither Appian nor Nicolaus mention Octavian's visit to Naples on 18 to 19

April, or to Philippus' villa. Cicero met Octavian there on 22 April, and is the only source for the meeting with Balbus.⁷⁰

When he was organising the games of Venus Genetrix in the summer, Octavian asked permission from the consul Antonius to display Caesar's golden chair and his wreath during the proceedings. In some historical accounts the chair is called a throne, but there was no such thing as a throne in the sense that moderns understand it; however, it has to be admitted that 'chair and garland' do not convey quite the same degree of importance. This honour for Caesar, the right to display his golden chair at the games, had been decreed by the Senate, but Antonius had worked hard to avoid stirring up popular feeling about Caesar, and so he refused permission for what he interpreted as an inflammatory gesture.

One fact that both Appian and Nicolaus make clear, is that this was the second time that Octavian had been foiled in his attempt to display Caesar's golden chair during a series of *ludi*, or games and shows. The debate about the first occasion when Octavian tried to display Caesar's chair is what has given rise to the theory that he must have entered Rome early in April, failed to get permission to display the chair, and left again, disappointed but still determined to have his way. Appian⁷¹ deals with the two sets of games together, explaining that the first occasion when Octavian was forbidden to display Caesar's golden chair was when the aedile Critonius was organising *ludi*. Unfortunately he gives no dates, and does not provide the name of the *ludi*. Since Critonius was paying for the games out of his own pocket he said that he could not allow the display of Caesar's golden chair. He was a partisan of Antonius, and referred the matter to him. Octavian backed down. Nicolaus⁷² says that for the games of Venus Genetrix, Octavian and his friends once again approached Antonius about displaying Caesar's chair, and Antonius refused, making 'the same threats as before' if Octavian persisted.

In the normal course of festivities in Rome, there are two series of games to which this first occasion could have belonged. The *ludi Cerialles* were associated with the festival of the goddess Ceres, called the *Cerialia*, held annually on 19 April, and the games started seven days earlier on 12 April. The *ludi Florales* normally took place from 28 April to 3 May. It is just feasible that Octavian hurried to Rome in time for the *ludi Cerialles* in mid-April, failed to achieve his ends, and left just as hurriedly to arrive at Naples on 18 April. However, Syme points out that there is some evidence that the *ludi Cerialles* had been postponed until May, which is quite likely in the disturbed situation in Rome at the beginning of April 44 BC.⁷³ There is some support for this theory in that Cicero's report to Atticus about the episode of displaying Caesar's chair was written on 22 May.⁷⁴ At this date he could not have been referring to the games of Venus Genetrix in late July. This makes it more likely that the first occasion when Octavian attempted to remind people of Caesar by showing his throne and wreath belongs to the middle of May, with no previous dash to the city in April.

Two letters of Cicero's imply that prior to the end of April, Octavian had not yet been in Rome. After Octavian had met with Balbus at Naples in the

morning of 19 April, Cicero received a visit from Balbus himself that afternoon. Cicero wasted no time in reporting to Atticus on the same day,⁷⁵ that according to Balbus, Octavian intended to accept 'that inheritance'. If Octavian had been in Rome at some time before this, trying to put Caesar's golden chair on show, and being thwarted by Antonius, by the time Balbus went to see to Cicero it ought to have been crystal clear to everyone that Octavian intended to take up 'that inheritance'. On 22 April Cicero wrote to Atticus⁷⁶ that Octavius, as he called him, was with him 'on terms of respect and friendship', but he worried about what would happen when 'the boy' (*puer*) arrived at Rome, surrounded by his Caesarian supporters, which implies that Octavian had not yet been there, or at least that Cicero had not heard of any previous visit to the city. The likelihood is that Octavian entered Rome in early May, and remained there, struggling to gain recognition against the opposition of Antonius.

Confrontation with Marcus Antonius

For Octavian, confrontation with Antonius was almost inevitable, not least because Antonius probably saw himself as a more worthy and much more capable military and political successor to Caesar than a teenage boy with no previous experience in either of these spheres. More importantly, though he worked hard to restore order and could not be said to be totally self-seeking, Antonius had begun to arrogate power to himself and was not disposed to share it. He had many rivals among Caesar's long list of henchmen. These included his newly appointed consular colleague Dolabella, the consuls-elect for the following year, Aulus Hirtius and Vibius Pansa, and the new Pontifex Maximus, Aemilius Lepidus, who had been chosen to succeed Caesar in this important office. The Caesarians had not unanimously accepted Antonius as their overlord, so he found himself potentially in danger from all sides.

Antonius had reached a point where he could not back down and retire into private life even if he had wanted to, because he would not have survived. As consul he was relatively secure, especially since he had built up an armed bodyguard allegedly 6,000 strong, but when his office expired he would need to step straight into a proconsular command, preferably with a large army and preferably close to Italy, so he would not lose his dominant influence; it was known by the end of May that he was beginning to manoeuvre to exchange his assigned province of Macedonia, too far away from Rome, for Gallia Cisalpina, which was within striking distance of the city. Macedonia had been assigned to him by Caesar when the Parthian campaign was planned. This province was of no immediate use to him now, but the problem was that Gallia Cisalpina had already been promised to one of Caesar's assassins, Decimus Brutus. The problem was circumvented by a law, the *Lex de permutatione provinciarum*, which was passed to allow Antonius to exchange provinces, probably with effect from 1 January 43 BC.⁷⁷

In addition to taking over a province that was not strictly his, Antonius was determined to keep control of the Macedonian legions, so he began to arrange

for their transfer to Italy.⁷⁸ It was quite clear that Antonius had no intention of sinking into obscurity after his consulship ended, and clearer still that it was not part of his future plans to subordinate himself and become the willing ally of Caesar's adopted son. The first clash came when Octavian tried to claim the money left to him in Caesar's will.⁷⁹ Antonius would not, or could not, pay the cash due to Octavian, most likely because he had spent it. Antonius was suspected of using much of Caesar's money to pay off all his own substantial debts; this may be partly true, but on the one hand he would have required large sums for all sorts of purposes in order to carry on some semblance of government, and on the other hand, Caesar's own accounting had not been too scrupulous about the divisions between his private fortune and the public funds. It is perhaps a little unfair to accuse Antonius of pursuing nothing but a policy of embezzlement for his own ends.⁸⁰

While Antonius had an established following, family connections, consular power, an armed bodyguard and a proconsular command awaiting him, Octavian had little except his name at this stage and had to build on this meagre foundation. Perhaps because of this, Antonius did not take him very seriously, and his later taunt that Octavian owed everything to his name is not far short of the truth.⁸¹ Antonius might have added that Octavian owed much more to his determination to keep his name despite obstacles put in his way.

Octavian came away from his first interview with Antonius without gaining anything, financially or otherwise. He immediately set about gathering enough cash to pay out of his own pocket the per capita sums decreed to the people by the terms of Caesar's will. Generosity to the populace was merely a by-product of Octavian's plans. The disbursement was a political manoeuvre, and in its execution it was designed to resolve two problems at once. Much of Caesar's property had been acquired by dubious means by buying up estates of proscribed or banished persons, not that Caesar had proscribed anyone himself. The purchases had been carried out legally so that Octavian could show the deeds of sale, but there were many men who were prepared to take Octavian to court over possession of these estates. Initial judgements went against him, so he began to sell the property at the lowest prices, to put a stop to future litigation, and then used the money to distribute among the people.⁸²

When the proceeds of the sales proved to be insufficient to satisfy all the legacies, Octavian asked his relatives Pedius and Pinarius for their shares of Caesar's fortune, and began to sell the property of his real father Gaius Octavius as well. All this was at least in part a calculated risk. Octavian was not facing destitution, nor was he in truth depriving himself of the very means of existence. Since the sales of property were undertaken for political purposes, naturally he did not do this in the utmost secrecy, and since he did not keep the money but used it to pay the people, naturally popular sympathy flowed in his direction. Popular sympathy was a very powerful tool which Julius Caesar had used to great effect, and Octavian was learning very rapidly. By implication Antonius emerged as the villain of the piece, for having reduced the poor young man to

such straitened circumstances. The first round of the war of words and deeds had been won by Octavian.

Self-advertisement and connection with Caesar, and above all his declared intention to avenge Caesar's death, were Octavian's prime concerns.⁸³ It soon became the prime concern of Antonius to block all attempts by Octavian to establish this connection with Caesar, and more importantly Antonius strove to put an end to the incendiary talk of vengeance. The struggle was not purely personal; Antonius had devoted considerable effort to keeping the peace after the Ides of March, coming to terms with the conspirators while not entirely obliterating the memory of Caesar, and on the whole he had balanced the two delicate elements very well. Though he had abandoned much of the conciliatory policy on his own account and was busily exchanging Caesarian politics for Antonian politics, the arrival of Caesar's heir upset the balance disastrously, because it revived the Caesarian tradition, the deleterious effects of which Antonius had tried to suppress. Since he made no secret of his moral obligation to avenge the death of his adoptive father, Octavian's deliberate advertisement of his Caesarian connections threatened to split the already disjointed state and to undermine Antonius' position as neutral pacifier and sole merchant of Caesar's ideas. On each occasion that Octavian displayed his Caesarian colours either literally or metaphorically, Antonius blocked him, usually by indirect means, by instructing his circle of tribunes to pull the necessary strings. The quarrels between Caesar's lieutenant and Caesar's heir upset the soldiers, who objected to the potential division of their loyalties, so the army officers tried to pacify and reconcile Octavian and Antonius.⁸⁴

Octavian was no doubt gratified when on 7 July the games in honour of Apollo, arranged and paid for by Marcus Brutus, failed to instigate any demonstrations in favour of the Liberators and the Republicans.⁸⁵ Brutus had been appointed urban praetor, but was understandably absent from Rome by special dispensation of the consul Antonius. By his provision of lavish entertainment Brutus had endeavoured to win back some popular support, but the populace was very disaffected with the conspirators after their assassination of Caesar, the people's hero. The attempt to court popularity was a dismal failure, so Octavian leapt at the chance to outdo Brutus. With the help of Caesar's friend Gaius Matius, recruited to Octavian's cause, he arranged and financed the games in honour of Venus Genetrix, called *ludi Victoriae Caesaris*, to celebrate Caesar's victories. These games lasted for 10 days, from 20 to 30 July.

Octavian's attempt to display Caesar's golden chair at these games has already been described above, but since this was the second time that Antonius had opposed him, he derived some satisfaction from the fact that the people had begun to turn against Antonius, because in preventing the reference to Caesar he seemed primarily to be denouncing the Dictator rather than simply blocking Octavian.⁸⁶ Lack of success in putting Caesar's chair on show was soon overwhelmingly compensated. While the *ludi Victoriae Caesaris* were performed, a comet appeared each evening, soon labelled the *sidus Iulium*, literally translated,



Figure 2.2 Coin of unknown date showing Octavian with a short beard. He took Caesar's name and proclaimed himself the son of the god. On the reverse (not shown here) there is a portrait of Caesar, with the legend *DIVOS JULIUS*. It is not known when Octavian began to style himself as *divi filius* but it was probably very soon after taking up his inheritance, especially after the comet appeared in May 44 BC and was soon labelled *sidus Iulium*. All portents such as this were utilised to support Octavian's claims to be son of the divine Caesar.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

'the star of Julius'. The immediate interpretation was that the star signified that Caesar had become a god and had been transported into the heavens. This may have been a rumour that originated with Octavian himself, but even if it was not one of his own opportunistic fabrications, he seized upon it with energetic zeal. He placed a star on Caesar's statues and used the symbol on coins, all of which supported his claim to be the son of a god (*divi filius*) (Figure 2.2). In private, as he confided to one of his closest friends, he conceived of the comet as a sign for himself. It required courage to act as he had been doing, so he grasped at signs as superstitiously as anyone else embarking on dangerous or arduous projects.⁸⁷

Ratification of the adoption

Another power struggle with Antonius, more serious than bickering over Caesar's golden chair, began when Octavian tried to ratify his adoption by a law of the people (*Lex curiata*). Shortly after arriving in Rome, Octavian had accepted the adoption in the proper manner by going to Antonius' brother Gaius, who was urban praetor, so that witnesses could confirm his adoption in front of the praetor, and the proceedings could be set down in writing. This was a legal procedure, but not the same thing as the passage of a law to ratify the adoption, and without this there would always be doubt about Octavian's position. Antonius appeared to be doing everything in his power to put the law into effect but behind the scenes he instructed his tribunes, no doubt persuaded with ready cash, to block the ratification.⁸⁸ Appian invents a speech for Antonius, in which the latter points out that since it was only by his efforts that Caesar's acts were ratified, including the adoption of Octavius in his will, then in fact Octavian is

entirely in debt to him, Marcus Antonius, and he should be grateful. If Antonius ever expressed such a sentiment, then it was just a blustering demonstration of strength, probably tinged with a slight regret that he had not had the foresight to suppress this clause in Caesar's will.

The technicalities of the adoption cause modern scholars considerable problems, mostly because the legal position is quite unknown. While the adoption of members of the extended family or even of non-relatives was an established procedure in ancient Rome to ensure the survival of the family name, the method by which Caesar adopted Octavius by naming him in his will is unusual. Testamentary adoption almost certainly did not have the same validity as an adoption arranged while both parties still lived. Recorded examples of adoption after the death of the adoptive parent are much too rare to enable historians to extrapolate any general information, nor do the legal texts have anything to say on the matter. Syme dismissed testamentary adoption altogether, declaring that it simply did not exist.⁸⁹ If this is so, it explains why Octavian was so persistent in having the adoption established and ratified by law. It was not something that Octavian was prepared to overlook. It has already been stated that he had no doubt in his own mind that he was the heir of Caesar in all aspects of the inheritance, economic, political, military and filial. The soldiers and many of Caesar's *amici* accepted him without question, but this support was not sufficient without due process of law.⁹⁰

Though he was thwarted by Antonius in 44 BC, and had to concede defeat on this occasion, when Octavian became consul in August 43, it was almost his first act to have the *Lex curiata* passed. Whether this was simply excessive caution, or the fulfilment of a legal requirement cannot be known, but it amounts to the same thing; Octavian wanted the world to know exactly where he stood on the issue. One of his problems may have derived from the unclarified status of any natural sons of Caesar, born to him during his lifetime or after his death. The tribulations caused by the pretender Marius may have made a deep impression on Octavian when he returned from Caesar's war in Spain. Many people had believed Marius' claims, so Octavian needed to remove all doubt as to who had inherited Caesar's name and fortune.

More threatening still was the existence of Caesarion, the son of Caesar and Cleopatra. He and his mother had returned to Egypt after the Ides of March, but though they were far away from Rome, Cleopatra was not necessarily benign, nor was she a shy and retiring wallflower. She had made no secret of Caesarion's parentage, as indicated by the name she had given him, and she was hardly likely to recede into the background now that Caesar was dead.⁹¹ Octavian presumably had met Cleopatra, when she was in Rome as the guest of Caesar, and more importantly, made his assessment as to her ambitions and character, very early in his life. His perception of Cleopatra as an enemy no doubt arose equally early; he may have given way to the simple human emotion of jealousy because she claimed much of Caesar's attention and had given him an heir. This probably mattered a great deal even if he did not know that he was to be named

as Caesar's adopted son in his will. When Antonius began to link his fate to that of Cleopatra, Octavian probably did not have to summon a passionate hatred of her in order to persuade the Romans to go to war, but he made that his excuse for doing so, because it was better to go to war against a foreign enemy than against a fellow Roman. There may well have been enough dislike already festering among the senators and people to obviate the need for a massive propaganda campaign.

In 44 and 43 BC, Octavian had to act quickly to establish himself as heir and successor of Caesar. The possibility that he was not the first and only son of Caesar would not make a firm foundation for the assumption of power based on possession of Caesar's name.⁹² Schmitthenner investigated these possibilities, and his overall conclusions are not favourable to Octavian, who is accused of shady dealings; it is significant that Caesarion was permanently removed as soon as Octavian was in a position to do so, after the battle of Actium and the fall of Alexandria.⁹³ While this murder can be seen as a purely practical measure to put an end to any potential rebellion in the name of Caesarion, it also had the advantage of obliterating Octavian's most eligible rival.

The break with Antonius

The fluctuations of Octavian's relationship with Antonius are variously documented according to the individual bias of the ancient authors, with the result that the details of some of their interactions are obscured, a situation compounded by the fact that chronological sequences are not established beyond doubt. Nonetheless a broad general pattern emerges. Among a welter of petty divisions among the state, a triangular power struggle evolved from the inability of the three main protagonists to act in concert. Antonius was intent on retaining personal influence without antagonising the conspirators and thus precipitating war. The Senate, and the conspirators themselves, who had dispersed, did not want Antonius at any price, but could not risk open war with him because they were quite unprepared; there was no senatorial army waiting at the gates of Rome, while Antonius had access to Caesar's troops who were only too willing to avenge their general. It would take some considerable time for the various conspirators to gain control of the provincial armies that were left open to them. Octavian, the third contender for power, had no official position and was not supported by law, but he had to be taken seriously by virtue of his name and inheritance, and most of all by virtue of his influence among the populace and with the troops, including the veterans settled in Italy. The Senate did not relish the thought of acting alongside him, or even worse, under his domination.

The situation would deteriorate rapidly if any two sides of this triangle sank their differences and combined against the third. For the Senate, it was unthinkable to allow Octavian and Antonius to combine forces, a sentiment expressed in a letter from Cicero to Atticus, written at a time when he was wondering if Octavian was to be trusted.⁹⁴ Cicero may have expressed his

doubts about Octavian when they met in April. In the letter that he wrote to Atticus on 22 April, he explained that Philippus did not call Octavian by the name Caesar, so he did not use it either. Then he wrote '*quem nego posse bonum civem*' which is translated in the Loeb edition as a reference to using the name Caesar: 'I maintain that it is impossible for a loyal citizen to do so'. Taking a different tack, some authors have translated the phrase as 'I say that he (Octavian) cannot be a good citizen'.⁹⁵ There is a world of difference between the two interpretations. If Cicero thought that Octavian was not a good citizen, and yet cultivated him later when the Senate needed the army that Octavian had behind him, it says a great deal for the depth of loathing that Cicero felt for Antonius, and the plausibility of Octavian's demeanour. Cicero wanted neither Caesar's heir nor Antonius, but he would work to keep them apart at all costs.⁹⁶

For the Caesarian troops and veterans, an alliance between Caesar's lieutenant and Caesar's adopted son was the preferred option because then they would not have to choose sides and fight each other. The confusion of the soldiers and their torn loyalties are nicely documented in the pages of Appian, when he describes in two juxtaposed passages the troop-raising activities of Antonius and Octavian.⁹⁷ The military tribunes made two attempts to heal the rift and reconcile Antonius with Octavian.⁹⁸ After the first reconciliation, performed in public on the Capitol, Octavian assisted Antonius in persuading the people to pass the necessary law for the exchange of provinces (*Lex de permutatione provinciarum*) so that Antonius could relinquish his command of Macedonia and take up the governorship of Gallia Cisalpina.⁹⁹ Since this would entail ousting Decimus Brutus from his proconsular command, the Senate was hardly likely to agree to this proposal, especially since they feared that Antonius was planning to emulate Caesar. As Syme puts it: 'They knew what the last extended command in Gaul had meant'.¹⁰⁰ Following the example set by Caesar, Antonius went directly to the people. Octavian helped him, but he was not perhaps quite so interested in assisting Antonius as he was in removing Decimus, one of the assassins of Caesar, from a position of power. The means was never as important as the end result to Octavian.

The rift between Antonius and Octavian broke open again when one of the tribunes died in office, and Octavian was suspected of wanting to become tribune in his place.¹⁰¹ Since he had been made a patrician by Caesar, Octavian was ineligible for the post, which traditionally was reserved for plebeians, though there were precedents in the recent past for such a change of role, when Clodius had himself adopted into a plebeian family in order to circumvent this formality. The episode is puzzling, because as Syme¹⁰² points out, Octavian could easily have purchased the services of tribunes by bribery, in order to achieve whatever it was that he wanted; possibly he felt that he had not yet gained enough influence to do so. Alternatively it may be that Antonius had all the available tribunes firmly in his pocket, so Octavian may have felt that the only answer was to become tribune himself rather than trust uncertain characters. Later in his reign he placed great emphasis on his tribunician powers, so the possibility that

he really did intend to become tribune should not be dismissed. Appian says that Octavian favoured Flaminius for tribune, but the people declared themselves ready to elect Octavian himself. If this is not a complete fabrication to start with, it is highly likely that this declaration of the people was not exactly a spontaneous expression; it smacks of undercover work by Octavian's agents.¹⁰³ Octavian as tribune would have been anathema to both Antonius and the Senate. Neither of them could bear to contemplate it, because Octavian would probably have used the office to bring the conspirators to trial. In the event it was a non-starter. Octavian did not become tribune.

Shortly after this, a rumour took hold that Octavian had tried to infiltrate and subvert some of Antonius' bodyguard, with the purpose of assassinating him.¹⁰⁴ The Senate gave eager credence to this story, most likely as a result of wishful thinking, but Appian sounds a note of common sense when he points out that Antonius was more useful to Octavian alive and well, as a check on the power of the conspirators.¹⁰⁵ But it was too late for common sense. Hostile manoeuvring began. Antonius went off to Brundisium to meet the legions just arriving from Macedonia, where he found the troops not fully committed to him. These men had known Octavian while he had spent a few months in Macedonia, and so Antonius suspected him of subversion but could not find the agents responsible for it, which speaks for the integrity of Octavian's networks.¹⁰⁶

Octavian himself began to raise an army, going first to Casilinum and Calatia, where some of Caesar's veterans were settled.¹⁰⁷ These towns were situated on either side of Capua, where it will be remembered that Cornelius Balbus was patron; it is therefore likely that Balbus and his friends had already been hard at work in the region for some time, canvassing for Octavian.¹⁰⁸ In any event the subversion of the Macedonian legions and the troop-raising activities were not sudden innovations put into practice because Octavian had only just realised the potential threat to himself and his followers posed by Antonius. The prospect of Antonius at the head of an army must have been foreseen, and planned for accordingly. The most important part of the planning will have been the assembly of enough cash to buy the loyalty of the soldiers. Nicolaus says that Octavian took with him a large sum of money, and set off with officers, centurions, soldiers, slaves and a pack train carrying the money and supplies.¹⁰⁹

There were only two alternatives in the struggle with the consul Antonius: either Octavian must conclude an early alliance with him, but from a position of strength; or he must declare his open hostility. In either case he needed an army of his own, ready, equipped, and waiting. It was the timing which was crucial: Octavian cannot have been blind to the need for troops, but he required some reasonable excuse to raise them, so he preferred to wait until some action on Antonius' part provided him with the excuse that he needed.¹¹⁰

Antonius had gone to meet his four Macedonian legions (there were five in total, but one was left behind to garrison the province) to prepare to take them northwards, for the coming campaign to wrest Gallia Cisalpina from Decimus Brutus, but such was the distrust of him in Rome that it was an easy task to

spread the fear that he might use them to march on the city itself, instead of going to his province. At first, before distrust of Antonius had reached such a peak, Octavian could pretend that he was simply taking precautionary measures to protect himself against Antonius; a month or two later he would be able to claim, via Cicero's speeches, that by his timely action in raising troops he had saved the state from Antonius' worst excesses.¹¹¹

November 44 BC was a dangerous time for Octavian. Antonius was on his way back to Rome from Brundisium, in a towering rage at the subversion of his Macedonian legions, and he was fully prepared to have Octavian declared *hostis*, an enemy of the state and an outlaw. He was still consul and therefore not without power, so the possibility that he might succeed could not be discounted. Octavian had no legally sanctioned position. He was merely a young man at the head of a private army, a *dux privatus* as Pompeius had been when he raised three legions for Sulla. At the head of troops raised without sanction, Octavian ran the risk that he could be accused of being a rebel, since by gathering a private army he was likely to precipitate a war against the legally appointed consul Antonius. In November, although it was clear that an outbreak of war was highly likely, armed conflict had not actually begun, so Octavian could not fall back on the convenient excuse that he was entering the combat to fight against the enemies of the state, though he would use it later to justify his actions. Nonetheless, without an army he was powerless, so he took the chance. According to Appian his army was probably about 10,000 strong, perhaps not properly equipped, but the men were veterans who had fought under Caesar, and they were experienced and loyal. Linderski thinks that the army was divided into centuries, taking the text of Cicero's letter to Atticus as his guide, when Cicero says '*centuriat Capuae*'. The division into centuries would make for easier command structure and administration. When Cicero made his fifth Philippic speech proposing that the young Caesar should be made *propraetor*, the army is described as comprising cavalry, archers and elephants.¹¹²

Alliance with Cicero

It would have been folly to take any action using the soldiers he had recruited without first seeking the support of someone with authority if not legal power, so at the beginning of November Octavian wrote to Cicero, who was at Puteoli, to sound him out. Cicero was the senior statesman of his day. He did not hold office as a magistrate at this time, but he had considerable influence in the Senate. Cicero saw that Octavian intended to use his soldiers against Antonius, and though he approved of such a proposition he did not look forward to open warfare, especially with Octavian as leader. He expressed his doubts to Atticus: 'Who to follow? Look at his name, look at his age!' The unspoken subtext here is that there was no-one else to follow except Octavian.¹¹³ Cicero reported that Octavian had asked for advice on whether to march to Rome, or to station himself at Capua to await the arrival of Antonius who was marching back to the

city, or to go to meet the Macedonian legions marching up from the coast. He considered that many of these legionaries would be loyal to him, because they had recently rebuffed Antonius' offers. Cicero advised going to Rome, where he thought that Octavian would gain the upper hand with the support of the mob, and possibly even some of the 'good men' in the Senate. He refused to go to meet Octavian in secret at Capua, as the latter requested, since he knew that it could not conceivably be done in secret and was therefore subject to all manner of risks.¹¹⁴ In another letter to Cicero, duly reported to Atticus on 4 November 44 BC, Octavian offered himself as the champion of the Senate, as the general who would save the state from Antonius, but Cicero did not co-operate. He expressed his dilemma to Atticus, explaining that he did not trust Octavian because of his youth, and the fact that he did not know his disposition (*Ignoro, quo animo*).¹¹⁵

Octavian marched 3,000 of his soldiers to Rome, and made a speech, indicating that he was determined to earn the same honours as his father Julius Caesar. But the time was not yet auspicious for Octavian. According to Appian, the main reason why the attempt to stir up the soldiers and the people in Rome was not successful was because the men were reluctant to fight against Antonius.¹¹⁶ In a rare moment of panic, Octavian had misjudged the situation rather badly, trying to rush things because Antonius' threat to declare him an outlaw was very real and he could no longer afford to wait for Antonius to make the first military move. Instead Antonius had made a political move, which ought to have been countered by another political move, not a display of armed force. Perhaps this was the origin of Augustus' famous saying '*festina lente*', make haste slowly. His haste this time had led him to commit the gross and highly illegal error of occupying the Forum with soldiers. It revealed how far he was prepared to go, and lacked the saving grace of success. The only remedy was to disappear for a while. Octavian went off to Arretium (modern Arezzo), the native region of his friend Maecenas, and then to Ravenna to raise more troops. The abandonment of Rome and the withdrawal has been interpreted not as an undignified retreat, but as a strategic move to intercept Antonius when he came north. If this is so, nothing came of the move.¹¹⁷

In some danger from Antonius and out on a limb, Octavian needed senatorial backing, and he had no time to lose in seeking and obtaining it. An alliance with Cicero was one way to get it. He had already made a start, in his correspondence with Cicero in November, deliberately courting him as senior statesman, asking his advice, insisting that he wished to act through the Senate, and trying to encourage the orator to return to the city, to save the republic a second time.¹¹⁸ Such flattery is blatantly obvious and Cicero no doubt saw through it, but he had been absent from Rome since September, when he had clashed violently with Antonius and produced the first of his speeches which came to be known as the *Philippics*, named after the orations of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon. Cicero was not yet ready to make his reappearance in the Senate. Thus, Octavian was now entirely on his own. Cicero still did not entirely trust him. He reported to Atticus that he had received a copy of the speech that Octavian had

made in Rome, referring to the honours that Julius Caesar had received, and stretching his arm towards the great man's statue. Cicero said that he did not want salvation if it was to be at the hands of that particular saviour. Eventually, in December 44, against his better judgement, Cicero finally made up his mind and returned to Rome and took up the reins of state again, albeit without any official appointment. He had perhaps been swayed by Gaius Oppius, who had tried to persuade him to take up the cause of Octavian. Cicero had replied that he would never do so, unless he could be sure that Octavian would not turn out to be an enemy, and that he would befriend the Liberators, or tyrannicides, as he labelled them. Oppius had assured him that Octavian would satisfy both stipulations, possibly making surreptitious signs against the evil eye while he made the pronouncement.¹¹⁹ Octavian and his circle had presumably devoted considerable thought to finding the best means to gain Cicero's support, unscrupulously promising whatever was asked. If Cicero's description of Brutus and Cassius and their adherents as 'tyrannicides', with its intended judgement of Julius Caesar, was reported to Octavian, perhaps he smiled a bitter smile and let it drop without complaint, for the sake of expediency.

In the meantime, Antonius had returned from Brundisium, summoning the Senate for 24 November, apparently having briefed one of the ex-consuls to move that Octavian should be declared *hostis*.¹²⁰ Just before he was due to attend the meeting of the Senate, he heard of the defection of two of the Macedonian legions. In the nick of time, the *legio Martia* had gone over to Octavian, followed shortly afterwards by the *legio Quarta*, so Octavian's investments in subversive agents had paid off handsomely. Antonius tried to remedy the situation, but in the end he did not pursue Octavian further and decided to leave Rome before his consulship expired. He set off for his province of Gallia Cisalpina.¹²¹ Decimus Brutus, one of the assassins of Caesar, had already installed himself as governor of the province, but Antonius made short work of him, forcing him into Mutina (Modena) and laying siege to the town.

The short-lived alliance between Octavian and the Senate, linked by Cicero, was formed against Antonius. Appian depicts the alliance as a mere facade on both sides. Octavian seemingly convinced the Senate that he was serving the state,¹²² but his ulterior motive was to achieve power with a semblance of legality. There was no other army for the Senate to use in defence of Decimus Brutus against Antonius. The consuls-elect, the Caesarians Hirtius and Pansa, would not be able to take up office until 1 January 43 BC, and in any case it would take some time to raise a new army under their command. For the time being the senators were content to let Octavian march north to Mutina with the troops that he had raised.¹²³ He had no official standing as yet; the soldiers proposed that he should be made *propraetor*, which would very properly place him in a subordinate position to the consuls. Cicero could not propose this measure until the next consular year began on 1 January, but he prepared the ground when he made his speech on 29 December (the third *Philippic*). He was already thinking of himself as the saviour of the state, cleverly utilising the

services of the young Octavian, deluding himself that although he did not trust him, he could control him; he repeatedly included this self-perception in his correspondence and his later speeches. He paved the way for adulation of the new Caesar and spread the propaganda that by his admirable and timely efforts in raising troops at his own expense he had saved Rome from the fury of Antonius.

On 1 January in the fifth *Philippic* Cicero made three proposals which were of great importance to Octavian, and a fourth proposal concerning his army. First, Octavian was to be *propraetor* with the fullest powers, as though the appointment had been a regular one. This entailed granting him *imperium* without which, as Cicero explained to an audience who knew it perfectly well, no military affairs could be conducted and no army legally raised and held together. Second, Cicero proposed that Octavian should be made a senator, a process that was taken as read if he was to be given *propraetorian* status; and third, that he should be allowed to stand for any office as if he had been *quaestor* the year before.¹²⁴ The *quaestorship* was the lowest ranking magistracy, and there were age limits on eligibility for any office, a fact which Cicero's proposal consciously ignored. In effect it would mean that Octavian was to be treated as if he was already over 30 years old, and Cicero devotes a long passage to expounding the theory that to discriminate against youth was not always the wisest policy, enumerating among his examples of successful young men the inevitable story of Alexander the Great.

Cicero vouches for Octavian's integrity, with the statement that he knows all the young man's thoughts and feelings.¹²⁵ Perhaps he really believed that he did know Octavian, or perhaps he was just using the statement as a device to sway the Senate, while fully aware that he had been allowed to see only what Octavian wanted him to see. Cicero was astute and intelligent – except where his vanity was concerned. If he believed that he knew Octavian and could control him, then his astuteness is eroded and his penetrating intelligence is questionable, and on the other hand, if Cicero had been taken in by Octavian's avowed intent to serve the state through the Senate, it says a great deal for Octavian's manipulative and convincing abilities as an actor. To a modern audience furnished with the benefit of hindsight the whole episode becomes tragicomic; as the play unfolds, an eminent old statesman imagines that he is using a younger man to save the state under his guidance and for the glorification of his career, only to be used himself as the instrument that launched a career far greater than his own.

With regard to Octavian's troops, Cicero proposed that the Senate should find land for the veterans, guarantee to pay whatever sums the young Caesar had promised the soldiers, and grant them exemption from service after they had been discharged.¹²⁶ These provisions, and also the proposal that Octavian should be allowed to stand for office as though he had already served as *quaestor*, were Octavian's insurance policies for the future, and no doubt originated prior to the meeting of the Senate, around a discussion table, with Octavian outlining what he wanted and Cicero pruning the list to an acceptable form for his speech to the senators, where he would put across the ideas. The immediate

brief was to assist Decimus Brutus against Antonius, and not yet to lay the foundations for Octavian's further career, but he had already thought ahead. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to imagine Octavian, accompanied by Agrippa and Maecenas, Salvidienus Rufus, Gaius Matius, and Caesar's financiers Balbus and Oppius, thrashing out the details of what they wanted from Cicero and also making alternative contingency plans in case the project did not follow the desired path. They needed Cicero, for the time being, because they had no senatorial party of their own. All that had to be done was to convince him that Octavian hated Antonius more than he hated Decimus Brutus. For Octavian was not just an individual in search of destiny; he was a corporate entity, at the head of a virtual management board whose goal was first survival and second the highest point that their corporate efforts could reach in the government, though they probably had no fully elucidated conception at that moment of precisely what that point would be. This is not to detract from Octavian's own capacity for caution and wide-ranging forethought; rather it testifies to his ability to inspire loyalty in others and to make the best use of their talents.

On 1 January when Cicero made his important speech placing Octavian's army on a legal footing, Octavian himself was marching towards Mutina. On 7 January he took command of his army in his official capacity and thereafter he celebrated this date as the anniversary of his military command (*dies imperii*).¹²⁷ At the end of his reign, looking back on his achievements, Augustus regarded this as the crucial moment. The *Res Gestae* opens with the phrase 'At the age of nineteen on my own initiative and at my own expense, I raised an army with which I successfully championed the liberty of the Republic when it was being oppressed by the tyranny of a faction'.¹²⁸ Thus he presented the best possible interpretation of the civil strife which no-one could have forgotten; without naming Antonius he interpreted his own part in the struggle in general terms as defence of the Republic. The idea was not new; Cicero inserted the theme into as many sections of the *Philippics* as he could, though always taking care to mention the name of the man from whom Octavian had saved the state. In Rome debate had continued until 4 January about the situation, and in the end victory went to the moderates who suggested that before war was declared against Antonius, an embassy should be sent to him to ask him to give up the province of Gallia Cisalpina, and hand it over to Decimus Brutus. Cicero opposed this but it was carried despite his urgings to the contrary, so war was deferred for a while.

Antonius' reply was that he would give up Cisalpine Gaul in exchange for the province of Transalpine Gaul, which he would govern for five years. He also asked that all his acts should be ratified. This was not at all unreasonable, and certainly not as unreasonable as Cicero had predicted, so he had to work very hard to bolster up the opposition to Antonius.¹²⁹ He was successful, eventually, and so war was declared. It was decreed that military dress should be worn in Rome, and the consuls were empowered to save the state. Cicero failed to persuade the Senate to declare Antonius *hostis*, but for the moment that was just a

personal failure, and he could fall back on the consolation that the war might yet remove Antonius permanently. On 20 April the news reached Rome of the battle of Forum Gallorum, fought on 15 April near Mutina, between Antonius and the consul Pansa, who had been injured, and was consequently out of action; a short time later he was to die of his wounds. There was an immediate panic in the city because it was thought that Antonius' victory was more complete than it actually was. Rumours began to circulate that Cicero was aiming at the Dictatorship, and he underwent a disturbing few hours before the true report of the battle arrived. Antonius was in no position to march on the city. Then it was proposed by the city praetor Marcus Cornutus that civil dress should be resumed to indicate that peace was restored, and that there should be public thanksgiving. Cicero replied that it was too soon to give up military dress, since Decimus Brutus was still under siege, but he agreed to the proposal for public thanksgiving, which he suggested should last for an unprecedented 50 days, in the names of all three generals, whom he styled Imperators. Octavian had not actually fought in the main battle; his task had been to protect the camp, so it was somewhat eulogistic to elevate him to the same level as the consuls, but Cicero probably saw no harm in it.¹³⁰ After all, both consuls were still alive at this point, and Octavian was a minor personality as far as the Senate was concerned. But Octavian-Augustus counted this acclamation as Imperator as his first in a series of such military honours.

The situation changed dramatically when the second battle of Mutina was fought on 21 April, resulting in a disaster for Antonius and the death of the consul Hirtius. Antonius decided to withdraw across the Alps into Gaul. To the uninitiated it seemed as though Antonius was finally defeated, and all that was required was to pursue him. The Senate rejoiced, and Octavian's position became very awkward. Hirtius was dead and the other consul, Pansa, died soon afterwards. The only remaining commander was Octavian, so the Senate ordered him to co-operate directly with Decimus Brutus. On one pretext or another, Octavian prevaricated for as long as possible. Decimus belonged to the party who had assassinated Caesar. While he was operating alongside the two consuls, Octavian did not need to make his opinion of Decimus very clear, but now that he was alone, his principles would not allow him to march to the aid of one of the so-called Liberators.

The alienation between Octavian and the Senate was beginning to show. When Cicero and the Senate needed his services as commander of his army, Octavian had been praised and given powers to legalise his position; now that the danger was averted, he was made to feel unnecessary. He was granted only an ovation for his part in the Mutina battle, while Decimus Brutus was awarded a triumph and placed in overall command of the consular armies. A commission was set up to distribute land to the veterans, but Octavian was not included on it,¹³¹ and the payments supposedly guaranteed to his soldiers were not forthcoming, two factors which perhaps were deliberately calculated to embarrass him and undermine his military support.

Probably at this time Octavian was informed of Cicero's clever pun concerning him: *laudandum adolescentem, ornandum, tollendum*, which means the young man should be praised, honoured and immortalised, which comes closest to translating the pun. *Tollere* can mean to raise up, and also to remove by death. It was characteristic of Cicero that he could not resist such a brilliant play on words, and significantly when Decimus Brutus wrote to tell him that Octavian knew of his turn of phrase, Cicero did not deny authorship of it.¹³² In his reply to Decimus, he merely burst out for a sentence or two against Labeo Segulius who had discussed the subject with Octavian. The original informant is not known. Decimus Brutus' letter, written on 24 May, begins with the news that Octavian had already heard the story, so it was current by mid-May.

It is perhaps relevant that it was also known by mid-May that Octavian was thinking in terms of the consulship.¹³³ He had expressed no emotions about Cicero's description of him, and according to Decimus it was Labeo Segulius who brought up the subject, even though Octavian already knew of it; Octavian's reply was that he had no intention of allowing himself to be immortalised. On the surface he thought very little of the matter; beneath that surface there may have been other thoughts. The possibility that he had trusted Cicero is slight; if he had inherited anything at all from his contact with Julius Caesar it ought to have been an ability to survive whilst trusting scarcely anyone, even for an instant. This is brilliantly expressed in Mankiewicz's film *Cleopatra*, where Rex Harrison as Caesar says, 'Trusting is like wine; whenever I've tried it, the after effects have not been good.' But for Octavian, Cicero's clever pun may have engendered an element of disappointment, world-weariness and anger, which he did not reveal. The normal human reaction would have been to bluster, tell friends all about the problem in a raised voice, write indignant letters, lose sleep, and fume in private. Not so the cool and calculating Octavian. Such behaviour would wreck the game he intended to play. He knew for certain now that he could hope for nothing from the Senate without coercion, and that his relationship with Cicero was at an end, but after all, there was no pressing need to allow either of these two parties to know that he knew these things. He merely noted their sentiments, and waited.

Another significant piece of information in Decimus Brutus' letter of 24 May is that although he had been ordered to do so, Octavian would not give up Pansa's legion. Not only was Octavian persistently failing in the pursuit of Antonius, he was also keeping his troops together under his command. For the time being it served his purpose to pretend that he could not control the soldiers, with the unspoken subtext that since the senators had not paid them, and had not allowed him to oversee the settlement of the veterans, they had only themselves to blame for the unruly behaviour of the troops. The *legio Quarta* and the *legio Martia* would not move if they had to serve under Decimus Brutus; no doubt Octavian had spared no pains to remind them that Decimus had murdered Caesar. The rest of the troops were steadily working themselves up about the

lack of pay, and the exclusion of their young commander from the land commission, so that their interests were not being represented by the one man who could help them. Then there was that terrible thing that Cicero had said about him. Octavian was letting his troops do all the agitating for him while he pretended that he could do nothing about it.

The truth was that the senators, taking into account the history of the past decades, tried to put a stop to the process whereby the soldiers under the command of victorious returning generals relied on them alone to arrange their land settlements and payouts of their promised bonuses. In the past, obstinate opposition to veteran settlement on the part of the Senate meant that the struggle with the victorious generals simply escalated and ended by forcing the generals to accumulate enormous power simply in order to fulfil their promises to their soldiers. In the absence of a regulated system for veteran settlement, returning generals were more or less forced to use their troops, or at least the threat of using their troops, to enforce the land grants to their discharged soldiers. This time, the Senate showed itself willing, at last, to offer lands to the veterans, but insisted that the commissioners must deal directly with the soldiers, to the exclusion of their commanders.¹³⁴ The effort to deny such powers to Octavian as had been accrued by Pompeius Magnus and Julius Caesar sadly misfired.

In June, Munatius Plancus, the governor of Gallia Comata, or 'Longhaired Gaul', wrote to Cicero, full of surprise that the young Caesar had not sent his army to help him and Decimus Brutus against Antonius,¹³⁵ but by the end of July, Plancus had finally begun to penetrate what was in Octavian's mind, namely that while he had consistently promised to march each time he was asked to do so, he was merely stalling for time, because he had set his goals somewhat higher.¹³⁶ That same month the soldiers sent an embassy of 400 men to Rome to demand from the Senate the consulship for their young commander. Appian¹³⁷ recounts the story that Octavian asked Cicero to be his colleague as consul, but for this there is little or no evidence.¹³⁸ Despite the lack of proof, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Octavian would think of such a plan. He had been praised to the skies while he was necessary and then summarily dropped, but Cicero was still an important and influential senator who could be used to advantage, and Octavian would not let personal animosities jeopardise his ambition.

Naturally the senators refused Octavian's request, probably after they had stopped laughing. They presumably felt that they were still in control of the state. Their refusal counted for nothing, and merely served to precipitate events. Octavian had waited long enough to achieve his aims by legal constitutional means, and by co-operation with the Senate. Antonius was far away at the moment, but it was a certainty that he would be back, most likely with the other Caesarian provincial governors in alliance with him, and backed by their armies. In the interim, before Antonius gained too much power, it was time to act. Octavian gathered his eight legions and marched on Rome.

Notes

- 1 Suet. *Aug.* 8.2.
- 2 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 16.
- 3 Appian *BC* 3.10.
- 4 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 17.
- 5 Appian *BC* 3.10; Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 17.
- 6 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 17.
- 7 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.12.
- 8 Appian *BC* 3.10 states that Philippus reminded his stepson that Caesar had been murdered by men whom he counted his friends. Philippus' advice as related by Appian is by no means the 'strong opposition' of Suet. *Aug.* 8.3.
- 9 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18.
- 10 Taylor 1949, 28 suggested that Augustus censored the historical record. Cicero's letters to Atticus written after November 44 have not been preserved. It is not certain whether the loss was incurred by design or by accident.
- 11 On the controversy surrounding the appointment as *magister equitum*, see this book, Chapter 1, notes 110–13. See also Badian 1990, 36 n.16; Heitland 1909, 363.
- 12 Cic. *ad Fam.* 10.24.5 can be interpreted to suggest that Plancus had noticed Caesar's intentions towards Octavius. Schmitthenner 1952, 1–2; 61 discounts the evidence of this letter, but Kienast 1982, 4 n.20 thinks his doubts are unfounded, and that the letter should be taken at its face value.
- 13 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18 says that Octavian had no intention of ceding to anyone 'a name or rule as great as his'. Levick 2010, 5; 23 sets out with the premise that from the very first Octavian aimed at sole, permanent power.
- 14 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.5.
- 15 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.10.
- 16 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.11.
- 17 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.12.
- 18 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 19–27.
- 19 Dio 44.9.1 says that Caesar's enemies fostered rumours that he wanted to be king. Gelzer 1968, 318 n.4 concludes that any attempt on Caesar's part to win the crown and title of king 'would have been utter political madness'.
- 20 Plut. *Caes.* 61.
- 21 Gelzer 1968, 321–22.
- 22 Badian 1990, 35 says 'the chances are that he really preferred to remain Caesar and not demean himself by becoming *rex*'.
- 23 Plut. *Ant.* 12.
- 24 Heitland 1909, 335; 367 considered that the only way to oppose senatorial misrule was to become an autocrat, and that Caesar had no intention of giving up power or sharing it. Meier 1995, 471; 475 thinks that if Caesar wanted to establish a monarchy 'he went about it very ineptly' but admits that Caesar was a *de facto* monarch.
- 25 Dio 44.5.3.
- 26 Dio 43.44.3; 44.5.3; Syme 1939, 96; Meier 1995, 471. For discussion see Kienast 1982, 4–5.
- 27 Gelzer 1968, 306 states that Caesar so appreciated the talents of his great-nephew that he increasingly hoped to find in him his political heir.
- 28 Syme 1939, 53.
- 29 Syme 1939, 114.
- 30 Cic. *ad Fam.* 9.15.4.
- 31 Dio 43.27.1.
- 32 Gelzer 1968, 290.
- 33 Gelzer 1968, 272; 330.

- 34 Cic. *ad Fam.* 9.16.5.
- 35 Cic. *ad Fam.* 13.68.
- 36 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 19.
- 37 Gelzer 1968, 320 n.3; Meier 1995, 475.
- 38 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18.
- 39 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18.
- 40 Syme 1939, 113 says that 'from the beginning his [Octavian's] sense for realities was unnerving, his ambition implacable'.
- 41 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31.
- 42 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.8; 9.
- 43 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 28.
- 44 Alföldi 1976, 24.
- 45 Jones 1970, 113.
- 46 Alföldi 1976, 31–54.
- 47 For Balbus' career see Syme 1939, 77; 130–32; 381; Alföldi 1976, 32–33; 36–43. Cic. *ad Att.* 2.3.3 describes him as Caesar's crony, and explains in *ad Fam.* 6.8.1 that his letters to Caesar had to be vetted by Balbus; Stockton 1971, 265; 271; 275.
- 48 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.10.
- 49 Syme 1939, 130–31.
- 50 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18.
- 51 Dio 45.3.2.
- 52 Alföldi 1976, 82–84.
- 53 Kienast 1982, 13 n.58; 23 n.100.
- 54 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.8.
- 55 The Parthian war chest and the year's tribute from Asia are casually documented together by Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 18.
- 56 Appian *BC* 3.11.
- 57 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31.
- 58 Appian *BC* 3.12.
- 59 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.5.
- 60 Lacey 1996, 17ff.
- 61 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.12.1; 14.2; 21.3.
- 62 Meier 1995, 481.
- 63 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 29–27.
- 64 Syme 1939, 105 considers that Antonius 'displayed consummate skill as a statesman' in 44 bc. On Antonius see Kienast 1982, 18 n.81; Huzar 1978, reprinted 1986; Pelling 1988; Southern 2010.
- 65 Suet. *Aug.* 8; Dio 55.3–4.
- 66 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.10.
- 67 Osgood 2006, 31 n.73.
- 68 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 28.
- 69 Appian *BC* 3.11–13.13.
- 70 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.11; 14.12.
- 71 Appian *BC* 3.28.
- 72 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 28.
- 73 Syme 1939, 116 n.3; Rice-Holmes 1928, 191; Hall 1923, 92 n.3 opts for a postponement of the *ludi Florales* to the middle of May.
- 74 Cic. *ad Att.* 15.3.
- 75 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.10.
- 76 Cic. *ad Att.* 14.12.
- 77 Syme 1939, 15; Rice-Holmes 1928, 192.

- 78 Appian *BC* 3.25.
- 79 Appian *BC* 3.14–20.
- 80 Syme 1939, 107; 130.
- 81 Antonius is quoted by Cic. *Phil.* 13.11.24: ‘*et te, O puer, qui omnia nomina debes*’.
- 82 Appian *BC* 3.23; Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 28.
- 83 Vengeance for Caesar’s death is laconically described in *RG* 2: ‘I drove into exile the murderers of my father, avenging their crime through tribunals established by law; and afterwards when they made war on the Republic I twice defeated them in battle.’ In 42 Octavian vowed that he would build a temple to Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger); it was finally dedicated 40 years later in 2 BC.
- 84 Cic. *ad Att.* 15.3; Appian *BC* 3.29; Dio 45.4.
- 85 Syme 1939, 117.
- 86 Plut. *Ant.* 16; Appian *BC* 3.28.
- 87 Dio 45.7; Pliny *NH* 2.94; Kienast 1982, 24–25; Alföldi 1976, 69.
- 88 Dio 45.5.4.
- 89 Syme declared that testamentary adoption simply did not exist (‘Clues to testamentary adoption’ *Epigrafia e Ordine Senatorio* I, 1982, 397ff = *Roman Papers* IV 1988, 159ff). Schmitthenner 1952, 39–64 points out that the legal sources for testamentary adoption are of no use, and gathers together all the known examples.
- 90 Kienast 1982, 6–7.
- 91 Plut. *Ant.* 54; Dio 49.41; 50.1.5; 50.3.5; Shuckburgh 1903, 121; Kienast 1982, 33 n.220; R. Syme, ‘No Sons for Caesar?’ *Historia* 29, 1980, 422ff.
- 92 Taylor 1931, 104.
- 93 Suet. *Aug.* 17.
- 94 Cic. *ad Att.* 15.12 said that he did not know whether to trust Octavian, but whatever happened he must be kept away from Antonius.
- 95 Everitt 2001, 270; Osgood 2006, 32.
- 96 Cic. *ad Att.* 15.12.
- 97 Appian *BC* 3.42; 3.46; 3.47.
- 98 Appian *BC* 3.29; 32.
- 99 Appian *BC* 3.30.
- 100 Syme 1939, 115.
- 101 Suet. *Aug.* 10.2; Plut. *Ant.* 16; Appian *BC* 3.31.
- 102 Syme 1939, 120.
- 103 Suet. *Aug.* 10.2; Appian *BC* 3.31; Plut. *Ant.* 16; Dio 45.6.2.
- 104 Kienast 1982, 25.
- 105 Syme 1939, 124 follows Appian *BC* 3.39, who says that Octavian would not eliminate a potential ally.
- 106 Appian *BC* 3.43.
- 107 Appian *BC* 3.40; Dio 45.12; Suet. *Aug.* 10. Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31 says that Octavian approached the veterans of the Seventh and Eighth legions, but he is the only ancient author to mention these two legions by name.
- 108 Some of the men who canvassed for Octavian may be the ones mentioned by Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31, where he says that Octavian’s plans met with the approval of his friends Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, Gaius Maecenas, Quintus Iuventius and Marcus Modalius, who are otherwise unknown, and a certain Lucius, who may be Lucius Coccieus Nerva, the great-grandfather of the Emperor Nerva.
- 109 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31; Cic. *ad Att.* 16.8.
- 110 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 31 places Octavian’s troop-raising activities *after* Antonius had left for Brundisium, which gives some credence to the theory that Octavian was prepared to wait for Antonius to make the first move.
- 111 Cic. *Phil.* 3.2; 3.11; 4.2; 5.11; 8.2.

- 112 Appian *BC* 3.40; Linderski 1984, 78 n.20 referring to Cic. *ad Att.* 16.9; Cic. *Phil.* 5.17.46.
- 113 Everitt 2001, 301–2.
- 114 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.8.
- 115 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.9.
- 116 Appian *BC* 3.41–42.
- 117 The abandonment of Rome and the supposed flight to Ravenna has been reinterpreted; Kienast 1982, 25 n.114 quotes M. Sordi, ‘Ottaviano e l’Etruria nel 4 a.C.’, *Studi Etruschi* 40, 1972, 3ff.
- 118 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.9.
- 119 Cic. *ad Att.* 16.15. Everitt 2001, 288 suggests that something happened in December 44 BC to make Cicero change his mind about Octavian, and that probably Balbus and Oppius had something to do with it.
- 120 Stockton 1971, 296 follows Syme 1939, 125–26, assuming that it was Antonius’ man Fufius Calenus who had prepared the case against Octavian to have him outlawed.
- 121 Appian *BC* 3.45–46.
- 122 Appian *BC* 3.48.
- 123 Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 28 says that Octavian was not ignorant of the reasons why the Senate seemed to support him; he then continues with his usual hobbyhorse theme that at the time everyone was fighting for power for himself, whereas Octavian was the only one to whom power had been bequeathed.
- 124 Cic. *Phil.* 5.16.45–46.
- 125 Cic. *Phil.* 5.18.50.
- 126 Cic. *Phil.* 5.19.53.
- 127 Kienast 1982, 28.
- 128 Brunt and Moore 1967, 38 point out that the raising of the private army was strictly an illegal act, but the main reason for mentioning it was the fact that Octavian had used the army to secure the liberty of the Republic.
- 129 Syme 1939, 170; Stockton 1971, 300; Everitt 2001, 291; 295.
- 130 Dio 46.38.
- 131 Correspondence between Decimus Brutus and Cicero, reported in Cic. *ad Fam.* 11.20.3; 11.21 attests that Octavian was not on the land commission, and Cicero wished that he was not on it himself because it was so burdensome. Decimus Brutus urged Cicero to carry out the land settlements and the payments that had been promised.
- 132 Cic. *ad Fam.* 11.20; 11.21.
- 133 Syme 1939, 185; Kienast 1982, 31.
- 134 Everitt 2001, 299.
- 135 Cic. *ad Fam.* 10.23.
- 136 Cic. *ad Fam.* 10.24.4.
- 137 Appian *BC* 3.82; Everitt 2001, 303.
- 138 Stockton 1971, 325–26.

CONSUL AND TRIUMVIR

In the summer of 43 the Roman world was rapidly polarising into two hostile portions: Caesarians in the west and the 'Liberators' in the east. Antonius had retreated into Gaul, but he was far from beaten. By the end of May, Lepidus as governor of Gallia Narbonensis had succumbed to the inevitable and joined him. In his correspondence, Lepidus had prevaricated and protested his loyalty to the Senate for as long as he could, waiting to see what would happen. He had tried to arrange a negotiated peace with Antonius in March but did not gain much credit for doing so.¹ At Rome it was thought that Antonius was in a desperate plight, so in the opinion of the senators it followed that Lepidus would surely see the folly of joining a general who was nearly beaten.² In reality Lepidus probably realised that Antonius' troops were still loyal to him and that Antonius himself was not yet ready to give up. Lepidus had no real taste for combat with Antonius, and no inclination to sacrifice himself and his army to no purpose. It was becoming clearer day by day that Lepidus' future lay with Antonius and not with the Senate.³ His soldiers were already fraternising with the enemy. That much is certain, but the details are variously reported in the ancient sources: Appian⁴ says that Antonius camped near Lepidus, but did not surround himself with a wall and ditch, so that messengers started to pass between the two armies. Velleius Paterculus⁵ recounts the tale of Antonius forcing an entry into Lepidus' camp through a breach in the walls. The most vivid account of all is to be found in Plutarch's *Life of Antonius*, which perhaps embellishes the truth somewhat.⁶

Lepidus explained himself politely to the Senate, and made peace with his rival, insisting that it was the mood of his troops and his impossible situation that compelled him to join Antonius. Senatorial disgust with his actions prompted them to declare him a public enemy (*hostis publicus*) in June.⁷ His property was forfeited to the state, and his sons forbidden to hold office. Lepidus cannot have made his decisions lightly, despite many accusations, both contemporary and modern, that he vacillated through weakness of character. Even the strongest character would probably not have hurled himself into the arms of Antonius without some deliberation. Antonius was already *hostis* as a result of Cicero's unstinting efforts, so the two Caesarians now shared a common status which

threw them together for better or worse; they had nothing to gain by negotiation with the Senate, and nothing to lose except their lives by fighting.

Antonius was now in command of a swelling force of auxiliary troops and eventually about 22 legions, three of them raised on the initiative of Publius Ventidius Bassus, who had miraculously led his little army northwards through Italy, avoiding battle all the way; he crossed the Apennines, and reached Antonius just as he was retreating into Gaul. His march to join Antonius was known to Decimus Brutus who wrote to Cicero about it.⁸ The forces potentially opposed to Antonius and Lepidus comprised the joint armies of Lucius Munatius Plancus, governor of Gallia Comata, and the troops of Decimus Brutus. Technically, Octavian's troops were also part of the opposition, but the young Caesar was determined to sit still and do nothing, a fact which Antonius presumably noted with interest.

Immobile in Hispania Inferior, the governor Gaius Asinius Pollio also waited upon events, another fact of which Antonius was doubtless fully aware. Pollio, according to Syme, is a steadfast champion;⁹ Velleius Paterculus calls Asinius Pollio *firmus*¹⁰ in that he never wavered in his support for the Caesarian cause and was always implacably hostile to the Pompeians, but Stockton¹¹ casts doubts upon Pollio's integrity, because he always sat on the fence until he discerned who was likely to win, then he joined the stronger party. Of these main protagonists in Spain, Gaul and northern Italy, Decimus Brutus was the odd one out. He had been party to the murder of Caesar; all the rest were Caesar's men. It was only a matter of time before an immense power block formed in the west, armed and ready. The only questions were how soon could Antonius emerge at its head, and in what position would Octavian find himself when that happened.

The conspirators in the eastern provinces

In the east, the conspirators were also arming. After leaving Rome, Brutus and Cassius had been assigned to the administration of the corn supply in Sicily and Asia, which would have conveniently removed them from the scene of action without granting them any real powers. They had refused these tasks, officially because they found them degrading, but in reality because the duties assigned to them offered no security. For that they were forced to aim higher, at provincial government and command of troops.¹² At first it seemed hopeless. The Caesarian colours were successfully displayed by Antonius' consular colleague Dolabella, appointed governor of Syria as part of Caesar's provincial administrative plans. He did not travel directly to his province, but moved via Macedonia and Thrace into Asia. He defeated and killed Trebonius, the proconsul of Asia appointed by the Senate. Trebonius had been authorised to collect money and troops on behalf of Brutus and Cassius, an unpopular move that did little to engender support for the conspirators.

Like Antonius and Lepidus, Dolabella was declared *hostis* by the Senate, and by degrees his fortunate beginning turned into a less fortunate progress. The Senate declared war on him when he was outlawed,¹³ and the situation gradually changed in favour of the conspirators. By a combination of good luck and good

management, Cassius established himself in Syria before Dolabella arrived. A minor war was already in progress between the Caesarians and their opponents. Caecilius Bassus, locked up in Apamea with one legion, was under siege by the six legions of Staius Murcus and Marcius Crispus, when Cassius arrived. The siege was raised and the three commanders and all seven legions sank their differences and joined Cassius.

Queen Cleopatra sent four legions from Egypt under the command of Aulus Alienus to aid Dolabella in the struggle against Cassius, but they never reached him.¹⁴ Faced with a choice of fighting their way to join Dolabella against seven legions, or simply joining those seven legions, it probably took Cleopatra's legionaries a very short time to arrive at their decision. Cassius already had a high moral standing in the east, gained immediately after the defeat of Marcus Licinius Crassus and his army by the Parthians at Carrhae. Cassius, as quaestor, had rallied the troops who survived and saved the situation in Syria. This fact perhaps encouraged the provincials and allied states to provide the money and supplies that Cassius required, but it has to be admitted that to his high moral standing, he added great military strength, since he now commanded eleven legions.¹⁵ This would tend to foster co-operation with his demands. Cassius reported his successes to Cicero on 7 March¹⁶ but at this stage the Senate had not yet recognised him as governor of Syria.¹⁷

Meanwhile in Greece, Brutus had assembled a following (Figure 3.1). He raised troops in Macedonia and formed them into legions, then campaigned in Thrace, where he recruited auxiliary soldiers. His next move was to gain control of the lucrative province of Asia. As the conspirators and the Senate gained in strength and daring, reciprocally the position of the Caesarians declined in the east. The provinces were reassigned; Brutus was recognised as governor of Macedonia though he had established himself there illegally and violently.¹⁸ He had raised troops and enrolled them in his legions without authorisation.¹⁹ Sometime later Cassius was confirmed in his tenure of Syria. Appian²⁰ equates the reassignment of Macedonia to Brutus and Syria to Cassius with the declaration of Antonius and Lepidus as *hostes*, but although these events were



Figure 3.1 Gold aureus of 42 BC issued by Marcus Brutus as he and Cassius raised troops in the east to prepare for war against Octavian and Antonius. On the reverse, Casca Longus is named, one of Brutus's legates.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

related in sentiment they were not contemporary. Two months after Brutus was made officially governor of Macedonia, Cassius was confirmed as governor of Syria,²¹ then in one single act he was placed in charge of all the Roman forces in the east.²² Ironically, these arrangements reflected the exact provisions which Caesar had made for these areas.

Marcus Antonius had installed his brother Gaius as governor of Macedonia, but no sooner had Gaius Antonius arrived than Brutus blockaded him in Apollonia,²³ leaving him alone for the time being since he would provide a valuable hostage and therefore some bargaining power. Cicero thought otherwise, influenced by an unreasoning hatred of Marcus Antonius; he wrote to Brutus that a little salutary severity went a long way as an example to others, so he should kill Gaius immediately.²⁴ Eventually, Brutus did execute Gaius Antonius. Less hysterically and more usefully, Cicero proposed in the Senate that Brutus should be charged with keeping safe all Macedonia, Greece and Illyricum,²⁵ and the proposal was immediately adopted. This extended command, coupled with that of Cassius in Syria, ensured that almost all the east was under the control of the conspirators, with the sanction of the Senate.

The conspirators also controlled the sea, by means of the fleet of Sextus Pompeius, who offered his services and was officially accepted as an ally, with power over all the coastal areas. Sextus was granted the status of *praefectus classis et orae maritimae* (Figure 3.2) which was really only a belated recognition of the



Figure 3.2 After the Triumvirs recognised Sextus Pompeius' command of the sea as part of their agreement in 40 BC, Sextus issued this gold aureus showing the heads of his father Pompeius Magnus and his brother Gnaeus. The legend PRAEF.CLAS. ET.ORAE.MARIT. EX S.C. indicates that he was now officially in command of the fleet (*classis*) and the Mediterranean coast (*orae maritimae*). His command was short-lived. Octavian had little choice except to come to terms because he had been defeated several times by Sextus. In 36 BC, Sextus was finally defeated at the battle of Naulochus. He tried to establish himself in the province of Asia, but was captured and killed by Antonius' troops.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

facts.²⁶ This arrangement was ratified by the Senate on 20 March 43 BC. Despite their strength, the conspirators made no move to invade Italy. Brutus steadfastly ignored the demands of the Senate and the exhortations of Cicero to come to Rome and finish off the allegedly defeated Antonius, but Brutus realised that while his arrival in Italy might well decide the issue once and for all, it could also solidify the opposition.²⁷ Instead he eventually marched to join Cassius. The final chapter was the suicide of Dolabella, trapped in Laodicea with little hope of rescue or even survival.²⁸ The Caesarian cause was extinguished in the east, but the news did not reach Rome until the end of the year.

Octavian obtains the consulship

The options open to Octavian in June and July 43 were difficult, but crystal clear. An alliance with Brutus and Cassius was out of the question, anathema to him and his troops. He had already rejected the idea of co-operation with Decimus Brutus, but he could not afford to broadcast this decision just yet. It suited his purpose to allow everyone to imagine that he was perfectly willing to obey orders, but he could not persuade his troops to follow Decimus. All the time while he made excuses, Decimus marched further and further away, thus removing any immediate obstacle to Octavian's projected march on Rome, for which he had doubtless been prepared for some considerable time; it was not the sort of plan to be made on the spur of the moment. It had become increasingly obvious by now that he could entertain no further hope of working with the Senate, so his initial use of that body to gain official status was now redundant. Octavian was not necessary to the Senate now that the battles of Mutina were over, and he had nothing to offer that could elevate him to a position of importance; he still suffered from the lack of a party of his own within the Senate strong enough to influence opinion.²⁹ Velleius Paterculus makes much of senatorial ingratitude once the immediate danger from Antonius was removed, and shows that Octavian let the soldiers take up this theme on his behalf.³⁰

Octavian could not afford to wait until Antonius made a move, because he could not guarantee that he would be taken up a second time as the champion of the Senate, even with limited and temporary powers, nor could he guarantee that Antonius would accept him as an ally. In any case, ranging himself against Caesarian forces under Antonius and Lepidus was an illogical, false position for Caesar's heir to occupy. More importantly if he waited for Antonius to take the initiative it would be too late. He had no powers except military force, and that force was now quite inferior to that of Antonius. He would find himself marooned and powerless, caught between the two millstones of the Senate on the one hand and Caesar's capable understudy on the other. He would be ground down to nothing, welcome to neither party.

Everything pointed towards an alliance with Antonius. Left entirely to his own devices he could not even hope to withstand the conspirators, let alone defeat

them; if he was to survive, an alliance with Antonius was imperative, indeed it was the most natural choice. But as a youth of 19, with a waning political influence and not enough legions to match Antonius, Octavian would have been very much the junior partner. All that he would achieve by alliance with Antonius at this juncture would be to exchange his expendability with the Senate for an equally expendable status with Antonius. The consulship, temptingly and very conveniently vacant, was the obvious and optimum goal. He would have laughed to scorn the doubts expressed by Munatius Plancus in a letter to Cicero, where he grumbled that Octavian had set his heart on an almost worthless consulship of a few months duration, when he could instead have been acquiring glory for himself by fighting the enemies of the Republic.³¹ Shuckburgh comments that this simply shows that Plancus did not understand Octavian's object or policy, but if so, he was probably not alone in failing to penetrate the ideology of the 19-year-old Caesar.³² Octavian was not concerned with status for its own sake. He knew perfectly well what he intended to do with his consulship of a few months. It was a means to an end, like so many of his actions or inactions. He used his short term as consul merely to get what he wanted, and then once these aims were satisfied, his subsequent disinterest in the office is demonstrated by the readiness with which he surrendered it to Ventidius as part of the arrangements made when the Triumvirate was formed.

As consul, Octavian would gain temporary ascendancy over the Senate, long enough to annul its influence and its danger to him, and at the same time he would be in possession of constitutionally based power that would elevate him to a bargaining position with Antonius.³³ He would be able to legalise his adoption by Caesar, thereby establishing himself as *patronus* of Caesar's extensive *clientelae* and wealthy freedmen, as well as becoming legal owner of his property.³⁴ As Caesar's son, he would be obliged to avenge his father's death, and as consul he would be able to outlaw the conspirators, the first stage on the road to complete annihilation of anyone who had the remotest connection with Caesar's murder, a long-term aspiration to which he was totally dedicated. Octavian's soldiers stood to gain too, if their commander became consul. They would receive their promised payments, and many of them thought no further than this during their march on Rome.

Realising the value of outright bribery and unscrupulous enough to use it, the Senate belatedly despatched envoys to the troops, promising them money; Dio³⁵ indicates that the Senate actually sent a portion of the cash, and Appian³⁶ says that Octavian gave orders to chase away the convoy bringing the money in case some of his soldiers were beguiled by new-found wealth and forgot the main purpose of their march. Then came the offer for Octavian to stand for the consulship *in absentia*; Dio says that the Senate forbade the army to come within 100 miles of Rome. The Senate possibly hoped by this means to avoid conflict near the city, and this is perhaps the context of their offer to allow Octavian to stand for the consulship *in absentia*.³⁷ Caesar's ghost would have found that quite amusing. Neither the army nor its young general were fooled, and pressed on

towards the city. Among other things, Octavian was worried that his mother and sister might come to some harm if he delayed. He did not know for certain if they were safe, and had perhaps heard rumours that the Senate had ordered a search for them.

Rome was put into a state of defence. The two legions summoned by the Senate from Africa had arrived along with 1,000 cavalry, and there was another legion, originally raised by Plancus, but left behind in the city. That amounted to three legions with no significant commander and no time to engender any sense of unity, ranged against eight unified legions under a commander to whom they had every reason to remain devoted. The three legions therefore joined the eight legions,³⁸ which was a foregone conclusion to anyone with an ounce of sense. Even after all this, the Senate enjoyed a brief resurgence of hope when they heard that two of Octavian's legions had turned against him; they met hurriedly by night and sent officers to levy troops in Picenum. One of these officers was Marcus Aquilius Crassus, who was captured, disguised as a slave, before he reached his destination.³⁹ He was publicly pardoned by Octavian the consul, and a short time later coolly proscribed by Octavian the triumvir.

It is permissible to wonder why the Senate was taken in by the false rumour that Octavian's legions had deserted him; even if it had been true, it still left him with six legions which had fought together under his command, against five senatorial legions which had not. Perhaps it was just wishful thinking elevated into belated action, but by their persistence in trying to resist by armed force, the senators showed their hand, thus revealing to Octavian the precise value of their feelings towards him.

On Octavian's arrival in Rome, as his army approached the Campus Martius, six vultures were seen and hailed as a truly favourable omen. The flights of vultures over Rome at various crucial moments of Octavian's career, such as his entry into the city and his first acts as consul, are reported with discrepancies in the sources. Dio opts for six vultures when Octavian entered Rome and then 12 all at once when he harangued the soldiers as consul; Appian reports 12 when the newly elected consul made his first sacrifices. The numbers and precise occasions are not important; the salient point is the comparison with similar omens when Romulus founded the city.⁴⁰ Good fortune also smiled on Octavian's mother and sister, who were discovered safe and sound, having taken refuge with the Vestals, where pro-Caesarians had hidden them from anyone seeking to use them as valuable hostages to ensure Octavian's co-operation.⁴¹ Starting as he meant to go on, Octavian made the Senate keep its promise to the soldiers to pay them the amounts suggested by Cicero. The first instalments were delivered before he was elected consul. The hand-outs to the soldiers amounted to roughly 10 times their annual pay. This was Octavian's capital investment for the eventual creation of his monarchy. Thus the precedent was set, and the soldiers looked to Octavian-Augustus for their pay and extra cash donatives, and then to succeeding emperors for the same. The memory of such donatives survived for over 200 years, when the legionaries of the late second and early third

centuries, who had not had a pay rise for many years, decided to use the precedents that they had probably read about in their history books, and tried to persuade the emperor Septimius Severus to pay them the same amounts. He refused; perhaps miraculously, he also survived.⁴²

The consular elections for the remainder of 43 BC duly took place, in a convoluted but constitutional fashion. The proper procedure in the event of the deaths of both consuls was for the Senate to appoint an *interrex*, but this entailed calling for the resignation of all the patrician magistrates, many of whom were not in the vicinity of Rome. A novel procedure was adopted instead, constitutionally anomalous, but providing a veneer of respectability. The city praetor arranged for the election of two men temporarily endowed with consular powers to preside over the real elections. While they were held, Octavian withdrew from the city, so as not to interfere with the freedom of choice of the people. Dio points out how ridiculous this was: Octavian's physical presence was neither here nor there, but his power was all-pervasive, all-persuasive, irresistible.⁴³ Aged 19, Octavian was elected consul on 19 August, the month which the Romans still knew as Sextilis, until many years later they renamed it in his honour.

Octavian's consular colleague was his kinsman Quintus Pedius; Dio outspokenly labels him Octavian's subordinate.⁴⁴ Pedius may not have been the first choice as colleague. Syme speculated that Octavian may have desired the election of Publius Servilius Isauricus, to whose daughter Servilia he had recently been betrothed.⁴⁵ Roman contemporaries thought that Cicero was to be consul, either by his own wish or by invitation of Octavian. Appian explains how Octavian asked Cicero to be his consular colleague, because he was the elder statesman with greater experience; he goes on to say that Octavian only wanted to dismiss his soldiers in the proper fashion, which is a transparent attempt to mislead; it is hardly credible that Octavian should consider such a shabby device, when it was clear that he wanted much more than that.⁴⁶

Cicero's ambitions in this direction are neither attested nor refuted. Marcus Brutus was told in May that Cicero had actually become consul, but he distrusted his sources.⁴⁷

Octavian may still have been prepared to co-operate with Cicero, and through him with the Senate. There was no overt quarrel between them; he had not broken off all relations with either party, and had apparently never said anything in public in recrimination for his shabby treatment at the hands of the Senate, nor had he acknowledged that he had heard of Cicero's alleged remarks about him, hinting at his elimination. What he had done was to demand the consulship in an arbitrary fashion, which of course offended corporate sensibilities, but he had not made specific personal enemies, and had therefore kept his options open. More realistically he may have hoped to utilise the prestige of Cicero to add authenticity to his acts. It is a possibility that cannot be entirely discounted, but Octavian was leaning so far towards Antonius at this time that even if he was simply trying to hedge his bets it could only have complicated matters to try to

maintain smooth relations between two such diametrically opposed forces. In the event, Cicero was eclipsed when Octavian became consul, and he was too astute to fail to recognise the facts. He retired eventually to his estates at Tusculum.

When Octavian took up his office as consul and stepped onto the Rostra to address the people, yet more vultures made a timely flight over the Forum – so timely that it is tempting to wonder whether they had just been released from a cage somewhere close by. Such manipulation of superstition is not out of the question; the main purpose would be to emphasise once again the connection with Romulus, and to rely upon fate was haphazard to say the least; sometimes nature required a little assistance.⁴⁸ Without delay, Octavian set about his main business. He distributed the remaining instalments of cash to his soldiers. To neglect that duty would be to court disaster and lose all future credibility with the army. He also paid the outstanding legacies still not settled from the terms of Caesar's will. The source of the cash is not stated. Dio says that he appropriated public funds but pretended that he paid for everything out of his own private fortune.⁴⁹ Appian agrees that he used public funds but does not exactly accuse him of deceit; he hints at supplies from Caesar's circle of wealthy freedmen.⁵⁰ Probably both are correct; there need not be one single source for Octavian's wealth, and Caesar himself had confused public and private money. In Octavian's case, the task in hand was far more important than scruple.

Next, Octavian turned to his own needs. His adoption as Caesar's son was at last ratified by a *lex curiata* passed in the people's assembly. On the face of it, this law seems perfectly normal, but as mentioned above, the whole concept of testamentary adoption has been challenged, dividing scholars into two opposed camps, some of them denying that the adoption of Octavius as Caesar's son was legal, and others defending it.⁵¹ Adoption was usually arranged while both adopter and adoptee were still living, even though the proceedings may have involved a great deal of chicanery bordering on the ridiculous, as when Publius Clodius, a patrician, wanted to stand for election as a tribune of the plebs, but was barred from such a step because of his patrician status. In order to circumvent this problem, Clodius was adopted by a plebeian, who happened to be younger than himself. The requisite legal formalities were observed, carried out in front of the representatives of the *Comitia Curiata*, and properly recorded with priests to observe, including the Pontifex Maximus himself, who at the time was Julius Caesar.⁵²

It is probable that adoption by leaving instructions in a will had no force at law, especially if the adopter had failed to reveal his intentions while still alive. Octavian's situation in March 44 BC seemingly had no firm precedent, and if it had no backing in the laws of Rome, then it did not really matter what political or legal machinery Octavian used to ratify the procedure, in the eyes of the law it was still not strictly legal. This, among other considerations, may have been one of the reasons that Antonius was called upon to block Octavian's attempts to ratify the adoption in May 44 BC. Legal sanction of his adoption was clearly important to Octavian, and when he tried again in 43 BC, he was consul with

command of loyal troops, which gave him more than a slight edge in persuading the curiate assembly to pass the law. The Pontifex Maximus, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, could not be present because he was in the north commanding his armies, and in any case he had been declared *hostis* and outlawed. As Levick points out, the fact that the adoption was ratified in this way has been used by some scholars to prove that testamentary adoption and the manner of ratifying it was upheld by the law, but this is to put the cart before the horse. What it does show is the lengths to which Octavian was prepared to go in order to obtain legal sanction for his adoption.⁵³ It also explains why Octavian continually stressed his early connection with Caesar and the alleged interest shown in him by the Dictator. No-one can say whether or not there had been any hint, during the lifetime of his intended son and heir, of Caesar's intention to adopt the teenage Octavius, but in either circumstance, Octavian embellished, or perhaps even fabricated, his status as Caesar's relative and colleague to support his claim to be his son. When he obtained ratification for his adoption, Octavian was legally entitled to call himself Gaius Julius Caesar, as indeed he had insisted upon for the past 15 months.

In the short time that Octavian spent in Rome, other laws were passed. The law declaring Dolabella *hostis* was revoked; Antonius and Lepidus would have to wait a little longer for the laws against them to be repealed. The murder of Caesar was declared a crime, and a special court was set up for the trial of the assassins, in their absence. The proceedings were not protracted and all was completed within the day. The men who had wielded the knives that despatched Caesar were indicted and prosecuted for their part in the murder, but the net was spread wider than that, to include some men who were prosecuted for the possession of information about the conspiracy, even though they were nowhere in evidence when the crime was committed.⁵⁴ Sextus Pompeius was included in the prosecutions, one of the chief accusers being Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, presumably acting on the advice of Octavian. No-one seems to have pointed out that Sextus had been nowhere near Rome when the assassination was carried out. A single day sufficed to pass judgement upon all the conspirators and their satellites. They were all found guilty, which meant that not only were they outlawed, but their property was forfeited to the state. A lone voice spoke up in favour of Marcus Brutus, that of Silicius Corona, who boasted of his bravery.⁵⁵ Octavian did not retaliate, thus gaining a reputation for clemency. For the time being his play-acting as the implacably just but reasonably merciful consul seems to have been credible; there were no sudden departures for the camps of Brutus and Cassius from the ranks of those to whom Octavian extended his mercy. The consequence was that men such as Silicius Corona and Marcus Aquilius Crassus, another supporter of Brutus and Cassius who had raised troops for them,⁵⁶ felt no alarm and remained in Rome long enough to meet their ultimate fate at the hands of the triumvirs when they were proscribed. Perhaps they did not realise the acute qualities of Octavian's memory for names and faces, attitudes and deeds, nor the extent to which he was capable of concealing his emotions and

ambitions when it was neither politic nor convenient to display them. His restraint was formidable; his long-term ambitions yielded to the immediately practical, and otherwise remained on ice, until the time was ripe.

The conspirators were now technically outside the law, and in illegal possession of armies in the provinces that they had taken over by force. The charge of illegality was only the first step; by itself it was not sufficient to deprive Brutus and Cassius of their commands, but Octavian could not contemplate making war against them until the illegality of the actions of the conspirators had been established. More pertinently he could not open hostilities until he possessed more troops. Therefore if he could come to an arrangement with Antonius the combined weight of their joint armies would bring the goal nearer, especially since Antonius' qualities as a general were far from negligible. The time for bargaining with Antonius was approaching, though not yet to be overtly admitted. Leaving Pedius in charge of the city, Octavian marched north, ostensibly to make war on Decimus Brutus, but also offering assistance to Antonius if he so required. There may have been one other event to attend to before Octavian could leave Rome to go to meet Antonius.

During his consulship, Octavian's mother Atia died. The date is unspecified, so it can only be said that her death occurred after he became consul on 19 August and before 17 November 43 BC when the Triumvirate was established.⁵⁷ It may have been the ordeal of going into hiding during her son's march on Rome that contributed to Atia's death, but it is nowhere documented how or why she died. Octavian gave her a splendid public funeral with all honours.⁵⁸ Dio relates the probably garbled story that one of the soldiers had the effrontery to ask for her property after her death; unfortunately he does not record Octavian's response. Nor is there any record of displays of grief. It would be uncharacteristic of the resolute and calculating young man to allow it to interfere with the task in hand. It is possible that with the death of his mother, the last restraining influence on his conduct was removed; he need not now feel that he was answerable to anyone. He may also have felt that he had lost everything that mattered, his own father long ago, Julius Caesar, and now his mother. Consequently, from then on, more than ever before, he may have felt that his goal in life was all or nothing, and that no savagery or personal risk was beyond him.

Octavian allies with Antonius and Lepidus

While Octavian was on his journey northwards to meet Antonius, his colleague and kinsman Pedius managed to persuade the Senate to revoke the laws declaring Antonius and Lepidus outlaws.⁵⁹ It was no secret any longer that there would be some sort of alliance between the three Caesarian leaders, and that this union spelled danger for Brutus and Cassius, but the Senate was in no position for last-ditch heroics. The ground had been well prepared for an understanding between Antonius and Octavian. Before the battles at Mutina, Antonius had sent his famous letter to Hirtius and Octavian, known to us from

Cicero's verbal shredding of it, clause by clause, in the 13th *Philippic*, delivered in the Senate. The letter is quoted in sections, interspersed with Cicero's comments, but while the eloquence is entertaining and the vituperation very clever, what we are allowed to hear of the letter reveals that Antonius had a better grasp of reality than Cicero himself, a feature which Octavian no doubt stored in his memory for later use.⁶⁰ After the initial defeat of Antonius, Octavian had returned captured officers from Antonius' army with messages of friendship, and whenever he came upon Antonian stragglers he either enrolled them in his own army or simply let them go free.⁶¹ He did nothing to prevent Ventidius from joining Antonius, possibly because his troops would not march against Ventidius, or more likely because the complete destruction of Antonius was not likely to prove beneficial in the long run, since it would leave Octavian to face the Senate and the conspirators with no allies. Osgood says that Octavian was working towards an alliance with Antonius, who only achieved as much as he did because Octavian allowed him to do so unhindered. Everitt describes Octavian's dealings with Antonius as a balancing act, because he had no intention to crush Antonius completely.⁶² Better to let well alone at that moment; Antonius in retreat was preferable to Antonius either totally defeated or overwhelmingly victorious.

In the period after Mutina, both Antonius and Octavian had made use of the respite to fortify their respective positions. Octavian had achieved the consulship and legitimate power. In July Antonius had been joined by Asinius Pollio with two legions. Shortly afterwards, persuaded by Pollio and also common sense, Munatius Plancus joined Antonius as well, leaving Decimus Brutus vulnerably exposed with six new and untrained legions and four experienced ones, whose energies had been sapped by near starvation at Mutina. Decimus' hour had almost come. He was deflected from his retreat towards Ravenna and Aquileia by Octavian's northward march, so he turned northwest to aim for the Rhine. The inexperienced recruits left him and joined Octavian, and the rest of his army drifted away to Antonius. Accompanied by only a few horsemen, Decimus was captured and killed by a Gallic chieftain; some said it was done on the orders of Antonius. It hardly mattered; outlawed thanks to Octavian's pursuit of Caesar's murderers, deserted by his troops, isolated and in the wrong part of the Roman world, Decimus could not have survived.⁶³

Formation of the so-called second Triumvirate

For the first time in a year, Octavian and Antonius met face to face, to hold their conference on an island in the middle of a river, probably near Bologna (ancient Bononia). Only Appian says that the meeting took place at Mutina, but even though it meets the criteria of the river with islands in the middle, Mutina would have been redolent of the recent conflict, so it is more likely that Bologna was the venue, as all the other sources state.⁶⁴ Antonius had many clients in the city, which adds some weight to the argument. Wherever the meeting took place, the results are more important than the location because they changed the

course of Roman history, if not the history of the world. The stage management was public and ostentatious, bordering on the ceremonial. The protagonists approached the river with five legions apiece, then advanced to the bridge with 300 men as bodyguards. Lepidus went ahead to search the designated island, then waved his cloak when he had ascertained that all was safe. They all took up positions on the island and sat down, with Octavian in the centre as befitted his rank as consul. It took two whole days to come to the final agreement, and the results were thorough. In full view of everyone, but out of earshot and therefore enjoying complete privacy, they began to forge the union of three Caesarian leaders known to the modern world as the second Triumvirate.

The so-called 'first Triumvirate', describing the agreement made in 60/59 BC between Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Gaius Julius Caesar and Marcus Licinius Crassus, would not have been recognised under this heading by the three men concerned; it is a convenient modern term derived from analogy with the later alliance. This earlier arrangement of 60 BC was an unofficial merger of interests, not sanctioned by law, and the participants were not styled *tresviri*, nor by the modern ungrammatical term 'triumvirs'. They gave themselves no corporate title at all, but their association was dubbed by the people of Rome as the Three-Headed Monster.

Two lessons had been learned from the career of Julius Caesar. The use of the title Dictator was a sensitive issue, and the office had been abolished by Antonius soon after Caesar's assassination. It would have been impolitic to reintroduce the concept so soon after the Dictatorship had been eradicated, and besides, there were now three men, not just one. Despite the avoidance of the actual word Dictator in the triumviral titlature, the closest analogy for the titles adopted by Antonius, Octavian and Lepidus does in fact derive from the Dictatorship; both Sulla and Caesar were each in their turn legally appointed *Dictator rei publicae constituendae*. The terminology indicates that the Dictator Sulla and the Dictator Caesar were charged with reconstituting the Republic. Using almost the same formula, the members of the new alliance were appointed *Tresviri rei publicae constituendae*, with powers confirmed for five years. Between them the triumvirs possessed powers of a blatantly Dictatorial nature.⁶⁵ Since it was only a short time since Caesar had been made *Dictator perpetuo* and had been quickly assassinated after accepting the appointment, the triumvirs also avoided the slightest hint of the depressing notion '*perpetuus*' by limiting their office to a five-year term. Both Appian⁶⁶ and Dio⁶⁷ indicate that the Triumvirate was to last for five years, and the terminal date for this period is known from the *Fasti Colotiani*, contained in an inscription naming all three men, though Antonius' name was later erased after his *damnatio memoriae* in September 30 BC, which means that the inscription was set up before this date. The restored text reveals that the first five-year term of the second Triumvirate was to expire at the end of December 38 BC.⁶⁸

As Millar points out,⁶⁹ the Triumvirate was arbitrary and illegal, but unfortunately there are few sources besides Appian and Dio for the formation and method of operation of the Triumvirate. Gowing⁷⁰ enters into full discussion of

the available sources, and Bleicken⁷¹ examines the legal framework and procedural aspects of the Triumvirate. Contemporary evidence of how, precisely, the triumvirs would operate may have been suppressed when Augustus came to sole power after 27 BC, and began to erase the illegal aspects of the triumviral period. In the remaining literary sources, most of them written down long after the events and therefore not completely trustworthy, it is stated that the triumvirs were to hold equal power to the consuls, which meant in effect that they would be superior to all other magistrates, a simple phrase that has given rise to serious debate. In his examination of the basis of the power of the triumvirs, Bleicken⁷² laid the greatest emphasis on the proconsular *imperium*, which gave them power over a wider area than Rome. In Rome itself they presumably held *consularis potestas*, but Lintott⁷³ points out that this ought to mean powers equal to those of the consuls, and therefore does not explain the apparent superiority of the triumvirs to the consuls in Rome.

The triumvirs were to be empowered to make laws, to nominate magistrates and provincial governors, and all three of them were each to be appointed to a province, or as it turned out, more than one area of Roman territory grouped together as one provincial command, with control of troops.⁷⁴ Since their territories were extensive, and the three men themselves could not be in all places at once, they would govern their provinces by proxy through *legati* as Pompeius had governed Spain. Like Pompeius as sole consul governing Spain through his deputies, the triumvirs would hold power at Rome at the same time, but with this significant difference, that Pompeius had been limited to one year of office as consul, while the powers of the Triumvirate were confirmed for five years.

Since Brutus and Cassius controlled the eastern provinces and diverted the revenues from them into their own coffers, the triumvirs had to be content with the west. Antonius demanded Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, thus metaphorically flexing his muscles as the senior partner; control of the two Gauls allowed him to retain control of Italy as well. Caesar had shown how this could be done. Lepidus drew Gallia Narbonensis and Spain.⁷⁵ Octavian was to command Africa, Sicily and Sardinia. There were advantages and disadvantages for Octavian in this allocation. The main disadvantage was that his provinces would have to be fought for and won. There was a civil war in progress in Africa, and the security of the islands of Sicily and Sardinia was threatened by the naval power of Sextus Pompeius. On the other hand the struggle would be well worth the effort, because the provinces were rich in grain production, a supremely important factor at this stage, since Rome did not yet control Egypt and the wealth of agricultural produce that came with it. Whoever controlled the corn supply also controlled Rome, so it was tantamount to handing the city to Octavian, if he could win the necessary battles.⁷⁶

Before they could make any progress at all, the triumvirs had to attend to their armies; they could not afford to neglect their troops if they hoped for military success. Octavian as consul announced to the soldiers the main features of the new alliance, which were written down, signed and sealed. News of the

intended proscriptions was not broadcast, so the triumvirs could be said to have lied by omission. In order to pacify the armies and keep their spirits up, the triumvirs marked out 18 cities in the most productive areas of Italy for the settlement of veterans. This had always been problematic and the triumvirs had to ensure the loyalty of their troops by showing in advance that they intended to cater for their veterans. Appian⁷⁷ names a few of the 18 designated cities: Capua, Rhegium, Venusia, Beneventum, Nuceria, Ariminum and Vibo. Some of Octavian's recruits had come from Capua in the first place, so the settlement of veterans there was not a completely novel idea, but it was an outright and shameless bribe, and there were great upheavals when the time came to redistribute the lands and properties, but the soldiers were necessary in a way that the small landowners were not, so the triumvirs were willing to risk such disruption of civilian life as a more viable alternative to the potential risk of armed insurrection; it was expedient and the lesser of two evils. Dio⁷⁸ reports on the establishment of colonies in conjunction with his account of the depredations made by the soldiers in the countryside around the towns, thus linking the settlement of veterans with the other unacceptable activities of the armies. He implies that even these measures did not ensure the loyalty of all the soldiers, so that the triumvirs were obliged to go even further in satisfying demands, by offering to the most troublesome men the properties of the proscribed.

The actual execution of the process of veteran settlement fell to Octavian. It was not an easy task, but like the winning of his provinces the operation would yield benefits if properly carried out. The veterans would look to him as their benefactor, thus providing him with a ready power-base in Italy and a counterweight to the influence of Antonius in the north, where he controlled most of Gaul. Thus, although Octavian faced difficulties in his allotted tasks as triumvir, the gamble probably did not deter him; the stakes were high, but so were the rewards, and they were directly and consistently focussed on Rome and Italy.

The finer details of the tripartite alliance penetrated to a more personal level. Octavian was to relinquish the consulship to Antonius' man Ventidius,⁷⁹ a sacrifice which probably cost him very little, since he had already derived what he wanted from his brief tenure of the office. Marriage ties were proposed to bind the Triumvirate together. Octavian was to be betrothed to Clodia, the daughter of Antonius' wife Fulvia by her previous marriage to Publius Clodius.⁸⁰ Octavian played safe; he readily broke off the existing betrothal to the daughter of Servilius Isauricus, but probably did not enter into full marriage with Clodia, maintaining that she was too young. Dio⁸¹ implies that Octavian's betrothal to Clodia was undertaken lightly and without a sense of restriction upon his future plans, because Octavian knew that Caesar and Pompeius had been bound by marriage ties but this had not prevented them from making war on each other. There may have been another reason for Octavian's caution in not entering into full marriage with Clodia, since she was the daughter of the political trouble-maker Clodius and his forceful wife Fulvia, a formidable genetic inheritance.⁸² Lepidus' son was betrothed to Antonius' own daughter Antonia, by his first wife,

but this marriage did not take place. The younger Lepidus fell from favour when his father tried to rebel against his triumviral colleagues. Antonius eventually married off his daughter to cement an alliance with Pythodorus, a Greek from Tralles in Asia Minor. It is not recorded whether she pined for Marcus Aemilius Lepidus junior.

Lepidus is usually considered the 'sleeping partner' in the Triumvirate, but as Pontifex Maximus and a member of the aristocracy, he brought high patrician and religious status to the alliance. He was not without influence; in grateful thanks for his peace settlement with Sextus Pompeius, the Senate had voted Lepidus an equestrian statue, which was an extremely high honour, but Dio⁸³ records that the statue was torn down when he was declared *hostis*. In a speech to the Senate, delivered at a time when the senators still hoped that Lepidus would remain loyal to the Republic, Cicero noted all his sterling qualities and his family connections.⁸⁴ Though he was eventually relegated to a negligible position, Lepidus was indispensable in the early years of the Triumvirate; he was consul in 42, and he lent his legions to the war effort, three to Octavian and four to Antonius, keeping three for himself for the control of Rome and Italy while Antonius and Octavian made war against Brutus and Cassius. By remaining in Italy while the civil war with the conspirators was fought, Lepidus consigned himself to the minor role, and later to oblivion.⁸⁵

The proscriptions

Octavian's ultimate goal was not forgotten. He was implacably dedicated to the destruction of Caesar's assassins, and though Antonius had initially favoured reconciliation, he too now recognised that the time for compromise was long past. Civil war with Brutus and Cassius was inevitable, and consequently there could be no half measures. All opposition must be annihilated, either by warfare or by any other means. Accordingly, after the official triumviral programme was announced to the troops, and the soldiers went off to celebrate, the triumvirs retired together for a private conference to produce in cold blood a list of those whom they wished to eliminate by proscription. A preliminary list of 17 names, including that of Cicero, and his brother Quintus and his nephew, was sent to the consul Pedius in Rome. More names were added, in two instalments, once the triumvirs reached Rome and their powers were confirmed by law, but many of these additional names were presumably discussed now at the private meeting on the island.

This was nothing less than authorised mass murder, and the fact that Rome had seen it all before is no excuse. Ancient and modern authors alike have been reluctant to place too much blame upon Octavian for his share in these murders. Dio⁸⁶ excuses the young Caesar because he was outnumbered and overwhelmed by his colleagues, and since he never did anything comparably cruel in his later career, this post-triumviral reticence can be taken as proof that he was not really vicious. Plutarch talks of Octavian defending Cicero and then finally sacrificing

him to the blood lust of Antonius, which unfairly implies that it was Antonius alone who was responsible for the death of the orator.⁸⁷ The unpalatable truth is that Octavian had as much of a vested interest as either Antonius or Lepidus in the removal of many people, whether they were real or imagined enemies. The eradication of Cicero is held up as one of Antonius' greatest crimes, but it should never be forgotten that Octavian also had good reason to eliminate Cicero, who would perhaps in turn have eliminated him if it had been necessary. It is significant that Cicero did not deny that he had said that the young man must be praised to the skies and then 'immortalised', and it is worth emphasising that the root of Cicero's triumph as consul in 63 BC lay in the fact that, without benefit of a proper trial, he had the death sentence passed on Catilina and his associates, one of whom was Antonius' stepfather Lentulus Sura. This was a policy which Julius Caesar had advised against at the time, and the tribune Clodius made Cicero pay dearly for his haste in condemning the so-called Catilinarian conspirators. Octavian probably did not mourn Cicero, though much later, as Augustus, he acknowledged the great qualities of the statesman, when it was safe to do so.

Suetonius⁸⁸ maintains that Octavian held out against the proscriptions for some time and then gave in, but once he had given in, he proved more zealous in the end than the other two triumvirs when the infamous proceedings had begun. Modern authors too have exonerated him, claiming that Octavian's cruelty was merely assumed in order to achieve his immediate aims.⁸⁹ This rather misses the point; to a man about to die as a result of the proscriptions, it could have been of little comfort to know that Octavian was not really cruel at heart, and to those who witnessed the proscriptions but survived, perhaps without many of their family members, it was no comfort at all to know that this cruelty was merely assumed in order to meet a specific aim – one simply never knew when it might be assumed again.

Some scholars hold the opinion that Octavian himself had few enemies, and that after the publication of the first 17 names of those to be proscribed, both the elimination of Octavian's opponents and revenge for Caesar's death were properly and fully effected. This is nonsense. Octavian had as many enemies as Caesar had, or to define the problem more closely, as many enemies as he thought Caesar *may* have had, which is infinitely wider in scope. Truth and reality would play little part in the schemes of one who did not even consider taking any chances. Octavian knew the gruesome alternative and did not shrink from it, and though it has overtones of sacrilege to say so, as much blame attaches to him as to Antonius or Lepidus for the proscriptions of 43 and 42 BC.

It is remarkable that with the passage of time, combined with a fortunate series of events and careful manipulation of the legend, Octavian managed to gloss over his share in the proscriptions. Antonius inadvertently shouldered the blame by playing into Octavian's hands at every turn. His reputation as a profligate was already embedded in Roman consciousness, and he did not take sufficient care in the choice of, and control of, his associates, whose activities reflected badly upon him. This was a matter that Octavian understood by

instinct and perhaps by observation and analysis of the entourage of Caesar: there was no question of allowing friends, close colleagues, clients or agents, to act as anything other than synchronised cogs in the machine, otherwise the whole machine would cease to function. Antonius was too liberal, too easy going and perhaps too human, and his machinery collapsed. Finally, of course, when the time came to rewrite the history of the triumviral period, Antonius had the consideration to be dead, so he takes all the opprobrium for the dreadful acts of 43–42 BC. Octavian was extremely fortunate in that he outlived his two associates, and over a long period, fortified by the advantage of having brought peace, he could mould and influence the official record. Antonius was cast as the arch-villain long before he ever came to Actium, so after this preliminary blackening of his name while he still lived, the burden of guilt could quite credibly be offloaded onto him after his death.

The stories that it was Antonius who engineered the proscriptions cannot possibly be anything other than fabrications. The triumviral discussions took place in private. No-one except the three participants can have known who said what, or why he said it. Information about the widespread proscriptions was not prematurely divulged to anyone, and even the announcements to the troops did not breathe a word of the intended massacres, which came as an unexpected shock to all parties. Seemingly no-one had read between the lines to predict that this is what would happen. An alliance of the most powerful Caesarians with armies at their backs ought to have alerted people to the potential dangers, but many men who might have escaped while Octavian went to meet Antonius remained in the city long enough to become victims.

The proscriptions divided the entire state. The way in which this disagreeable episode affected ordinary people is examined in detail, using literary and epigraphic evidence, by Osgood.⁹⁰ Each and every class was affected in some way, families and friends, masters and slaves, parents and children, soldiers and civilians, rich and poor. In the general carnage, there will have been some arbitrary murders of rivals by people harbouring a grudge, and the lists of the proscribed were probably augmented by anonymous people who had an eye on someone's property, and surreptitiously added their names, in order to seize the property with legal backing. If all this is true, the triumvirs probably turned a blind eye to the subterfuge. They provided incentives to murder by offering financial rewards for heads of victims, or a smaller amount of cash and the promise of freedom to slaves who brought in heads of proscribed men. Appian and Dio catalogue the few personal sacrifices and displays of loyalty, and the very much larger number of betrayals and shameful acts of cowardice.⁹¹ Few people behaved with dignity or grace, and when the episode was all over there would be many who entertained dark memories which they would rather forget. This explains in large part how and why Augustus was successful in drawing a veil over the worst of the triumviral crimes. In 36 BC after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius, he ordered all documents concerning the years after the Ides of March 44 to be destroyed.⁹² If there was any protest, it was not recorded, or if any record of it was made, then

that was also suppressed. A new beginning was necessary for many people, and held almost universal appeal; destruction of records was equivalent to purging the memory of the past, which faded as Augustus' long reign progressed. He survived as head of state for another five decades and used the time with great success to rewrite himself, emphasising his many worthy achievements and using their brilliance to mask the shadows cast by the events on the road to power. If he had possessed the benefit of modern idiom he would probably have approved of the phrase 'no pain, no gain'.

It has been affirmed, probably incorrectly, that the main motive for the proscriptions was financial, since the properties of the proscribed could be seized and sold. This was undoubtedly one of the motives, but not the overriding one. The triumvirs were obviously desperate to raise cash, as evidenced by their later measures to force people to yield up a percentage of their total wealth. This enforced taxation, coupled with the sale of properties of their victims, has perhaps masked the intentions of the triumvirs. It has been suggested that they were perfectly content to allow some men to escape to join Brutus and Cassius, or to be rescued by Sextus Pompeius, because the triumvirs were not interested in the removal of persons, only in separating them from their cash.⁹³ This was indeed the fate of many of the proscribed, who conveniently left their properties and fortunes behind, a circumstance of which the triumvirs took immediate advantage, since they were not averse to gaining wealth in this way. But it was merely a fortuitous by-product; the real aim was dispersal of enemies by fair means or foul. During the first days of the licensed killing, the city was sealed off to prevent the escape of the intended victims, so in these instances removal by death was quite decidedly the primary aim, and the financial profit was merely a gratuitous bonus. Kienast is surely right to point out that the financial motive was secondary, and the driving necessity behind the proscriptions was eradication of opposition.⁹⁴

The triumvirs made no secret of this. The Triumvirate was formally constituted on 27 November 43 BC by the *Lex Titia* passed by the tribune Publius Titius,⁹⁵ and that same night the first list of proscribed men was posted up in Rome, with 130 names added to the first list of 17 men. The proclamation of the proscriptions contains an unequivocal statement of intent to sweep aside all their enemies once and for all. Appian's text of the triumviral proscriptions, written in Greek, is probably a faithful rendition of the original Latin, as Appian himself claims at the end of this section of his history,⁹⁶ but even if Appian can be accused of misquotation or embellishment of the original proclamation, the total eradication of opposition was a concept that presumably found acceptance among his listeners and readers. Appian quotes the final toll as 300 senators and 2,000 equites,⁹⁷ which has been repeated and accepted by some scholars, despite the discrepancy in Livy's account, where it is stated that the victims numbered 130 senators.⁹⁸ Attempts to reconcile the two figures are doomed to failure because the numbers of victims simply cannot be confirmed; besides, it is possible that Appian may have included in his figures those who fled as well as those

who died, whereas Livy may have listed only the dead.⁹⁹ The total of 300 senators is an almost incredible but possibly significant figure. It is in fact the entire Senate of pre-Caesarian days, and amounts to one-third of the inflated Senate of 900 that Caesar left behind.¹⁰⁰ This is not to make the claim that it was the entire pre-Caesarian Senate that was eliminated, but it demonstrates how ruthlessly and comprehensively the triumvirs planned the removal of their enemies.

Absolute accuracy as to numbers is perhaps not quite so important as the ideology behind the proscriptions, which basically concerned the long-term survival of the triumvirs themselves and the security of Italy while Antonius and Octavian fought the coming civil war in the east. For this purpose the Senate had to be brought to heel. Caesar's deliberate policy of *clementia* had not worked, nor had Caesar been saved from assassination by swelling the ranks of the Senate with his own supposedly loyal men. There had already been a thinning of the upper echelons of the Senate; some men of consular rank had died, others had been killed in the first round of the civil war with Antonius in Italy, and some of them died when the Liberators fought their initial battles with the Caesarians in the east. The proscriptions can be interpreted as an additional form of culling, the effects of which were severe because, as Dio points out, the triumvirs each had their own circle of enemies, only some of whom mutually overlapped.¹⁰¹

In addition, it was not only individual senators that had to be removed, because individuals by themselves were not always dangerous. It was the power blocks formed by the networks of alliances that represented the worst threat to the triumvirs, so in many cases the friends, families and associates of the proscribed senators were also eliminated.¹⁰² The equites who fell victim to the purge may not have posed any direct threat to the existence of the triumvirs, but as the satellites, business agents and financiers of senators, they were naturally eradicated with them. It was essential to remove each power base very thoroughly, from senatorial figurehead right down to loyal bankers and assiduous agents. Only by so doing could the triumvirs eliminate the potential regrowth of dangerous pockets of opposition. The triumvirs even proscribed members of their own families. Lepidus proscribed his brother Aemilius Paullus, who had been instrumental in having him declared *hostis*. Antonius included his uncle, Lucius Caesar, in the lists of victims. It may be significant that both these men escaped death. It may have been intended all along that they should do so, perhaps because the inclusion of their relatives in the proscriptions was merely a gesture to demonstrate just how seriously and ruthlessly the triumvirs intended to pursue their aims.¹⁰³

Though their position was new and constitutionally unprecedented, and their power was extensive and arbitrary, the triumvirs were anxious to remain as far as possible within the existing framework of the Republican administrative machinery.¹⁰⁴ However, they had no intention of limiting themselves to what it was possible to achieve by remaining passively within the bounds of that

framework. Rather, they considered what they wanted to put into effect and then found a way of adapting the law to conform to their needs, much as Caesar and Pompeius had done in the past, but now the precedent was employed more ruthlessly and rapidly.¹⁰⁵ Dio is more forthright: 'they ordered everything just as it seemed good to them'. When the Triumvirate was constituted by the *Lex Titia* on 27 November 43, the five-year term was extended by nearly another month, so that the terminal date was to be 31 December 38, a date which is attested epigraphically.¹⁰⁶ The renewal of the Triumvirate for a second term after that date is fraught with difficulties, but in 43 BC, the need for a second five-year term may not have been foreseen. Immediate worries about the probable duration of the Triumvirate were no doubt subsumed by the serious affair of the proscriptions. The first list of 17 proscribed men had already been published, and on 28 November, the day after the Triumvirate was established, another list of names was posted up in the city, followed by a third and longer list some time later. Just before or possibly during the ensuing panic, the consul Pedius died; he perhaps believed that the first 17 victims were the only ones to be proscribed, and thus met his end in a state of shock. The cause of his death is not established.

Of the original 17 proscribed, the most illustrious victim was Cicero, who was killed on 7 December. He made arrangements to flee, and in fact would have had sufficient time to escape to the camp of Brutus or Cassius if he had so wished, but he may have lost heart after his brother and nephew were killed in Rome. His vacillation can be interpreted as cowardice, but it may have derived from a stubbornly heroic attachment to Italy, conflicting with his sense of duty which compelled him to join Brutus. He met the soldiers bravely at the end.¹⁰⁷ Antonius ordained that his head and hands should be nailed to the Rostra in the Forum. It was a reminder that Cicero had delivered his speeches vilifying Antonius there, and a salutary lesson that he had met a gruesome end for having done so. It is possible to understand Antonius' extreme hatred after the execution of his stepfather as a member of the Catilinarian conspiracy in 63 BC, and second because in all the personal and political jibes of the *Philippics* and no doubt in private conversations, Cicero had deliberately provoked Antonius beyond endurance. But Antonius would have earned much more credit for himself if he had limited his venom to a speech of his own and then allowed Cicero a decent funeral.¹⁰⁸

The triumvirs take power

Rapid and forceful removal of enemies represented only half of the necessary measures to establish the Triumvirate. There could be no guarantee of security for the triumvirs unless they could also assume immediate control of the government of the city of Rome and the provinces. The consuls and the provincial governors constituted one of the most serious potential threats, and unlike the tribunes, who constituted an equally damaging but different source of

opposition, they could not be so easily bought and manipulated. The consulship was therefore the first office to be organised to the triumvirs' satisfaction.¹⁰⁹ For what remained of 43, Publius Ventidius and Gaius Carrinas, both of whom were Antonius' men, were to be consuls in place of Octavian who resigned and Pedius who was dead. The consuls for the ensuing years were designated now, those for 42 being Lepidus and Plancus. They were to be succeeded by Publius Servilius Isauricus and Lucius Antonius in 41, followed by Asinius Pollio and Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus in 40. Each candidate for the most important offices had to be chosen with care, and it was important to fill all the offices for some time to come, so that Antonius and Octavian could rely upon peace and quiet behind them while they waged war in the east. The government of the western provinces was divided up between the triumvirs themselves, and then exercised via delegates, much as Pompeius had governed Spain while remaining in Rome. For the time being, the eastern provinces were closed to the Triumvirate. Minor provincial offices and city magistracies in Rome¹¹⁰ were redistributed as the proscribed victims vacated them, until it became virtually a free-for-all, with appointments offered as rewards or sought as favours. The proscriptions embraced wealthy town councillors, whose place was taken by soldiers loyal to the triumvirs. The incentive to the soldiers no doubt entailed not just acquisition of the office of town councillor but also the property that the eliminated councillor had held.¹¹¹ The method of appointment did not matter, since the end result was that most of the city magistracies in Rome, most of the western provincial commands, and the government of towns and cities, would be held by Caesarian partisans. The triumvirs perhaps did not control absolutely all the appointments; some magistrates were probably still elected, but the survival of the elections is debatable, and even if elections did take place, they may have comprised only a rather nervous but formal ratification of triumviral wishes.¹¹² Traditional forms and procedures were not abolished, but it would require an enormous act of faith, then as now, to maintain that after 27 November 43 the Republic was alive and well.

The triumvirs gather funds

The financial situation was chaotic. Brutus and Cassius had diverted the taxes of the eastern provinces to their own use, thus depriving the triumvirs of the greatest source of ready cash.¹¹³ The western provinces were never as wealthy as their eastern counterparts, and in any case they were almost exhausted. Italy itself had to bear the brunt of the triumvirs' expenses, which were monumental in scale and immediate in the need for settlement. Payment for the troops was always the most pressing consideration, and preparations for the coming war were just as urgent. The one went hand in hand with the other; if no pay was forthcoming the soldiers would hardly be co-operative when it came to making war overseas, against Romans like themselves. It has been argued above that the desire for financial profit was not the main reason for the proscriptions, and even

if it had been, the results would have been disappointing. The sales of confiscated estates did not produce much more than a small percentage of the required sums. As Dio¹¹⁴ explains, no-one except perhaps the soldiers dared to buy the properties of the proscribed, because nobody was willing to reveal that he possessed wealth, so in the end only the soldiers had the courage to purchase the properties, probably at knock down prices. They were probably the only ones to gain from the proscriptions. The triumvirs may have expected very low returns from the disposal of estates. The same phenomenon of low returns on the property of proscribed individuals had been at work under the regime of Lucius Cornelius Sulla. For Antonius, Octavian and Lepidus, the sales of many of the properties to the soldiers may have been an end in itself, in order to keep at least a portion of the troops contented.

Since the confiscations were not highly profitable, the triumvirs were far short of their desired target¹¹⁵ so other sources of cash had to be found. Antiquated taxes that had not been levied for years were revived, and newly invented taxes were imposed.¹¹⁶ The consuls of 42, Lepidus and Plancus, levied a percentage tax on wealth, and instituted a system of self-assessment whereby each person estimated his own contribution, which naturally led to charges of attempts to defraud the government and then to more confiscations by way of punishment.

This wealth tax even extended to women, 1,400 of whom were singled out for contributions.¹¹⁷ Under the leadership of Hortensia, the daughter of Cicero's old rival the lawyer Hortensius, and with the support of Octavian's sister and Antonius' mother, the women pointed out that since they were not allowed to vote or to take part in government, sequestration of their resources was unfair, especially after many of their husbands, fathers and sons had been killed or driven away. They declared themselves ready to make voluntary contributions should there be any threat to Italy or to Rome, but they particularly objected to being asked to provide resources to fund a civil war. The triumvirs were not pleased by their revolt, but next day they reduced the original list to 400 names. After this attempt to raise cash had been partly thwarted, there remained the temple treasuries. In this there was nothing new; generals of all epochs before and since have robbed temple treasuries to fund wars, but the triumvirs brought particular opprobrium upon themselves because they seized the personal savings of individuals entrusted to the care of the Vestals.¹¹⁸

Divine Caesar

During the last days of 43 BC Plancus and Lepidus held separate triumphs, respectively for successes in Gaul and for negotiations with Sextus Pompeius.¹¹⁹ Then they took up office as consuls for 42. On 1 January, the Senate and magistrates took a solemn, binding oath to maintain the acts of Caesar the Dictator,¹²⁰ an unequivocal return to the status quo of 44 BC, where all the triumvirs could pick up the threads of government at the point where Antonius the consul left off.

After confirming Caesar's acts in the earthly sphere, the triumvirs also confirmed his presence in the heavens. All three men stood to gain from the enrolment of Caesar among the gods, but none more than Octavian, who soon began to call himself *divi filius*, a calculated advertisement that he was the son of a god. This was unprecedented and daring, and an unequivocal declaration of his intention to rise higher than most other men. Precisely when he began to use the name is disputed; he had no reason to be coy about it and no reason for tactful delay. There is evidence to suggest that he had already adopted it by 40 BC: a series of coins bearing the legend *Divi Juli Filius* and portraying both military standards and agricultural implements has been dated to the period of the land settlements just after Philippi, a context that is most apt in view of the appearance of the symbols of the military and agricultural equipment on the coins. This date has been disputed, but at present it cannot be proven conclusively that Octavian adopted the title *divi filius* any earlier than 40. It is worth pointing out that it is unlikely that he wasted four years after the assassination of Caesar before he realised the advantages inherent in the name.¹²¹

As a further honour to Caesar, it was decreed that a temple to *Divus Julius* should be built in the Forum on the site of Caesar's funeral pyre.¹²² The temple was finally dedicated in 29 BC. The cult of *Divus Julius* was propagated actively; it was officially established in Italy by the *Lex Rufrena*.¹²³ Scholars are divided over the relationship between the divine honours awarded to Caesar just before his death, and the deification in 42. Part of the argument hinges on whether Caesar intended to set up a divine monarchy on the pattern familiar in the east. For some authors it is quite obvious that this was indeed his goal,¹²⁴ while others point out the dearth of contemporary evidence from such writers as Cicero, who would surely have had something witty and damning to say if he suspected Caesar of such a scheme.¹²⁵ It is possible that the question of monarchy, divine or otherwise, is a modern confusion, quite peripheral to the main issue of divinity alone.

A more sensible and indeed down to earth suggestion is that the divine honours awarded to the living Caesar and his deification after his death were linked from the beginning, and were always intended to be so, in that his divinity was recognised but he could not actually become a god until he was dead. The suggestion made by Gesche¹²⁶ that the whole process was bound up together and planned to take place in stages, some before death and some afterwards, seems the most sensible interpretation. In this scenario the divine honours had as their logical consequence the promise of deification once Caesar had departed life on earth. If this is the case, the triumvirs were simply bringing to fruition the process begun by law while Caesar was still alive, thereby doing justice to his memory. There is support for this in the narrative of Dio, who treated the divine honours and the deification of Caesar as a continuous development; for him the divine honours granted to the living Caesar comprised a necessary evolutionary stage in the creation of the dead *Divus Julius*.¹²⁷ It is difficult to discern how much Dio's view may have been attributable to influences from his own times,

when deification of the emperor was a fully established and normal procedure, unless the emperor in question had been particularly obnoxious. Nero and Domitian were never deified, and Commodus escaped damnation only because Severus wished to link his family with the dynasty of Marcus Aurelius, and could not afford to acknowledge that the son of that emperor had been less than ideal.

Depending upon the acceptance or rejection of Caesar as divine monarch, the intentions of Octavian with regard to the cult of *Divus Julius* are interpreted very differently. For some, Octavian was the rightful successor to Caesar, and as the conscientious adopted son, he wished only to honour the memory of his father. It could also be said that Octavian ruthlessly exploited the divinity of his ancestor in an opportunistic bid to enhance his own power. In either case he profited. Divine ancestry was not an uncommon claim among the Roman aristocracy.¹²⁸ Caesar himself claimed descent from Venus, and all the triumvirs utilised the system at one time or another, chiefly by means of their coinage, where they advertised the family mythology of the Antonii, the Aemilii, and the Julii. In the east Antonius was lauded as a god on earth after his fair treatment of the eastern cities after the Civil War, and was equated with both Hercules and Dionysus.¹²⁹ For Roman aristocrats the connection with divinity was mostly rooted in the distant past, but Octavian's claim was much more direct. Ostentatiously rejecting divinity on his own account, he rose to power at one remove, via Caesar's divine image.¹³⁰ According to Dio, Agrippa wanted to place the image of Augustus as a god among other gods in the Pantheon, but Augustus refused, and installed *Divus Julius* instead.¹³¹ Octavian's stance was all the more effective because his relationship was not to a mythical goddess from a remote age, but to a real person from the recent past. The audience who would be most appreciative of this relationship would naturally be the army.

It has been argued that deification removed Caesar from the mortal realm of envy and hatred,¹³² and that Octavian was concerned to drive a wedge between the image and the memory of Caesar the Dictator and that of the new, improved, and infinitely more marketable divine Caesar.¹³³ Gradually the latter obliterated the former, until Augustan literature could ignore Caesar the Dictator altogether. If he is mentioned at all, it is usually when the worldly and authoritarian aspects come to light, but this is seldom seen. The establishment of the division between the Dictator and *Divus Julius* was necessarily a slow process, and the emphasis must be on the gradual element in the transformation. In January 42, too many people remembered the earthly Caesar the Dictator and Caesar the General. The triumvirs had just declared all his acts valid and binding, so however hard Octavian tried to focus attention on *Divus Julius* and so to distract attention from the Dictator, for some years the true image would remain. Indeed it was important that it did not yet fade entirely, because it was the most influential tool in playing upon the loyalty of the army. The sling bullets used by Octavian's army at the siege of Perusia were inscribed *Divum Julium*¹³⁴ and the watchword of the army was *Divus Julius*.¹³⁵ This was as much a declaration of intent to the outside world as it was a reminder to Octavian's own

army, though it served both purposes well enough. The propagation of the idea of Caesar as a god, powerful and protective, would inspire confidence in the soldiers, but at the same time it was important that they should also remember him as a man, on the basic human level of their balding general who braved anything and everything to lead them to victory. By implication this meant that the depersonalisation of Caesar could not yet be absolute. The sheer utility of all this was quite undisguised and served its purpose until 29 BC, when Octavian finally dedicated the temple to *Divus Julius* in the Forum in Rome. Throughout the Triumvirate and even for some time after the battle of Actium, Octavian's purpose was to advertise and execute vengeance for Caesar's death and to establish a solid and sacrosanct foundation for his own power. After he had eliminated his rivals and achieved a steady increment in his power and prestige, Octavian placed less emphasis on *Divus Julius* and more on his own position as princeps.¹³⁶ In the same proportion, though his reliance upon the army was no less permanent and total, it became less overt.

The road to Philippi

The army was at the core of events of 42, but it was Antonius and not Octavian who quite rightly emerged with all the laurels. The sources, even the favourable Augustan ones, all concur in describing to a greater or lesser degree Octavian's lack of success. He sent Salvidienus Rufus to oust Sextus Pompeius from Sicily, which was designated one of Octavian's own provinces, but the sailors and soldiers under Pompeius were more experienced and easily drove Salvidienus off. Perhaps the experience and strength of Sextus had been underestimated.¹³⁷ The project had to be shelved because the campaign against Brutus and Cassius was beginning, and this took precedence over winning back Sicily.

When Octavian and Antonius crossed the Adriatic with their combined strength of 28 legions, finally arriving at Philippi, Octavian's performance earned him no credit. He was ill, and at first he remained behind at Dyrrachium, but followed Antonius for compelling reasons. If Antonius were to be defeated, Octavian would have to face the conspirators alone, which would have been potentially disastrous. On the other hand, an independently victorious Antonius would present different but hardly less formidable problems.¹³⁸ So Octavian and Antonius faced Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, where the conspirators had dug themselves in with mountains on one flank and a marsh on the other, and in front of them they had built a fortified line, which Antonius pierced only with difficulty. The battle of Philippi (Figure 3.3) actually comprised two battles, the first a stalemate and the second a victory for Antonius.¹³⁹ In the first battle, Antonius captured the camp of Cassius, while Brutus was doing the same damage by capturing the camp of Octavian. There are variations on the story of how Octavian avoided capture and death; in his *Memoirs* Augustus claimed that he was given warning in a dream of one of his friends that he should stay in the battle line, even though he was ill.¹⁴⁰ This he did and thus was

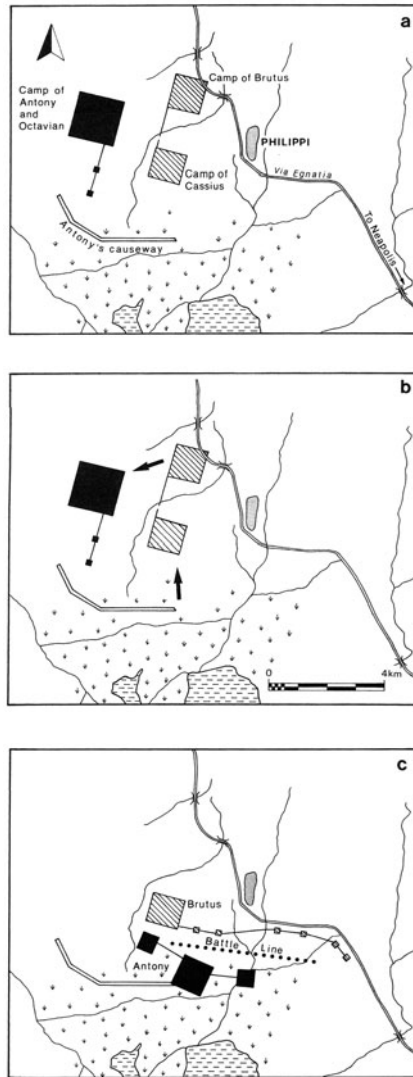


Figure 3.3 Plans of the battle of Philippi in October–November 42 BC.

Notes: 3a shows the camps of the two opposing armies. Antony built a causeway behind Cassius' camp to try to cut the communications of the so-called Liberators.

3b shows how Antony advanced from the causeway and captured Cassius' camp. Cassius was driven off to the northeast, and committed suicide because he thought that Brutus must have been defeated. During the battle Brutus captured the camp of Octavian, who survived by hiding in the marsh.

3c: Brutus occupied Cassius' camp and built a series of smaller camps to prevent Antony from outflanking him. For some time he avoided a battle, but he decided to fight in mid-November. Antony and Octavian encircled him and drove him off.

Source: Drawn by Graeme Stobbs.

not in the camp at the time of its capture. It may be true; stranger things have been known to happen in wars. But even Agrippa and Maecenas do not deny that Octavian hid in a marsh at some point during the fighting.¹⁴¹ Augustus never made any claim to have been a great soldier, and perhaps he merely upgraded the scene from bog to battle line to satisfy posterity. His personal courage should never be in doubt, nor should it be doubted that he was genuinely ill at Philippi, though the nature of his ailments remains a mystery.

After the first battle, there was an immediate return to the status quo, because neither side could afford to hang onto their gains, so the captured camps were reoccupied by their rightful owners. The event that tipped the balance was the unnecessary suicide of Cassius, who was discouraged because he thought that Brutus had been defeated. Reliable and accurate information might have saved the day, but now Brutus was alone. He knew very well that his best option was to wait, secure in a defensive position, well supplied by the fleet which disrupted the communications between Rome and the triumvirs and sometimes captured their convoys. In the end, if Brutus had simply waited long enough, Octavian and Antonius would have been forced to move to find food. The situation was an echo of the campaign in 48 BC, when Pompeius knew that he could outwit Caesar for the same reasons, but like Brutus, he too was a victim of the Republican system. They were both of them subject to the constant nagging of insubordinate subordinates, and though they were both single-minded, they were neither of them sufficiently autocratic to master their fire-eating colleagues. After an interval of about 20 days, Brutus risked battle, and lost.¹⁴² His camp was captured and held by Octavian, while Antonius and the cavalry pursued Brutus himself, who conveniently committed suicide. The survivors of noble rank fled, some of them to join Sextus Pompeius, others elsewhere, and for the time being dispersal was as good as death in battle, since it meant an end to armed and united opposition to the triumvirs.

Octavian put to death everyone who had been a party to the murder of Caesar. Stories were told of his inflexible cruelty, and his lack of interest in even the most harmless relaxation of ferocity. He refused proper burial to at least one of his victims, and displayed complete lack of compassion when a father begged to die in place of his son. Octavian told them to play *mora*, a game of chance, or to draw lots as to who should die.¹⁴³ He executed the father and then the son committed suicide; the two deaths were regrettable, but the deaths were not the most lamented aspect. Octavian's cavalier treatment of the two men stirred deep emotions; perhaps he thought it just retribution for the cold-blooded murder of his adoptive father, who had shown mercy but had never been granted the chance to plead for his life.¹⁴⁴ Implacable and indifferent, Octavian probably despised the men who pleaded with him for mercy of any description. In two years, he had not grown weary of vengeance, and his unfeeling anger may not have been founded entirely on mere play acting. The possibility that he entertained entirely genuine and completely undiminished hatred for the murderers of Caesar should not be dismissed. If nothing else, he was consistent.

After Philippi

The ancient historians recognised the momentous importance of the battle of Philippi, because it marked the transformation of the republican form of government into that of the Triumvirate and then the Principate. Both Appian¹⁴⁵ and Dio,¹⁴⁶ in summing up the importance of the battle of Philippi and its aftermath, depicted the deaths of Brutus and Cassius as divine retribution for the murder of Caesar. The two accounts of Appian and Dio coincide on many points.¹⁴⁷ They both saw the battle as a conflict far greater than just a civil war between two factions, for it was nothing less than the end of the Republic and beginning of the Principate, though to contemporaries this far-reaching conclusion may not have seemed quite so obvious, because at this juncture there was still a long way to go. Appian describes the result of the battle without mincing words: 'the form of government was decided chiefly by that day's work, and they have not yet gone back to democracy'. Dio adds that the battle was fought to decide which form of government should be adopted in Rome, and that democracy was impossible and unworkable for the Empire. Dio's conclusion is starker in its judgement that this was a civil war: 'What else can one say regarding the contestants on both sides than that the vanquished were Romans and the victor was Caesar!' But though that was the logical conclusion with the benefit of hindsight, the young Caesar's victory was not yet complete, and would not be complete, for several more years. After the battle, according to Suetonius,¹⁴⁸ the soldiers saluted Antonius as Imperator, but reviled Octavian for his cruelty to the prisoners. If this is not complete fabrication, it may indicate the work of Antonius' agents against Octavian, and it may have influenced the way in which, two years later, Octavian dealt with the machinations of Lucius Antonius and Marcus Antonius' wife Fulvia, who stirred up the events culminating in the Perusine war.

At any rate, it is highly unlikely that either of the two triumvirs trusted each other. They parted on a theoretical basis of equality, but in the practical sense Antonius was the acknowledged superior. He remained in the east, where there was much to do, and Octavian returned to Italy with the discharged veterans whom he now had to settle on the land. On the way back to Rome he was so ill that rumours began to circulate that he was dead or dying. Allegedly the Senate rejoiced, and these rumours disquieted Octavian sufficiently to prompt him to send messages ahead to Rome proving that he was still alive and on his way there.¹⁴⁹ He arrived at Brundisium and was forced to lodge there for a while in order to recuperate, delaying his arrival in Rome until early in 41 BC. He would need all his strength to perform the tasks that awaited him in Italy.

The allocation of the provinces was reshuffled once again. Allegedly on the basis of Caesar's original plans, Cisalpine Gaul ceased to be a separate province and was incorporated into Italy.¹⁵⁰ It made perfect sense to do so, utilising the Alps as the northern boundary of Italia. Beyond this boundary, the natives were not wholly subdued or pacified, and could not be counted on as allies, nor was

passage through the Alps wholly under Roman control; it would require several more years and the talents of several generals, and ultimately the skills of Tiberius and Drusus, before Roman domination of the Alpine passes was established.

Lepidus was now relegated to the background as far as his political power in Rome and in the provinces was concerned. The official reason for reducing his influence was the suspicion that he was in regular and possibly nefarious communication with Sextus Pompeius, a charge which gained some credence owing to his past record of co-operation with Sextus. Gallia Narbonensis was wrested from Lepidus and given to Antonius, who already commanded Gallia Comata, and had control of all the eastern provinces as well. Octavian promised Lepidus command of Africa, provided that he could eventually demonstrate his loyalty to the Triumvirate.¹⁵¹ In reality Antonius controlled Lepidus' African province from the east.¹⁵² In exchange Octavian took over Lepidus' erstwhile province of Spain, which was almost wholly in the hands of Sextus Pompeius. Salvidienus was despatched to the province with six legions, to win it back for Octavian.

Settlement of veterans

The most urgent task in Italy was to settle the veterans on lands promised them at the outset of the civil wars. Though there were some deserted farms and some remnants of state owned lands in Italy, there was nowhere near enough to settle the vast numbers of veterans. The total is unknown and much disputed. The numbers of veterans to be settled in Italy are reported as 170,000 in Appian's narrative,¹⁵³ which is an almost impossible figure. Keppie¹⁵⁴ estimates the total as 46,000. This figure, daunting enough without the literary exaggeration of Appian, includes the veterans from Africa and the western provinces, and those from the legions which had fought at Philippi, from both sides. The settlement of veterans embraced the defeated soldiers of Brutus and Cassius, because settling them on the land was preferable to allowing groups of discontented men to roam freely around the provinces and Italy. If they could be given farms and a means of making a living by Octavian, then they would be aware that like his own soldiers, they owed everything to him.¹⁵⁵

The important point is that the settlement involved the displacement of farmers who made a modest living from the land, and their substitution by soldiers whose relationship with the plough and knowledge of animal husbandry was tenuous. On the whole the settlement programme was neither a social nor an agricultural success, creating hardship for some and prosperity for others, and as such it was divisive rather than cohesive. Not all the soldiers were to be given lands in Italy; the provinces were affected too, though the full effects were probably more keenly felt in Rome, where landless men and their families converged on the city. The evidence for the upheaval is assembled and evaluated by Osgood, who devotes a whole chapter to the theme.¹⁵⁶ It is difficult to discern any viable contemporary alternative to the appropriation of lands for the soldiers, given that the structure of the Republic and the Roman way of life did not

allow for equivalents to state benefits or the modern job-creation schemes that have traditionally, if sporadically, mopped up veterans from more recent armies. It was a task in which Octavian could not possibly please everyone, and the dilemma was not resolved until he was in a position to create a standing army with regulated pay scales and pension schemes, but that was in the distant future. Appian's statement¹⁵⁷ that it was because of his ill health that Octavian chose the task of veteran settlement rather than anything more martial is probably wide of the mark; it was definitely not a sinecure for a convalescent. Syme¹⁵⁸ says that Octavian's task was 'arduous, unpopular and all but fatal to himself'. The impossibility of the task was comparable to being set up to fail, and this may be the reason why Lepidus did not seem to have agitated to play a larger part in government and in fact meekly acquiesced in the loss of his provinces. He probably did not want to become embroiled in this unpopular and disruptive settlement programme. He certainly did not render any assistance to Octavian.

Nor did the consuls Lucius Antonius and Servilius Isauricus provide any help with the problem of the redistribution of land, but it is suspected that these two were in Antonius' pocket. Dio commented¹⁵⁹ that the power behind the two consuls was in reality that of Marcus Antonius and his wife Fulvia. The collaboration of Fulvia and Marcus Antonius has never been proven conclusively, but the fact was that eventually Lucius Antonius combined forces with his sister-in-law to do everything in their power to hinder Octavian's progress, playing off the farmers on one side against the veteran soldiers on the other. Neither Lucius nor Fulvia seemed to have any clear positive programme of their own in mind to substitute for the state of affairs in Italy, which lends some credence to the widely held belief that they were acting on instructions from Antonius himself, the only identifiable aim being to stir up trouble in whatever way they thought fit. The tools to foment discontent were immediately to hand. The farmers who were evicted to make room for the soldiers naturally complained because they had lost their means of subsistence; the soldiers complained that they had not received what was promised to them; so there was sufficient discontent in the air to fuel Lucius and Fulvia's campaign against Octavian, whose popularity sank like a stone. He severed his connections with Fulvia and her entourage by despatching her daughter Clodia, whom he was supposed to marry, back to her mother. This was no hardship, because as already stated above, he probably distrusted her character.

Though the veteran settlement was a thorny problem, according to Appian the tact and diplomacy exercised by Octavian initially resolved some of the difficulties. Appian¹⁶⁰ ascribes the disturbances caused by Lucius Antonius to jealousy on behalf of his brother, because Octavian was reaping all the praise whilst Marcus Antonius, the real victor of Philippi, was absent. This may be a distortion of the truth. Octavian's relationship with the veterans was not always smooth. The soldiers quickly turned against him when his actions did not conform to their desires. They nearly lynched him when he ejected one of their colleagues from the rows of seats reserved for the equestrians at the games. The first 14 rows of seats were assigned to the equestrians by a law of 67 BC passed by the tribune

Lucius Roscius Otho, so Octavian had of necessity to be seen to uphold the law even if, or most especially if, the offender was a soldier from the armies to which he owed his elevated position. Favouritism towards one of his own supporters simply would not do. Since the soldier in question disappeared for a while, the rumour spread that he had been taken away and executed, so the soldiers rioted, baying for Octavian's blood. Then the soldier turned up unharmed, in the nick of time.¹⁶¹ All this in the space of a few moments revealed the volatile fickleness of the mob and the soldiery, and the fragility of any relationship with them that was not constantly and assiduously groomed. It was a valuable lesson, duly noted by Dio.¹⁶² The soldiers had become arrogant and greedy because they had realised their value to the triumvirs. Appian says that Octavian indulged them with gifts and money, and by this means he earned their affection if not their respect, so the Antonians reasoned that they must pry the veterans away from Octavian before he became supreme. Accordingly Lucius opened hostilities by insisting that the veterans of the Antonian legions ought to be settled by Antonius' own agents, and not by Octavian, which gave rise to the notion that perhaps Octavian had not treated the Antonian troops as impartially as he ought to have done. Octavian tried to heal the rift that Lucius had created; unexpectedly, perhaps, he authorised Antonius' chosen agents to oversee the settlement of his troops. Lucius was temporarily thwarted on that particular issue, because Octavian's ready compliance ensured that he now had not a leg to stand on, so he had to think up some other scheme for the discomfiture of the young Caesar. Disarmed by Octavian for the moment, Lucius changed tactics and went on to take up the cause of the dispossessed landowners.

The unknown quantity behind all this is the extent to which Antonius himself connived at the scheming of his brother and his own wife. He has his defenders, ancient and modern, who claim that he was quite ignorant of what was going on in Italy; Appian insists that Antonius knew nothing of the activities of Lucius and Fulvia.¹⁶³ Probably no-one really did know, even at the time, what part Marcus Antonius played in the political wrangling between his brother the consul and Octavian. There is little surviving contemporary evidence to make any judgement as to whether Antonius had instigated the disturbances via Lucius and Fulvia, or whether he merely condoned their scheming while he simply waited on the sidelines, feigning ignorance, and remaining aloof until he could assess the outcome and then tailor his response accordingly.¹⁶⁴ Dio also makes the cynical comment¹⁶⁵ that whatever the result, it was Antonius who gained, either as champion of the veterans, or of the dispossessed landowners. Pelling¹⁶⁶ says that 'a studied vagueness suited Antonius' purpose'.

Antonius may have been completely innocent and not embroiled in the matter at all. The ancient authors themselves, writing many years after the events, were uncertain about Antonius' complicity in the schemes of his brother and his wife. Appian¹⁶⁷ describes how Lucius and Fulvia wrote to Antonius to inform him of events, but despite a thorough search, Appian says that he had no success in tracing Antonius' reply. In a later passage, insisting that Antonius was innocent

and knew nothing about the problems created by his brother and his wife, Appian¹⁶⁸ indicates that he probably believed that no such letter ever existed. Syme¹⁶⁹ suspects that Fulvia was the instigator, but as Dio pointed out,¹⁷⁰ all hostilities ceased when she fled to Greece and died there, so that, whether or not she was the guilty party, everyone could then blame the outbreak of war upon her with impunity. Huzar¹⁷¹ suggests that Fulvia could see that Octavian was more dangerous to Antonius than he had realised, and so tried to neutralise him.

Dangerous or not, Octavian could never be certain that his triumviral partner was innocent. He could not accuse Antonius directly, but he no doubt reasoned that if he lost his grip on the soldiers and the populace alike, and allowed everything to get out of control, then that might provide the motive for recalling Antonius, to restore the law and order that he, Octavian, had ignominiously let slip. The ploy had been used before in Republican history, and if it was successful this time, when everything was in chaos, then Octavian would be finished forever, except to survive as a satellite of Antonius, either totally obliterated, or perhaps just effaced but magnanimously forgiven for his failures; allowances would be made for his youth, ill health, and inexperience, and a complete block put upon his further career. Antonius could then abolish the Triumvirate, assume the consulship, restore the constitution (after a fashion) and keep control of Rome and his provinces, well within the legal framework that was so necessary for success. Octavian would not be able to emerge again except by making war on Antonius, which would mark him out as the unconstitutional, ambitious but guilty party, which would destroy all his credit. Then there was the very real possibility that even if he risked making war, he would lose.

It was a dangerous time for Octavian. The involvement or otherwise of Marcus Antonius did not affect the immediate situation to any degree. In the end it was inevitable that Octavian would have to fight it out with the consul Lucius on Italian soil. There were attempts at reconciliation. In Dio's narrative¹⁷² all the credit goes to Octavian for attempting to negotiate, but this is largely because Octavian is portrayed as a prototype Augustus, already part of the legend, wise and authoritative with right on his side. According to Appian¹⁷³ Octavian sent a mission to Antonius to try to find out what he really wanted, but it was too late and produced nothing positive. Both Appian and Dio describe how attempts to bring about a reconciliation between Lucius and Octavian were made on the initiative of the soldiers.¹⁷⁴ At Teanum, Octavian and Lucius held a meeting, during which the soldiers urged them to settle their differences, but the proposals for peace were never put into effect. What was revealed was that the struggle was not really about settlement of veterans and the displacement of farmers. This was only the useful catalyst. On a wider front the conflict concerned the powers of the consuls and the legally sanctioned, but technically unconstitutional powers of the triumvirs, with Octavian as the main target. Lepidus had already been neutralised and Marcus Antonius was probably sitting on the fence, inscrutable, distant, and as yet unimpeachable. Each side began to prepare for war. The legions tried to arrange another meeting at Gabii, between

their own representatives, Octavian, and Lucius Antonius. Octavian attended the meeting, but Lucius and Fulvia boycotted it, remaining in Praeneste where they had fled. They let it be known that they had done so because they were in great fear of Octavian.

The war began with sporadic outbreaks of violence. In order to guard his rear, Octavian sent one legion to Brundisium in case reinforcements arrived from the east, which indicates how little he trusted Marcus Antonius. He recalled Salvidienus Rufus, who was marching to Spain with six legions to make war on Sextus Pompeius. Two legions were entrusted to Lepidus to protect Rome. Octavian recruited as many troops as he could, and he put Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa in command of whatever soldiers he could muster in the time available. Though Agrippa had long been associated with Octavian, from early schooldays onwards, this is the first time that he emerges as the trusted military lieutenant, and he acquitted himself with credit, thus laying the foundations of the partnership that shaped the Empire. Lepidus did not perform so well, and failed to stop Lucius marching into Rome. At least he avoided bloodshed, and he took refuge with Octavian.

With Rome at his disposal, Lucius made a speech declaring that he would restore the authority of the consulship and abolish the Triumvirate; this meant of course that he would eliminate Octavian and Lepidus, and bring in Marcus Antonius on the side of respectable government, presumably divested of triumviral powers but recompensed by consular ones instead. Lucius was well received, hailed as Imperator, and given a command against an enemy who was not actually named. He swept out of Rome intending to stop Octavian's general Salvidienus in his tracks as he came south on the Via Cassia. Instead he miscalculated and manoeuvred himself into a trap between Salvidienus and Agrippa, who managed to get behind him and started to close the gap, cutting his communications with Rome. Lucius had no choice but to turn aside. He aimed for Perugia nearby and shut himself up there, hoping to be relieved by Antonius' lieutenants, Asinius Pollio and Ventidius, who commanded armies in the two Gauls, and possibly by Plancus, who was at Spoletium with an army of veterans. The plan misfired because Marcus Antonius had not declared his intentions or his wishes, and since they were his legates and not the consul's they were uncertain as to how they should react, either for or against Lucius. Plancus did not make the slightest effort, and Pollio and Ventidius moved only very slowly and possibly very reluctantly.

In the meantime Octavian built up siege works around Perugia, using sling bullets fired at the city bearing the name *Divum Julium*.¹⁷⁵ While Perugia was gradually starved into surrender, Octavian and Agrippa marched on Ventidius and Pollio, who did not stand and fight. There was no decisive battle; the two Antonian generals removed themselves, crossed the Apennines, split up and went their separate ways, Ventidius to Ariminum, and Pollio to Ravenna. It was only a matter of time now before Perugia fell to Octavian. Lucius gave in at the end of February 40 BC.¹⁷⁶ He was allowed to go free, and so were his men, because

punishment of the soldiers could result in retribution from Marcus Antonius. Plancus escaped with Fulvia to Greece, intending to join Marcus Antonius in the east, and eventually Ventidius followed. Other senators and some of the leading citizens of Perugia were not so protected. Octavian put many of them to death; the war had been between him and Lucius, but anyone who had assisted Lucius could be considered an enemy. The usual tales of unemotional cruelty are attached to these acts. It was said that he sacrificed his victims on an altar to *Divus Julius*. As for Perugia, the citizens were not punished, but the town was given up to the soldiers, and, during the pillage, went up in flames.¹⁷⁷

Notes

- 1 Weigel 1992, 54.
- 2 Cic. *ad Fam.* 11.18.2; Stockton 1971, 322–23.
- 3 Weigel 1992, 57.
- 4 Appian *BC* 3.83.
- 5 Vell. Pat. 2.63.1.
- 6 Plut. *Ant.* 18.1.3; Weigel 1992, 61 judges this passage mostly fictitious.
- 7 Cic. *ad Fam.* 10.35; 12.10.1; Weigel 1992, 62.
- 8 Cic. *ad Fam.* 11.9.1; 1.10; Stockton 1971, 320–21; Syme 1939, 126 n.3; 176; 178.
- 9 Syme 1939, 5; 166; 180.
- 10 Vell. Pat. 2.63.
- 11 Stockton 1971, 330.
- 12 Dio 47.21
- 13 Dio 47.29.4; Syme 1939, 172; Stockton 1971, 309.
- 14 Appian *BC* 3.78; Dio 48.15; Taylor 1931, 105; Southern 2007, 149–50; 254. Huzar 1978, 124 doubts that Cleopatra sent any help at all.
- 15 Dio 47.26–28 devotes three chapters to an account of the troops which came over to Cassius. Appian *BC* 4.58–59 says that Cassius gained 12 legions (of which 11 are attested) and some Parthian mounted bowmen.
- 16 Cic. *ad Fam.* 12.11.1.
- 17 Cic. *ad Fam.* 12.7.1.
- 18 Stockton 1971, 311.
- 19 Heitland 1909, III 420.
- 20 Appian *BC* 4.5.
- 21 Dio 47.29.
- 22 Syme 1939, 172; 177–78.
- 23 Dio 47.21.4–7.
- 24 Cic. *ad M. Brut.* 1.2a.2.
- 25 Cic. *Phil.* 10.25–26.
- 26 Cic. *Phil.* 13.13; Kienast 1982, 30.
- 27 Syme 1939, 183; Stockton 1971, 315.
- 28 Appian *BC* 4.60–62.
- 29 Kienast 1982, 30.
- 30 Vell. Pat. 2.62.5.
- 31 Cic. *ad Fam.* 10.29.
- 32 Shuckburgh 1903, 65 n.2.
- 33 For Octavian's march on Rome see A. Alföldi, 'Der Einmarsch Oktavian in Rom August 43 v.Chr.', *Hermes* 86, 1980, 480–96.
- 34 Appian *BC* 3.94.

- 35 Dio 46.44.2.
- 36 Appian *BC* 3.89.
- 37 Dio; 46.44.2; Appian *BC* 3.90.
- 38 Appian *BC* 3.91–92.
- 39 Appian *BC* 3.93.
- 40 Dio 46.46.2; Appian *BC* 3.94; Taylor 1931, 95 n.34.
- 41 Appian *BC* 3.91–92.
- 42 Watson 1969, 113 points out that when the soldiers demanded 2,500 denarii for each man from Severus, they had probably been reading Appian's *Civil Wars*.
- 43 Dio 46.45.3–5; the constitutional anomaly is pointed out by Carter 1982, 120.
- 44 Dio 46.46.1.
- 45 Suet. *Aug.* 62.1; Syme 1939, 182 n.6.
- 46 Appian *BC* 3.82.
- 47 Cic. *ad M. Brut.* 1.3.2; 4.6; *Phil.* 14.15; Stockton 1971, 325.
- 48 Dio 46.46.2; Appian *BC* 3.94.
- 49 Dio 46.48.2.
- 50 Appian *BC* 3.94 hints at Caesar's rich freedmen as a source of the cash.
- 51 Schmitthenner 1952, 2nd edn 1973, denies the legality of testamentary adoption; Schumacher 1999 defends it. Osgood 2006, 31 n.71 points out that the main source for the will is Suet. *Iul.* 83, where it is stated that Octavius was named as Caesar's heir and adopted into the family (*in familiam nomenque*), which according to Schmitthenner constitutes a document of private law.
- 52 The problems of legalising the adoption are very clearly set out by Levick 2010, 29–30; 54 n.15; 56 n.42.
- 53 Levick 2010, 30.
- 54 Appian *BC* 3.95.
- 55 Dio 46.49.5
- 56 Appian *BC* 3.94.
- 57 Suet. *Aug.* 61.
- 58 Dio 47.17.
- 59 Appian *BC* 3.96.
- 60 Stockton 1971, 313–14.
- 61 Appian *BC* 3.80; Syme 1939, 187–88.
- 62 Osgood 2006, 58–59; Everitt 2001, 275.
- 63 Appian *BC* 3.98.
- 64 Appian *BC* 4.2 opts for Mutina, but Weigel 1992, 67–68 points out that Bononia is the more likely venue.
- 65 On the absence of the term Dictator in the triumviral titles, see Kienast 1982, 32 n.142.
- 66 Appian *BC* 4.2.
- 67 Dio 44.55.3–4.
- 68 The restored text of the inscription runs *III viri rei publicae constituendae ex ante diem V K. Dec. ad pridie K. Ian sextas*. Millar 1973, 51 and n.7 says 'These *Fasti*, which the erased name of Antonius shows to have been inscribed before September 30 BC, thus make it clear that the Triumvirate was due to expire on 31 December 38 BC'.
- 69 Millar 1973, 51.
- 70 Gowing 1992.
- 71 Bleicken 1990.
- 72 Bleicken 1990, 21–26.
- 73 Lintott, reviewing Bleicken 1990 in *JRS* 82, 1992, 251–52.
- 74 Appian *BC* 4.2; Bleicken 1990, 32–36.
- 75 Appian *BC* 4.3.

- 76 Baker 1937, 96; Kienast 1982, 33 n.143 quotes R. E. A. Palmer, *Athenaeum* 1973, 315, who considers that Antonius virtually surrendered the administration of the city of Rome to Octavian by granting him Africa, Sicily and Sardinia.
- 77 Appian *BC* 4.3.
- 78 Dio 47.14.4.
- 79 Dio 47.15.2–3.
- 80 Suet. *Aug.* 62.
- 81 Dio 46.56.3.
- 82 Adams 1939, 173.
- 83 Dio 46.51.4.
- 84 Cic. *Phil.* 5.38–41; 13.8.
- 85 Weigel 1992, 70.
- 86 Dio 47.8.
- 87 Plut. *Ant.* 21 and Vell. Pat. 2.66 both blame Antonius for the worst excesses of the proscriptions.
- 88 Suet. *Aug.* 27; Kienast 1982, 34.
- 89 Adams 1939, 119.
- 90 Osgood 2006, 63–82.
- 91 The proscriptions are reported at great length by Appian *BC* 4.6–4.51. In *BC* 4.7 he says that some people were murdered by mistake, and their names appended to the lists afterwards, to provide spurious proof that they were justly killed; in *BC* 4.8–11 he gives the text of the proscription; *BC* 4.12–30 reports harrowing accounts of the sufferings of various individuals, and *BC* 4.36–51 covers miraculous escapes. Dio 47.9–13 adds some different harrowing tales to those of Appian.
- 92 Appian *BC* 5.132.
- 93 Heitland 1909, 415 thought that the Triumvirs were happy to let most men escape while leaving all the properties behind.
- 94 Appian *BC* 4.9; Kienast 1982, 35; Weigel 1992, 73; 153 n.25; Hinard 1985, 259–318.
- 95 Appian *BC* 4.7; Dio 47.2.2; Kienast 1982, 33 n.145.
- 96 Appian *BC* 4.8–11; Gowing 1992, 251 n.12; Hinard 1985, 228 n.4.
- 97 Appian *BC* 4.5.
- 98 Livy *Epit.* 120. It may be significant that, writing much later, Appian *BC* 4.7 says that 130 names were added to the list of the original 17 men.
- 99 Shuckburgh 1896, 58; 1903, 73–74 tries to reconcile the two figures by assuming that only 130 senators actually died, while the rest presumably fled.
- 100 The Senate numbered about 300 members according to Livy *Epit.* 60, but Appian *BC* 1.35 implies that the total of 300 was not always realised. Even when there were 300 actual members, there was rarely a full turnout; Cic. *ad Q. Fr.* 2.1.1 reckoned that an attendance of 200 senators was excellent. Julius Caesar increased the number of senators to 900 by the *Lex Cassia*: see Suet. *Iul.* 41; Tac. *Annals* 11.25; Dio 43.47. These new senators were Roman citizens but not members of the proud aristocracy of Rome. A joke circulated in the city that no-one would show these new men the way to the Senate House. Syme 1939, 199 says ‘Strange names of alien root and termination now invade and disfigure the *Fasti* of the Roman people’.
- 101 Dio 47.9.
- 102 Kienast 1982, 35.
- 103 Appian *BC* 4.12; 4.37–38; Dio 47.5–6; Weigel 1992, 72.
- 104 For the *Fasti Colotiani* and the terminal date of the Triumvirate see note 67 above; the agreement was renewed, probably without the benefit of a law; the problems are discussed in the next chapter of this book; see also Bleicken 1990, 14 n.28.
- 105 Dio 47.15.3.

- 106 Millar 1973, 54.
- 107 Appian *BC* 4.19–20; Dio 47.7. Vell. Pat. 2.66.
- 108 Heitland 1909, 414 n1; 470 n.4.
- 109 Syme 1939, 189.
- 110 Appian *BC* 4.2; Dio 47.91.4.
- 111 Eck 2007, 18.
- 112 On the survival of the elections during the Triumvirate and the Principate see Millar 1973, 51–52, quoting Frei-Stolba, *Untersuchungen zu den Wahlen in der römischen Kaiserzeit* 1967.
- 113 Appian *BC* 4.5.
- 114 Dio 47.17.3
- 115 Appian *BC* 4.31.
- 116 Dio 47.16.
- 117 Appian *BC* 4.32.
- 118 Plut. *Ant.* 21.
- 119 Weigel 1992, 75. Vell. Pat. 2.67.3–4 recounts the scurrilous chants of the soldiers that the triumphs were really over their brothers.
- 120 Dio 47.18.3.
- 121 On the deification of Caesar see Dio 53.27.2 and Kienast 1982, 192. Nock 1934, 482 says that *Divi filius* was ‘a unique form for a Roman’. It was probably first used in 40 bc, on the coinage, according to Pollini 1990, 346. The coins issued by Quintus Voconius Vitulus and Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus bear the legend DIVI JULI F. and they portray military standards and agricultural implements, which perhaps links the coinage to the distribution of land to the soldiers after Philippi; Alföldi in *Revue Numismatique* 75, 1973, 121 dated the coins to 43; Kienast 1982, 42 prefers the later date and strongly favours the connection with the veteran settlements after Philippi; see also Taylor 1931, 106 n.10 and Syme 1939, 202.
- 122 Dio 47.18.4; 47.19.3; 51.22.1.
- 123 *ILS* 73 and 73a.
- 124 For the view that Caesar intended to set up a hereditary divine monarchy such as those familiar in the east and in Egypt, see Taylor 1931, 73 and Weinstock 1971, reviewed by North 1975, 171.
- 125 Syme 1939, 55.
- 126 Gesche 1978, 370, and review of Gesche by J.P.V.D. Balsdon in *Classical Review* 1970, 62–64.
- 127 Dio 47.18.2; 47.19.2; 56.34.2.
- 128 Taylor 1931, 103.
- 129 Plut. *Ant.* 24; Appian *BC* 5.7; Strabo 14.648; 674; Taylor 1931, 107.
- 130 Galinsky 1996, 318 and Kienast 1982, 192 n.88 point out that Octavian rejected personal divinity for himself, but used his divine ancestry to great effect.
- 131 Dio 53.27.3.
- 132 Taylor 1931, 99.
- 133 Syme 1939, 317; 1958, 432; 1959, 58 = 1979, 434.
- 134 Syme 1939, 211; *CIL* XI 6721.26.
- 135 Syme 1939, 471.
- 136 Syme 1939, 318; 1950, 13–14 = 1979, 214.
- 137 Appian *BC* 4.84–85; Dio 47.36; Shuckburgh 1903, 82 suggests that Octavian underestimated Sextus Pompeius’ strength and expertise.
- 138 Dio 47.37.3.
- 139 Plut. *Ant.* 21.4; Appian *BC* 4.3; Dio 46.56.1; Weigel 1992, 77–78.
- 140 Plut. *Ant.* 22; Appian *BC* 4.110; Dio 47.41.1–4.
- 141 Syme 1939, 204–5 n.1; Pliny *NH* 7.148.

- 142 Appian *BC* 4.105–38; Dio 47.37–49.
- 143 Suet. *Aug.* 13.2.
- 144 Appian *BC* 4.134 says that the murder of Caesar by Brutus and Cassius was no small crime because they committed it unexpectedly against a friend, ungratefully against a benefactor who had spared them in war, and nefariously against the head of state.
- 145 Appian *BC* 4.137–39.
- 146 Dio 47.39.
- 147 Gowing 1992, 175–76.
- 148 Suet. *Aug.* 13.2.
- 149 Dio 48.3.
- 150 Appian *BC* 5.3.12; 5.22.87; Dio 48.12.5; Syme 1939, 206–7.
- 151 Appian *BC* 5.12.
- 152 Weigel 1992, 79.
- 153 Appian *BC* 5.5.
- 154 Keppie 1983, 60.
- 155 Eck 2007, 19.
- 156 Osgood 2006, 108–51.
- 157 Appian *BC* 5.13.
- 158 Syme 1939, 207–8.
- 159 Dio 48.4.1.
- 160 Appian *BC* 5.14.
- 161 Suet. *Aug.* 14; Appian *BC* 5.15.
- 162 Dio 48.8.4 commented that armed force has no power to compel affection; see also Gowing 1992, 80–81.
- 163 Appian *BC* 5.52; Chamoux 1986, 259 accepts Appian’s statement.
- 164 Pelling 1988, 198; Huzar 1978, 134.
- 165 Dio 48.5.4.
- 166 Pelling 1996, 15.
- 167 Appian *BC* 5.21.
- 168 Appian *BC* 5.52.
- 169 Syme 1939, 208.
- 170 Dio 48.28.
- 171 Huzar 1978, 132.
- 172 Dio 48.10.11; Gowing 1992, 82–83.
- 173 Appian *BC* 5.60.
- 174 Appian *BC* 5.20; 5.23; Dio 48.12.2–3.
- 175 Appian *BC* 5. 27–49; Dio 48.13–14.
- 176 Appian *BC* 5.39–48.
- 177 Appian *BC* 5.49.

THE DECISIVE DECADE

During the 10 years that elapsed between the fall of Perusia and the capture of Alexandria in 30 BC, Octavian gradually established himself in a position of power. The decade was the most fertile area of all for Octavian's development, but receives little elucidation in the *Res Gestae*.¹ Though he began his account of his achievements with the raising of the army at the age of 19, Augustus was reticent about the details of what happened next, passing in three chapters from a narrative of specific events to a general account of his victories, triumphs and honours. The elusive victory over Sextus Pompeius was of the greatest importance, but it is described only very briefly and obliquely in *Res Gestae* by the simple phrase 'I made the sea peaceful and freed it of pirates'.² There were pirates in the Mediterranean before Sextus Pompeius made himself master of the sea, and there were pirates after he had been removed from the scene, but this laconic phrase does not refer to general piracy, and it conceals several battles and disastrous defeats before the struggle with Sextus Pompeius was finally ended. It also neglects to mention the momentous achievement, won through the expertise and determination of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa; the victory was his, not Octavian's.

It is impossible to discern how Augustus regarded the years which were so fruitful and formative. Looking back on them, he would be able to pick out the significant trends and relevant turning points, while the less portentous events would recede into obscurity. Going forwards through those years with no guarantee of ultimate success, he would not be able to evaluate the situation quite so clearly; the salient factors would be tenacity of purpose combined with flexibility of method. There were more roads than one towards his goal, and it is possible that his ultimate goal was not too sharply defined at first, being dependent upon events and circumstances and his reaction to them.

His rise was not rapid, nor was it steady; he met with hindrances and disappointments, but he possessed a superhuman patience and a dogged determination that enabled him to surmount difficulties and defeats which might have discouraged less obdurate people. He experienced more than one narrow escape from personal danger both on the political scene and in military action; like a cork, he sometimes briefly sank below the surface, but rapidly came back up,

buoyant and unsinkable. Though he had youth on his side, its advantages were neutralised by his frequent illnesses, some of them serious enough to threaten his survival; but despite his ailments he managed to appear at the right place at the right time, for those occasions when it mattered. He had joined Caesar in Spain when he was not in robust health, and in similar circumstances he had joined Antonius at Pharsalus. These efforts to ensure that he was seen to be attending to the interests of the Roman people cost him a great deal sometimes, but he showed indomitable willpower and courage that impressed his contemporaries. He built on this foundation shrewdly.

Octavian's circle of friends

As a hard-nosed realist, Octavian acknowledged those areas where he lacked certain qualities, and he used the skills of other people to fill the gaps. Indeed much of his success can be laid at the door of his associates, in whom he inspired a loyalty that scarcely ever wavered. That may have come about either because of his personal charm, or in some cases loyalty may have derived from the prospect of the rewards that he could offer if he remained at the helm. Of his original group of friends, only Salvidienus proved doubtful, and he was eventually executed for reasons which are obscure. By the time he allied with Antonius and Lepidus, Octavian already operated at the head of a network of clients and agents, consisting of those he inherited from Caesar and those he acquired for himself. Very few of these are recorded; the unsung majority yield to the more famous names, such as Agrippa, Maecenas, Oppius and Balbus.³

In the military and naval sphere, Octavian could rely on his friend Agrippa, without whom it is possible that the world would never have known Augustus. In the diplomatic sphere Gaius Maecenas rendered excellent service. These two men are inextricably associated with Octavian, but their contribution to his success cannot be precisely measured. Augustus was not afraid of acknowledging their usefulness and his reliance upon them, and even after their deaths, he still made reference to them as his companions and guides. Much later, when the scandalous affairs of his daughter Julia became known, he so far forgot himself that he expressed his anger in the Senate, furious that the matter should be a matter of public discussion. The cool, calm exterior had given way to an outburst of emotion, which he immediately regretted, adding that if Agrippa or Maecenas had been alive, they would never have allowed him to display his feelings for all to see.⁴

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa sprang from humble origins, and first encountered Octavian while still a boy.⁵ His name crops up now and then during Caesar's supremacy, so it seems that his association with Octavian was fairly constant, and that he was a firm friend. He was with Gaius Octavius, as he then was, in Apollonia when the news arrived of Caesar's assassination,⁶ and he came to prominence in the Perusine war, where in a modest way he demonstrated his capacities as a general, undertaking independent tasks very competently.⁷ He

was sent into Gaul after the troubles with Lucius Antonius were over, and there he enjoyed considerable success, being the only general of his day, besides Caesar, to cross the Rhine. He settled the Ubii tribesmen in the new *colonia*, which became the modern city of Cologne.⁸ It was presumably his loyalty to Octavian that led him to refuse a triumph on his return from Gaul,⁹ at a time when Octavian himself had made only a very poor showing against Sextus Pompeius. Such self-effacement is a rare quality, and Agrippa was rarer still in that he never seems to have agitated for supremacy throughout his long association with Augustus.¹⁰ Velleius Paterculus¹¹ sums him up: 'he was of distinguished character, unconquerable by toil, loss of sleep or danger, well-disciplined in obedience, but to one man only'. When Augustus was dangerously ill in 23 BC, and not expected to recover, it was Agrippa to whom he chose to delegate tangible authority by handing over to him his signet ring,¹² thus probably offending Marcellus, Augustus' nephew, who was generally considered to be the most eligible candidate to follow in Augustus' footsteps.

Agrippa was granted an independent *imperium* in 21 BC; that much is certain, but discussion still goes on as to the exact nature of this *imperium*. There are those who are quite certain that it was *imperium aequum*, or power equal to that of all other governors of the provinces, and there are other scholars who are convinced that Agrippa was granted *imperium maius*, or power that was greater than that of all other governors, to enable him to act freely and give orders to whomever he wished. If this was so, then Agrippa's status was indeed high, and the honour and responsibility very significant.

There are serious reservations about this problem. It has been argued that the concept of *imperium maius* did not even exist.¹³ According to this argument, even when special powers were granted to an individual to carry out specific tasks, it is probable that *imperium* was always simply *imperium* no matter what the circumstances. Two pieces of evidence seem to contradict this theory. The first derives from the funeral oration of Agrippa, delivered by Augustus himself. The text survives only on papyrus, in Greek.¹⁴ Augustus says that a law was passed to the effect that wherever Agrippa was sent on the business of the Republic, no-one held power that was greater than his. This suggests, but does not prove, that Agrippa held *imperium maius*, but this is not stated unequivocally. The Greek word to describe this power is *exousia*, which as Lacey¹⁵ points out could be a translation of *imperium*, or *potestas*. There is a world of difference between the two, the former being bestowed by law and conferring command of armies, and the latter merely indicating power that could be unofficial, shading off into 'authority', which is not the same thing as *imperium*. Other points to bear in mind are that there is no date for the enactment, which may refer to Agrippa's status in 23, 18 or 13 BC, and it is not clear whether Augustus himself is included in the phrase that no-one held power that was greater than Agrippa's. The second piece of evidence suggests that he was not, and that it should be taken as read that his powers were always greater. In AD 17 Gnaeus Piso was sent to co-operate with Germanicus, and an inscription¹⁶ specifically states that he held *imperium*

maius over any proconsul governing any province that he entered, except that the *imperium* of the princeps, in this case the emperor Tiberius, is specifically stated in the inscribed text to be greater in all things. Much depends on whether this is an innovation of Tiberius' reign, or whether it is based on Augustan precedent, so it does not entirely solve the problem of Agrippa's powers.

The esteem in which Augustus held his colleague Agrippa is underlined by the bestowal upon him of *tribunicia potestas* for a five-year term in 18 BC,¹⁷ and for a second five-year term in 13 BC.¹⁸ This grant of *tribunicia potestas* was a signal honour, and its importance is demonstrated by the fact that it was not granted to anyone else except Tiberius. The only difference between Agrippa and Augustus was the duration of his tribunician power. Augustus held it for life, while Agrippa was restricted to periods of five years. It is possible that his five-year tribunician powers would have been continually renewed, but he held his second five-year tribunician power for only a very short time before he died in 12 BC.

Augustus' debt to Agrippa was not a secret, and rewards were not lacking, but significantly, Agrippa's name occurs in the *Res Gestae* only when it is necessary to acknowledge him as consul. Otherwise every achievement is credited solely to Augustus himself. Agrippa would have expected nothing else. His achievements earned him credit among those who knew him well, and he was content with that; glory was reserved for Caesar Augustus. Dio reports on Agrippa's opinion of his place in life by giving him an invented speech, a literary device to enable Dio¹⁹ to put forward his own views. Dio's attitude to the relative positions of Augustus and Agrippa may well contain an element of his own sentiments about subordinates to the emperor, but the sentiments expressed in the invented speech do at least fit the known facets of Agrippa's character. In a nutshell, Agrippa regarded himself as a facilitator, who eased the path for his master, without exceeding the bounds of permissible glory for himself.

The family of Gaius Maecenas hailed from Arretium.²⁰ He was a member of the equestrian class, and according to Velleius, content to remain so. The high flying senatorial career held no attractions for him; he was talented in other directions. Whenever he was called upon to take action, he displayed an almost sleepless energy and was capable of an intuitive foresight; equally, when there was occasion for it, his love of leisure and academic pursuits consumed him to the exclusion of all else. He entertained no lofty political ambitions.²¹ Although he was not a soldier, Maecenas was present at the battles of Mutina and Philippi, and from 40 BC onwards he was entrusted with a variety of diplomatic missions on Octavian's behalf, without being endowed, or perhaps encumbered, with any form of office or magistracy. Though he played a great part in public life, his exploits are less public than those of Agrippa, since for much of the time he either worked in the background, or carried out confidential missions which have remained confidential. He attracted a circle of literary and scholarly writers, and used this influence in the cause of Augustus, but not just on the normal scale for the aggrandisement of one man; it was the entire state that was lauded and promoted via that one man.²² At some time before 23 BC, Maecenas

married Terentia, a sister of Aulus Terentius Varro Murena. He divorced her in 12, allegedly because of Augustus' overwhelming interest in her. It was thought for a long time that Terentia's brother Varro Murena, consul designate for 23 BC, was involved in a plot with Fannius Caepio to assassinate Augustus, but it seems certain now that the Varro Murena implicated in this mysterious affair was a different man, namely Lucius Licinius Varro Murena, who defended Marcus Primus and lost his case.²³

Some opprobrium may have fallen upon Maecenas because of his relationship to the family of Varro Murena, but it is probably just inflated rumour. The scandal, whatever it may have been, was said to have destroyed his relationship with Augustus, and brought about his fall from favour. It is established that Maecenas withdrew from public life, and although a specific date cannot be ascertained, it is clear that after 23 BC he played little part in government, perhaps because his diplomacy and tact were no longer needed, or because he wished to enjoy life after the initial turmoil. It has been argued that there was no quarrel with Augustus at all,²⁴ merely a change of roles whereby Maecenas set up the literary circle and its productions, and when Augustus had time to pay attention to that side of political life, he gradually took control of it himself, eventually using it to create a new kind of patronage. Maecenas died in 8 BC, four years after the death of Agrippa.

Many other men served Augustus as well and as loyally as these two, but Agrippa and Maecenas were long-standing friends whose attachment developed very early, well before it became clear that by following in the wake of their friend Gaius Octavius, great-nephew of Gaius Julius Caesar, there might be substantial rewards to be picked up here and there. The loyalty of Agrippa and Maecenas was to the youth Octavius, not to his position or rank. Immediately after Caesar's death, there was no indication that Octavius rather than Antonius would be the eventual successor to the Dictator, so in the early years the creation of an entourage would require forethought and persuasion.

Octavian used his time in Rome as triumvir very well to entrench his position using the literary circle that Maecenas had built up. In 37 BC, when Octavian met Antonius and Sextus Pompeius for negotiations, he brought with him Vergil, evicted from his ancestral home in Mantua as a result of the veteran settlements. He also introduced Horace, who had been on the losing side at Philippi. The literary circle was already forming, and would provide Augustus with his propaganda machine and his own advertising agency. Though his writers and artists were obviously partisan, they were not completely shackled or wholly moulded in his image.²⁵

The administrative and military community was also assembling. The names of the various Augustan generals, legates and officials have come down to us from Appian, Dio, Suetonius, Tacitus and other sources, and have been investigated and documented for modern readers by Sir Ronald Syme, whose line of enquiry about Augustus depicted the man himself through the medium of his contemporaries. Apart from his Caesarian connections, Octavian's circle was

limited at first, not perhaps in numbers of personnel, nor even in wealthy individuals, but definitely limited in terms of noble power and influence. What was lacking until the first few years after Perusia was a senatorial faction such as the strong and influential alliances that Octavian had helped to destroy in the triumviral proscriptions.²⁶

His first attempt to ally himself to the leading families was not a success. He married Scribonia, sister of Lucius Scribonius Libo, whose daughter was the wife of Sextus Pompeius, so Scribonia and Octavian were the aunt and uncle by marriage of the younger Scribonia. By a strange quirk of fate, Lucius Scribonius Libo's son had been adopted by Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, perhaps late in his life – Claudianus had been on the losing side at Philippi, and had committed suicide rather than face execution. Adoption of sons from other families was not uncommon, especially where the adoptive father had no male heirs to continue the family line. In the case of Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, there was a daughter, who was to become a greater heir than the younger Scribonius Libo. She was Livia Drusilla who was to become the wife and consort of Octavian-Augustus, and her son by her first marriage was to be the emperor Tiberius.

Octavian married Scribonia in the hope that he would be able to use the connection to make peace with Sextus, and thereby create an alternative power block to counter the growing prestige and power of Antonius. Even if all he could achieve was to keep Pompeius and Antonius apart, it would be better than nothing. As a political alliance, it served its purpose temporarily; as a marriage it was a disaster. Scribonia was much older than Octavian, almost old enough to be his mother; she had a son who was very nearly as old as Octavian. Though this sort of age gap need not prohibit a successful relationship, in this case the two were hardly compatible.²⁷ The marriage did not last for very long. When it became clear that peace with Sextus Pompeius was no longer an option, and war was becoming an urgent necessity, Octavian waited until the birth of his daughter Julia, and on that same day he divorced Scribonia. As a mother, many years later Scribonia proved her worth when Julia was disgraced and exiled. She accompanied her daughter to the island where she was incarcerated.

Family connections, the importance of which cannot be over-stressed, would not have sufficed by themselves to keep Octavian in the foremost ranks of society. The decade before Actium saw a gradual accretion of his powers by a combination of good fortune and an alert, optimistic attitude, which enabled Octavian to seize upon every strand of power and hold onto it with a limpet grasp once he had obtained it. He increased his territorial commands and with them the size of his armies until he was equal in strength to Antonius. Equality in military and political power was necessary for survival, but in a society that was interested only in supremacy, that very equality invited rivalry and suspicion. According to Appian²⁸ the desire to be sole ruler was common to all the triumvirs, so they could not allow themselves to relax their vigilance at any time.

Opportunism and the grand design: the path to sole power

After the Perusine war, Octavian can be seen as the aggressor, but of course not immediately and not overtly.²⁹ He was still only one among four contenders for power. Lepidus still counted for something, and Antonius controlled the whole of the east, with its resources immediately to hand. But the three of them were not alone. Sextus Pompeius was undoubted master of the seas, and being unable to eradicate him, the triumvirs were forced to negotiate with him.³⁰ The political system could not accommodate all four of them indefinitely, even if each of them had been able to operate exclusively within their own domains, without encroaching in any way on the territory or preserves of the others. There was mutual distrust on the one hand, as well as shared expedients on the other; if expediency ruled for the time being then there was the danger of coalition between any of the parties, which would upset the balance.

Ever watchful, Octavian concentrated first and foremost on surviving, while at the same time he took advantage of every opportunity to discredit and eventually remove the rivals who obstructed his rise to sole power. This is not to imply that he mapped out his course in advance and then engineered events to fall in with his plans, privately thinking when one adversary was removed, 'one down, several more to go', though with hindsight it probably seemed as though that was exactly how he progressed. This is the slant that Tacitus gives his account, under the guise of weighing the good and bad points of Octavian's metamorphosis into Augustus. Accusations of intent to establish one-man rule are permissible, provided that it is realised that as events fell into place Octavian adapted himself as he went along, dealing with failures and backtracking to regroup, as well as dealing with successes and progressing from them. He utilised circumstances but could not control his fate any more than other people could control theirs. In the early days he did not possess sufficient influence to put a superhuman plan for supremacy into operation. Though he may all along have kept his eyes firmly on the distant goal of sole personal rule, he could not possibly have dictated the stages by which he intended to achieve it. He could probably have elbowed his way to a thinly veiled Dictatorship very rapidly if he had so desired, but that went against common sense and would merely have served to attract enemies from all directions. Experience and precedent had proved that such a course would have been glorious but also brief. Besides, Octavian was much more subtle than that. Pompeius Magnus had shown how expedient it was to wait to be asked to save the state; Octavian turned it into an art form.

Octavian also became an expert at transferring the blame for any disturbance onto his opponents, while presenting himself as the innocent injured party. From his early attempts to come to some sort of understanding with Antonius and Sextus Pompeius he learned how to sway the people and the soldiers. He was not successful every time, but mistakes can teach as much if not more than successes. He was forced to succumb to popular pressure to make peace with his rivals on

more than one occasion, and as Appian says,³¹ Octavian found that the soldiers would not always unquestioningly march with him against Antonius, because they did not necessarily view him as an enemy. Octavian therefore set about turning him into one, not directly, for that would have been too crude, but indirectly via Cleopatra. When war was finally declared, it was not overtly against Antonius, but against the Egyptian queen, a foreigner, who was represented as the greatest threat to Rome since Hannibal, a compliment, in its way, to Cleopatra's intelligence and importance. Antonius was the main rival, but he was a Roman and it would not be considered proper to target him as the enemy at first. He was included in the pre-war campaign by implication because of his association with Cleopatra (Figure 4.1). There is some doubt as to whether he had actually married her in 37 BC, or whether he had merely participated in some kind of ceremony which could be construed as a marriage by the people of Egypt. If he had married her, then he had done so bigamously, because he had married Octavian's sister Octavia and had not at that time divorced her. Perhaps more importantly, he had also committed an illegal act, because marriage with aliens was forbidden by Roman law.³²

The actual form of Antonius' association with Cleopatra is hardly important, compared with the use that Octavian was able to make of it. Even if there had been no marriage ceremony, Egyptian or Roman, the partnership looked like a

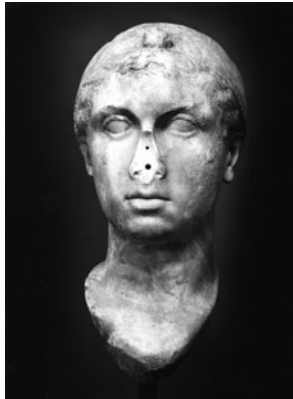


Figure 4.1 Head of Cleopatra. She was not beautiful, but clever, shrewd and fascinating. Although doubt has been cast of the identification of all portraits of the queen, this unadorned portrait shows the severe hairstyle of her coins. After the victory at Philippi Antonius remained in the eastern provinces while Octavian took Italy and the west except for Gaul. Cleopatra VII, the queen of Egypt, had consolidated her position thanks to Julius Caesar, and she had contributed troops and ships to the war effort against Brutus and Cassius. After 42 BC she and Antonius began their famous association that played into Octavian's hands and his propaganda machine.

Source: Courtesy Vatican Museums.

wedding with a foreigner, and it looked especially threatening when Antonius acknowledged his own children by Cleopatra, and Caesarion, son of Julius Caesar. The threat was of course to Octavian, but he managed to convert it into a threat to the supremacy and even the survival of the Roman people. This was the root of the matter. The Egyptian marriage, or liaison, was bad enough, but the strong hint of dynastic succession, combined with Cleopatra's supposedly insatiable desire for world domination, proclaimed disunity of the Roman world for generations to come. The political power of Cleopatra in her own right should not be underestimated; with her resources and her sharp political acumen, she has been described as the most significant power in the eastern Mediterranean.³³ For the moment, the time was not quite ripe for Octavian to seize upon all this and magnify it without also appearing to think purely of his own interests. Antonius had done him no personal harm, and in Rome Antonius' standing as military commander and politician was undiminished. Apart from his alleged marriage, which was illegal and potentially threatening, it required a few years for Antonius to provide Octavian with enough material to use against him. But waiting was not a problem to Octavian. His maxim *festina lente*, make haste slowly, was applied to himself as rigorously as he applied it to his associates. He also used to say that a thing was done quickly enough that was done well enough.³⁴

Patiently he bided his time until an insidious campaign of name-blackening, not to mention vilification of Antonius and Cleopatra, finally bore fruit.³⁵ He exaggerated, elaborated, and distorted, but his stories retained an element of truth. Accusations of deceitfulness and outright lies have been made against Octavian, but typically cannot be fully substantiated; his method was more usually to give his opponents the proverbial inch, wait for a suitable turn of events, and then he would persuade the Roman people that his opponent had taken the proverbial yard.

By the time Octavian made war on his enemies, he had usually brought about a situation where the people and the soldiers were practically begging him to do so. He did not always win battles, but he won wars. He did not enter into such things without due consideration, often saying that wars should not be undertaken unless the chance of gain outweighed the fear of loss, but once committed he was absolutely tenacious of his purpose. It took him three years to defeat Sextus Pompeius, and almost coincidentally he neutralised Lepidus at the same time, bloodlessly, but nonetheless decisively. Five years later it was the turn of Antonius. The battle of Actium, so important in modern histories as a terminus or a beginning, and both lauded and reviled in ancient literature as the birth of a new era, was actually something of a damp squib when it was fought. Actium as a decisive turning point does not meet with unanimous acceptance among modern scholars.³⁶ In the *Annals*,³⁷ Tacitus talks of the generation born after Actium, who did not know anything of the *res publica*, but in the *Histories*³⁸ he acknowledges that after Actium all the power was in the hands of one man.³⁹ It was the preparation, long and thorough, focused and determined, which made

the battle of Actium so decisive. The fall of Alexandria in the following year, and the elimination of Antonius and Cleopatra, were inevitable events that were assured from the moment they fled the naval battle and returned to Egypt. When Antonius was extinguished, there was no-one to take up his cause. Though Octavian's career was by no means smooth or easy after 30 BC, he was in sole charge. It remains to examine how he arrived there.

Antonius in the east

Since the battle of Philippi, Antonius had achieved some successes in his vast eastern territories, mostly on the diplomatic front. The ultimate intention was to pick up where Caesar had left off, and to resume the abortive campaign against the Parthians that had been originally planned for 44 BC, but before he could embark on such an ambitious project, Antonius had to settle the affairs of the Roman provinces, the client states, and the free states, all of which had felt the effects, in some way, of the arrival and then the defeat of Brutus and Cassius. Reparations had to be made, damage had to be repaired, sifting delicately between the states which had helped Brutus and Cassius and those which had tried to oppose them and suffered for their obstinacy. Some cities or even kingdoms had been bankrupted, and the results were the same whether they had submitted voluntarily to the demands of the so-called Liberators or had been forcibly coerced.

In treading carefully between all the various states, Antonius cannot have performed as badly as his detractors claimed. Contemporaries were fuelled by Octavian's propaganda and the flames were later fanned by the Augustan literary machine, followed by successive authors up to the present day. The fact that many eastern rulers and their subjects were prepared to accept Antonius as a living god suggests that the only Liberator they recognised as such was neither Brutus nor Cassius, but Antonius the triumvir. In the east it was customary to worship living individuals as gods, but in Rome it was not readily acceptable. Antonius acquiesced without demur because for one thing it gave him an edge against Octavian's claims to be the son of a god.

The repair of the eastern economy was of the utmost importance, but at the same time Antonius needed cash, and that immediately if not sooner, to pay his soldiers and to finance the coming Parthian expedition. He travelled to Pergamum, where he asked the eastern states to send representatives to meet him. The delegates were shocked to hear his demand for the taxes for ten years to be paid in one year. One of them had the courage to point out that since Antonius was powerful enough to demand a second levy of taxes after the Liberators had already taken the first one, perhaps his powers also extended to arranging for a second summer and a second harvest to enable the impoverished states to raise more tax. A compromise was agreed, where nine years' taxes were to be paid in two years.⁴⁰ Even this was not enough to cover the immediate needs of the army, the administration, and the projected Parthian campaign. There was one

other place to turn to: Egypt. In 41 BC Antonius summoned Cleopatra to meet him at Tarsus.

It was clear that Antonius needed something from Egypt, but the fact that Cleopatra made the journey indicates that there was something that she needed from Rome. While Caesar lived, Cleopatra was sure of recognition of Egypt and herself as its ruler, as a friend and ally of the Roman people. This was not just an empty formula, but an official title denoting preferred status, with mutual obligations on the part of Rome and the allied state. It was part of Cleopatra's design for keeping her independence and ensuring the freedom of her country. The Romans had for a long time been casting envious eyes on Egypt, waiting for a chance to annexe it. Her father Ptolemy Auletes had not helped matters, bankrupt but continually mortgaging his country on the promise of expected yields from its crops and products, and continually putting himself into the pockets of rich Romans, such as Pompeius Magnus and Julius Caesar, who bailed him out of his difficulties by loaning him money. In return he had been recognised as an ally of the Romans, but after his death, and Cleopatra's contested accession, she sought reaffirmation of this agreement with Rome.

When Caesar was assassinated, Cleopatra had lingered in Rome for a short time, perhaps to obtain formal ratification of the allied status that Caesar had readily awarded to her and her kingdom. She also required recognition of her son Caesarion as the offspring of Caesar, if not his heir, uniting Egypt and Rome but avoiding annexation as a Roman province. When she returned home the future did not look quite so secure. Octavian was Caesar's heir, and was obviously determined to remain so. It would have been clear to her even then that this did not bode well for her son. Now, Antonius, the most powerful Roman of the day was in the east, and he was presumably open to suggestions about the future of Egypt, its queen, and Caesarion. So instead of standing on ceremony and replying to Antonius that if he wanted to see her he was welcome to visit Egypt, she sailed to Tarsus to meet him. The knowledge that he needed something from her no doubt strengthened her resolve to drive a hard bargain, with the things she wanted in return already rehearsed and fluent.

The ancient authors did not possess sufficient superlatives to describe this legendary meeting at Tarsus, with its magnificent queen on her equally magnificent royal barge, and the feasting and ceremonial that accompanied the occasion.⁴¹ Appian says that Antonius was enamoured of Cleopatra from the moment he met her at Tarsus,⁴² gradually becoming oblivious to Rome and all it stood for. This is part of the later Augustan propaganda, portraying Antonius as bewitched by the queen of Egypt and too spineless to extricate himself.⁴³ It may not have been the *coup de foudre* that Appian describes. Possibly neither Cleopatra nor Antonius knew at this moment that their association would transcend the diplomatic sphere and escalate into romance and legend. Perhaps they had no inkling of how much their subsequent behaviour would play into Octavian's hands. Perhaps at this moment not even Octavian knew it, either.

At Tarsus, Antonius wanted cash, and Cleopatra wanted recognition of Egypt as a friend and ally of the Roman people, but also as a kingdom where she was free to develop it as she wished, and hand it on to her son. The meeting seems to have been mutually satisfying to both parties. They went their separate ways for a while, and then Antonius joined her in Alexandria for what sounds like a pleasant holiday. While he was there, Lucius Antonius and Fulvia began the agitation against Octavian that ended with their defeat at Perusia. From Octavian's point of view, the Perusia affair could have concealed a plot to bring Antonius back from the east to restore order and in the process achieve popularity and an easy supremacy, just as the name of Pompeius used to be uttered when the state needed to be saved from something. This is exactly what the inflammatory speeches of Lucius Antonius implied, when he said that he would dismantle the Triumvirate. This was probably not a threat aimed at his brother, but a ploy to remove Octavian from power. There is also a hint of the beginning of the campaign to convert Cleopatra into an enemy of the Roman people. Writing many years after the event, Appian tells the tale of Antonius' friend Manius whispering into Fulvia's ear that while peace reigned in Italy, Antonius would remain with Cleopatra, but if the peace was disrupted, then Antonius would be the man to restore order.⁴⁴

When Perusia fell, Fulvia and Antonius' general Munatius Plancus fled to Greece. Antonius' mother Julia also left Italy and found refuge with Sextus Pompeius. Lucius Antonius was captured but not executed, because Octavian was not yet ready to precipitate immediate hostilities with Lucius' brother the triumvir Antonius. Lucius was allowed to go to Spain, where he was closely watched by Octavian's agents.⁴⁵ He eventually died there, not inconveniently perhaps. Another convenient death, very soon after the fall of Perusia, was that of Fufius Calenus, one of Antonius' men, the governor of Antonius' province of Gaul. In the summer of 40 BC Octavian took control of all the legions of Calenus' command,⁴⁶ substituting his own military commanders for Antonians. He placed Quintus Salvidienus Rufus in command of Gaul, and made himself more secure by sending away suspect Antonian sympathisers to join their master, and by despatching Lepidus to Africa with six legions whose loyalties he did not trust.⁴⁷ His pretext was that he was simply taking care of Antonius' interests. The control of Gaul was a necessary adjunct to the control of Italy, and if he had learned nothing else from Caesar, Octavian could hardly have failed to absorb this fact. The importance of Gaul to his own command in Italy, coupled with his immediate substitution of his own commanders in the legions of the unfortunate Calenus, rather gives the lie to his claim that he was concerned to protect Antonius' interests. If that had been the case, he would have held the province until Antonius named a successor to Calenus, and then acquiesced in the choice of governor. Octavian had his eye on his own ambitions and security, which seemed at this point to include strengthening himself against Antonius.

Antonius could not afford to remain aloof from the west any longer. He was already losing influence, and now with the death of Fufius Calenus it seemed as

though he had lost territory and legions as well. He now needed allies from some other source. After his mother Julia had been offered shelter with Sextus Pompeius, there had been an exchange of friendly overtures between Sextus and Antonius. The outcome was not an immediate alliance. Antonius fought shy of such an inflammatory gesture, but he made a promise that if he could not reach agreement with his adversaries, he would make an alliance with Sextus in the future, or alternatively if he did reach an agreement, then he would plead the cause of Sextus and his followers in the Senate and with the people of Rome.⁴⁸ Instead of throwing in his lot with Sextus, which may have damaged his reputation at Rome, Antonius allied with Domitius Ahenobarbus, who had collected a fleet after Philippi and played understudy to Sextus Pompeius ever since. Although Domitius had attacked Italian coastal towns, he had not incurred the opprobrium of the Roman people by disrupting the food supply, so an alliance with him would be slightly more respectable, and his fleet would be useful in patrolling the Mediterranean.⁴⁹

It was an inauspicious moment to turn away from the east to sail to Italy, because the Parthians had erupted into Syria. Antonius' governor Decidius Saxa was killed. In Italy, the loyal Ventidius Bassus had rounded up the Antonian troops after the fall of Perusia, but had remained in Italy, presumably awaiting instructions; it may have been now that Antonius sent him to the east to try to re-establish the position there. On his journey to Italy, Antonius met Fulvia in Greece, and found her very ill, but could not afford to linger with her.⁵⁰ Since it is not clear whether or not Antonius and Fulvia had acted in concert against Octavian, it is not known if there were recriminations because of the trouble she and Lucius had caused, or whether the two of them commiserated that the plans had failed. Fulvia died soon after Antonius' departure, which makes his action in leaving her seem that much more callous, though Appian depicts him as grief-stricken.⁵¹

The treaty of Brundisium

When Octavian returned to Rome from Gaul, having taken over Antonius' legions and control of his Gallic provinces in the summer of 40 BC, the news was not encouraging. He heard that Antonius had allied with Domitius Ahenobarbus, but not only had they allied, they were now besieging Brundisium, because when they attempted to return to Italy the town had locked its gates against them.⁵² Antonius and Domitius blamed Octavian for obstructing them, possibly conveniently forgetting that Domitius had attacked the town in the previous year, so the inhabitants of Brundisium were not about to give him a second chance.⁵³

It mattered very little whether or not Octavian had ordered the town and garrison to close their gates; the hard fact was that it had happened and now another civil war seemed imminent. But the soldiers were tired and had little inclination to fight each other; war was averted by negotiation. Maecenas acted as envoy for Octavian, and Asinius Pollio fulfilled the same role for Antonius. The neutral Lucius Cocceius Nerva, possibly an ancestor of the emperor Nerva,

interceded on behalf of both triumvirs. The resultant treaty of Brundisium, agreed in autumn 40 BC, divided the Roman world more or less in recognition of the status quo. Antonius held the eastern provinces, and Octavian's portion was the west. His provinces encased Italy on both sides, Gaul and Spain on the west, and Illyricum on the east. Lepidus was already being marginalised.

As part of the agreement reached at Brundisium, Domitius Ahenobarbus was sent to govern Bithynia, and Sextus Pompeius was confirmed in his possession of Sicily, less from magnanimous motives than recognition of how difficult it would be to take it from him. He had hoped for more, perhaps to take the place of Lepidus in the Triumvirate, and his failure to gain anything became a sore point that festered for the next four years.⁵⁴ The negotiations were rounded off with sumptuous feasting; Octavian entertained Antonius in Roman style, while Antonius entertained Octavian in eastern fashion. The staunch adherence of Antonius to the east would have been noted by Octavian, and stored for later use. After the feasting the two journeyed to Rome, to meet with a joyous reception from the people on the way there.

In Rome the triumvirs attended to business. Connections with Caesar were reaffirmed. Antonius became *flamen divi Juli*, priest of the cult of the divine Julius.⁵⁵ He had been appointed *flamen* while Caesar was still alive, and Cicero⁵⁶ refers to him as such, but despite holding the title, he could not actually become *flamen* until Caesar was dead and deified. When he became triumvir in 43 BC, Antonius was confirmed as priest of the divine Julius, but his actual inauguration was delayed until after the meeting at Brundisium. Antonius' connection with Caesar was not quite as close as that of Octavian, who began to style himself *Imperator Caesar divi filius*, using *Imperator* as a *praenomen*. He may have begun to employ the name immediately after the treaty of Brundisium in 40 BC. It underlined the connection with Caesar, strengthened Octavian's position with the army, and demonstrated that the powers of the triumvirs outweighed that of the people. Kienast cites an inscription where it seems that Octavian calls himself *Imperator* in 40 BC.⁵⁷ Syme agrees that Octavian used the title perhaps from 40 BC,⁵⁸ but the clearest evidence and the earliest attested use of the title comes from coins of Agrippa struck in Gaul in 38 BC.⁵⁹

Rewards and punishments followed. Cornelius Balbus was made consul, presumably as a reward for his unrecorded services to Octavian; it is not certain whether this was an ad hoc decision made from a position of strength, or whether his name had always been on Octavian's list of promotions for the year 40 BC. Alföldi⁶⁰ thinks that he had been on the consular list since 43 BC. Though there were several associates to be rewarded, there were unfortunately some who had to be eliminated. Antonius turned his back on his former associate Manius, who had allegedly stirred up Fulvia to rebellion by suggesting that if there was a political disturbance in Rome, Antonius would leave Cleopatra and return to restore order. The story may have been fabricated, and Manius may never have uttered a word, but Antonius the triumvir had to be seen to be squeaky clean and to divest himself of unreliable subordinates. Manius was executed.⁶¹

Octavian too had to rid himself of one of his associates. For reasons that are still obscure, Salvidienus Rufus was summoned from Gaul, sentenced to death, and executed, but only after Octavian had laid the case before the Senate and obtained the *senatus consultum ultimum*. The execution was thus legally sanctioned, but the crime and the charge remain obscure. The ancient sources declare that Salvidienus had been on the point of deserting to Antonius when it seemed certain that civil war was about to break out, and Antonius had informed Octavian as a demonstration of goodwill. Richardson⁶² accepts the story that Antonius informed Octavian of Salvidienus' treachery. But the fact was that Salvidienus had not mobilised, there had been no war, and now the two main antagonists were reconciled. Salvidienus' crime perhaps had more serious undertones than that of a mere turncoat.⁶³ He could have used his position in Gaul to deny the province to both Octavian and Antonius alike. Perhaps he had been acting a little too independently, and the Senate as a body would be very sensitive about independent commanders at the head of armies in Gaul. Playing on this sensitivity, Octavian went to considerable lengths to arraign Salvidienus before the Senate, thus converting him from merely a personal enemy into an enemy of the entire state. Whether he was justified or not cannot be known, but by having Salvidienus properly tried and executed he had made several statements in one stroke. He had managed to imply that the state was more important than the triumvirs and their personal rivalries; that the triumvirs would protect the state, and that in order to do so, they would not hesitate to punish any of their erstwhile friends who posed any sort of threat. It was very neat. Octavian replaced Salvidienus with Agrippa, whose exploits earned him real credit and the offer of a triumph, which he refused, perhaps because he was aware that Augustus was intent on ultimately curtailing the right of victorious generals to hold a triumph. Eventually, but not just yet, Augustus limited the triumph to immediate members of his family.⁶⁴

Marriage ties were proposed to bind the triumvirs together. Fulvia had died suddenly in Greece, so now Antonius was free to marry. Octavian suggested that Antonius should be wed to his sister Octavia, whose husband Marcellus had also conveniently died in 40 BC, but too recently for her to be legally married again quite so soon. Technically, widows were supposed to remain in mourning for 10 months before taking another husband, the stipulated lapse of time being obviously connected with childbirth and paternity. If the widow was obviously pregnant at the time of her husband's death, there was less confusion over paternity, but a child born to a widow during the 10-month mourning period was not legally considered to be the heir of her late husband. In Octavia's case, the triumvirs appealed to the Senate for permission to waive the rules, demonstrating their adherence to ancient custom. Octavia became the wife of Antonius (Figure 4.2). She already had a son and two daughters by Marcellus, and she was to bear two more daughters to Antonius, one of whom was to be the mother of the emperor Claudius. Later, after the fall of Alexandria and the suicide of Antonius, Octavia took in and raised Antonius' son Iullus, whose mother was



Figure 4.2 As part of the agreement between the triumvirs in 40 BC, Antonius married Octavian's sister Octavia, who is shown but not named on the reverse of this coin. Antonius appears on the obverse as Imperator and Triumvir.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

Fulvia, and his children by Cleopatra. Octavia was the archetypal mother figure, and was revered for her kindness.

The treaty of Misenum

The rejoicing in Rome was short lived, ending as soon as Sextus Pompeius began his blockade of Italy, deliberately disrupting the food supply. He was still supreme in the Mediterranean, and disappointment that he had not gained more from the treaty of Brundisium prompted him to show his strength in a series of raids on coastal towns. Popular pressure was brought to bear on Antonius and Octavian to put a stop to the blockade which threatened to cause famine in Rome.⁶⁵ The food supply was always a sensitive issue, but never more so than now, when civil wars, the proscriptions and the disruptions resulting from the veteran settlements had all contributed to the destruction of Italian agriculture. Riots broke out. Octavian tried to calm the mob, and was stoned for his efforts. He bore it stoically, and when Antonius arrived with some soldiers the mob stoned him too. Collecting more troops, Antonius forced his way into the Forum and rescued Octavian from mortal danger.⁶⁶ But neither of them could afford to make extravagant promises about crushing Sextus Pompeius. Since Octavian had no fleet and Antonius could contribute only a few ships, the only alternative at the moment was further negotiation with their rival.⁶⁷

After an abortive attempt to reach agreement, the protagonists finally met in the summer of 39 BC, and agreed upon the treaty of Misenum. The terms of the treaty are given by Appian, who says that the documents were signed and sealed and deposited with the Vestals.⁶⁸ As a result of the agreement Pompeius was given control of Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily, with the promise that the Peloponnese would also be his, but at a later date, thus removing territories from

both Octavian and Antonius. Most important, Pompeius was to guarantee Rome's corn supply, and was excluded from basing troops in Italy. As reward for his compliance he was admitted to the college of augurs, and he was to be consul in 38 BC, along with Antonius who was also consul designate for 38 BC (Figure 4.3). The triumvirs designated the consuls for 35 to 31, having already decided on those for 39 to 36. To mark their confidence and goodwill, they declared an amnesty for all those who had fled to Sextus Pompeius for refuge; the men who now returned to Rome would provide a fertile recruiting ground for Octavian's party.⁶⁹ The peace was very popular at Rome.⁷⁰ At the end of the negotiations, Pompeius entertained the two triumvirs to dinner on board his flagship. Pompeius' admiral, Menas, rendered as Menodorus in some sources, suggested that it would be a good idea to cut the cables, sail away with two illustrious prisoners, and quietly tip them overboard, but Sextus Pompeius nobly resisted the temptation.⁷¹

Perhaps unaware that they had narrowly avoided such an untimely end, the triumvirs went their separate ways. Antonius attended to the problems of the east, having taken care to have all his arrangements confirmed in advance by the Senate. He was probably mindful of the example of Pompeius Magnus, whose eminently sensible administrative arrangements for his eastern conquests and client kingdoms were debated out of existence and into futility. If he had submitted his arrangements for the east one by one, hoping for ratification as he went along, Octavian could have influenced the decisions of the Senate, so obviously Antonius was taking no chances with either of them. In Antonius' absence, Octavian used his position in Italy to great advantage, steadily building a faction, extending his influence and consolidating his power. Antonius may have had many agents acting on his behalf in Rome, but there was no substitute for being there in person, to react immediately to events and to monitor changing moods. It was Antonius' misfortune that he was absent, increasingly



Figure 4.3 Antonius and Octavia are shown together on the obverse of this silver coin, with the legend M.ANTONIUS.IMP.COS.DESIG.ITER.ET.TERT. indicating that Antonius was consul designate for 38 BC. Bacchus is shown on the reverse, flanked by intertwined serpents and the legend IIIIVIR.R.P.C. *Tresvir rei publicae constituendae*.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

identified with things eastern and non-Roman, and not brilliantly successful in his campaign against the Parthians. If he had won splendid victories, Octavian would have had to put a lot of effort into portraying Antonius as an enemy. As it was, while Antonius became increasingly easternised, Octavian upheld Roman virtues and brought his wars to successful conclusions with the aid of his generals. Administration in Rome was theoretically in the hands of both triumvirs. They were still concerned with appearances, but could only disguise very thinly the fact that although they were using constitutional methods, they held absolute and therefore unconstitutional powers. In 39 BC they had all their acts ratified from their first day of power,⁷² so that any charge of illegality could be countered with the retrospective senatorial sanction of their deeds. Also in 39, according to Dio,⁷³ more than two consuls were chosen for the first time, without the excuse that one or both consuls had died or been removed from office. The practice of electing more than two consuls eventually became more widespread during the Empire, the first two elected senators being the eponymous consuls, giving their name to the year, and termed *consules ordinarii*, and the subsequent pair or pairs being termed *consules suffecti*.

In 38 BC no fewer than 67 praetors held office.⁷⁴ These multiple magistracies provided an excellent method of rewarding men for their loyalties and services, granting them experience in administration, and furthering their careers, all at one stroke. It is speculated that some of these 67 praetors of 38 BC, whose names are not known, would be proscribed men returning under the terms of the amnesty declared at the treaty of Misenum. The multiple appointments eased the congestion that would have occurred when the exiles returned, all requiring appointments and magistracies, and potentially restless if they did not receive them. More important, the advancement of their careers would be owed to Octavian, so that when the final break with Antonius occurred, they may not have had to think long and hard about where their loyalties lay.

Livia Drusilla

Among the exiles returning to Rome after the agreement reached at Misenum was Tiberius Claudius Nero, his wife Livia Drusilla, and their infant son, the younger Tiberius. The elder Tiberius had had a chequered career. He had been one of Caesar's quaestors and had commanded the fleet at Alexandria, but later he had turned against Caesar and joined the Liberators. He may have been influenced by Livia's father, Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, originally, as his name suggests, a Claudian, but he had been adopted as an infant by Livius Drusus. He can hardly have known his new father for very long, since Drusus was assassinated in 91 BC, before he could bring his political ideas to fruition. These included enfranchisement for the Italian allies, who contributed to Rome's military successes but did not receive an equal share in the spoils. The inequality rankled and the allies made several efforts to gain equality with the Romans, if not full citizenship. Their hopes were raised when Drusus proposed

his new laws, and foiled when he was assassinated. It seemed that there would never be equality with the Romans, so the allies erupted, feeling they had nothing to lose by fighting. The bloody Social War followed, with the allies pitted against the Romans in a bitter contest. After all, the allies knew how the Romans fought, and how to counter their methods. The war ended only when the Romans gave in and promised citizenship to those who would lay down their arms.

The association with both Livius Drusus, champion of the people, and the ancient noble family of the Claudii ought to have launched Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus on a brilliant political career, but although he was praetor in 50 BC, his prospects were cut short. He became a confirmed anti-Caesarian, joined the conspirators, and after the formation of the Triumvirate he was proscribed. He fled to join Brutus, and then killed himself after Philippi. His daughter Livia Drusilla, his only child, was named for her adoptive grandfather Livius Drusus, though her Claudian bloodline was not forgotten.⁷⁵ She married Tiberius Claudius Nero probably in 43 BC, when she was about 15 or 16 years old, and he was in his thirties. Shortly afterwards they began to live in interesting times;⁷⁶ Tiberius backed Lucius Antonius and Fulvia, and joined them, escaping to Praeneste with his wife and infant son and then heading for Naples. There he allegedly tried to instigate a slave uprising, but had to flee once again when Octavian besieged the city. Tiberius and his family took ship to Sicily, hoping to join Sextus Pompeius, but they were rebuffed, so they chose Antonius, who probably did not know what to do with them and sent them to Sparta. The arrival of a family so bitterly opposed to Octavian would be among the last things that Antonius would wish for. For a while Tiberius Claudius Nero and his family enjoyed a respite at Sparta. Tiberius forged good relations with the Spartans, but then it all went wrong and Tiberius, Livia and their son had yet another frightening escape, this time through a burning forest, where Livia's hair and dress were singed.⁷⁷ In less than three years of marriage, Livia Drusilla had experienced more than many other women did in their whole lives, and had come through it all perhaps a stronger character than when she had started out. She was still not much more than 20 years old.

When the treaty of Misenum was agreed, Antonius returned to Rome, and Tiberius Claudius Nero and his family accompanied him. The family property may have been restored to him and Livia, but normally the proscribed and their families retrieved only about a quarter of their estates and wealth. After so many hair-raising escapes and adventures, it is probable that Livia was now impoverished, but no details of her life at this time have been preserved. Octavian may have met Livia Drusilla through the agency of his wife Scribonia, whose nephew was the younger Scribonius Libo who had been adopted by Livia's father. Livia cannot have known her adoptive brother very intimately, but the relationship would be strong enough to support some connection between her and Octavian's wife. In whatever way they first encountered each other, the story goes that Octavian immediately fell in love with Livia. The tale is one of the few perceived truths about Augustus that survives unsullied from ancient times, accepted

probably because of wishful thinking and sheer relief that he was susceptible to at least one normal human passion.

Octavian determined to marry Livia (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). His divorce of Scribonia, callously arranged so that it occurred on the day of his daughter's birth, was probably hastened by his need to be free to remarry as soon as



Figure 4.4 Green basalt head of Livia. It was previously thought to portray Augustus' sister Octavia, but the characteristic hairstyle resembles other portraits of Livia. 31 BC.
Source: Musée du Louvre. ©RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Daniel Arnaudet.



Figure 4.5 Head of Livia in marble, showing her as a young woman. This head was found in Egypt. It is a copy made in the fourth century AD of an original of around 27–23 BC.
Source: Courtesy Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Photo by Ole Haupt.

possible. He made the excuse that Scribonia nagged him,⁷⁸ and propaganda portrayed her as shrewish, but it is more likely that she was simply nowhere near as useful to him as Livia was to be.⁷⁹ He was quite undeterred by the fact that Livia was already married, and was the mother of one young son. She was also pregnant with her second child, who would be known to the modern world simply as Drusus. Since she was very obviously pregnant, there could be no doubt about the paternity of the child, and this put few hindrances in the way of the divorce, to which the compliant husband Tiberius Claudius Nero readily agreed.⁸⁰ He even attended the betrothal feast, which took place probably in September or October. Genuine affection was not a necessary feature of Roman marriages, but this match between Octavian and Livia seems to have been one of the exceptions. The marriage was conducted with what has been termed indecent haste. Drusus was born in Octavian's house on the Palatine Hill in Rome on 14 January 38 BC, and returned to his natural father Tiberius Claudius Nero. The wedding took place three days later.

It cannot be denied that the marriage was extremely advantageous to Octavian, so he would probably have gone ahead with it even if he had been unable to summon the least trace of affection. It was a definite bonus that he liked Livia, but the prime consideration was the fact that she was well connected, and her personality was suited to the role which Octavian wished her to fulfil. Through Livia, Octavian began to attract leading members of the senatorial groups to his cause.⁸¹ Livia was a Claudian by blood, and there were few more ancient noble families in Rome. A distant ancestor was Appius Claudius Caecus, who founded the Appian Way and the Aqua Appia, the first aqueduct bringing water to Rome. There were two branches of this illustrious family, the Claudii Neroni, and the Claudii Pulchri, of which Publius Clodius Pulcher, patrician turned plebeian to become tribune, was one of the more famous, or infamous, descendants. Suetonius⁸² insists that Livia's father was a member of the Pulchri clan, but not all modern scholars agree.⁸³

Sextus Pompeius resumes hostilities

The treaty arranged at Misenum with Pompeius was almost a dead letter from the first day. War broke out again very soon, and occupied most of 38 BC. Pompeius had not received the Peloponnese as had been promised. Shuckburgh⁸⁴ blamed Antonius for instigating the war, because he had not surrendered the Peloponnese. Dio⁸⁵ accuses Antonius of plundering the Peloponnese and rendering it worthless, effectively denying it to Pompeius in another fashion, rather than churlishly holding on to it. These views are quite unfair, because if Pompeius had really wanted the Peloponnese, he could have gone there and fought for it, but as an immediate and more effective alternative he chose the blockade of Rome's food supply, prompting the usual riots in the city in response. The disturbances in Rome were as much against Octavian himself, and the war with Pompeius was unpopular because it was thought that Octavian had broken the treaty.⁸⁶

Octavian had to act. He put into operation his plan to invade Sicily, striking at the heart of Pompeius' domains. The attack was to be mounted simultaneously from several sides, and theoretically stood every chance of success. Menas, Pompeius' admiral in command of Sardinia, had just deserted to Octavian, bringing three legions with him, and according to Dio⁸⁷ this was the first of several defections from Sextus Pompeius' forces. Menas was placed under Caius Calvisius who commanded one wing of the fleet, the other wing being under Lucius Cornificius. Unfortunately, Octavian proved no match for Pompeius, and was defeated in a naval battle off Cumae.⁸⁸ Several ships were destroyed, and what made matters worse was the destruction of the surviving ships in a storm next day.⁸⁹ His losses in the first skirmish were so heavy that Octavian felt it prudent to write to his friends and the other participating generals, in case plots should be formed against him 'as is often the case in times of adversity'⁹⁰ and he was forced to ask Antonius for help. The latter was at Athens, with work of his own to attend to in the east, but he sailed to Brundisium as requested. When he arrived, Octavian was not there, so he did not wait, for which Octavian reproached him later. Antonius returned to Athens, where Maecenas pursued him, to try to persuade him to meet Octavian. His entreaties were combined with those of Octavia, who seemed to have some influence over her husband at this stage.⁹¹

The meeting eventually took place at Tarentum in 37 BC, probably in summer, though the exact date is not given in the ancient sources. The only clue is that it was too late for Antonius to begin the Parthian campaign by the time the negotiations were over, which would mean that the conclusion was reached anywhere between the late summer and the early autumn.⁹² The terms of the agreement were favourable to Octavian. Antonius was to hand over to him 120 ships⁹³ with their crews, in exchange for the promise of 20,000 soldiers, which he needed for his forthcoming Parthian campaign. But in the end Antonius never received them.

Renewal of the Triumvirate

The rest of the negotiations concerned the Triumvirate, which had officially expired on 31 December 38. Technically the triumvirs had held power illegally since that date, by virtue of their supreme military force without even any pretence at legal or constitutional infrastructure.⁹⁴ This potential illegality had not inconvenienced them nor diminished their authority. Probably no-one, even among the contemporaries or the triumvirs, could be certain whether or not they held power illegally,⁹⁵ and in any case it would have required superhuman daring to stand up and say so, when virtually all the armed forces of the Roman world were under the command of the triumvirs. Octavian and Antonius were so confident of their supremacy that they now renewed the Triumvirate for a further five years, seemingly without the immediate benefit of an appeal to the people or the formality of a *lex*. Based on the assertion of Appian,⁹⁶ who says



Figure 4.6 Gold aureus of c.37 BC, showing Octavian as son of the Divine Caesar and triumvir for the second time (CAESAR.DIVI.F.III VIR.ITER.R.P.C.). The initials R.P.C. proclaim the purpose of the Triumvirate, *res publicae constituendae*, for reconstituting the Republic.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

that the triumvirs did not ask for the people's consent, it was considered at one time that the triumvirs never bothered to ratify the renewal of their powers by law, and suitable astonishment was expressed by modern commentators.⁹⁷ But it now seems that Octavian attended to this formality later on (Figure 4.6) and did have the necessary law passed, which presumably retrospectively ratified the arrangement that the triumvirs initially made by themselves, for themselves.⁹⁸

The reality of the situation had an obvious part to play, and explains why the triumvirs found it so relatively easy to remain in power. At the time of the meeting at Tarentum, Pompeius was strangling Rome, and Octavian was prepared to stop him; in the east Antonius was about to deal with the perceived threat from the Parthians. The concession which Octavian made to the law was to style himself, after 37, *Triumvir rei publicae constituendae iterum*; Antonius did not bother with this nicety and just carried on calling himself triumvir. In the *Res Gestae* Augustus simply described his term as triumvir as 10 consecutive years, neatly glossing over the little hiatus between 31 December 38 and the renewal of the Triumvirate at the conference in summer 37 BC. The start date, and by association the terminal date, of the second term of the Triumvirate, are of crucial importance at the end of 33 BC and for the whole of the year 32. The discussion of the various opinions is deferred until that point: see below.

The war against Sextus Pompeius

While the conference at Tarentum was progressing, preparations for the next stage of the war against Pompeius had already begun, when Agrippa returned from Gaul at the end of 38 BC. He was consul designate for 37; that was perhaps sufficient honour to satisfy his ambition. Perhaps time was pressing as well. For several reasons he decided to forego his triumph; the ancient sources declare that he had no wish to reflect badly upon the failures of Octavian, but as mentioned

above, it is just as likely that the refusal was part of Octavian's wish to limit the numbers of men who were permitted to hold a triumph to immediate family members. Generals parading to the Capitol in their triumphal garb might just start to develop ideas above their station.

Agrippa set to work to build another fleet. He dug a canal from lake Avernus to the sea, and built an artificial harbour called Portus Julius,⁹⁹ by joining the Lucrine lake to lake Avernus, hitherto separated from each other by a narrow strip of land. He probably had to dredge the Lucrine lake to make it deep enough for shipping.¹⁰⁰ There he trained the crews. Manpower was evidently a problem. Twenty thousand of these crews were slaves specially freed for the purpose of training them as rowers.¹⁰¹ The need for 20,000 freed slaves implies that these were desperate times and that there was a chronic shortage of manpower.¹⁰² It is firmly embedded in popular imagination, and reinforced by novels and films, that the rowers on the galleys were slaves, but this is erroneous. Superlative film though it is, and eleven Oscars notwithstanding, *Ben Hur* has led people astray. If Octavian and Agrippa wanted rowers so desperately they could have commandeered and coerced thousands of slaves, but by freeing them first they were presumably acting in accordance with normal custom. It is permissible to wonder what inducements were offered to make the new freedmen remain at their oars instead of legging it to the nearest port.

Agrippa planned with forethought; he is credited with the invention of the *harpax*, a grappling hook that could be used to haul enemy ships closer and thereby hold them and destroy them.¹⁰³ The idea was not new, but it seems that Agrippa made certain innovations which improved on the original. His catapults could shoot the hooks for a much greater distance, and he managed to cover the ropes immediately behind the hooks with a protective wooden shield which prevented the enemy crews from cutting them away so easily. Meanwhile, as the crews tried to detach the hooks, Agrippa's men could winch the ships closer, and then board them. Shipbuilding and training went on all through 37 and the first half of 36 BC. By the summer of that year, Octavian and Agrippa were ready.

The plan of campaign was again centred on Sicily. Lepidus was brought into the attack this time; his task was to approach Sicily from the south with his legions from Africa. Statilius Taurus was to approach from Tarentum, and Octavian himself from Puteoli. The date chosen for the attack was 1 July, the month recently renamed after Julius Caesar. Only Lepidus managed to gain a foothold in the island.¹⁰⁴ A storm broke out on 3 July and drove Statilius Taurus back to Tarentum, and the same storm wrecked Octavian's ships. The damage was extensive and took a month to repair. While this was being done, Octavian toured the Italian colonies to engender support and recruit soldiers to his cause. Maecenas was sent to Rome to dispel fears that Sextus Pompeius was about to take over the city, evidently with the gods on his side, because they sent opportune storms to save him whenever he was under threat.

In August Octavian resumed the offensive. It was hoped that he would be able to ferry his legions into Sicily while Agrippa held off Pompeius' fleet. Part of

the plan worked, and three legions were eventually encamped on the island while Agrippa fought a naval battle off Mylae. It was not decisive.¹⁰⁵ Pompeius withdrew, but then fell upon Octavian before he had managed to bring all his troops across the sea into Sicily. Octavian put Lucius Cornificius in command of the three legions that he had already landed on the island, and decided to engage Pompeius at sea. The result was the destruction once again of Octavian's ships, with potentially more disastrous consequences. Octavian only narrowly avoided death and reached the shore accompanied by a sole companion. He was rescued by Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus, who took care of the young commander who had once placed his name on the proscription lists.¹⁰⁶

It was probably the lowest moment of Octavian's career. He was physically exhausted, and morally dejected. He could not know that Agrippa was safe and sound, because he was forced to conclude that Pompeius' attack on his own ships meant that Agrippa had been defeated. He had no idea what had become of the three legions that he had deposited on the island, now that Pompeius was free to attack them too. It must have seemed that all was lost. From Messalla's camp, Octavian sent messages to Agrippa, and to Lucius Cornificius. The news was cheering; all was not lost, because these two commanders had joined up and taken Tyndaris, one of Pompeius' bases. The next stage was to attack other towns, especially Messina. Deprived of land bases Pompeius would have little choice left except to uproot himself and establish his operations elsewhere, or risk everything on a naval battle, which up to now he had always won. This was what he did, and he came to grief at the battle of Naulochus in September 36 BC.¹⁰⁷ His ships were sunk, burnt or wrecked. He fled to Antonius, but instead of following a direct course he also sold his services to the Parthians, rendering himself suspect to all Romans,¹⁰⁸ especially Antonius, whose sympathies were not likely to lie with anyone who made common cause with his main eastern enemy. Any chances of future negotiations were thus blocked for Pompeius, who was eventually killed, either on the orders of Antonius himself or of Antonius' legate Plancus.

Sicilian problems

After Pompeius fled, peace was at hand for Octavian, but it was not achieved before a slight hiccup in Sicily. When Messina surrendered, Lepidus asserted himself, accepting the surrender in his own name without waiting for the arrival of Octavian. This action and his subsequent demeanour strongly indicated that he was aiming at the domination of Sicily if nothing more, and he obviously thought that command of 20 legions would guarantee his success. When Octavian did arrive, Lepidus dictated terms, namely that he should go away again and leave the island for good. It was ill-advised. The soldiers would not fight, mostly because they saw no end to the battles and there was no promise of huge rewards when one Roman commander set himself against another. Most likely they had been well and truly briefed by Octavian's agents. At any rate they

deserted Lepidus and all that Octavian had to do was to sit and wait. After a suitable interval he walked into Lepidus' camp, where he was greeted by the spectacle of his triumviral colleague begging for mercy. Octavian was merciful, and sent Lepidus back to Italy, his power broken forever. Lepidus' triumviral powers were formally abrogated by a law passed by Octavian, but Lepidus was left in office as Pontifex Maximus until his death.¹⁰⁹ For the rest of his life, he was kept under virtual house arrest. The punishment fitted Octavian's judgement of Lepidus. Had there been anything to fear, Octavian would have executed him, finding some way of doing so with legal backing, just as he had found a way of ridding himself of Salvidienus Rufus.

The next problem, immediately consequent upon the first, was a near mutiny of the troops in Sicily. There were more than 40 legions encamped in the island, all eager for discharge or some tangible reward for their share in the victory. According to Appian it was Octavian's troops who were most troublesome, but this need not be a sinister development, indicating a sudden withdrawal of loyalty or sympathy. It was natural that the soldiers who were the most ardent in his support should now seek from him some especial mark of favour. Octavian promised to reward everyone commensurately with their share in his victories. Of those who had fought with him from the beginning at Mutina, Philippi, and Naulochus, he released 20,000 men immediately and sent them back to Italy.¹¹⁰ The centurions were granted the status of town councillors in their home towns, and the right to wear purple-bordered cloaks. Appian includes the story of the rebellious centurion Ofillius, who dared to argue with Octavian, and after the altercation was never seen again.¹¹¹ This sinister disappearance brought everyone into line. For the men who would promise to stay with him, Octavian hinted at monetary rewards and the prospect of great wealth in the coming foreign wars in Illyricum, where fractious tribes were causing trouble. Last, he purged the army of slaves, who were not permitted to join the Roman army, though in the turbulent times recruiting officers had no doubt been lax in checking on soldiers' backgrounds. Octavian restored runaways to their owners, and executed all those slaves whom nobody claimed. It was cruel but necessary. No-one would follow a man who was lax about this sort of thing; rank and distinction had to be preserved, after all.

Tribunician power

The Senate and the people of Rome welcomed Octavian as a hero, ready to shower him with honours.¹¹² The most important and also most controversial of the honours is the award of *tribunicia potestas*, tribunician power, or more probably some aspects of it, culminating in full tribunician power 13 years later.¹¹³ Tacitus¹¹⁴ labels tribunician power as *summi fastigii vocabulum*, a title of the highest rank, and it was this power, above all else, apart from command of the armies, that ultimately provided Augustus with his overriding authority and legal power in the state. Apart from the right to veto proposals of the magistrates, tribunician

power gave him the right to summon the Senate and to put motions to that body, to instigate legislation, to summon the people's assembly, and to render assistance to citizens who had been treated unfairly by the magistrates.¹¹⁵ In the words of Tacitus,¹¹⁶ Augustus said that the rights of a tribune were all that were necessary for him to protect the people.

It is disputed whether or not Octavian acquired full tribunician power all at once, or in successive instalments. There is confusion in the sources, none of which give exactly the same information. Appian, presumably erroneously, says that after the victory of Naulochus, Octavian became tribune for life.¹¹⁷ This is discounted. As a patrician, Octavian could not legally hold the post of tribune at all, but the device that was eventually employed, either now or later, was to separate the powers from the actual office of tribune. It is possible that Appian's error is merely a question of semantics, confusing the office of tribune with the powers, but this still does not solve the problem about the date when the full tribunician power was granted to Octavian. Appian says he was given full power in 36 BC. Richardson¹¹⁸ allows that Appian may be correct. The late Roman author Orosius also states that Octavian was given full tribunician power in 36 BC after the victory at Naulochus,¹¹⁹ but his testimony is suspect, since he wrote so long after the event, at a time when tribunician power was a firmly established attribute of all emperors. It would probably be considered inconceivable in Orosius' day that Octavian-Augustus could possibly have received various elements of tribunician power at successive dates.

If Octavian was not endowed with full tribunician power in 36 BC, it may be that at that time he was simply granted the personal sacrosanctity of a tribune and the right to sit on the tribunes' bench at meetings, as Dio¹²⁰ affirms. Kienast¹²¹ suggests that in 36 BC only the sacrosanctity of the tribunes was bestowed on Octavian. This was also extended at some later time to Octavian's wife and sister,¹²² irrevocably underlining his dynastic tendencies. In their commentary on *Res Gestae* Brunt and Moore discuss the problem, along with the advantages that full tribunician power offered to Octavian.¹²³ It is Dio who complicates matters. After describing the award of tribunician sacrosanctity in 36 BC, he gives two further dates concerning tribunician power, which he says was awarded in 30 BC¹²⁴ and again in 23 BC.¹²⁵

These statements of Dio lead to different speculative conclusions. It is possible that individual elements of the tribunician powers were awarded separately and successively, so Dio is essentially correct, but not specific enough, in giving two dates when *tribunicia potestas* was bestowed on Octavian. On the other hand Pelling¹²⁶ is not in favour of tribunician power being split up and awarded in sections, some in 30 BC and more in 23 BC, so he favours the argument that in 30 BC Octavian was offered it but refused it. Yet another alternative is that when he was offered it in 30 BC, Octavian accepted it, but then surrendered it at some unspecified time, then took it up again later when he had become Augustus. Surrender of any power seems at odds with his usual tenacity, so Bleicken on the other hand¹²⁷ strongly suggests that Octavian would neither have refused nor

surrendered the very power that he regarded as the foundation of his political influence and freedom of action.

None of this informed speculation finally settles the date when Octavian accepted the full powers of the tribunes. In the *Res Gestae*¹²⁸ Augustus says that he held tribunician power 37 times. It was renewed each year, the last occasion being July AD 14 in the year that he wrote the *Res Gestae* and the year in which he died. Counting backwards from AD 14, 37 years arrives at 23 BC, the year from which Augustus dated his tribunician powers, which seems to support the argument that he received the full *tribunicia potestas* only then. It is unlikely that he was granted full tribunician power in 36, even after the period of euphoria after the victory of Naulochus, and it is quite improbable, if he had been offered such a useful tool in 30 BC as Dio says, that he would have refused it, or accepted it only to relinquish it shortly afterwards. If he had possessed such power from 30 BC onwards, it is strange that he did not count his tribunician years from that date. There may have been a considerable amount of networking by his agents to bring about the award of tribunician sacrosanctity in the first place, and he could never guarantee that it would be offered again without a great deal of background persuasion. Better to grasp it and hold onto it when it was finally offered in full, whenever that was.

The year 23 BC is the most significant date for the assumption of full tribunician power¹²⁹ because it was then that Octavian, by this time Augustus, laid down the consulship, which he had monopolised until then. If he had held tribunician sacrosanctity since 36 BC, he need not have felt any lack of personal security when he divested himself of the consulship, but, leaving aside for the moment the lengthy debate about whether he held consular or proconsular powers, unless he could find a legally sanctioned substitute for the consulship he would lack the ability to formulate laws and arrange meetings of the Senate. Tribunician power would provide this legal substitute.

It may be that Dio, in providing three separate dates, was trying to say that Octavian achieved full tribunician power by gradual stages, for which the details have been lost; such a process would have been more characteristic of Octavian's approach to such matters. Lacey¹³⁰ has termed Augustus' progress to sole rule as a series of gradual encroachments on power, with the impetus arising from a variety of sources, from his own ideas, from his immediate circle of advisers, from the will of the people, and from other magistrates. It was his policy to acquire powers gradually rather than seizing them all at once. Such precipitate actions stood every chance of upsetting public opinion from all quarters, but in accruing power in smaller instalments he could gauge reactions, and then by combining opportunism with alert good sense, he could prepare the way for the next stages and for eventual total success.

The end of civil war

For the time being, honours voted to Octavian were abundant and were probably quite sufficient for his purpose. The contribution of Agrippa to the naval

victory over Sextus Pompeius was not forgotten. According to Velleius Paterculus,¹³¹ Agrippa was the first to be awarded the *corona classica* or *navalis*, a golden crown with representations of ships' beaks incorporated into its design. Octavian was granted the right to wear a laurel wreath,¹³² which he used to advantage by depicting himself on the coinage adorned with a wreath. The comparison with Julius Caesar would have been quite clear. In an attempt to please him, the people voted death to Lepidus, but Octavian refused. It would have invited all kinds of retribution to execute the Pontifex Maximus in cold blood. The time for that had passed when Octavian allowed Lepidus to return to Italy. If he had so wished at that juncture he could have divested Lepidus of his priestly office and then used the will of the people as a valid excuse to rid himself of a potential troublemaker. There was no need for such drastic measures. He had already made the judgement that all he had to do was watch Lepidus closely. It was a good beginning to be acknowledged as merciful to someone who had tried to rebel against him, and it went some way towards wiping out the memory of his appearance in Rome as triumvir at the end of 43 BC, with all the carnage that had resulted.

The importance of Octavian's victory over Pompeius cannot be too strongly emphasised; it brought him tremendous credit, especially for the way in which he had absolutely refused to be beaten, returning to the task again and again, grimly determined, until he won. Even more important, it was successfully presented as a corporate victory, won on behalf of the people, not a personal vendetta to eliminate an enemy who stood in his way. Thus far Octavian could avoid the charge that he was intent on establishing dictatorial autocratic rule. The food supply was secured, and the special taxes, levied by various means to fund the war, could at last be rescinded. All Octavian's actions after Naulochus were positive, and for the good of everyone. He launched a continuing programme of improvements that came under the broad general headings of personal safety, protection of property, and reduced taxation.¹³³ He did not confine his plans to the city of Rome, but embraced the whole of Italy in his schemes; during the next few years he put into operation what can only be described as a proactive welfare programme. While the finer details were worked out over a protracted period of time, it is highly likely that the broad general outline was established after Naulochus, taking the long-term view. It would not have been difficult to pinpoint the areas where improvements were desperately needed. All that was required was time and personnel, sometimes employed quite unconventionally, for instance when Agrippa, who had already reached the consulship in 37 BC, became a lowly aedile in 33, and began to overhaul Rome's water supply, sewage system and other public works.¹³⁴

In Italy, agriculture had suffered dreadfully in the civil wars and during the settlements of the veterans. The devastation was noted in contemporary literature, for example in Vergil's *First Eclogue*, and in the *Georgics*, where the uncompromising portrayal of the bleak and suffering countryside has been interpreted as evidence that since Octavian did nothing to suppress such information and

comment, he had clearly opted for a free style of patronage rather than a stifling and restricted control of poets and writers. The extent to which his circle of writers had a free hand is disputed. Osgood finds indications, in Vergil's *Eclogues* especially, that there were restrictions on the expression of opinion during the Triumvirate.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, closely controlled though he may have been, Vergil, whose family had lost their estates at Mantua, manages to convey the plight of those farmers and landowners who had been displaced in the programme of veteran settlement. Octavian's policy in allowing writers some freedom to describe an unhappy situation was more likely the result of common sense. The state of Italian agriculture simply could not be ignored. To control writers in such a way as to make light of a problem that was clear to everyone would have been ludicrous and would have caused a complete dearth of confidence in Octavian. Allowing or even encouraging Vergil to describe the countryside as it really was, in his own terms, was one way of acknowledging the problem quite openly, with the unspoken implication that since he knew all about it, the young Caesar intended to make amends.

The land settlements for the veterans after Naulochus involved some dispossession of existing farmers, but in general the acquisition of land was made as far as possible by cash purchase, instead of by enforced evictions.¹³⁶ Public land was used where available, and it is quite possible that farms given to soldiers in the earlier settlements were now vacant again. The veterans of the Seventh legion were settled in Baeterrae (modern Béziers) in Gaul.¹³⁷ As well as settling veterans in other parts of the Roman world, this time Italy was to be treated with more care, and that care was to be demonstrated ostentatiously, not only in the matter of veteran settlement, but also in terms of general welfare. Octavian sent Calvisius Sabinus to deal with the brigands who had grown powerful and dangerous in Italy during the unrest of the past few years. Within 12 months it was safe to travel again, so successfully did Sabinus eradicate the problem. Thus the food supply, protection of property, and personal safety were unequivocally taken under Octavian's wing. It remained to give some attention to the ruling classes, to integrate them into the scheme of things. A fresh start was made once the dangers from Sextus Pompeius' fleet were over. Documents were burned, administration of public affairs was partially restored to the magistrates, and Octavian promised to restore the *res publica* when Antonius returned from the east. For the time being it seemed as though all civil strife had ended.¹³⁸

The positive side to this promise veiled the negative aspect, which was that Octavian did not intend to relinquish his accumulated political and military influence while Antonius still held power in the east. But for the purposes of public relations, it seemed as though Octavian was merely unwilling to act alone, without deference to his colleague. The status quo could be prolonged on this basis, and the onus for bringing it all to a successful and peaceful conclusion rested with Antonius. Octavian's accommodating attitude was meanwhile underlined by his decree that all documents relating to the period of the proscriptions were to be burned or otherwise destroyed, to demonstrate the fact that

there was to be an end to civil wars, and in its place a splendid new beginning, full of hope. It was permissible to draw a line and start again. Even so at the end of 36 BC, Octavian cannot have felt that peace would be universal and long-lasting. Foreign wars there would be in any number, but that was acceptable for Romans. What was not acceptable was the slightest hint that there might be a struggle to the death with Antonius, who had on each occasion helped Octavian when asked to do so, and who was trying to establish Roman supremacy over their enemies the Parthians by making war on them, carrying out the task that Caesar had set himself in 44 BC. The time was still not yet ripe to call Antonius an enemy, so there was no choice but to call him friend, and celebrate the end of civil war.

Foreign wars

Both Octavian and Antonius waged war outside Italy, for a variety of reasons and with varying degrees of success. Foreign wars were eminently welcome to Romans, especially after the long years of civil wars. So far, Octavian's track record as a general had been less than spectacular; he required some measure of kudos to match that of Antonius, whose military reputation and ascendancy were still very strong. Octavian chose well. The Roman province of Illyricum, not yet properly pacified, would provide an excellent theatre of war for his troops. If the sources are to be believed, he had already planned for this war before he had tidied up after the victory over Pompeius. One of the methods by which he quelled the mutiny in Sicily was to promise rich rewards in Illyricum for any soldiers who would remain with him.¹³⁹ It has been pointed out that this was pure charlatanism, shamelessly employed to induce the soldiers to follow him; Illyricum was not the place to find rich rewards, at least not in the modern sense.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps soldiers of the first century BC had a different conception from ours of what was to be classified as a rich reward. Or perhaps Octavian resorted to a cheap trick.

Politically and strategically, Illyricum was ripe for attention. It lay across the road to Macedonia, and it was vital to secure this route. There was also the advantage that the inhabitants could be represented as a threat to Italy, because some time ago they had attacked Tergeste (modern Trieste). They had defeated Aulus Gabinius in his campaigns of 48–47 BC, and had captured some standards, so there was a revenge motive as well.¹⁴¹ Octavian could also fall back on the unfulfilled intentions of his adoptive father. Julius Caesar had intended to subdue Illyricum when he was governor of the area along with the whole of Gaul, but he had not had time to carry out his plans. If he had survived beyond 44 BC he would have launched the campaign against the Parthian Empire, which would also have entailed a preliminary subjugation of Illyricum on the way to the theatre of war.¹⁴² With regard to the security of Italy and Rome, there was really no pressing reason for Octavian's campaigns in Illyricum, as Dio¹⁴³ rightly commented.

It is not difficult to discern other, more personal reasons, for making war in Illyricum. Antonius was not yet such an abject failure in the east as later propaganda was to portray him, so Octavian required a military reputation to equal or excel his rival's, and in anticipation of a future rift with Antonius, Octavian would require an army, but at the moment, there was no urgent danger to the state that would warrant the retention of so many soldiers. Therefore in the interim, Octavian needed a legitimate excuse to keep control of his army, and somewhere to base the troops, not in Italy but not too far away either, preferably in some place where it was not too difficult to wage war, but difficult enough to enable him to emerge with the appearance of a successful general. Provided that he did not meet with total disaster, the results of the wars were not of extreme importance. Under the guise of attending to the welfare of Italy, Octavian could keep his army together, and train the men via the experience they would gain in rugged terrain against an expendable enemy.¹⁴⁴ By employing his troops in this way he absolved himself of the necessity of discharging them, thus avoiding the risk of converting them into veterans who needed land. Nor did he need to worry about unemployed and troublesome soldiers roaming around Italy, profitlessly idling their time away, fomenting discontent, harassing the citizens, and eating the vital food supplies that he had just secured for the people of Rome. Attempts have been made by modern authors to imbue these Illyrian campaigns with a grand strategic design.¹⁴⁵ It has been postulated that the master plan was to secure Roman domination up to the Danube,¹⁴⁶ or alternatively that Octavian wished to block any projected invasion by Antonius via the land route into Italy, or even that he desired to secure the route because he planned to launch an invasion southwards against Antonius. These considerations are not relevant to Octavian's immediate purpose.

He gained no territory for Rome after his campaigns, but that did not matter. In 35 BC he moved against the Iapodes and besieged their stronghold of Metulum on the river Colapis (the modern Kolpa). At one point during the siege the soldiers wavered in crossing a bridge, or as some sources have it, a ramp from a siege tower. Octavian tried to rally them, but the structure collapsed and he was injured, fortunately not too seriously. The demonstration of courage could yield nothing but good results, binding the army more closely to him and enhancing his reputation as a general. Next he destroyed Segesta (modern Siscia, or Sisak, southeast of Zagreb) at the point where the river Kolpa joins the Save. He returned to Rome, intent on pressing forward during the following year, but in 34 he turned aside and attacked the Dalmatae, or Delmatae, destroying the strongholds of Promoda and then Synodium, appropriately for Roman ideals of revenge, for this was near the place where Gabinius had been defeated. At the beginning of the year 33, Octavian returned once more to Rome to take up his second consulship, which he laid down immediately in order to attend to the war. In the spring the Dalmatae surrendered, along with other tribes. The war was over, and Octavian's reputation much improved. His capacity for self-advertisement had not abated. He had impressed the army by his conspicuous

personal bravery; he had been wounded twice, eradicating the suspicion that he was always ill at crucial moments, and perhaps his ailments occurred by design so he could avoid sharing in the hardships of the troops. Not as celebrated as Caesar, he was nonetheless a fully-fledged leader of soldiers. At home it remained to impress the senators and the people. He read out an account of his achievements in the Senate, including for greater effect a long list of tribes that he had conquered. He brought back the rescued standards that Gabinus had lost, and housed them with appropriate ceremony in the newly built Porticus Octavia, which was only one of the buildings which he and his associates had already begun in order to beautify and embellish Rome.

On a personal note he postponed the triumph that was voted to him, displaying a suitable modesty, but he was not so modest that he could afford to allow public acknowledgement of the contributions of Agrippa, active in Illyricum from 35 to 34 BC, probably patrolling the Dalmatian coast with the fleet,¹⁴⁷ or of Statilius Taurus, who took over from 34 until 33. Such acknowledgement was reserved for a later time when Octavian had become Augustus and was secure in his sole rule. For the time being, rewards for the generals came in a different form. Statilius Taurus had been granted a triumph over Africa in 34, before being appointed to his command in Illyricum, and Agrippa's position was already assured as second man in Rome. He never sought tangible proofs of Octavian's approval, content to remain chief assistant. The Illyrian victories were earmarked as Octavian's own, at a time when he needed to stand out. He made little enough of them in the *Res Gestae*¹⁴⁸ because by the time he wrote of his achievements these wars had receded into the background, overshadowed by more momentous events. In his earlier *Memoirs* he devoted much more attention to them. Appian used this work to produce his account of the wars,¹⁴⁹ so the details come down to us at second hand, but derived from Augustus' own words.

Antonius' great project was the invasion of Parthia, for which he had been preparing for some time, interrupted by Octavian's demands for assistance. His military preparations were accompanied by a necessary preliminary overhaul of the administration of the entire east, which he carried out over a prolonged period from 39 to 36 BC. He divided the area into a series of client kingdoms ruled by men who were well disposed towards Rome. His administrative arrangements were undertaken with care and good sense, so that when Octavian finally emerged supreme, he made adjustments and fine tunings, but did not find it necessary to make very many radical alterations, retaining most of the new territorial boundaries that Antonius had redrawn, and confirming many of the new kings and princes in their powers.¹⁵⁰ While Antonius made all his political preparations, in 38 BC Ventidius Bassus fought with great success against Pacorus, the son of the king of Parthia. He had attacked Syria, so Ventidius' campaign was fought with right on the Roman side. He was granted a triumph as reward.¹⁵¹ Thereafter the Antonian generals Sosius in Syria and Canidius in Armenia maintained the status quo.

The foundations for the Parthian campaign were well laid, but the campaign itself was not the resounding success that Antonius had dreamed of.¹⁵² It began very promisingly in the spring of 36 BC, while Octavian and Agrippa were still training their crews and preparing for the resumption of hostilities against Sextus Pompeius. At this point Antonius could afford to rest on his laurels, his reputation intact, his plans well made, and his army loyal. His timing was impeccable. A considerable schism had arisen in the Parthian court, where the new ruler Phraates had killed off all his relatives and divided the nobility, some of whom rebelled against him. There could be no more propitious time for a Roman offensive. Unexpectedly, success eluded Antonius, for several reasons. He advanced too quickly, attempted a siege which he was forced to abandon and in the ensuing retreat he lost a great part of his army.¹⁵³ His qualities as a commander, resourceful and energetic in adversity, were never more in evidence, but such qualities in defeat, commendable though they were, could in no way substitute for victory, endless booty and the return of the standards lost by Marcus Licinius Crassus. The details of the Parthian campaign belong to the history of Antonius rather than to the history of Augustus, who eventually achieved by patient diplomacy what Antonius had failed to achieve by armed invasion. When Antonius reached safety he summoned Cleopatra to his aid; it is to her credit that she set sail in winter, regardless of the risks, to meet the tattered remnants of the Roman army, bringing with her vital supplies of food and clothing.¹⁵⁴

For the next two years in 35–34 BC, Antonius turned his attention to Armenia, always the buffer between Parthia and Rome. The reason for the action was that the Armenians had assisted the Parthians, or at best had not helped Antonius as they had promised. Without a battle, Antonius seized King Artavasdes and imprisoned him, then occupied the whole country and issued commemorative coins with the proud legend *Armenia devicta*, to indicate that he had conquered the land (Figure 4.7). Octavian put it about that this victory was nothing but a sham, dishonourable and discreditable to Rome. He would probably not have achieved very much by this political slander if that had been where it all ended, but Antonius compounded his own situation at the end of 34 BC by holding a victory parade in Alexandria which so resembled a Roman triumph that he seemed to be making a mockery of it. This had sacrilegious undertones, because all spoils of victory were traditionally to be rendered as an offering to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol in Rome, and here was a Roman general masquerading as the new Dionysus in Egypt, rendering them instead to foreign gods in a foreign country. Worse still, either at the same time as his parade, or shortly afterwards, Antonius disposed of various territories (which were not indisputably his to distribute) as gifts to Cleopatra and her children, in a ceremony which became known as the Donations of Alexandria. Cleopatra was to rule over Egypt, Cyprus and Coele Syria, and Caesarion, her son by Caesar, was now declared *rex regum*, king of kings, and recognised as heir to Julius Caesar.¹⁵⁵ The young children of Antonius and Cleopatra were to divide



Figure 4.7 This coin of 32 BC refers to the notorious Donations of Alexandria made by Antonius to Cleopatra and their children. Antonius celebrates his conquest of Armenia, *ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA*, bending the truth a little, and more importantly for Octavian's propaganda purposes, Cleopatra is proclaimed as *CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM FILIORUM REGUM* 'queen of kings and her sons who are kings'. The phrase king of kings was widely used in the east, where it did not possess the inflammatory over-ambitious sense that it did in Rome.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

between them Libya, Cyrene, Phoenicia, Syria, Cilicia and Armenia. To this list was added Media and Parthia, a slightly presumptuous addition since neither territory was yet conquered. There is some doubt as to the immediate effect of these measures in Rome.¹⁵⁶ Defenders of Antonius declare that there was hardly a ripple, until Octavian stirred up the opposition for his own personal gratification, to justify his campaign against Antonius.

Antonius and Cleopatra: enemies of Rome?

There will probably never be any decisive proof that Antonius and Cleopatra entertained the huge ambitions for world domination that have been attributed to them. They have their defenders and slanderers, neither of which opposing factions can be entirely vindicated in their beliefs. The ancient historians probably swallowed Augustan propaganda whole. Velleius Paterculus¹⁵⁷ says that Antonius was planning to invade Italy, and according to Dio¹⁵⁸ and Plutarch¹⁵⁹ Cleopatra schemed to rule the whole Roman world. None of these accusations can be verified and therefore rely on informed speculation, so modern historians must be content with what finally happened, relegating motives, and what might have been, to the background. A vexed question, quite apart from what motivated all the central characters, is the extent to which Octavian shaped the contemporary view of the events preceding and following the battle of Actium and the fall of Alexandria, and how much of our perception of the whole is the product of a post-Actium justificatory rewriting process. Cleopatra definitely had



Figure 4.8 From c.37 to 33 BC Cleopatra issued a series of coins of this type from several different mints. A diadem holds her hair in place, swept back into a knot in her distinctive, severe style, repeated on her other coins and in sculptures. The legend in Greek, transliterated into Latin characters, reads *BASILISSA CLEOPATRA THEA NOTERA*, referring to Cleopatra as queen and relating her to her ancestor Cleopatra Thea, well known in the east where she once ruled over a wide extent of territory. Coins such as these were useful to Octavian, since he could use them to illustrate Cleopatra's alleged territorial ambitions.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

the interests of Egypt and its dependent territories in mind, rightly calling herself queen, and comparing herself to her Egyptian antecedents (Figure 4.8) but how far she intended to extend her influence is unknown. Her proprietorial interests in the Near East stretched at least as far as the lucrative commercial activities of Judaea and Arabia, where she took over certain productive areas with profitable businesses, and then magnanimously leased them back to the rulers, Herod and Malchus, who had been installed by Antonius.

Some credit is due to Antonius for the fact that he did not relinquish control of the entire eastern world to Cleopatra, however infatuated he may have been with her; he still kept a stern Roman head on his shoulders. It is not possible to state categorically whether or not Cleopatra ever uttered the words that she was reputedly fond of repeating: 'When I dispense justice on the Capitol'.¹⁶⁰ Her ultimate design may or may not have been to dominate the whole Roman world, but that is the reputation that Octavian built up for her, based on actions of hers and of Antonius that played into his hands. The behaviour of both Antonius and Cleopatra would plausibly bear the interpretation that Octavian put upon it, and the cumulative effect, accrued over a period of time and culminating in 32 BC, allowed Octavian to portray not only himself, but also Rome, as the injured party. His real design was to remove Antonius, but by going off at a tangent and targeting Cleopatra he could stir up Roman emotion more effectively. For a while the war of words and emotions remained on the personal

level. Antonius' treatment of his worthy and blameless wife Octavia gained much sympathy for her brother Octavian. In 35 BC, he sent his wronged sister to Antonius with 2,000 soldiers,¹⁶¹ which fell far short of the total of 20,000 that had been promised, but Antonius repudiated his wife and sent her home. He did not finally divorce her until 32 BC, but the delay only counted against him, especially since Octavia herself refused to divorce him, despite the excellent grounds he had given her. Accused of immoral behaviour, Antonius wrote the famous letter to Octavian.¹⁶² The phrase *uxor mea est* used of Cleopatra in this letter has been interpreted in two opposing ways, one a literal translation 'she is my wife' and the other with a question mark added to it to mean 'is she my wife?' Those who insist that Antonius was never married to Cleopatra obviously prefer the second interpretation. As reported by Suetonius, the gist of the letter was that both of them were free to associate with any woman they liked, including Cleopatra, because after all, sex was only sex and meant nothing, and moreover Octavian was not as virtuous in this department of life as he claimed. Personal abuse of this sort was standard practice; perhaps Antonius thought that this was as far as it needed to go, forgetting, or perhaps never realising, that he was dealing with an unscrupulous, devious, clever and ambitious politician intent on sole rule. Perhaps Antonius thought his position in the east secure and quite unassailable. Perhaps he simply underestimated Octavian's strengths. His agents presumably informed him of the change of direction of politics at Rome, if indeed such a change was detectable. It may be that historians have sought to push too far back in the retrospective search for the degeneration of relations between Antonius and Octavian. It has been pointed out¹⁶³ that in 33 BC when he ought to have been feverishly preparing for war, Antonius had not even begun to move his legions from their positions in the east, and that he seemed to have no intention of fighting Octavian. For some time envoys went back and forth between Antonius and Octavian carrying complaints and messages of self-justification.¹⁶⁴ Probably at the beginning of 33 when he took up his consulship, Octavian made a virulent speech against Antonius,¹⁶⁵ but at least one author has relegated this speech to the beginning of 32, when Dio¹⁶⁶ says that Octavian and Antonius became openly hostile. It may be that Octavian, who was concentrating on ending the war in Illyricum and then on his civic regeneration programme all through 33, had not yet fully revealed his hand.¹⁶⁷ Antonius may not have been as undiscerning as he has been judged; there may have been little to discern in 33 BC.

Octavian's position in that year gained strength every day. At the end of the wars in Illyricum, he was the hero of the people and Senate. He was granted a triumph which he stored up for use in the future. He had built up a coterie of generals who had held triumphs over Africa and Spain, though the number of generals who triumphed over Spain only serves to emphasise the difficulties of subduing that country.¹⁶⁸ Octavian and his victorious generals continued with the plans to beautify Rome, restoring old buildings or erecting new ones, in most cases temples to the gods, or public amenities that benefitted the populace.

According to Velleius Paterculus,¹⁶⁹ Octavian directed this building work by dropping unmistakable hints to his generals, so the embellishment of Rome was not so spontaneous nor was it quite so voluntary as it sounds. Agrippa arranged entertainments for the people, showered them with free gifts, and provided them with baths. He also reinstated the *Lusus Troiae*,¹⁷⁰ an ancient military-style tournament probably dating back to Etruscan times, in which Roman youths rode their horses, wearing full armour and carrying weapons, in complicated manoeuvres, probably akin to the cavalry displays of modern times. Rituals such as these allowed Octavian-Augustus to emphasise ancient traditions, promote the youth of Rome, and instil into them a martial spirit. In one of Rome's periodic purges of charlatans and fortune tellers, Agrippa expelled the astrologers.¹⁷¹ As praetor, he had gained some experience in the technicalities of water supply, and all through 33 BC, even though he had reached the consulship, he took the retrograde step of becoming a lowly aedile, in which post he continued this sterling work, not only repairing sewers and aqueducts but more importantly setting up maintenance schemes to try to ensure that his extensive work would never be needed on such a scale again.¹⁷² His work lasted for a long time and the aqueducts delivered abundant water to the city. Towards the end of the first century AD Sextus Julius Frontinus, who had been governor of Britain, was appointed *curator aquarum*, in charge of the water supply. He wrote a book, *De Aquis*, describing the system that he had inherited from Agrippa, and how he corrected many abuses where people had tapped into the channels of the aqueducts to bring water into their own homes, often by bribing the staff of the water services.

Rome had stopped living hand to mouth, not only in the nutritional sense but in most aspects of life. There was now someone in charge who saw further ahead than the traditional but truncated annual offices held in Rome, which hampered rather than facilitated the kind of continuity that Octavian tried to foster. There had never been any such corporate, closely administered schemes for building and repair works, supervision of the provinces, security of the individual and property. Piecemeal government had given way to planned, co-ordinated, all-embracing influence. It would never fully return to the old order of things, and yet there was no sharp break with tradition. Octavian was careful to regenerate old Roman virtues and customs, to appeal to the old gods, to reaffirm *Romanitas*.¹⁷³ On this foundation, in the crucial year 32 BC, he was ready to begin hostilities with Antonius.

The expiry of the second term of the Triumvirate

The consuls for 32 were the two Antonians, Gaius Sosius and Domitius Ahenobarbus. Against this potential opposition, Octavian's arsenal was perhaps merely psychological rather than physical; his political status is the source of endless debate. The terminal date of the renewed Triumvirate is not established beyond doubt. Although the balance of scholarly opinion tilts in favour of an expiry date

of 31 December 33 BC, this has not entirely eradicated some strong argument for the end of the year 32, supported by the lone voice of Appian¹⁷⁴ who says that the Triumvirate expired at the end of that year. Unfortunately, aside from Appian's narrative, there is no explicit elucidation in any of the other ancient sources. As a result of the lack of concrete evidence, there are several opinions and lots of scholarly verbiage, but it has to be acknowledged that there is no incontrovertible proof for a terminal date of 31 December 33, or for the end of 32 BC.

A terminal date of December 33 poses an immediate problem in assessing Octavian's political and legal position in 32 BC.¹⁷⁵ The second five-year term of the Triumvirate had been arranged after a short lapse from the end of the first one, and was agreed upon only in the summer of 37 BC. It may have run from the middle of the year, which is not very likely. Alternatively it may have been rationalised and backdated to January 37, or forward dated to the beginning of 36 BC.

Pelling¹⁷⁶ and Bleicken¹⁷⁷ advocate a terminal date of 31 December 33 BC, ignoring Appian's statement. This implies that the Triumvirate must have been backdated from the summer of 37 BC when it was agreed upon, to start on 1 January of that year. Richardson¹⁷⁸ points out that this is confirmed in the *Fasti Capitolini*, listing the consuls for each year.¹⁷⁹ At the head of the entries for the year 37 BC, after the names of the consuls, the three triumvirs are listed, which can be taken to imply that the second term of the Triumvirate had been backdated to run from January of that year, directly continuing from the expiry of the first term at the end of December 38 BC. On the other hand, as Levick¹⁸⁰ has argued, it is not known what form of words would have been necessary to incorporate this concept of backdating power into the legal framework, and in any case the insertion of the names of the triumvirs in the *Fasti Capitolini* for the year 37 BC may simply mean that the gap between the first and second term was tacitly glossed over in the official record. The terminal date is therefore just as debatable as ever. Even the apparent confirmation to be found in the *Res Gestae*¹⁸¹ where Augustus says that he held the Triumvirate for a period of 10 consecutive years (*per continuos annos decem*), can be interpreted in the same way, that he deliberately neglected to mention that there were a few months when, technically, he did not hold this position, so whilst the 10-year period is not an untruthful statement, because there were two terms of five years each, it is the words '*per continuos*' that conceal a lie.

If the second term of the Triumvirate ended in December 33, the constitutional position of both Octavian and Antonius in 32 becomes a highly contentious issue. If they had ceased to be triumvirs at the end of 33, it is puzzling why they claimed the consulship for themselves only in 31, thus leaving a gap of one year without legal sanction or any official position.¹⁸² This makes it feasible to argue that Octavian and Antonius were still triumvirs in 32. Gabba¹⁸³ dated the beginning of the second five-year term of the Triumvirate to 1 January 36, which would mean that it did not expire until the end of 32. Levick¹⁸⁴ also opts for a terminal date of 31 December 32. These suggestions agree with Appian's claim¹⁸⁵ that the Triumvirate expired at the end of that year. It would

also mean that there had been a long gap between the expiry of the first term and the renewal, which as suggested above may simply have been ignored in official records.

It is possible that the gap between the two terms did not matter, since it has been argued that the Triumvirate was still formally constituted as long as one of the members remained alive, so that merely by dint of surviving Octavian retained triumphal powers until after Actium and beyond 31 BC.¹⁸⁶ It can certainly be said that he acted as if he were still triumvir until 27 BC,¹⁸⁷ without necessarily using the title. It is possible that the only way that any of the triumvirs could put an end to their powers was by formal abdication¹⁸⁸ so that even if the Triumvirate had officially ended on 31 December 33, Octavian could drop the title, but still retain the powers until 27 BC by dint of never having abdicated. Other scholars believe that in 32 the Triumvirate was a dead letter and Octavian was thrown on his own resources, therefore from 1 January 32 he was merely a *privatus cum imperio*.¹⁸⁹ If this was indeed the case, then the oath of loyalty to him that was sworn all over Italy and in the western provinces in 32 BC has a great bearing on his position, giving Octavian a legalised status that would allow him to act even if the Triumvirate had come to an end.

It is quite likely that not even the contemporaries of Octavian and Antonius were sure of the details of their triumphal powers, or the absence of them. In any case legality had in some measure yielded to sheer power and influence, which Octavian had steadily built up via his naval and military successes, the elimination of his immediate rivals, and the active building schemes and public works in Rome. If Octavian really was simply a private citizen in the year 32 BC, then it follows that in the city and in Italy he had no official powers whatsoever. Outside Italy it has been suggested that he still held his proconsular *imperium* over Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily and Sardinia. Since his provincial commands presumably did not expire at the same time as the Triumvirate, this was where his powers lay, because he could not be replaced until a successor or successors had been appointed to govern his provinces,¹⁹⁰ and if the suggestion of new appointments had occurred then a tribune's veto could easily have prevented the scheme.¹⁹¹

The road to Actium

The multiplicity of theories about the end of the second term of the Triumvirate serves to illustrate the fact that there is no actual evidence apart from Appian's statement, written long after the event, to provide any certainty about the situation at the end of 33 BC and the whole of the following year. All that has survived is some notification of what happened. It was said that the consuls Sosius and Domitius Ahenobarbus had received a despatch from Antonius, which they suppressed for some reason, possibly because it contained details of the so-called Donations of Alexandria and the disposal of eastern territories in favour of Cleopatra and her children, which the consuls thought too damaging to reveal.

The tale should be treated with a grain of suspicion, not least because it is hard to believe that the Senate and people of Rome had not already heard of the Donations of Alexandria, which had occurred at least 18 months earlier, and were too momentous to be concealed for long.¹⁹² It is also alleged that in this same document Antonius asked for ratification of his acts in the eastern provinces, including, presumably the assignment of territories to Cleopatra and her children. On the face of it, this was somewhat over-cautious. Antonius did not really require the approval of the Senate, since he had extracted legal sanction and made himself as secure as he could in his eastern command, well in advance, before he began his Parthian campaigns. It could be argued that Antonius was concerned to cover the gap between the two terms of the Triumvirate, but Levick¹⁹³ doubts that the triumvirs would have drawn attention to the fact that they had exceeded the first five-year term by some months before they renewed their powers.

On 1 January the consul Gaius Sosius made a speech denouncing Octavian, proposing something that the tribune Nonius Balbus vetoed. The problem is that it is not known what it was that he vetoed. It is likely that Sosius demanded the instantaneous resignation of Octavian and the renunciation of all his powers. No-one knows whose interests were served by the tribune's veto.¹⁹⁴ It may be that Octavian kept Nonius Balbus close to hand to protect his position should need arise,¹⁹⁵ or alternatively, Nonius may have been an ally of Sosius, who may have primed the tribune to extricate him from a tricky situation should everything start to go wrong.¹⁹⁶

Octavian was not in the city at the time of Sosius' speech; he returned a few days later in spectacular fashion, entered the Senate with an armed guard, and sat between the two consuls, Sosius and Domitius Ahenobarbus, to emphasise his determination and strength. The absolute effrontery of placing himself between the consuls cannot be over-emphasised. His actions may have resulted from sheer bravado, or alternatively it may simply mean that he was still triumvir in 32 BC, with powers that were greater than or equal to the consuls, and was therefore entitled to act as he did. Octavian declared that Antonius should come to Rome, and lay down his powers formally, which was probably the only method by which the triumvirs could put an end to their supremacy. But it was an offer that was not capable of fulfilment and clearly not meant to be taken seriously, except as metaphorical chest-beating and a delaying tactic on the part of Octavian. Considerable orchestration no doubt went into this, not without some risks. Success was by no means assured, and failure at this point would have involved Octavian in further dubious activities just to stay alive, but since his plan worked, and the consuls took fright and fled to Antonius, the illegal nature or otherwise of his venture could be conveniently forgotten. Polarisation was now complete. Everyone who wished to go to Antonius was allowed to do so; it is estimated that 300 senators fled, but this figure is nowhere firmly attested. It derives from the assumption that there were about 1,000 senators in total, and then depends upon the subtraction of the 700 that Augustus said remained loyal to him.

Reciprocally, Antonians who began to imagine themselves better off elsewhere than with Antonius now came to Rome. Two of these men, Marcus Titius and Munatius Plancus, are said to have revealed to Octavian the whereabouts of Antonius' last will and testament, which they had witnessed. Dio¹⁹⁷ says that they gave to Octavian the name of the man who held it; tradition says that the will was lodged with the Vestals, which would be the more normal arrangement. Wherever it was, Octavian obtained it, and read it out in the Senate. He calculated very finely, confident no doubt that his own shocking display of unscrupulous behaviour would fortunately be obliterated by the even more shocking sentiments in Antonius' will. Octavian has been accused by modern authors of fabricating the whole or parts of the will. He opened it in complete privacy, so no-one else saw it¹⁹⁸ and so it is possible that Octavian may have forged sections of it,¹⁹⁹ but this is to ignore the practicalities and the time involved in doing so. If this conjecture is true, however, then he performed very plausibly, building on Antonius' well-attested character and deeds. Richardson points out that scholars have doubted the authenticity of the details that Octavian allegedly found in Antonius' will, precisely because the so-called facts suited his purpose so admirably that they seem good to be true.²⁰⁰ But there was probably no need to fabricate anything, only to select and emphasise portions of the will.²⁰¹ Octavian probably had only to learn the salient points, rehearse his speech, and put on a good performance in the Senate. The emphasis was on Antonius' connections with the east, and by implication with Cleopatra. The most ignominious clause, from a Roman point of view, was that Antonius wished to be buried in Alexandria beside the Queen. The most damaging clause, from Octavian's more personal point of view, was that Antonius named his children by Cleopatra as his heirs,²⁰² and recognised Caesarion as the true son of Julius Caesar. This sealed Caesarion's death warrant, as far as Octavian was concerned.

It seemed that another empire was growing in the east, dominated by Antonius through the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, doubly distasteful to the Romans because she was both foreign and female. Rumours started to circulate that Antonius was planning to move the capital to Alexandria and turn over Rome to Cleopatra.²⁰³ Similar tales had escalated when Caesar invited the Queen to stay in his villa in Rome, and when he placed a statue of her in his temple dedicated to Venus Genetrix. It is permissible to query the origin of these rumours of Antonius' alleged intentions, which may have emanated from Octavian's propaganda department. When feelings were running high, war was declared against Cleopatra, not Antonius. Octavian unearthed some venerable ancient ritual that involved casting a spear into a patch of land that substituted for enemy territory.²⁰⁴ The spot chosen by Octavian was appropriately near the temple of the war goddess Bellona; the scant remains of the temple podium can be found in Rome, near the Portico of Octavia and the Theatre of Marcellus.²⁰⁵ This ancient ceremony, or possibly a new one that Octavian had invented based on some venerable usage, made visible and thereby inevitable the intention of the Romans to make war on their foreign enemy. Antonius was not declared

hostis at this time,²⁰⁶ but that formality was quite superfluous. Octavian had achieved what he wanted.

Another year went by before the battle of Actium was fought on 2 September 31. Octavian put the year to good use. He dropped the title *Triumvir*, whereas Antonius continued to use it (Figure 4.9) until his death.²⁰⁷ Levick points out that it was Antonius' only power, since he had been divested of his intended consulship for 31 BC by Octavian.²⁰⁸ Such a blatant demonstration of triumviral power was not appropriate for Octavian, who was working towards playing down the *Triumvirate*. He had to persuade the ruling class and the populace that not only did he intend no harm, but that he was acting positively on their behalf, with their best interests always at heart. The Senate backed him in the declaration of war against Cleopatra, but senatorial backing did not by itself raise armies, or clothe, feed and train them. New taxes were necessary, amounting to 25 per cent of people's incomes.²⁰⁹ Riots ensued. Octavian retaliated, before sympathies for his cause dissipated and dwindled. He took the extraordinary step of administering an oath in all parts of the Roman world under his dominion. Exact chronology now evades elucidation.²¹⁰ Dio relates the reading of Antonius' will, then the declaration of war against Cleopatra, followed by the taking of the oath to Octavian. Cautious as Octavian usually was, it is possible that he took the precaution of securing a legal basis for his actions by means of the oath, before he began to stir up the Senate and people against Antonius. This is the chronology that Syme preferred,²¹¹ but it is not established beyond doubt, and it has even been suggested, less plausibly, that the oath belongs to a period of retrospective self-justification *after* Actium.



Figure 4.9 This silver denarius is one of the series of legionary coins that Antonius issued in 31 BC before the battle of Actium. Legionary standards are depicted, and on the other side the war galley is surrounded by the legend ANT. AUG. III. VIR. R. P. C. The letters AUG are not to be confused with Augustus, since Octavian had not yet been given this title. Antonius was describing himself as augur, a priest whose duties included divination of the future. He also describes himself as *triumvir*, though by this time the *Triumvirate* had expired, and Octavian had scrupulously ceased to use the title. Antonius continued to use it because he had no other legal powers.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

The oath was one of loyalty to Octavian as leader of the war against Cleopatra. It has been noted that there is a direct correlation between the expiry of the Triumvirate and the need for another form of legally sanctioned power for Octavian in the year 32 BC, which the oath provided by making him the legitimate leader, with the right to raise troops in a struggle against an enemy.²¹² Even if he still held triumviral powers, Octavian may have considered it prudent, if not a legal necessity, to obtain sanction for committing the Romans to a war that in many ways was a personal vendetta. Many years after the event, Augustus described the oath in the *Res Gestae*²¹³ in studiously laconic form: 'All Italy swore an oath of allegiance to me of its own free will (*sponte sua*) and chose me as the leader in the war in which I won at Actium', which gives no assistance whatsoever in solving the problem of the actual text of the oath, nor of dating it precisely. The term Italy suggests that the whole peninsula was a politically united area under Roman control, but such complete unity had not yet been achieved, even though the concept of *Italia* was not a new idea. Italians had sworn an oath to the tribune Marcus Livius Drusus who had tried to obtain Roman citizenship for the allies.²¹⁴ Furthermore, the phrase *sponte sua*, 'of its own free will' perhaps requires some slight modification; Suetonius²¹⁵ was sceptical about the voluntary nature of the oath, and Earl²¹⁶ calls it 'the last resource of tyranny'.

The actual text of the oath is lost. It may be that it evolved into the regular oath of allegiance to each of the emperors on accession, which was taken by the whole populace, including senators, equestrians, civilians and soldiers. In 32 BC, the most useful precedent was the military oath sworn by soldiers to their commanders, so it is likely that the form of words in the oath to Octavian resembled, but did not slavishly follow, this more regular formula, largely because Octavian was usually careful to use firmly established precedent wherever he could, rather than to force innovations on people, who might regard novelty as suspicious. If he did use a similar form to the military oath, then the innovation was in applying it to the civilian population, presumably to all adult males in Italy and the provinces under his control. The military character of the oath is affirmed by Pelling²¹⁷ but rejected by Brunt and Moore²¹⁸ at least for the later oath to the emperors, which some authors think may have evolved from the oath sworn to Octavian. In describing the first oath sworn to the emperor Tiberius on his accession, Dio²¹⁹ seems to imply that the wording was based on the oath of 32 BC.

The text survives for other oaths sworn at a later time to Augustus and his imperial colleagues, so the wording of these may have some relevance to the original one of 32 BC. One of these oaths, inscribed in Greek, was found at Phazimon, in Paphlagonia,²²⁰ where in 3 BC all male inhabitants of the province, Roman citizens and non-Romans, took the oath. Another text was found in 1988, inscribed on a bronze tablet from a place called Conobaria (the name is restored from an incomplete word) in Baetica, dated to 6 or 5 BC. The wording resembles that of another similar oath from Samos, also dating to 5 BC.²²¹ These oaths concern Augustus, his adopted sons Gaius and Lucius, and Agrippa Postumus, and the dates are significant, because it was in 5 BC that Gaius was first

introduced into public life and holding of offices, followed two years later by his younger brother Lucius.²²²

The method for administering the oath throughout Italy and the western provinces is not documented in detail. Antonius' clients were absolved from taking the oath to Octavian; for instance, the whole town of Bononia where Antonius had many partisans was not coerced,²²³ and this was held up as an example of Octavian's fair treatment. It also implies that for the rest of Italy there was an element of coercion. For the rest of Italy and the provinces, Octavian contacted leading citizens from each community, urging them to act as his delegates to persuade the populace that the war against Cleopatra was necessary for the safety of Rome and the growing Empire, and therefore the oath was equally necessary to ensure cohesion and his own leadership.²²⁴ The mechanics of the oath taking may have followed the military procedure, where one man was chosen to read out the text, and then swore to obey it, and then all the rest followed him with the phrase *idem in me*, meaning 'the same goes for me'. In general people no doubt took the swearing of the oath very seriously, especially as the gods were witness to it, so breaking the oath would possess connotations of dire punishments. There is no indication that there was any coercion on these religious grounds, but religion permeated Roman society so fundamentally that there was probably no need to remind people. In whatever way it was engineered, and whenever it was administered, the oath of loyalty, implying obedience to his orders, gave Octavian moral and legal support for the war.²²⁵ With his leadership confirmed, he divested Antonius of all powers, and usurped his place as consular colleague for 31 BC by substituting Valerius Messalla, who had rescued him when he was shipwrecked in the naval war against Pompeius.²²⁶

In the east, Antonius bestirred himself. He wintered in Greece, where he defended the coasts by stretching out along them most of his legions under the command of Canidius. His main strength was in his naval forces, but neither he nor his officers could prevent landings on the coast by Agrippa and Octavian. He had manoeuvred himself into a predicament where he was forced to defend a long coastline with too many landing places, and he failed to prevent Agrippa from taking Methone, one of his supply bases. Octavian occupied Corcyra, almost unopposed.²²⁷ Although his land forces ought to have been adequate to sustain a confrontation, Antonius seems to have placed all his reliance upon a decisive naval battle. But his old vigour had gone; no wonder that men said he had been bewitched by Cleopatra. Antonius did little to retain command of his lines of communication, and when Octavian moved to the peninsula of Actium, he followed but achieved nothing, except to make an unsuccessful attempt to blockade him. There may have been a brief spark of energetic activity on the part of Antonius, not recorded in the accounts of the Actium campaign, but one of Antonius' coins issued in 31 BC shows a portrait of the goddess Victory on the reverse, and the legend on the obverse refers to Antonius as consul for the third time, and Imperator for the fourth time, which means that he had won a victory and been hailed as Imperator by his troops just before the naval battle of

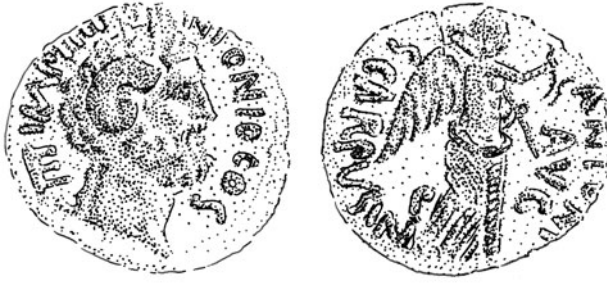


Figure 4.10 Silver denarius issued by Antonius and his general Scarpus. It portrays the goddess Victory, and Jupiter Ammon, the god who amalgamated the two major deities of Rome and the east. The legend of this coin runs M.ANTONIO. COS.III.IMP.III indicating that Antonius was consul for the third time, but in fact Octavian had annulled his appointment. Even more important is the title Imperator IIII (the figure four was not always written as IV), which implies that Antonius and his troops were not as utterly useless as they are said to have been, since at some point in 31 BC he won a victory that earned the proclamation as imperator by his soldiers, probably a land battle around the Gulf of Actium, but the details are probably not recoverable.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

Actium was fought, but there is no evidence to illuminate the circumstances of this unrecorded successful action (Figure 4.10)

Before the main battle, Antonius' general Sosius risked a naval encounter with Agrippa and lost. The surviving record is very brief, much too obscure to retrieve the details of a campaign that occupied several months, but ultimately it is certain that all the odds were stacked against Antonius when he failed to achieve anything very rapidly against Octavian. It was all or nothing, instantaneously, and Antonius lost by his delay. In the ensuing stalemate, desertions began. Antonius' forces were never totally united, especially since the presence of Cleopatra was bitterly contested, and Antonius stubbornly refused to send her away.

When he finally decided to fight the naval battle it was noted that Antonius ordered the crews to carry sails, which he said were necessary in case he had to pursue a fleeing enemy,²²⁸ but in view of his subsequent action in leaving the scene of the battle it is easy to accuse him of planning to run away. He burnt some of the less seaworthy ships and honed his fleet to a more efficient size. When the battle began, the two fleets faced each other for some considerable time without moving, (Figure 4.11) then in the afternoon, probably taking advantage of the breeze that usually blew from the shore at that time,²²⁹ Antonius started to advance. Without putting up too much of a fight, Cleopatra, followed by Antonius, broke away from the fleet and sailed back to Alexandria, accompanied by about 40 ships.²³⁰ Significantly, Cleopatra carried their joint treasure chest on board her ship, perhaps as part of a pre-arranged plan formulated by

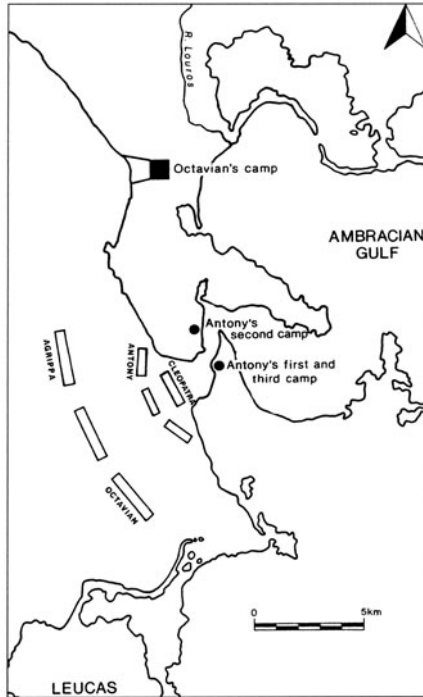


Figure 4.11 Plan of the battle of Actium showing how Antonius' fleet was bottled up by Octavian and Agrippa.

Source: Drawn by Graeme Stobbs.

Antonius, not so much to run away as to extricate whatever he could from a battle that was lost before it started. They left the rest of their fleet under Sosius to the mercy of Octavian. The ship's prow in the British Museum, found in the bay at Actium, may belong to one of Antonius' vessels (Figure 4.12). Antonius' army under Canidius was ordered to march overland to Egypt.²³¹ There was no heroic, hard fought battle at Actium, but there was an undeniably complete victory for Octavian. It was celebrated initially by a decree of the Senate making 2 September a day for annual festivals, and over subsequent years it was converted from a victory to a political turning point, and the foundation of Augustus' Empire.²³²

The victory at sea could be described as incomplete, because the two principal enemies were still at large, but that hardly mattered, because most of their troops had deserted them. Octavian won over or bought Antonius' legions, and dispersed them, sending some of them back to Italy for settlement on the land. Canidius was spared, and made his own way to Egypt. Antonius' and Cleopatra's sphere of influence had shrunk to Alexandria and the kingdom of Egypt. There



Figure 4.12 Bronze *rostrum* or ship's beak that was attached to the prow, to strengthen it and enable the ship to ram an enemy vessel. It was found in the waters of the bay at Actium.

Source: Courtesy British Museum.

they would have to be eliminated, but unlike Caesar after Pharsalus, Octavian could afford to be more leisurely in his approach to Alexandria. He intended to spend the winter on the island of Samos, but was forced to return to Italy, in response to the entreaties of Agrippa and Maecenas, who had been sent on ahead. Octavian arrived at Brundisium to find that most of Rome had come to meet him there. This was a tremendous honour, emphasised by the distance that people had travelled instead of waiting for him nearer to Rome. Only two praetors and the tribunes had remained behind in the city to deal with day to day administration. The problems that Maecenas and Agrippa had been unable to solve concerned the veterans, mostly those of Antonius' army, who were restless and potentially troublesome. Peace in Italy was hard won and Octavian could not afford to have it disturbed. Rewards, or profitable occupations, or both, had to be found for the soldiers. Octavian adopted several measures at the same time. He pensioned off some of the men, settled some of them on land allotments, or sent them to new campaigns. He sold his own property to raise the money to pay them or to buy land for them, a ploy which earned him considerable credit. He was soon able to fill his coffers again when he had captured Alexandria and turned Egypt into a province under his direct control via equestrian, not senatorial, legates.

There may have been another problem to attend to at this time, though its context is disputed. The son of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus raised a revolt against Octavian at some time while he was in the east; some authorities date the conspiracy to autumn or winter 31, while others prefer to place it in the period after the fall of Alexandria in the following year.²³³ The vigilance of Maecenas rooted out the plot before it could be put into effect. Appian tells us that Maecenas sent the young Lepidus as a prisoner to Octavian at Actium,²³⁴ but corroboration for the tale and the date is lacking. Firm evidence for the date is not perhaps as

important as the knowledge that Maecenas had established an inner ring of personnel, acting as what might best be described as a private news agency, or a preventive and pre-emptive police network. Within a short time, 30 days after he had landed at Brundisium, Octavian set off to return to the east.²³⁵ He passed through Corinth and approached Egypt from Syria, while Cornelius Gallus advanced from the west. There was surprisingly little resistance. Antonius risked a battle, but his soldiers deserted in droves. His end was now inevitable. Not only his end, but also Cleopatra's. Alexandria fell to Octavian on 1 August 30 BC.²³⁶ Antonius and then Cleopatra committed suicide.²³⁷ As for the details of how Antonius and Cleopatra died, recorded by ancient authors, and relayed via Shakespeare through films and plays, absolute accuracy is not important. Something along those romantic novelesque lines is entirely possible. Marcus Antonius has his niche in history, and probably everyone in almost the entire western world has heard of Cleopatra.

Notes

- 1 Eder 1990, 72.
- 2 *RG* 25.1.
- 3 Octavian's agents, and especially the careers of Oppius and Balbus, are examined by Alföldi 1976.
- 4 Yavetz 1969, 33 nn.36–37 says that Augustus had learned to curb his anger from his tutor Athenodorus, who taught him to recite the letters of the alphabet before speaking.
- 5 Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa: *PIR* V 457; Reinhold 1965; Roddaz 1984.
- 6 Suet. *Aug.* 95; Appian *BC* 3.10.
- 7 Dio 46.49.1; Appian *BC* 5.31–33; 5.35; 5.50.
- 8 Appian *BC* 5.92.
- 9 Dio 48.49.
- 10 Reinhold 1965, 151–52.
- 11 Vell. Pat. 2.79.1.
- 12 Dio 53.30.2.
- 13 Ameling 1994, 14–15 n.61; Bleicken 1990, 104.
- 14 Lacey 1996, 128–29, quoting L. Koenig, 'Die *laudatio funebris* für Agrippa auf einem neuen Papyrus', *ZPE* 5 1970, 217–83.
- 15 Lacey 1996, 129.
- 16 Lacey 1996, 129 n.39.
- 17 Dio 54.12; Vell. Pat. 2.90; Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.
- 18 Dio 54.28.
- 19 Dio 49.4.
- 20 Maecenas: *PIR*2 M 37; Tac. *Ann.* 6.11.2 erroneously calls Maecenas 'Cilnius'.
- 21 Vell. Pat. 2.88.
- 22 Syme 1939, 459–75.
- 23 The story of Terentia is recounted by Suet. *Aug.* 66.3 and Dio 54.19; 55.7. Two men, Terentius Varro Murena and Licinius Varro Murena, have been confused and treated as one; see Syme 1986, 387–93 and Raaflaub and Samons 1990, 426 n.32.
- 24 Williams 1990, 261, 267–68.
- 25 Osgood 2006.
- 26 Syme 1939, 227 and Kienast 1982, 43 examine how Octavian began to create a senatorial faction which he had hitherto lacked.

- 27 Suet. *Aug.* 62.2; Appian *BC* 5.53.
- 28 Appian *BC* 5.79.
- 29 Gowing 1992, 84.
- 30 Appian *BC* 5.67–68.
- 31 Appian *BC* 5.53; 5.56–57; 5.59.
- 32 On the nature of the marriage, if such it was, between Antonius and Cleopatra, see Pelling 1988, 219–20 on Plut. *Ant.* 36, and the review of the above by J. M. Carter in *JRS* 79 1989, 211–12; see also Pelling 1996, 30 n.137; Richardson 2012, 59 doubts that there was a marriage.
- 33 Richardson 2012, 47–48.
- 34 Suet. *Aug.* 25.4.
- 35 Eder 1990, 96 says that the literary feud began long before Actium. On the feud itself see Fadinger 1969, 180–94. With patience Octavian manipulated public opinion for war; Meier 1990, 64–65.
- 36 Eder 1990, 72 does not consider either 31 BC or 27 BC as turning points.
- 37 Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.7.
- 38 Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.1.
- 39 For a survey of the contemporary views of Actium and the debate on whether the literary portraits of the battle were centrally orchestrated or spontaneously produced, see Gurval 1995, *passim*; for the monuments and artistic representations, and what has been termed as the dawn of a new style after Actium, see Zanker 1988, 79–100.
- 40 Appian *BC* 5.6.
- 41 Plut. *Ant.* 26.
- 42 Appian *BC* 5.8.
- 43 Southern 2007, 166.
- 44 Appian *BC* 5.19.
- 45 Appian *BC* 5.54.
- 46 Appian *BC* 5.51.
- 47 Appian *BC* 5.53; Dio 48.20.3–4.
- 48 Appian *BC* 5.51; Dio 48.15; Huzar 1978, 135–37 says that Antonius was inclined to look favourably on an alliance with Sextus Pompeius, but considered that an alliance with Octavian would be more profitable.
- 49 Appian *BC* 5.55–56; Vell. 2.76.2; Dio 48.7; 48.16.
- 50 Plut. *Ant.* 30; Appian *BC* 5.54. According to Dio 48.28 Octavian and Antonius made peace after the death of Fulvia.
- 51 Appian *BC* 5.59.
- 52 Appian *BC* 5.56; Dio 48.28.
- 53 Huzar 1978, 137.
- 54 For the build-up to the treaty of Brundisium and the arrangements made, see Appian *BC* 5.65; Vell. *Pat.* 2.76.3; Tac. *Ann.* 1.10; Dio 48.28.30.
- 55 Plut. *Ant.* 33.
- 56 Cic. *Phil.* 2.110; but see Taylor 1931, 69; 96.
- 57 Kienast 1982, 42–43. The text runs *Imp. Caesar ovans quod pacem cum M. Antonio fecit palmam dedit* (*Fasti Triumphales Barberini* = *Inscriptiones Italiae*) XIII 1 343; R. Combes, *Imperator*. Paris, 1966, 134ff. Eder 1990, 94 n.110 and Galsterer 1990, 15 are less sure of the authenticity of the date that has been attached to the inscription.
- 58 Syme 1939, 113 n.1.
- 59 *BMCR* II 411.
- 60 Alföldi 1976, 54.
- 61 Appian *BC* 5.65.
- 62 Richardson 2012, 52–53.

- 63 Dio 48.33; Appian *BC* 5.66; Vell. 2.64; Suet. *Aug.* 66.1. Bleicken 1990, 51 affirms that it would have been illegal for the triumvirs to annihilate a man contesting their power, and this was an emergency situation that lay outside their competence, but Lintott in *JRS* 82, 1992, 252 disagrees, since this may simply have been a case in which the Senate's approval was politically desirable at that particular time.
- 64 Appian *BC* 5.96 and Dio 48.49.4 provide only brief references to Agrippa's activity in Gaul.
- 65 Appian *BC* 5.67.
- 66 Appian *BC* 5.68.
- 67 Appian *BC* 5.69.
- 68 Appian *BC* 5.72–73.
- 69 Syme 1939, 227; Kienast 1982, 43.
- 70 Dio 48.36–37.
- 71 Dio 48.38.
- 72 Dio 48.34.
- 73 Dio 48.35.
- 74 Dio 48.43; Kienast 1982, 43–44.
- 75 Livia Drusilla: *PIR*2 L 301; Barrett 2002; Dennison 2010.
- 76 Barrett 2002, 11–17.
- 77 Suet. *Tib.* 6.2–3; Dio 54.7.2.
- 78 Suet. *Aug.* 62.
- 79 Dio 48.15; 44; Syme 1939, 229; Kienast 1982, 43–44.
- 80 Suet. *Tib.* 4.3; Dio 48.44.3; Vell. *Pat.* 2.79.2.
- 81 Suet. *Aug.* 62.2; Appian *BC* 5.53; Dio 48.44; Kienast 1982, 44; Syme 1939, 229 n.4.
- 82 Suet. *Tib.* 3.1.
- 83 Barrett 2002, 9; 348 n.12; 349 n.26 summarises the references.
- 84 Shuckburgh 1903, 102.
- 85 Dio 48.39.1; 46.1.
- 86 Syme 1939, 228–31.
- 87 Dio 48.45.
- 88 Appian *BC* 5.86 portrays Octavian in heroic terms even though he had been defeated.
- 89 Appian *BC* 5.89.
- 90 Appian *BC* 5.91.
- 91 Appian *BC* 5.92–95.
- 92 The exact date of the agreement is not known. It may have taken place in September or October, but as Pelling 1996, 25 n.112 points out, it could just as easily have occurred in June or July, which would still have prevented Antonius from beginning his Parthian campaign.
- 93 The ships may not have been as important as the ancient sources suggest. It has been argued that since the ships were expensive to keep in operation, it could be said that Antonius was only too glad to get rid of them, *CAH* X¹ 54–55, and when they were delivered to Octavian, Richardson 2012, 55–56 says that he was not too eager to accept them.
- 94 Kienast 1982, 46.
- 95 Pelling 1996, 26.
- 96 Appian *BC* 5.95.
- 97 Shuckburgh 1896, 57–58; 1903, 104; Rice-Holmes 1928, 231–45; Carter 1982, 122–23.
- 98 Eder 1990, 94; Pelling 1996, 27 n.120 and n.130 says that it is possible to reinterpret Appian to suggest that the law really was passed.
- 99 Dio 48.50; Suet. *Aug.* 16.

- 100 Shuckburgh 1896, 33; 1903, 103.
- 101 Suet. *Aug.* 16.1.
- 102 Carter 1982, 105.
- 103 Appian *BC* 5.118–20 describes the *harpax* in action; see also Reinhold 1965, 34 n.40.
- 104 Appian *BC* 5.97–98.
- 105 Appian *BC* 5. 106–8.
- 106 Appian *BC* 5.112–13; on Valerius Messalla see Syme 1986, 200–216. Dio 49.1 represents Lepidus as very reluctant to help at all.
- 107 Appian *BC* 5. 118 says that the battle of Naulochus was fought as a result of a challenge, on a day fixed for the purpose.
- 108 Appian *BC* 5.133–44.
- 109 Appian *BC* 5.123; Dio 49.12.4; Eder 1990, 95 n.116.
- 110 Appian *BC* 5.129.
- 111 The disappearance of Ofillius is told only by Appian *BC* 5.128–29.
- 112 Appian *BC* 5.130.
- 113 On the *tribunicia potestas* see Last 1951; Lacey 1996, 154–68.
- 114 Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.
- 115 Cooley 2009, 126–27.
- 116 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.
- 117 Appian *BC* 5.132.
- 118 Richardson 2012, 58.
- 119 Orosius 6.18.34.
- 120 Dio 49.15.6.
- 121 Kienast 1982, 48–49 n.204.
- 122 Dio 49.38.1.
- 123 Dio 51.19.6.
- 124 Dio 53.32.5; see also Ferrary 2001, 115–21.
- 125 Brunt and Moore 1967, 12–13.
- 126 Pelling 1996, 69.
- 127 Bleicken 1990, 74–76.
- 128 *RG* 4.
- 129 Brunt and Moore 1967, 10–11; Carter 1982, 124–25; Cooley 2009, 126–27.
- 130 Lacey 1996, 3–4 n.9; 5; 14.
- 131 Vell. Pat. 2.81.3.
- 132 Dio 49.15.1.
- 133 Nicolet 1984, 111.
- 134 Reinhold 1965, 46ff; Kienast 1982, 61; Dio 49.43.1–4.
- 135 Osgood 2006, 111–44 examines *Eclogues* 1 and 9, comparing and contrasting evidence from other ancient literature.
- 136 Keppie 1983, 69–73; Reinhold and Swan 1990, 164.
- 137 Dio 49.14.4; Pliny *NH* 3.4; Rice-Holmes 1928, 118.
- 138 Appian *BC* 5.132.
- 139 Appian *BC* 5.128.
- 140 Pelling 1996, 37–38.
- 141 On the beginning of the war see Appian *Ill.* 12–13; 15; 18 and Dio 49.34.2.
- 142 Richardson 2012, 63–65.
- 143 Dio 49.36.1.
- 144 Vell. Pat. 2.78.2.
- 145 Gruen 1996, 172–73.
- 146 Rice-Holmes 1931, 130–31.
- 147 Reinhold 1965, 45 n.1.
- 148 *RG* 29.1; 30.1.

- 149 Appian *Ill.* 12–28; see also Dio 49.35–38.
- 150 Syme 1939, 271 says that Antonius' arrangements for the east were intelligible and workable, and did not go beyond the brief of a Roman proconsul.
- 151 Ventidius' contribution is described by Dio 49.19–22 and Plut. *Ant.* 34.
- 152 Gurval 1995, 95 points out that since Appian's account of Antonius' campaigns in the east is lost, historians must rely on Plut. *Ant.* 37–52 and Dio 49.24–30.
- 153 Antonius' losses in the Parthian campaign and during the retreat are variously given; Vell. Pat. 2.82.3 says that he lost a quarter of his entire army; Plut. *Ant.* 50 says he lost 20,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry by the time he reached Armenia and 8,000 more in the wintry weather afterwards.
- 154 Vell. Pat. 2.82.1–3; Plut. *Ant.* 51; Dio 49.23.31.
- 155 For Caesarion as *rex regum* see Dio 49.41.1; Plut. *Ant.* 54; Kienast 1982, 53.
- 156 Syme 1939, 260–61 says that the distribution of lands and the 'triumph' in Alexandria made no impression in Rome, and Pelling 1996, 41 thinks that it made no difference to the administration of the east; see also Dio 49.32; 41 and Plut. *Ant.* 36.2.
- 157 Vell. Pat. 2.82.3–4.
- 158 Dio 50.4.1–2.
- 159 Plut. *Ant.* 58.9–11.
- 160 Dio 50.5.4.
- 161 Appian *BC* 5.138; Plut. *Ant.* 53.1.
- 162 Suet. *Aug.* 69.
- 163 Pelling 1996, 37.
- 164 Dio 50.1–2; Plut. *Ant.* 55.
- 165 Syme 1939, 276 n.1.
- 166 Dio 50.2.2.
- 167 Kienast 1982, 54 n.223, quoting Fadinger 1969, 125ff and 180.
- 168 There were triumphs for Octavian's generals every year from 36 to 33, except for 35 when he himself began the wars in Illyricum. Dio 49.42.3 hints that triumphs were so cheap that they were for sale. Later, Augustus curtailed the privilege of holding a triumph.
- 169 Vell. Pat. 2.79.4. On the buildings of Octavian and his friends see Zanker 1988, 73–80.
- 170 Dio 49.43.3; Vergil *Aeneid* 5.545–603; Balsdon 1969, 327.
- 171 Dio 49.43.5.
- 172 Dio 49.43.1–4; 54.11.7; Reinhold 1965, 48–52.
- 173 Pelling 1996, 44 suggests that Octavian's return to the old traditions, including the building of temples to the gods, especially Apollo, possibly arose as a direct contrast to the frenzies of Antonius' Dionysiac associations.
- 174 Appian *Ill.* 28.
- 175 Pelling 1996, 49 says that Octavian's position in 32 BC was fragile, but retrospective knowledge makes it seem as though his victory over Antonius was assured even then, which was far from the case. The ancient sources, and the arguments of various scholars concerning the problems of the year 32 BC, are summarised in a most useful article by Benario 1975.
- 176 Pelling 1996, 25–27; 67–68.
- 177 Bleicken 1990, 14 n.28.
- 178 Richardson 2012, 56 n.14.
- 179 *EJ*² 1976, 33.
- 180 Levick 2010, 51–53.
- 181 *RG* 7.1.
- 182 Dio 50.2.5; Bleicken 1990, 65–82; Brunt and Moore 1967, 48–49. The story is told by Syme 1939, 225 from Antonius' point of view.

- 183 Gabba 1970, 7.
- 184 Levick 2010, 53.
- 185 Appian *Ill.* 28.
- 186 Petzold 1969, 340–46.
- 187 Levick 2010, 51–53.
- 188 Grenade 1961, 28; Fadinger 1969, 143–45; Lacey 1996, 4 n.10.
- 189 Benario 1975, 304; Kienast 1982, 55. On the political status of the two remaining triumvirs in 32 see Bleicken 1990, 65–82.
- 190 Bleicken 1990, 68–74.
- 191 Benario 1975, 306.
- 192 Antonius' despatch to Sosius and Domitius is reported by Dio 49.41.6.
- 193 Levick 2010, 53.
- 194 Dio 50.2.3.
- 195 Bleicken 1990, 66; Richardson 2012, 66 says that Nonius vetoed Sosius' speech attacking Octavian.
- 196 Pelling 1996, 49.
- 197 Dio 50.3.3.
- 198 Plut. *Ant.* 58.3; Levick 2010, 46.
- 199 Syme 1939, 282 n.1; Crook 1955, 36–38; Pelling 1996, 52.
- 200 Richardson 2012, 67.
- 201 Eck 2007, 39; Osgood 2006, 253; Levick 2010, 46.
- 202 Richardson 2012, 67 n.43 cites references for the illegal nature of this bequest.
- 203 Dio 50.4.
- 204 Dio 50.4.4–5.
- 205 Claridge 2010, 279.
- 206 Dio 50.4.3 says that Antonius was not declared *hostis* at this time, but Suet. *Aug.* 17.2 suggests that he was, though perhaps referring to another occasion.
- 207 Bleicken 1990, 68.
- 208 Levick 2010, 53.
- 209 Levick 2010, 48; 61 n.122; Dio 50.10.4–6; Plut. *Ant.* 58.
- 210 Kienast 1982, 59 n.237.
- 211 Syme 1939, 284; 291.
- 212 Osgood 2006, 357–61; Cooley 2009, 215–16; Richardson 2012, 69.
- 213 *RG* 25.2.
- 214 Levick 2010, 48.
- 215 Suet. *Aug.* 17.2.
- 216 Earl 1980, 53.
- 217 Pelling 1996, 53.
- 218 Brunt and Moore 1967, 67.
- 219 Dio 57.3.2.
- 220 *ILS* 8781.
- 221 Osgood 2006, 360–61 gives the full text of the Conobarria version; Cooley 2009, 215–16.
- 222 Osgood 2006, 360.
- 223 Suet. *Aug.* 17.2.
- 224 Osgood 2006, 359–60; Syme 1939, 289–92.
- 225 Cooley 2009, 215–16; Girardet 1995; Ridley 2003, 172–77.
- 226 Dio 50.4.3; 10.
- 227 Syme 1939, 294–95; Reinhold 1965, 53–58.
- 228 Plut. *Ant.* 64.2.
- 229 Southern 2007, 220–23.
- 230 Plut. *Ant.* 66.7.

- 231 Dio 50.14.1–2; Vell. Pat. 2.84.2.
- 232 The Actium campaign is briefly documented by Vell. Pat. 2.84–85 and in more depth by Plut. *Ant.* 61–63 and Dio 50.10–75, complete with invented speeches for both Octavian and Antonius. See also Gowing 1992 and Gurval 1995.
- 233 Vell. Pat. 2.88; Syme 1986, 35 also dates it to autumn 30 BC.
- 234 Appian *BC* 4.50; Suet. *Aug.* 19.1; Dio 54.15.4.
- 235 Dio 51.4.2–8.
- 236 Vell. Pat. 2.8
- 237 Plut. *Ant.* 76–78; Dio 51.5–10.

EMPIRE BUILDING

With the fall of Alexandria and the deaths of Antonius and Cleopatra, all serious military and political rivals to Octavian evaporated. Antonius' troops joined him, and the wealth of Egypt was his for the taking. It has been said that he desired to capture Cleopatra alive in order to march her through the streets of Rome in his triumphal procession.¹ Perhaps he entertained such thoughts in a brief fantasy. It is possible that Cleopatra, knowing his intentions, made sure that she ended her life in Alexandria, though it is still not certain whether she died by her own hand or with some unsought assistance. The story of the basket of figs with the asp concealed inside is so deeply embedded in modern consciousness that it would be difficult to advance any other theory. It was believed that the bite of the asp conferred divinity on the victim, so it is likely that Cleopatra deliberately chose this way of death, but the means by which she obtained the basket of figs and their deadly contents is not so clear. It was said that as soon as Octavian was informed of Cleopatra's death he sent for the *psylli*, men who were trained to suck out the poison from snake bites, as though he had prior knowledge of exactly how Cleopatra had died. He may have wished her to live so that she could feature in his triumph in Rome, or alternatively he may simply have been going through the motions in appearing to try to save her, for form's sake. There is no doubt that Cleopatra's death was tidy and convenient, so much so that Octavian was suspected of arranging a private murder, because it would relieve him of the necessity of organising a public execution.² Octavian honoured Cleopatra's last wishes and buried her next to Antonius. He could have been much more vicious and refused her an honourable burial, but it would have earned him no credit and served no real purpose. He confined his implacable ruthlessness to the execution of Caesarion (Figure 5.1) and Antonius' teenage son Antyllus, who might have proved embarrassing rivals if they had been allowed to go free.³ The other offspring of Antonius and Cleopatra were brought up by his widow Octavia; Cleopatra Selene, the young daughter of Cleopatra and Antonius, was eventually given in marriage to King Juba of Mauretania.⁴

After 14 years of political wrestling, wars, devious planning and struggle for mere survival, Octavian was now alone and supreme. Egypt was defeated and became Octavian's own preserve, celebrated on a coin issued in 27 BC



Figure 5.1 Cleopatra and her son Caesarion, portrayed in Egyptian fashion on the temple at Dendera. As the son of Caesar, Caesarion represented a serious rival to Octavian and had to be eliminated.

Source: Photo by Graeme Stobbs.



Figure 5.2 This coin celebrates the fall of Alexandria and the defeat of Antonius and Cleopatra in 30 BC, but it was not issued until 27 BC, as indicated by COS VII in the legend, Octavian's seventh consulship.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

(Figure 5.2). The country provided the source of much of his wealth. After the fall of Alexandria no-one came forward as champion of Antonius and his cause to carry on the civil wars in Egypt or in any other province. There was to be no repeat of what had happened in the past when Caesar defeated Pompeius, but

the war was continued by Pompeius' sons, who gathered the surviving troops and continued fighting in Spain and Africa. Antonius' children were too young to resist, and too young for any of the army commanders to choose them as figureheads to rally the soldiers. Antonius was perhaps only dimly remembered by the majority. He had been absent from Rome for a long time, appearing in the city only for brief interludes, and now that he was dead and buried, his followers either joined with Octavian, or kept a low profile. They would presumably have surfaced if Octavian had lost the battle of Actium, and Alexandria had not fallen, as an anecdote of Macrobius demonstrates that not everyone unreservedly backed Octavian, but instead hedged their bets.⁵ The story goes that among the crowds gathering to congratulate Octavian when he returned to Rome, there was a man carrying a raven; good mimics as these birds are, this one said clearly, 'Hail, Caesar, victorious commander.' Octavian was impressed by the raven's prowess, and paid 20,000 sesterces for it. Unfortunately the lucky vendor tried to cheat his partner of his share of the money, so the disgruntled partner informed Octavian that he should demand to see the other raven that his friend had in his possession. It was produced and said, just as clearly as the first one, 'Hail, Antonius, victorious commander.' Octavian took it in good part, but insisted that the partners should divide the 20,000 sesterces between them.

After 30 BC, for the time being at least, Octavian's ascendancy was assured. He was consul, the armies looked to him as leader, Agrippa and Maecenas were in Rome, playing the parts of caretakers and sentinels and much else besides, fulfilling several tasks at once. But ascendancy is fragile and fickle. Achieving it is only the first step. Maintaining it is much more difficult. The story of how Octavian did so is nothing less than the history of the transformation of the old-style republican government of Rome, Italy and the provinces into the Roman Empire. In such a vast scenario, individuals are relegated to the background, while events and trends take centre stage. The story becomes one of the Augustan age, rather than a biography. Like the god Janus, Augustus looked both backwards and forwards in time, and to explain what he achieved necessitates explaining what went before, as the Republic became the Empire. The study of that complicated period must recognise certain significant features and events which serve as turning points. The procedure facilitates analysis of the subject, by slicing the whole into a series of manageable sections, but it obscures the possible alternatives that present themselves constantly in real life. The key dates that have emerged, 27, 23, 19 BC and so on, give the impression that the Empire was pre-ordained and ingeniously planned, all its parts assembled with the precision of a Swiss watchmaker and then set in perpetual motion once wound up. The thematic approach, so essential to an understanding of the inception of the Roman Empire, only serves to enhance the impression that Augustus had it all planned out from the beginning, and then spent the next years putting his plans into effect. On the other hand, the chronological approach is beset with problems, not least because of the lack of firm dates for certain events, and also because over the wide extent of territory that comprised the Empire,

simultaneous developments took place which render a linear account more complicated. It is much more convenient to study the reign of Augustus under separate headings, such as the provinces, the frontiers, the army, the city of Rome, administration, the Senate and equites, the imperial family, art and architecture, and literature. The development of all these factors can then be pursued individually, from antecedents to finished form. Logical though it is, such a narration of related facts, isolated from contemporary developments and compressed together in a way which obscures the long passage of time, contributes to the general impression of Augustus as conscious founder of the Empire, with an enlightened vision and a single plan, unfolded in progressive stages. At the end of the year after the fall of Alexandria, Octavian no doubt knew in broad general outline what he wanted to achieve, but he could not have predicted how, if at all, he would be able to put it into effect. The foundation of the Empire was not a deliberate act, but a series of developments, and moreover it was a long, slow process, involving cautious reconnoitring, some sidestepping and backtracking, and above all constant vigilance. The fantasy game of 'what if' is time consuming and ultimately unproductive, but it is salutary to remember that Octavian's rise to sole power was not a foregone conclusion, nor was his tenacious hold on it once he had achieved it. If illness or assassination failed to carry him off physically, there was always the threat of political manoeuvring. He had to be vitally aware of what men were thinking, and if possible pre-empt their actions or meet them halfway.

Opposition to Octavian's supremacy may or may not have arisen at this time, but if there was such nascent resistance it did not escalate into warfare. Crook⁶ says that opposition to Augustus can be overrated, and Raaflaub and Samons⁷ conclude that opposition was 'scattered, isolated, ineffective and, overall, minimal'. More recently Levick⁸ has examined the documented cases of opposition, concluding that while there were no really serious conspiracies, there was considerable discontent which found expression from time to time among different groups, embracing all classes of society, the army, the senators, the provincials and not least Augustus' own family. The old adage that you can't fool all of the people all of the time applies just as readily to trying to please all of the people all of the time. Fortunately, if Augustus could not please everyone, neither did he upset everyone all at once, so the discontented elements did not combine to form a well-organised universal conspiracy. It would have been difficult to topple him from power altogether since he commanded large numbers of seasoned troops who were loyal to him, and he had already demonstrated that he would not hesitate to use them to protect himself. It was fortunate that he was not seriously challenged, because above all in these new times of peace he had to avoid being put into the position of having to use military force. He needed to retain power, but without appearing to have usurped it. Augustus later insisted that he reached and remained in his supreme position by 'universal consent' (*per consensus universorum potitus rerum omnium*)⁹ which is a much wider concept than the oath of loyalty to himself that Octavian engineered throughout Italy and the provinces.¹⁰ It can be said that this *consensus* elevated him to a higher plane than the mere human,¹¹

but it has been pointed out that the *consensus* was unofficial; there was no formal vote of any official powers.¹² Ameling postulates an amended reading of the passage on the *Res Gestae*, changing *potitus rerum omnium* to *potens rerum omnium*, which alters the implications in a subtle way, elevating the *consensus* from a single occurrence to an ongoing circumstance.¹³

The existence, or pretence, of universal consensus is a more acceptable basis for power than the mechanical application of the law, which can place a man at the head of the government and maintain him there, but cannot make people accept him emotionally. Augustus was usually extremely assiduous about formal ratification of his powers by law, but he carefully glossed over the tangled matter of how and on what legal basis he arrived at complete control of the state. He had dropped the title of triumvir, and the Triumvirate had expired, either at the end of 32, or possibly at the end of 31 BC, but it can be argued that the debate about the legal termination is quite useless, because until Octavian formally laid down his powers as triumvir, then he still exercised Triumviral authority, even if he did not draw attention to this fact.¹⁴ By the time he wrote the *Res Gestae* the memory of the events of the triumviral period had faded, and indeed had been positively encouraged to fade. Even in 30 BC, it was not a phase of which Octavian wished to remind people.

Nevertheless, firm resolve to remain in control was already apparent in Octavian in 31 and 30 BC. At this stage he may have wished to sweep the triumviral era under the carpet, but he had not renounced his connections with Caesar, as demonstrated by a coin of c.31 BC bearing his portrait, with no legend at all, on the obverse (Figure 5.3) and on the reverse the goddess Venus Victrix with the legend proclaiming him the son of the divine Caesar. Since personal portraiture on the coinage was a new phenomenon only recently



Figure 5.3 A fine portrait of Octavian on a silver denarius probably of 31 BC or slightly earlier. The reverse, not shown here, bears the legend CAESAR.DIV.F. and a depiction of Venus Victrix, divine ancestress of the Julian clan.

Source: Drawn by Jacqui Taylor.

introduced by Caesar in the mid-40s BC, and the open declaration of oneself as the son of a god was also quite novel, Octavian's presentation of himself left few doubts that he intended to emulate and probably exceed Caesar.

Some of his responses to embassies from eastern cities have survived, attesting to his attitudes and intentions, and they are significant in that he disregards the senators. He expresses himself in the first person, and invites further embassies and petitions to himself as consul, as he was careful to style himself, but there is no indication that embassies should address their petitions to the Senate. Thus in the days before and after Actium he was making decisions on his own account, like a monarch.¹⁵ This is neither the language nor the stance of someone who intends to step down from power. The retention of power brought with it an interminable, daunting labour. Virtually every aspect of Roman life needed some degree of attention and repair, but Octavian did not shirk the responsibility. If he ever contemplated simply resting on his laurels and walking away, which is doubtful, he probably realised in the next instant that he could not bear to watch if anyone else took charge. He had been marked out by Caesar as his successor, which he took to mean that it was his duty to finish off in his own fashion what Caesar had begun. He believed in himself as the right man for the task, and set about making others believe in him too. This he could achieve by political means, but the way in which he presented his carefully groomed image also had a large part to play, especially in the areas further away from Rome. Portraits of him were idealised and youthful, and remained so, no matter how old he was. In sculptural representations he was made to seem calm and confident, and somewhat detached (Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6).



Figure 5.4 Idealised head of Augustus.

Source: Courtesy Vatican Museums.

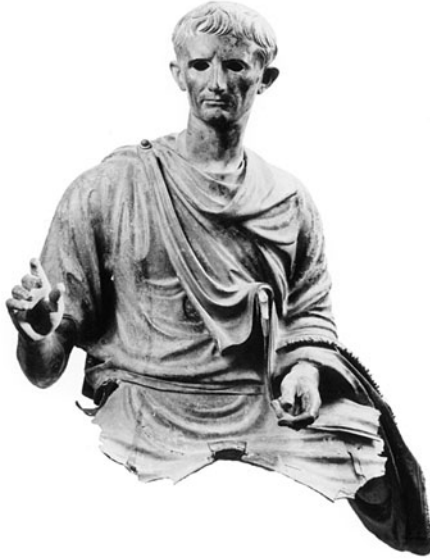


Figure 5.5 Bronze equestrian statue of Octavian from Greece.
Source: Courtesy National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Figure 5.6 Stylised portrait of Augustus, authoritative and assured. He was always depicted as a young man throughout his long reign.
Source: Photo by K. R. Dixon.

Octavian most likely mulled over all the most pressing needs and salient points after Alexandria fell and Antonius and Cleopatra were removed from the scene. This is not to say that he decided upon his course of action and the choice of titles then and there, because he could not be certain that he could guide the state in the direction he wished it to go. Innate caution and the lessons he had learned from Caesar and his ultimate fate were probably his guiding lights. He would see quite vividly what had to be done, and while focussing on the ends he would bide his time and continually adapt the means. He could formulate plans in broad outline, and then with continual reference to the political climate, he could wait for a suitable opportunity to introduce new ideas.¹⁶ If he judged wisely, and waited for the correct moment, his actions would not seem to have sprung from the unfeeling mind of an autocrat who was bent on introducing changes no matter what the senators and the people wanted. There may have been many plans which he never brought to fruition because of lack of suitable opportunity. He would be limited by all manner of constrictions, among them unavoidable circumstances, financial considerations and, on occasion, vociferous or covert opposition. It all depended on how widespread and how deep the potential opposition became. If it became obvious that he had used too much force or tried to move too quickly, he could withdraw and start again in some other fashion.¹⁷

Octavian's tasks after 30 BC

It was not too difficult to enumerate the problems that required attention. The one overriding factor that beset Roman politics was a lack of continuity, because of the annual change of magistrates, all largely pursuing their own ends within the confines of their short terms of office. The Roman world was a collection of territories only just emerging as an empire, so there was a considerable task facing Octavian with regard to the provinces. Like Caesar he viewed the Empire as a whole, recognising the need not just for conquest and exploitation for the glory of Rome, but also for integration and consistent administration. All this would take time to achieve. Transport and communications would be a vital part of provincial, indeed Italian administration, and would benefit from a single guiding hand instead of sporadic and piecemeal development. To guard the newly won provinces and to conquer new ones, the army would play a vital part, and would require much reorganisation. There were far too many troops under arms in 30 BC after the fall of Alexandria, estimated at about 60 or 70 legions.¹⁸ The state could not maintain such a large number of troops and it would seem highly suspicious to try to retain control of them, so it was obvious that many men would have to be discharged, which entailed finding land or pensions for them. Some legions would still be needed to protect the provinces, and in the longer term Octavian presumably bore in mind the need for the creation of a standing army, regularly recruited, serving for a specified length of time, and

properly catered for after retirement, but all this took considerable time to arrange. The time-served veterans who were to be settled on the land were not toothless old men who had served for a number of years. They had joined to follow one man, whether that man were Caesar, or Antonius or Octavian himself. They joined for the duration of the campaigns, and then required settlement; it was quite obvious that it would be much more convenient to have men sign up for several years, because in that case there would be plenty of time to make arrangements for their retirement, and a measure of reassurance about the future would aid recruitment, and relieve the anxieties of the provincials and the Italians about penniless veterans marauding their homes.¹⁹

In Rome and Italy there would be much to do in the way of repair, both in the cities and in the devastated countryside which had suffered in the wars. The city of Rome required above all a regular, dependable food supply, and clean water, and both these matters had already been taken under the wing of Octavian or Agrippa, but not in any permanent sense. The city administration needed to be placed under a properly organised scheme; there was no centrally directed police force or fire service, for instance, but the formation of such institutions could not happen overnight. Octavian had already addressed the problem of policing Rome and Italy after the naval victory at Naulochus in 36 BC, but further developments would have to wait for a while.²⁰ Later, he would establish the urban cohorts in Rome to provide a properly organised police force,²¹ and in AD 6 he would recruit freedmen to form a fire brigade (*Vigiles*).²²

Socially, the ancient Roman customs and the old religion had suffered serious lapses during the wars, and both required revitalisation. Confidence had to be restored, and a purification of the state was necessary before Rome could go forwards. But in order to move on, certain changes must be made, and that would be the most difficult task of all. Octavian could probably see more clearly than anyone else where changes would be necessary, to allow Rome to grow to Empire-stature. Caesar had seen it but he had tried to move much too quickly. It was all a question of balance, to manoeuvre the Senate and people into believing that in fact the changes were their own ideas, and that Octavian was merely the facilitator. Above all the Senate would have to be handled tactfully.²³ Too harshly repressed, or too fiercely pushed into the background, the senators would feel resentful and then give up hope. Octavian could never place them in a position where they felt they had nothing to lose, or else he would meet the same fate as his great-uncle, and at a rather earlier age. He had to induce them to think that it was all worthwhile, but at the same time he had to retain his own pre-eminence as the sole source of benefits and advancement. Influence rather than overt strength would be the order of the day. For the rest, a new social mobility was required, which would allow people to advance upwards throughout the social scale, or at least to imagine that they could do so if they exerted themselves in the service of Rome and Octavian.²⁴ This implied that noble snobbery must be overcome, because only when the dominance of the upper classes was broken would it be possible to utilise the talents of everyone and to

appoint as far as possible the best qualified man for each task, instead of choosing from a restricted pool of mostly self-interested nobles who might one day emulate Octavian by raising an army and challenging him. That above all had to be prevented. Syme commented on the lack of consulars among Augustus' immediate subordinates²⁵ and describes how he curtailed the senatorial proconsular governors who commanded armies, but without eradicating them altogether.²⁶ The social changes made themselves felt quite soon; equites could rise to senatorial status within two or three generations if they acquired sufficient wealth.²⁷

The vast majority of people required safety for their persons and their property, protection from enemies both local and foreign, some guarantee against famine, the promise of economic success, and to be allowed to get on with their own lives.²⁸ Dio outlines the needs of the people by inventing a long speech for Agrippa, which is counterbalanced by the equally long catalogue of ideas that Maecenas puts forward on how to run the Empire.²⁹ It was clear that the erstwhile image of Octavian the triumvir, ruthless against everyone who happened to stand in the way of whatever it was that he wanted, had to be decisively shed. The potentially universal threat implicit in such unbridled power had served its purpose and was now an embarrassment, so Octavian had to set about obliterating that image and substituting a new one. He had to appear benign and liberal, with the correct balance of fairness to the innocent and implacable ruthlessness to the guilty. This meant that there had to be clear rules as to how far anyone could go in his search for personal pre-eminence, which in turn necessitated the establishment or the refinement of the career structure, in which men must be subordinated without knowing that they were subordinated. One way of achieving this was for Octavian to refuse to accept any permanent office for himself, even though retirement was not included in his vocabulary. Theoretically, the consulship was not a permanent office, and Augustus always laid great emphasis on his position as consul. It was the legally acceptable basis of power, but this was a charade, as Tacitus³⁰ implies, since he was much more than simply consul, and until 23 BC he made certain that he was elected consul on a continuous basis. Despite this stranglehold on the consulship, the myth of terminal dates must always be kept alive, hence his powers, slightly variable but always supreme, were granted in blocks of years, five or sometimes ten at a time, so that it was possible to review the situation on a regular basis. Octavian probably remembered very starkly that Caesar did not survive for more than a few weeks after accepting the appointment as *Dictator perpetuo*.

From the fall of Alexandria until the so-called first settlement with the Senate in January 27 BC, the consul Octavian ruled Rome without seeming to rule. The majority presumably acquiesced because their hopes were vested in him for a better future, and to this extent there is some truth in Augustus' statement that he ruled by universal consent.³¹ Explicit clarity as to his powers was deliberately never achieved.³² While he held the consulship, his position was clear and

simple. In his replies to the embassies from the eastern cities, he carefully styled himself consul, as was right and proper. But he and everyone else knew that he was much more than that. One of the secrets of success, which was probably very clear to him even in 30 BC, would be to avoid the use of extraordinary titles, particularly those that implied arbitrary force, whilst at the same time concentrating on self-advertisement in its more positive forms. From 32 BC, when he dropped the title Triumvir, until the end of his life, Augustus observed these simple principles. The *Res Gestae*, written in retrospect, is a model of circumspection, not to say circumlocution; Augustus evades the question of how he held onto power either by simple omission, or by refusing to name the source of his power in technical terms. It would have been of enormous assistance if somewhere in the *Res Gestae* he had described precisely whether he held consular or proconsular powers at certain times in his career; a lot of ink and keyboard pounding would have been spared for discussion of other problems. The debate about proconsular power assumes greater importance after the events of January 27 BC, when Octavian said he was prepared to hand over the provinces to the control of the Senate, and promptly received most of them back again, this time with senatorial sanction. Phrases such as proconsular power find no place in the *Res Gestae*, nor in any other source, until the reign of Tiberius.³³ In so far as Octavian was prepared to acknowledge the sources of his power, he fashioned new words out of strictly traditional forms, bland words lacking any hint of coercive force. He claimed to be merely the first man in the state with no powers greater than any of his colleagues, eventually adopting the title *Princeps*, a title with a long history and established usage, acceptably free from military or political taint, with a suitably archaic nobility about it. Augustus broadened and ennobled the word, until it was all-embracing, extended into another realm. *Princeps senatus* and *princeps civitatis* were customary terms denoting the leader of the Senate or the state, but Augustus' concept was much wider, as Horace describes him, '*maxime principum*'.³⁴ Although Augustus was not shy about using the name Imperator, the term *imperium* does not appear in the *Res Gestae* very often. Instead of *imperium* the word he chose to describe his influence was *auctoritas*, a concept that defies complete elucidation in English translation, because modern thinking does not grasp all the nuances and shades of meaning. The major study, not yet superseded, is by Magdelain.³⁵ The word is related to *auctor*, or a counsellor with authority born of experience, whose advice was likely to be taken.³⁶ It conferred influence and power without any legal basis,³⁷ but Augustus had sufficient legal powers as well as influence to justify all his actions.³⁸ The English term 'authority' conveys only some of the meaning of *auctoritas*, and confuses the issue somewhat because 'authority' has connotations of an official appointment or magistracy, or some kind of qualification earned via a properly approved scheme, probably with the award of a uniform or a rolled-up parchment at the end of it all. Augustus wanted none of these official connotations; he was the experienced elder statesman, benignly dispensing accumulated wisdom to lesser beings.

The bringer of peace

Octavian was still in the east, wintering on Samos, when he entered on his fifth consulship in January 29 BC, with Sextus Apuleius as his colleague. In Rome on 1 January, the Senate gratefully confirmed all his acts,³⁹ which relieved him of the necessity of fighting for recognition, as had happened to Pompeius Magnus when he returned from his eastern campaigns. On 11 January, the doors of the temple of Janus were closed, signifying that Rome was at peace, for it was the rule that while she was at war the doors remained open day and night.⁴⁰ The closing of the doors of the temple of Janus was said to be the honour that pleased Octavian best. It suited the image that he wished to propagate, as the bringer of peace. The definition of war and peace perhaps requires a little refinement; it did not seem to matter that there were battles going on all over the Empire, against the Treveri in Gaul, who had brought German allies in on their side, and against the Cantabri and Astures in Spain, and against tribesmen in other areas. These peoples posed no serious threat to Rome herself, and as Dio affirms,⁴¹ these struggles were negligible; there was nothing to say about them in Roman opinion.

But the ongoing labour did not end when peace was established. The reorganisation of the provinces and most aspects of government could not be delayed. The organisation of the east claimed Octavian's first attentions. Egypt was made into a province and the Augustan image spread there, as demonstrated by the detached bronze head of a statue, probably carried off as booty to Nubia where it was found (Figure 5.7). Augustus describes the process in the *Res Gestae*⁴² by



Figure 5.7 Bronze head of Augustus from Egypt, detached from a larger statue and carried off as booty to Meroe beyond the Egyptian frontier.

Source: Courtesy British Museum.

the laconic phrase 'I added Egypt to the Empire of the Roman people', neglecting to mention that neither the Senate nor the Roman people had anything to do with its government, which was kept entirely and firmly in his own hands. Dio phrases it differently: 'thus was Egypt enslaved'.⁴³ By annexing Egypt, Octavian secured its valuable corn supply for Rome and the Royal Treasury for himself. The equestrian Cornelius Gallus, who had marched from the west towards Alexandria while Octavian approached from the east to defeat Antonius and Cleopatra, was made governor of the new province.⁴⁴ Gallus was not a senator, but this did not deter Octavian from employing him in this new role, with the title *praefectus*, answerable to Octavian-Augustus and not to the Senate. It has been debated whether this was an ad hoc decision made on the spur of the moment, using, as it were, the immediate tools that were to hand, or whether it was a calculated measure adopted with considerable forethought. Crook⁴⁵ maintains that the decision to employ an equestrian was made simply because Gallus was available, but since it proved an acceptable experiment, there was no reason to make changes thereafter. But it is more likely that Octavian appointed Gallus because as an *eques*, he would have owed everything to him and not to the Senate, and in view of this dependency, and his alienation from the Senate, Gallus might resist the temptation to use the wealth of Egypt to set himself up in opposition to Octavian. Whatever the means by which Cornelius Gallus was made prefect of Egypt, the post went to equestrians ever afterwards. If Octavian had made a mistake in his choice, he did not choose to alter it, even when three or four years later, Gallus seems to have overstepped the mark and after a mysterious sequence of events was obliged to do away with himself. If this unfortunate development was in any way associated with Gallus' rank rather than his personality, that would have been the time to rethink the governance of Egypt, but Augustus, as he then was, did not do so. Besides, decisions made on the spur of the moment do not suit Octavian's cautiousness. However convenient it may have been to employ Gallus simply because he was on the spot, it would not have been difficult to find someone else to fill the post, even if he had been forced to wait until that person could reach Egypt. An equestrian prefect of Egypt, responsible to himself alone and not the Senate, answered Octavian's purpose very well, and continued to answer it throughout his reign. If he had offered the senators one sniff of Egypt, candidates would have been queuing up outside his door. It would have been very easy to reverse his decision, but the outcome was that the Prefecture of Egypt became one of the ultimate equestrian career goals. Senators were not only excluded from governing the province but were forbidden to set foot in it without express permission from the emperor.⁴⁶

By remaining in the east Octavian allowed time for everything to settle down, both in Rome and in the Empire.⁴⁷ Dio recounts how he waited until a dispute between Tiridates and Phraates of Parthia had been resolved,⁴⁸ refusing to interfere even though he was asked to do so. He then negotiated with the victor, Phraates, and gained credit in Rome for his arrangements.⁴⁹ Later, he tried to

advance the cause of Tiridates, by assisting him in his efforts to usurp the Parthian throne, but after the failure of this attempt, friendly relations with Phraates were again restored. The eastern cities clamoured to honour Octavian, with games and spectacles, and even worship. At Ephesus and Nicaea, the chief cities of Asia and Bithynia respectively, he permitted the Roman inhabitants to build temples to Rome and the divine Julius, and for the non-Roman citizens of Pergamum and Nicomedia, he authorised the dedication of temples to Rome and to himself.⁵⁰ Careful not to offend either Roman sensibilities or provincial zeal, he included the goddess Roma in his personal panoply. The eastern peoples readily adapted to the worship of a living individual. Octavian readily adapted to the honour.

Nearer home the honours were exalted but of a more earthly kind. They fall into categories of monuments and statues, distinction in dress and in name, adulatory celebrations, and useful privileges. These are listed at some length by Dio.⁵¹ Two triumphal arches were to be built in honour of Octavian, one in Rome and one at Brundisium,⁵² along with numerous other architectural monuments and images of him. Prayers were said for him and thanksgiving voted for his victories. Dio recounts how the consul Valerius Potitus, successor to Sextus Apuleius, offered sacrifices in person and in public on Octavian's arrival, a signal honour not accorded to anyone else.⁵³ A triumph over Cleopatra was voted, and then another over the Egyptians, by which was meant Actium and Alexandria. Antonius was never mentioned by name in the victory celebrations. His memory was damned and his monuments were pulled down. His name was obliterated with such zeal that inscriptions were chiselled into blank spaces wherever the name Antonius occurred next to the name Marcus, irrespective of whether the text concerned him. His birthday, 14 January, was declared *nefastus*, unlucky and unfit for the transaction of public business.⁵⁴

Octavian's birthday on the other hand was honoured with public holidays and celebrations, and he was given permission to wear a triumphal crown at all festivals. The name Imperator, which he had been using on coinage of the triumviral period,⁵⁵ was now confirmed as his by right. According to Dio, this was 'not as the usual salutation, but the title as it had been granted to Caesar'.⁵⁶ By the *Lex Saenia* of 30 BC Octavian was granted the right to appoint patricians, just as Caesar had been. Octavian himself owed his own promotion to this privilege of Caesar. In the *Res Gestae*,⁵⁷ Augustus did not refer to the law but documented the fact that he created new patricians in response to a request from the Senate and the people. Kienast⁵⁸ says that one-third of the patricians of the Empire owed their elevation to Augustus, and Brunt and Moore⁵⁹ point out that more patricians would be needed to fill the vacant priesthoods.

One of the honours which Octavian refused was the formal greeting of the entire populace when he came home. It was normal for a man's friends and family, and clients and anyone else who was interested in him, to come out of the city to greet him when he returned after a tour of duty abroad, winning glory for Rome.⁶⁰ This time there had been no occasion for the citizens to

decide whether to do so, because the Senate had ordered it.⁶¹ Octavian declined the distinction,⁶² one reason being that it was no distinction at all when performed under compulsion, and could damage his reputation.⁶³ Another reason for declining the honour may have been that it was a tiring process, like an extended audience, so that he would be under observation all the way home, at a time when he was frequently under par if not actually ill. Consistently thereafter, Augustus often returned to Rome unexpectedly at night, so as to arrive home in privacy and calm. No doubt to underline his supremacy he did not return to Italy until August 29 BC, ready to celebrate his triple triumph, on three separate days, 13, 14 and 15 August, for victories in Dalmatia, at Actium, and the defeat of Cleopatra. In accordance with Roman custom, he would not enter the city until the day of his first triumph,⁶⁴ and he whiled away some of his time in the company of Maecenas and Vergil, who read the newly completed *Georgics* to him. As a gesture to spare the Italian cities from unnecessary expense, he did not accept the *aureum coronarium* or money tribute that had evolved from the custom of sending gold crowns to generals celebrating a triumph.⁶⁵ The cities had suffered devastations and deprivations during the wars, so Octavian relinquished the honour, gaining credit for his generosity while at the same time tacitly acknowledging the impoverished condition of the citizens; he would need their support in the future.

The spectacular displays of his three triumphs will have required considerable orchestration, involving large numbers of personnel, as anyone will know who has organised the simplest village May Day festival. It testifies to Octavian's ability to direct events from a distance via such men as Agrippa and Maecenas, who held no official posts at this time. The festivities also required superhuman stamina; Rome in August can be exhausting, even to natives. The triumphs were the apogee of Octavian's military career. Members of his family featured in the three triumphs; his sister's son Marcellus, and Livia Drusilla's son Tiberius rode with him, both teenage boys who had not played a part in the wars, but spectators would no doubt remember that the youth Octavius had accompanied Caesar in a triumph, even though he himself had performed no warlike deeds. Octavian-Augustus would never celebrate another triumph, which may have been as much by accident as design, but it fitted in with his policy of reserving the highest privileges for himself. In the case of the triumph, however, it would have been too blatant to reserve the right for himself while denying it to others. If he did not celebrate another triumph himself, then by this example he could quell the soaring ambitions of others. The last proconsuls to celebrate a triumph were L. Sempronius Atratinus, on 12 October 21 BC, and the younger Cornelius Balbus⁶⁶ *ex Africa*, 27 March 19 BC. Dio⁶⁷ records the demise of the triumph as far as proconsular governors were concerned, and then sneers that in any case they had been awarded on the feeblest of excuses, such as arresting robbers or clearing highways. The important point is that all credit for military victories went in future to Augustus, no matter who won them. His own legates governing his provinces were of praetorian rank and could not take the auspices on their

own account, which made them ineligible for the award of a triumph. In place of the actual triumphal procession, the substitute honour of *ornamenta triumphalia* was developed, an award which Tiberius was among the first to receive.⁶⁸ Augustus did not permit him to triumph on the grounds that he had not been fighting under his own auspices, but had acted as the subordinate of the princeps.⁶⁹

On 18 August, Octavian dedicated the temple of *Divus Julius* at one end of the Forum, and the *Curia Julia*, the new Senate House, at the other. Then there were games and festivals, after which distractions, according to Dio,⁷⁰ people forgot the wars and all the previous turmoil; it suited everyone to imagine that all the victories had been won over foreigners, not Romans. After the euphoria, there were also tangible rewards. Octavian paid all debts which he owed, and cancelled debts to himself.⁷¹ The Egyptian spoils allowed him to be more than generous, more even than lavish, with ready cash. He gave the soldiers bounties, and put into operation a massive settlement programme for the veterans. Keppie⁷² estimates that Octavian settled about 40,000–50,000 veterans in Italy, from a total of 25 to 30 legions, but this time, the process was carried out in a more sensitive manner, and did not seem to incur protest. Augustus records in the *Res Gestae*⁷³ that after the battle of Actium, and in AD 14, he paid out of his own pocket for lands on which to settle veterans. The total came to 600,000,000 sesterces for Italian lands and 260,000,000 for holdings in the provinces, since the settlements were not confined to Italy. This time much of the Roman world was involved in the founding of colonies or upgrading towns and cities to colonial status, though it is not possible to estimate how many veterans were settled in the provinces. In some instances, Octavian gave the veterans cash pensions. Probably all those who had served under Antonius were pensioned off in this way. It is reasonable to assume that the Egyptian Treasury funded most if not all of the settlements and pensions.⁷⁴ The remaining troops who were kept under arms, probably about 27 legions in total, were redistributed and set to work, not all of it warlike; in Egypt, for instance, the soldiers were employed in cleaning out old canals and improving the water supply. These arrangements were not all completed overnight, but in broad general outline this was the plan that Octavian adopted from the end of 30 BC onwards.

With Agrippa as colleague, Octavian entered his sixth consulship in 28 BC. The main task now was to dismantle the Triumvirate and restore Rome and the provinces to a workable form of government. For the first time in very many years the two consuls remained in Rome or Italy for the whole year. It is recorded that Octavian shared the *fascēs* (the axe and bundles of rods carried by lictors) with Agrippa,⁷⁵ another sign that things were returning to normal, but the main problem with this statement is that it is not known how many lictors Octavian possessed to begin with. As triumvir and consul he may have been allowed 24 lictors, which he now halved in order to grant 12 of them to Agrippa. A contrary school of thought is that he had always employed the usual 12 but now ceased to keep them to himself all the time, following the normal custom of sharing them with his consular colleague every alternate month.⁷⁶

Whichever it was, the Romans heaved a sigh of relief that Octavian seemed bent on regularity and good order. This was quite unequivocal when he annulled all the acts of the triumvirs, in an act that looked both backwards and forwards. It cancelled the horrors of the past and also proclaimed that there would be no return to such things. From a lofty and distant standpoint, Tacitus⁷⁷ was to view all this far more sourly, declaring that 'in his sixth consulship, Augustus, feeling secure, cancelled the acts of the Triumvirate and presented us with laws to serve our needs in peace under a prince. Thenceforth our fetters were tightened and sentries set over us'. Thus in seeming to release the Romans from their bonds, Augustus actually tightened them further than ever. At the time, though, it was successful; it was precisely what was necessary, and having known worse things, most people were happy with the situation. Confidence returned, the social order was repaired, religion was revitalised. Augustus boasted of restoring 82 temples,⁷⁸ some at his own expense, but he also coerced people to share in the task, especially those whose ancestors had some association with the particular deities whose temples had fallen into disrepair.⁷⁹

As consuls, Octavian and Agrippa were granted the powers of the censors (*censoria potestas*) without actually holding the office of censor.⁸⁰ Using these powers, they carried out a census, which revealed that there were 4,063,000 registered Roman citizens. Dio says that they completed the census that had been started in 29 BC.⁸¹ As with all statistics, there are reservations about what this means. Was it a figure limited to adult males, or were women and children included? The three separate censuses reported in the *Res Gestae* show a steady increase in the numbers of citizens, but once again there is a limit to the conclusions that can be drawn, because the methods and criteria for taking the census are not known. Next, in order to purify the city and the people, the *lustrum* was carried out.⁸² There had been no such ceremony of purification for over four decades, and it no doubt appealed to the emotions as much as any religious or practical sense. Another kind of purification that Augustus and Agrippa carried out using their censorial powers was the *lectio* of the Senate. The undesirables who had crept in during the Dictatorship and the Triumvirate were weeded out. Some were persuaded to resign, and then a list of names was posted up, not this time associated with anything as dire as the proscriptions. Partly it was an appeal to majority opinion, and partly a practical measure to reduce the Senate to a more manageable number, akin to modern voluntary redundancies before the management starts to select people for dismissal. The culling of the Senate was naturally interpreted as a movement to eradicate Antonians, and stories circulated that Agrippa and Octavian wore armour under their togas when attending the Senate meetings while the process was carried out. This is more likely hyperbole invented at the time, or by later authors. The adjustment of the Senate was not entirely focussed on removal of certain men, since it is recorded that Octavian gave money to those men who were worthy to serve but could not meet the stipulated monetary qualification,⁸³ and he created patricians to replace those noble families which had been eradicated during the wars.⁸⁴

Augustus says that he did this in his fifth consulship, but it was surely a continuous process, and not something that could be solved all at once. At some time in 28 BC, according to Dio,⁸⁵ Octavian became *princeps senatus*, but it is possible that he already had the distinction by 29 BC.⁸⁶ By this means he was recognised as the leading senator of his day, and was permitted to speak first at meetings of the Senate. The honour was no small one, and he kept the title until his death,⁸⁷ but honourable as it was, the title did not reach the dizzy heights of the single word *Princeps*, by which Augustus later became known; that was a much more robust demonstration of all-embracing supremacy.

The so-called restoration of the Republic, January 27 BC

All this social, religious and political repair work was the preliminary to the so-called 'first settlement' of 13 January 27 (the Ides of January). This was hardly a sudden, spontaneous event. Preparations had been carefully made by Octavian and his circle. Significant honours had been collected, the goodwill of the senators and people had been cultivated, the image of the saviour of the state assiduously groomed. Two years before the settlement, a grateful Senate had made a dedication to Octavian proclaiming *re publica conservata*,⁸⁸ the Republic saved, which is a statement of great import whether or not it refers to the state proper or simply the day to day running of affairs, which is what *res publica* strictly means. The date is 29 BC, confirmed by the text of the inscription, mentioning Octavian's fifth consulship and his designation for a sixth consulship in the following year.

In 28 BC Octavian reformed the treasury, revoked the illegal acts of the Triumvirate, and restored free elections.⁸⁹ He issued a coin with the legend *leges et iura P. R. restituit*, proclaiming that he had restored the rights and laws, either to the Roman people, or of the Roman people.⁹⁰ The uncertainty arises because it is possible to expand *P. R.* in the dative, as *populo Romano*, meaning 'to the Roman people', or in the genitive as *populi Romani*, meaning 'of the Roman people'. Rich⁹¹ opts for the dative, 'to the Roman people'; Levick⁹² thinks that on balance it is more likely to have been 'of the Roman people', an interpretation of which Mantovani⁹³ is certain, as demonstrated by the title of his article concerning the coin, in which he restores the legend in the genitive as *populi Romani*. Neither interpretation is certain, but the difference between the two is significant. Given that this coin was issued the year before Octavian made his speech restoring the government of the nascent Empire to the Senate, it could be said that the coin prepared the way for his gesture, and Ferrary⁹⁴ connects the coin to the events of January 27 BC. On the other hand, since Augustus and his successors eventually became the dispenser of justice and the fount of legislation, the claim that the laws had been restored to the people would eventually have sounded somewhat hollow.

After two or more years spent in preparation, on the Ides of January 27 BC Octavian as consul for the seventh time made a speech in the Senate giving back

power to that body and thus restoring the Republic (*res publica restituta*, or *reddita*). Great controversy lurks behind those deceptively simple phrases. To contemporaries, it would seem that the restoration of the Republic did not make a momentous impact; there are few references to it as an event, and the changes were limited in scope.⁹⁵ But to the ancient authors who came after, this was the birth of the Empire, and as time went by, the portrayal of Octavian's actions in 27 BC gathered momentum. Describing the results, Velleius Paterculus⁹⁶ crammed more superlatives into one paragraph than any of the panegyrists of the later emperors proclaimed for their heroes; his eulogy contains all the advertised benefits of the Augustan regime. Dio's account⁹⁷ of what Octavian actually said on the Ides of January is almost certainly fictional; the author invents a long speech, which would have taken some considerable time to deliver, which enables him to outline the foundation and functioning of the Empire. Dio clearly thought of Octavian's activity on the Ides of January as a complete sham, and recognised in Octavian's much vaunted restoration of the Republic the beginning of the monarchy.⁹⁸

In reality, no-one now knows what was in Octavian's speech, but it was most likely brief, to the point, and delivered with well-chosen words. Suetonius says that Augustus used to write everything down, to ensure that he said no more and no less than he intended, even when he wanted to talk to his wife.⁹⁹ It is the sign of a busy man who does not want to have to remember all the salient points while pondering innumerable other matters, and in the case of his speech on the Ides of January, he would not want to risk making any omissions or overstatements. Whether he read out loud from his script, or rehearsed and put on a good act is not known and is largely irrelevant, except to affirm that the whole performance was certainly not a spontaneous gesture. Suetonius implies that it was a long-term project,¹⁰⁰ ambiguously stating that Augustus twice thought of restoring the Republic, the first time after the defeat of Antonius, because it was a constant taunt of Antonius that it was all Octavian's fault that it had not been restored, and the second time after a lingering illness had wearied him, which can be dated perhaps to 23 BC, when Augustus was so ill that it was expected that he would die. But Augustus thought better of the idea, Suetonius says, because he could not expect to be free from danger if he retired, and it was not safe to entrust the state to the control of more than one person. The implication is that he had never at any time restored the Republic at all. It would have been impossible to do so in its full working order, but what he could do was produce an illusion of it, and Octavian's energies, especially during his fifth and sixth consulships in 29 and 28 BC, had been directed to this goal. He wrote in the *Res Gestae* that in his sixth and seventh consulships, he transferred control of the *res publica* to the Senate and people. In reality it was only the first instalment. Augustus regarded the process as an ongoing project, covering an extended time span,¹⁰¹ but for 'restoration of the Republic' read instead 'the foundation of the Empire and sole rule'.

Before he gave his speech, Octavian had no doubt already discussed the matter with his closest associates, as Dio expressly states,¹⁰² but whether this was

a discussion with his *consilium*, or a semi-official forerunner of it, remains to be established, since firm evidence of the functioning of the *consilium principis* at this early date is lacking.¹⁰³ Individual senators each organised his own *consilium*, consisting of a circle of friends and advisers, but the *consilium* of the emperors was more of an official body, comprising a rotating committee made up of senators and *amici*.¹⁰⁴ Whatever Octavian called his group of friends and advisers at the time, suffice it to be said that he would not risk putting such an important motion before the Senate without first having sounded out the likely response, so it is to be assumed that there was considerable stage management in the wings before Octavian took centre stage.¹⁰⁵ The whole procedure has been interpreted as a managed scenario, with various senators primed for action and coached in their roles. Possibly some men had been appointed to raise objections to the plan as outlined in Octavian's speech, to encourage debate with the ultimate aim of giving power straight back to him. Endless variations are possible, but it is more than likely that the outcome was already scripted. If the Senate had taken Octavian at his word, risen to its feet to congratulate him on his generosity and then rushed to take over the entire government, his position would have been a little uncomfortable. The timing was very important; it had to be done before his stranglehold on power convinced everyone that he was aiming at the Dictatorship like his adoptive father, and even more important, before any other potential candidate began to imagine that he could run the Empire rather better. In other words Octavian had to act while he was still in favour and indispensable.

As for the plan, he was simply bringing to fruition what had been promised repeatedly in the triumviral period, to restore normal government when the time was ripe,¹⁰⁶ but probably no-one could quite decide what normal government was, after the prolonged upheavals of the past. It has been described as launching a political programme that befitted reality,¹⁰⁷ and it goes without saying that it was a programme that did no damage to Octavian. Fortunately it was also acceptable to the majority. The impression on contemporaries seems to have been negligible. If there was no vociferous opposition, neither was there wild rejoicing, though no-one over the age of 40, or with a sense of history, could really have subscribed to the idea that the Republic had been restored. It probably did not matter. It was preferable to civil war.¹⁰⁸ As Syme points out, after the Dictatorship and Triumvirate, the end results of the speech on the Ides of January 27 BC were not at all displeasing. The senators coyly declined the government of the whole Empire. Graciously, Octavian accepted a compromise. Henceforth there were to be two kinds of provinces, some of them senatorial, governed by men with the title proconsul, and some imperial, governed by Augustus himself. He was to receive Gaul, Spain, Syria, Cilicia, Cyprus and Egypt as his *provincia* for 10 years, which he would govern, in the fully evolved system, through *legati Augusti pro praetore*, men chosen by himself and given praetorian rank, no matter that they may already have reached higher office than praetor; by this means, the legates remained subordinate to him.¹⁰⁹ Both Suetonius and Dio explain

that the provinces which Octavian received were the potentially threatened ones which could not be safely governed by magistrates who were subject to an annual turnover.¹¹⁰ One of the main consequences, indeed according to Syme one of the main reasons for the change, was that he was able to oust the proconsular senatorial governors from his provinces, and install men who would owe their advancement to him alone, and not the Senate. Theoretically, this would provide some guarantee of their loyalty and obedience; in consequence he did not choose to employ nobles or ex-consuls.¹¹¹ As for the provinces under senatorial control, the Senate would govern them as of old, sending out ex-praetors and ex-consuls, who were all called proconsuls whatever their previous status, and who in a few cases at this early stage would still command armies.

Octavian did not immediately take over absolutely all the armed provinces in 27 BC, nor did he commandeer all the troops, but by the end of his reign he had acquired such overall control. It is possible that while he was consul he could exercise overall command of the armies; this point has been debated for some time, since Augustus never elaborated upon the theme, avoiding any specific description of his powers. The thorny questions, debated for ages without solution, concern Octavian's exact status, how he governed his own provinces, and whether he could exercise authority over the governors in the senatorial provinces. Every year until 23 BC Augustus, as he must be called after 27 BC, was consul, so by dint of this office he held power which may have enabled him to govern his provinces. Jones¹¹² thought that the question of any grant of *imperium*, consular or otherwise, simply never arose from 27 to 23 BC because Augustus was actually consul. Eder¹¹³ notes that the status of *consul proconsule*, a consul still in office acting as a proconsul, was a constitutional abomination, so he also opts for the suggestion that Augustus governed his provinces as consul from 27 to 23. This means that only when Augustus gave up the consulship in 23 BC would he require proconsular *imperium* to enable him to continue to govern his provinces. Describing the events of 23 BC, Dio¹¹⁴ says that Augustus was granted the proconsulship for life, which is not strictly true because Augustus made sure that temporal limits were set on his powers, but with the award of proconsular powers in blocks of five or ten years each time, at least the need for annual renewal was obviated. He was also exempted from the regulation that he should lay down his powers when crossing the *pomerium* into the city of Rome.

Syme¹¹⁵ and Kienast¹¹⁶ decided quite categorically that Octavian held *imperium proconsulare* from 27 BC, and so governed his provinces as any other governor would have done, except that he chose to do so through legates. Raafaub¹¹⁷ says that in 27 BC Augustus was granted an extensive, long-term proconsulship over his provinces of Spain, Gaul, Germany and Syria. This remains a theory, but it should be noted that even after the satisfactory outcome of the meeting of the Senate in January 27 BC Augustus could not know for certain that he would be able to retain the consulship every year. Presumably he had every intention of doing so. It can be argued that although his public image was one of obedience to the laws and the old traditional customs, he was privately determined that he

should always be consul; Suetonius¹¹⁸ says that he tried to obtain the agreement of the Senate that he should be consul with two colleagues, which indicates very strongly that he had no intention of relinquishing the office, but wished to remain within the framework of the law. Even if he was prepared to leave the question of the consulship permanently open, playing it by ear, as it were, it would have been quite uncharacteristically lax if Augustus had not established at the beginning exactly how he was to govern his provinces. Just in case things did not work out in the way he would have preferred, it is likely that he would make a watertight case for holding his provinces for the 10 years that had been granted to him.¹¹⁹ One way to achieve this would be to have proconsular powers conferred on him at some time, either in 27 BC or four years later when he relinquished the consulship. Dio says that Augustus was awarded the proconsulship for life in 23 BC, and there seems to be some support for this in the text of an edict inscribed on a bronze plaque found in 1999 at El Bierzo in Spain, dated to 15 BC. Augustus is specifically named as proconsul, which accords well with Dio's statement, but some doubts have been cast about the authenticity of this inscription, so it may not be as crystal clear as the text makes it seem.¹²⁰ More corroborative evidence besides this one inscription is needed before it can be said that Augustus had acquired the title proconsul and used it regularly.

If the way in which Augustus governed his own provinces is not crystal clear, it is even less certain whether he was authorised to interfere in the provinces nominally governed by the Senate. Dio¹²¹ insists that from the very first after the reorganisation of 27 BC, Augustus issued orders to proconsular governors of senatorial provinces, but this does not constitute proof of the actual state of affairs from 27 BC onwards, since Dio's statement can be dismissed as an anachronism; such practice was entirely normal in Dio's time. The inscription from Cyne (or Kyme) on the coast of Asia Minor has been adduced as evidence that Augustus issued orders to the governors of senatorial provinces as early as 27 BC.¹²² The inscription is in three parts, the first being the text of a legal decision of Augustus and Agrippa concerning sacred places in Cyne, written in Greek. The second and third sections contain a letter of the proconsul Vinicius to the magistrates of Cyne, in Latin and Greek. The Latin text of this letter contains the phrase *iussu Augusti Caesaris*, on the orders of Augustus Caesar, with no mention of Agrippa. Some authors believe that the orders stemmed from Augustus' superior influence, or *auctoritas*, rather than legally based powers, and it is true that the text of the inscription provides no evidence of the legal authority that allowed Augustus to issue orders to governors of provinces technically outside his own remit.¹²³ But then, there was probably no real need for such an explicit statement; as Eck¹²⁴ points out, in 27 BC Augustus and Agrippa were consuls, and on that basis they were within the legal framework in issuing orders to provincial governors. The problem of how Augustus dealt with the senatorial provinces as opposed to his own imperial provinces assumes a greater importance during the years after he had given up the consulship in 23 BC.

Further complications arise from the debate about the nature of Augustus' proconsular power, and whether it was *maius* or greater than, or *aequum*, equal to, the powers of the senatorial governors. Supported by Dio, who says that when Augustus was granted the proconsulship, his authority was greater than that of provincial governors, Von Premerstein¹²⁵ argued that Augustus held *imperium proconsulare maius* from 27 BC onwards, which would give him powers superior to all other governors whatever their rank, and he would possess the legal basis upon which to make decisions for any of the senatorial provinces, but this is not supported by any truly incontestable evidence, and so the problem of *imperium maius* keeps on rearing its head. By Tiberius' reign, *imperium maius* was taken as read, even if this had to be unequivocally stated now and then. An inscription found in 1996 concerns the powers bestowed on Germanicus in the east in AD 17, three years after Augustus' death.¹²⁶ The text contains the assertion that Tiberius' powers are greater in all things, so while Germanicus was active there were three tiers of government, starting with the provincial governors, through Germanicus with powers greater than theirs, up to Tiberius who held powers greater than everyone else. Ferrary¹²⁷ believes that from its beginnings during the Republic, *imperium maius* was awarded for specific, finite tasks, for an equally specific finite period, and using these precedents Augustus accrued such powers gradually, rather than all at once. This would be in keeping with Lacey's theory¹²⁸ that Octavian-Augustus obtained supremacy via a series of gradual encroachments.

Some scholars have concluded that there was no such thing as *imperium maius*; this theory maintains that Republican precedent allowed only for *imperium aequum*, which curtails the extent of Augustus' authority, and has great import for his status when he relinquished the consulship in 23 BC. The precedents had been set in the recent past, as for instance when Pompeius Magnus obtained his command against the Mediterranean pirates, and was granted the necessary powers, for a limited time, to give orders to governors in the territories surrounding the Mediterranean, up to 50 miles inland, but this was for a specific and narrowly defined purpose, even if it did affect very large areas of the Roman world. Augustus needed something rather better than this, but could never be quite so overt about it, nor could he admit to permanence. The secret of Empire, as Tacitus said when describing the civil wars of AD 69 that brought Vespasian to power, cannot really have been a secret even in 27 BC. Augustus held most of the provinces with armies in them and the soldiers were loyal to him. The brutal reality was that in this psychological way he did indeed hold *imperium maius*, but whether this was sanctioned by law is still debatable. As with so many aspects of his reign, there is only passionate belief.

Honours for Augustus

Dio's version of Octavian's speech in the Senate in January 27 BC¹²⁹ constitutes an outline of the principles behind the foundation of the Principate, which is a

convenient place to insert a description of the evolution of the imperial government, but probably not a true depiction of what was actually discussed. Thus it can be argued that the only business that was dealt with on 13 January concerned the provinces and nothing more.¹³⁰ It may be that the single most important factor had been dealt with, and that was what Augustus meant by restoring the *res publica*. Alternatively, there may have been further items on the agenda on 13 January,¹³¹ but that can never be ascertained.

There was a pause while the Senate considered what to do next to honour Octavian. Like the speech that Octavian gave and the response to it, this too was probably guided if not totally orchestrated in advance. It would not be acceptable if the rewards were inadequate, or embarrassing, or compromising in some way. There was an interval of three days before the Senate met again. The time lapse may have been due to shell-shock on the part of the senators, or to wrangling over the correct honours and adulation. Lacey¹³² has simplified the matter by pointing out that the day following Octavian's speech, 14 January, was Antonius' birthday, which had been recently declared *nefastus*, so no public business could be performed; on the day after that there was a religious festival which would have limited the time available for a meeting of the Senate. Therefore it was only on 16 January that the Senate could award appropriate thanks and honours to Octavian. Munatius Plancus proposed that henceforth Octavian should be known as Augustus. In the *Res Gestae*¹³³ Augustus says that he received his name from the Senate '*senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum*' but Velleius Paterculus¹³⁴ informs his readers that the motion was put forward by Munatius Plancus, whose track record so far was perhaps not of the best quality, if Velleius is correct in his earlier assessment.¹³⁵ The unsavoury reputation of Plancus, and not least his former association with Antonius, may have been the reason for Augustus' neglect of him in his own account of how he acquired his name. The title Augustus was connected to augur and indeed to *auctoritas*, so it had religious and influential connotations.¹³⁶ It therefore had a good pedigree, did not denote an official appointment, and was suitably elevated but politically harmless. It is reported that Octavian toyed with the name Romulus, but rejected it because of the regal connotations.¹³⁷ Romulus had been that dreaded concept, king of Rome, and Caesar had come to grief on account of the suspicion that he intended to elevate himself to such a rank.

There were many other tangible honours, deeply significant for the Romans. Dio¹³⁸ provides a list, and comments in another passage that in this way the power of both people and Senate passed entirely into the hands of one man.¹³⁹ One of the highest honours was the award of the shield of virtue, *clipeus virtutis*, made of gold and displayed in the Senate House, bearing the words *valor, clementia, iustitia* and *pietas*. Though the shield was connected with martial prowess, the sentiments expressed on it were redolent of peace and goodwill. There were few honours of greater distinction than this, but more was to come. It was decreed that Augustus' house doors should be decked with laurel, and that he should be awarded the *corona civica* for saving the lives of citizens, a strange irony

when it is remembered how many citizens had been proscribed by the same person now being honoured. He took the award seriously, though, because he was now promoting himself as saviour of the people of Rome. The coinage was pressed into service in 27 with the legends *Caesar cos VII civibus servatis* and *ob cives servatos* indicating that Augustus had saved the lives of citizens.¹⁴⁰ It has been pointed out that the honours awarded to Augustus in 27 BC furnished constant themes for the coinage for the next 15 years.¹⁴¹

Rome and the Empire, 27–23 BC

What happened in 27 BC is not fully understood despite the availability of some documentation. No contemporaries of Augustus and his circle with a sense of history or of reality can have felt that the Republic had been restored, but as already mentioned it was a compromise between accepting the status quo on the one hand, and on the other causing upheavals all over again, and after two decades of war and mayhem, the pretence that the Republic was still alive and well was much easier to tolerate. Even more obscure is what Augustus himself felt and thought. Of the political developments we are allowed to glimpse a little; of the person, the private man, there is nothing. Did he go home to celebrate, feeling that he had ‘arrived’ as the modern idiom expresses it, or did he take it all unemotionally in his stride, knowing that there was still a long way to go? Livia may have been party to his thoughts, and no doubt Agrippa knew them, too. The rest of the family remain in the shadows. Augustus was not yet 40, and had been married to Livia for over 10 years, and yet there had been no children born of that marriage. His daughter Julia was growing up, but he seems to have regarded her merely as a political negotiating tool, or a surrogate heir provider. His sister’s son, the teenaged Marcellus, was the favourite, if not yet, then very soon; Tiberius and Drusus, the sons of Livia, were perhaps regarded as runners-up. His private family life remained private, by design and vigilant determination. For one thing he probably needed the refuge of privacy; when he needed to seclude himself to work or simply to be alone, he retired to a room at the top of the house, which he called ‘Syracuse’ or his workshop.¹⁴²

In general, the ordinary, mundane, not to mention sordid human details, were not the images he wished to offer up for public consumption. He was fortunate in not having to deal with a free press, because the Roman version of the media was strictly under his control. For some time now, via the poets and artists, he had been founding the legend. There have been several studies of all aspects of the image of Augustus; it would be needlessly repetitive to go over this ground again when it has already been dealt with by experts.¹⁴³ The image is important, but it is not the person; it is the persona, in the psychological sense of the word, the essence that the person wishes to project, which is only a part of the whole being. In literature Augustus was the hero, with all the right attributes; the audience for these messages would not be the wide popular market, but the educated and cultivated upper classes. Monuments and statues were available

for all to see, as a constant reminder of the man who had brought peace, but these visible messages would need to be augmented regularly, or their impact would fade. People very quickly become accustomed to their surroundings and cease to notice what has always been there; only tourists take real interest in statues, and even then they probably read the guide book, and then pass on to the next one within minutes. The way to impress the people was to give them civic amenities along with their food supply and personal protection, and to ensure first that the provenance of all these bounties is well known, and second that such benefits flow out in a regular stream without too many long intervals. Realists know that all the successes of a lifetime can be negated by one failure, if the effect on the majority is deep enough. Cromwell and Napoleon both said of the crowds who came out to cheer them that the very same crowds would turn out and cheer just as loudly if either of them were on the way to the scaffold.

Public works were in order, to convince the people that Augustus had their best interests at heart. Before he left Rome in the summer of 27, he began the repair of the Via Flaminia, from Rome to Ariminum (modern Rimini). He also repaired nearly all the bridges on this route, except two,¹⁴⁴ one of which was the Milvian bridge on the outskirts of Rome. Presumably it had been kept in good repair and did not need remedial attention. Augustus erected a statue of himself as a reminder of who was responsible for all this work. He encouraged other generals to spend their resources on similar public works. While Augustus was absent, the city would have been alive with building projects, left for the supervision of Agrippa, throughout 27 BC and the next few years. Dio groups the buildings together for ease of explanation,¹⁴⁵ so it is not certain that all those that are described within the context of a certain year do in fact belong to that year. Some of the buildings had already been completed, such as the white marble temple of Apollo next to Augustus' house on the Palatine, dedicated in 28 BC.¹⁴⁶ Possibly the family mausoleum was built at the same time.¹⁴⁷ It was well to be prepared for death, because Augustus was so often ill, and he would not be happy with anything less than a monumental tomb. It may have taken a long time to build; Dio¹⁴⁸ implies that when Marcellus was interred there in 23 BC the building was not yet finished.

On the whole, Augustus was probably well pleased with what had happened in 27 BC, and the honours that had been rendered to him, but in life there are always disappointments. In July of that year, Marcus Licinius Crassus, grandson of the Licinius Crassus who had died ignobly in Parthia, held his triumph for his exploits in Moesia in 29–28 BC. It should have been a cause for celebration, but instead left a sourness on the part of the *triumphator* and Augustus, because Crassus had failed to realise that the old Republican tradition of great generals returning from the wars and demanding recognition had been permanently monopolised. The Moesian campaign receives in-depth treatment from Dio,¹⁴⁹ so it is to be presumed that he had access to an account of them. While fighting in Moesia, Crassus killed with his own hand the enemy chieftain, and as a result of his victory he claimed the title of Imperator, and also the rare honour of *spolia*

opima, awarded to those few generals who had personally killed an enemy leader in battle. The *spolia opima* involved a prestigious ceremony in which the victorious general would dedicate the spoils of war, usually the dead enemy's armour and weapons, in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitol. Perhaps Crassus meant only to serve the state with honour, with Rome permanently at the forefront of his mind and himself a close second; but it was an ominous sign, which Augustus could not countenance. Though Crassus held his triumph, somewhat belatedly, he did not realise his wish to dedicate his spoils in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius. The reasons are obscure. The orthodox version of the story places Augustus in the centre stage, publicly challenging Crassus' claim and preventing him from attaining his ambition. Augustus unearthed a dubious argument concerning the status of the last known man to claim the honour, named Cossus, who had allegedly won his victory and killed an enemy, while commanding under his own auspices as consul, even though he was described in all the other sources as tribune. It was then determined from this example that *spolia opima* could be awarded only to those generals who had been in supreme command, acting like Cossus under their own auspices. Livy¹⁵⁰ recounted this story, but did not believe it. Augustus declared that Licinius Crassus did not qualify for the honour of *spolia opima* because he had not been acting independently, but was in fact operating under the orders of Octavian himself, as he then was. Later, he was at least consistent in that he refused to allow a triumph for Tiberius, because he too had been acting under orders and not under his own auspices.

Not only did Augustus squash Crassus' demand for the *spolia opima*, he also, according to Dio, purloined from Crassus the title *Imperator*, maintaining that the victory in Moesia was his own. Dio includes the conquest of Moesia as one of Octavian's victories, listed under that heading in the invented speech delivered in the Senate in January 27 BC. In this version of the problem, the matter then becomes rather wider than the prevention of bids for supremacy by upstart rivals; it concerns the question, not hitherto plainly answered, of who is really in charge. If Octavian's powers extended to provinces other than his own, then it seemed that the old Caesarian domination had returned under another guise. The classification of Crassus' campaign as one fought under Augustus indicates that history sided with the princeps.¹⁵¹ The Crassus 'crisis' has been interpreted as one of the main factors, if not the only one, that precipitated the settlement of 27 BC, when Octavian was forced into making the gesture of returning the provinces to the Senate and thereby 'restoring the Republic' almost as a by-product of saving his own skin. This view has been challenged after a re-examination of the evidence by J. W. Rich,¹⁵² who argues that Crassus did indeed adopt the title *Imperator*, despite Dio's assertion to the contrary. More important, the mechanisms by which Augustus could deny Crassus' claim are dubious, as the story related above plainly reveals. A more realistic interpretation is that Augustus and his chosen friends worked informally behind the scenes to persuade Crassus not to go through with his plans. Thus the ideology of the crisis

theory is no longer tenable, and Crassus' connection with the settlement of January 27 BC is negligible. On the other hand, the ideology of Octavian is not refuted; he held the monopoly on supremacy, and whether he put Crassus in his place by official or unofficial means, that much was made absolutely clear. It probably irked him somewhat that he was forced into the position, so early, of having to make this so glaringly obvious. If he had given way to Crassus, the floodgates would have been opened for the next victorious general, and the next and the next *ad infinitum*, until the competition for first place led to a repetition of the wars of the 40s BC. That was, on balance, a worse prospect than spoiling the carefully groomed image of Augustus as merely first among equals, allegedly with no coercive powers in excess of anyone else. The myth was exploded, but no-one seemed to protest. The memory of the Dictatorship and the Triumvirate, still painfully vivid, no doubt silenced any adverse reaction.

Augustus did not remain in Rome to witness Crassus' triumph. He went to Gaul, and then to Spain to carry on the war there, perhaps taking Marcellus and Tiberius with him. While he was absent, the affair of Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt, played itself out.¹⁵³ Considerable mystery attaches to this story, which is not fully explained. It is not even securely dated; Dio chronicles it under the year 26 BC; Syme¹⁵⁴ redated it to the end of 27 BC. It seems that Gallus had overstepped the mark, like Crassus, perhaps. He had campaigned in Egypt as far as the First Cataract of the Nile, and had not been shy of recording his exploits. He constructed buildings in Alexandria, and left his name on several monuments.¹⁵⁵ It is not certain what exactly he had done to incur disfavour. He may have demanded excessive honours like Crassus, but nothing is recorded under this specific heading. The only ascertainable fact is that he lost favour with Augustus, and when the Senate charged him with treason, he committed suicide. The question is, what treason had he committed? Dio¹⁵⁶ says that Gallus spread malicious gossip about Augustus, but unless he had declared himself by some action or had tried to subvert other men to join him in a plot, it seems unnecessarily violent to condemn him for gossip. It is counter-productive to stamp out freedom of speech when the current programme is to propagate an atmosphere of confidence and trust. The facts will always be obscure. Did Gallus fall from favour first, and then succumb to the jackals in the Senate who seized their chance to prosecute an abandoned *eques* hated by the higher ranking members? Syme considered the possibility that Gallus had to be sacrificed to conciliate the Senate.¹⁵⁷ Or did Gallus commit some crime against Augustus, who then set in motion or sanctioned the prosecution at the hands of the Senate? Suetonius¹⁵⁸ relays only the charge of ingratitude against Gallus, an indication perhaps that he did not know the details of the case any more than modern scholars do. If that was Gallus' only crime then the judgement was very harsh. Gratitude cannot be compelled, and ingratitude does not constitute a crime, and the realist in Augustus will have known that.

When it was all over, Augustus officially thanked the Senate, and in private he grieved over the incident. He did not reverse his decision as to appointing

equestrians to the post of Prefect of Egypt. He installed another equestrian, named Aelius Gallus, not to be confused with the unfortunate Cornelius. This Gallus was given instructions to campaign against Arabia and Ethiopia, to bring them to terms and establish boundaries. The purpose of the Arabian campaign has been re-analysed in connection with the political and diplomatic wrangling with Parthia. It is suggested that Gallus' operations were co-ordinated with those of the usurper Tiridates, who crossed the Euphrates with Augustus' blessing if not actual backing, at the same time as Gallus marched into Arabia. Thus Parthia would be threatened from two sides at once. Ultimately the Arabian campaign was a failure, and Tiridates managed to establish himself for only a very short time before being ejected.¹⁵⁹

There is little evidence for Augustus' movements in 26, except that he was in Spain, campaigning against the Cantabri, and directing affairs at Rome by remote control from abroad.¹⁶⁰ In his own brief account of the Spanish expedition,¹⁶¹ Augustus carefully omitted specific dates and also neglected to mention Agrippa's name in his list of achievements in Spain. It was rumoured that Augustus was going to make an expedition to Britain,¹⁶² perhaps in emulation of his father Julius Caesar, but this may be only wishful thinking on the part of the Roman populace, who desired that he should take Roman arms to the ends of the earth. It was tacitly understood that one day Britain would be conquered, and Augustan literature makes occasional reference to the island under this heading, but despite receiving embassies from defeated British chieftains seeking for help in regaining their kingdoms, Augustus did not take the bait. He had enough to concern him in maintaining the provinces he already had, and as Strabo¹⁶³ points out, somewhat dismissively, there was no reason to invade Britain and go to all the trouble of annexing and administering it, because the Romans were already trading with the British chiefs and collecting lucrative taxes, which the British readily paid without demur. Besides, there was no direct threat to Rome, because some of the British chiefs had made alliances with the Romans. Britain had to wait until the reign of Claudius before it enjoyed the benefits and problems of the *Pax Romana*.

Apart from a brief description of the Spanish campaigns, Dio concentrates on Rome, where in September 27 BC Messalla Corvinus held his triumph. A new honour was bestowed on Messalla in 26 when he was made prefect of the city, but his appointment lasted only six days, and then he gave it up, perhaps in response to hostility from the Senate.¹⁶⁴ Once again, mystery surrounds the matter. It may have been an experiment which was made too soon for Roman taste. Augustus presumably attached some importance to this post because he reintroduced it after a suitable interval. Syme calls Augustus' dealings with Messalla an artful device, and suggests that Messalla smelled a rat, and resigned before he could be compromised.¹⁶⁵ Sometime later, the city prefect became a regular appointment, with responsibility for policing Rome, with command over the urban cohorts to give the appointee the practical means to keep order in the city, but that was in the future. In the past, the city prefect had been installed

only when both consuls were absent, and in 26 BC when Messalla was appointed, Statilius Taurus, consular colleague of Augustus, was still in Rome. It is not likely that the protest originated from Taurus in a fit of jealousy, so the absence of other dissidents isolates the Senate as the objecting body, if there were objections at all. There may have been some practical purpose behind the appointment that is now lost to sight, since it would be unlike Augustus to award the post as an empty honour; there were many baubles which he could have offered Messalla instead of an office which was a glaring anomaly, and which might compromise him. It does not seem to have been considered that Messalla might have been given a specific task to perform, possibly related to some kind of police work, which he performed in six days, rather like a mini-version of Pompeius Magnus' rapid sweep of the Mediterranean when he cleared the sea of pirates.

Agrippa's position in 26 BC has not been clarified. He had received some important marks of distinction, such as the blue pennant (*vexillum*) awarded him after Actium,¹⁶⁶ which complemented the honours that he won after Naulochus. Suetonius¹⁶⁷ confuses the two awards. Agrippa's high standing could not be in doubt, but he was not consul and had no other magistracy. He did not accompany Augustus to Spain. His building programme will have occupied much of his time and energy, but seemingly he had no province and probably could not hold proconsular rank after his consulship. The term *provincia* did not originally denote a territorial area; it meant strictly a task, as in 'Not my province' meaning 'That job is nothing to do with me.' As Rome expanded and took in more territory, the tasks given to the retiring magistrates also had to expand to enable government of these new areas to be carried out, so the same word was applied to the government of a province as had been attached to the performance of special duties in Rome. It is not recorded that Agrippa's special *provincia* concerned building work, so the conclusion is forced on scholars that he was merely a *privatus* at this time. Unwilling to accept this, some authors have postulated that he must have been given some special command or rank in 27 BC; Lacey's theory¹⁶⁸ is that he was made prefect of the fleet with responsibility for the Mediterranean coastal areas (*praefectus classis et orae maritimae*), the precedents for which were Pompeius Magnus' command against the pirates, and Sextus Pompeius' brief overlordship of the seas during the civil wars. For this there is not the least shred of evidence, but it is entirely possible that Agrippa was given some official post which has escaped the notice of the ancient authors.

Meanwhile the conquest of Spain was dragging on. Augustus fell ill at Tarraco and had to conduct the war through subordinates. He regarded the conquest as complete, but in fact it took a few more years and the application of Agrippa's talents to achieve it. Spain is a difficult country, the graveyard of many a Roman general's reputation, and described, many centuries later, as a country where large armies starve and small ones are defeated. It has been said that Augustus' illness may have lasted all through the latter part of 26 and all of 25, and this may have been what prompted him to arrange the marriage of his nephew Marcellus and his daughter Julia, in a bid to produce heirs,¹⁶⁹ although it is

likely that this project had been in his mind all along. It is biologically impossible to hurry the production of heirs and advance their growth, and even if a baby had been born, it is hardly likely that any notice would have been taken of an infant if Augustus had died in 26 BC. It is more probable that this marriage was always a project that he had in mind and he was merely waiting for Julia to arrive at the right age.

When Augustus returned home at the end of 25, he held no triumph but announced that he would give 400 sesterces each to 250,000 citizens,¹⁷⁰ significantly the same figure that he had paid out in 29, when he did hold triumphs.¹⁷¹ Thus the people were not deprived of their rewards, even when the pomp and circumstance were absent. On 1 January 24 BC, the Senate confirmed by oath all Augustus' acts since 29, and Dio¹⁷² affirms that he was now dispensed from all the laws, which cannot be taken as literal truth.¹⁷³ He was exempt from some of the laws, but not from the whole. At this stage the Senate and people would not have been ready to condone such an arbitrary position.

In 25 and the beginning of 24, it could be said that Augustus was preparing even then for the so-called settlement of 23 BC.¹⁷⁴ In 24, Marcellus and Julia were married, with the faithful Agrippa presiding over the ceremony because Augustus was ill. Whether or not the obvious dynastic tendencies were feared just yet is not known, but it was plain that both Marcellus and Tiberius were favoured members of the family who were destined for higher things. Marcellus was to be aedile in 23 BC,¹⁷⁵ as though he had already served as quaestor and was therefore eligible for the other magistracies. Unlike Marcellus, Tiberius was to become quaestor in 23, being permitted to stand for office five years before the legal term.¹⁷⁶ It was prudent to advance these young men in echelon, rather than simultaneously, in case offence was caused at such overwhelming determination to favour the family and not the promising young aristocrats of other households.

If it was taken for granted that Marcellus was the appointed heir, Augustus surprised everyone when he succumbed to an even more serious illness, possibly an abscess of the liver¹⁷⁷ early in 23 BC. It was thought that this time he would die, and he gave his signet ring not to Marcellus, but to Agrippa, together with an up-to-date account of the administration of the provinces and the finances to his consular colleague Piso.¹⁷⁸ If he had died at this point, there may well have been another civil war¹⁷⁹ and Augustus knew that only Agrippa could continue from where he left off. Only Agrippa would have the stamina and determination to do so, with the backing of the armies, if such extreme measures were necessary. Indeed Agrippa was the one man who could keep the armies united under his command and so prevent their subversion by anyone else with ambitions. Marcellus was too inexperienced, and Augustus knew it. Dio¹⁸⁰ says of Marcellus that Augustus was not yet confident of the young man's ability and judgement, though after his recovery Augustus may well have intended to promote Marcellus until he felt that he was ready to be entrusted with government.¹⁸¹ Syme suggested¹⁸² that Agrippa was in league with Livia to prevent the promotion of

Marcellus, so that her son Tiberius stood a better chance of advancement. Later, when Augustus had recovered, the story goes that he came under some criticism about his successor, and so in order to allay suspicions and show that he had designated neither Marcellus nor anyone else as his successor, Augustus offered to read out his will in the Senate,¹⁸³ but no-one would allow him to do so. It was not purely family matters that were at issue here. He had not as yet named a successor to his powers and political standing, like a monarch, but as a consequence of his status Augustus had progressed beyond ordinary families, and whatever arrangements he made for someone to succeed him, these arrangements would have great bearing on the future of the Roman world. Despite the speculation, both ancient and modern, that Marcellus was to be the heir, it seems that Augustus did not adopt him, and refers to him in the *Res Gestae* as *gener*, son-in-law, and not *filius*, his son. In 23 BC, for the time being, the subject of the succession was closed.

Relinquishing the consulship, 23 BC

In July 23 BC, having recovered from his illness thanks to the ministrations of his Greek physician Antonius Musa, Augustus gave up the consulship. One school of thought maintains that he did so in response to a crisis, exacerbated by his illness in 23. The so-called crisis is related to the trial of Marcus Primus, and the subsequent condemnation of the alleged conspirators Fannius Caepio and Varro Murena.¹⁸⁴ The latter was probably Lucius Licinius Varro Murena,¹⁸⁵ and not, as previously thought, Aulus Terentius Varro Murena, who is listed in the Capitoline *Fasti* as consul in 23, but it is suggested that he had perhaps died before he had even taken up his office. The absence of hard facts allow for a multiplication of opinions as to the nature and even the date of the so-called conspiracy.

It all began with the trial of Marcus Primus, who had been governor of Macedonia, and had made war on Thrace without authority. He was charged and brought to trial, possibly at the end of 24, or early in 23. He declared that he had acted on the orders of Augustus, and then the orders of Marcellus. Macedonia was a senatorial province, so if Augustus had issued orders without explaining himself to the Senate, his pose as first among equals was demonstrably false. He came to court and declared on oath that he had issued no such orders. Varro Murena, defending Primus, made it clear that he did not believe this. Nonetheless, Primus was condemned. There are so many possible permutations that it would be tedious to enumerate them all, but among the possibilities, there was either a scheme to discredit Augustus by employing Primus as an innocent dupe, or Augustus himself had miscalculated by being underhand in issuing orders, had been found out, and then lied to cover his tracks. This hardly seems credible; if he had wanted to direct affairs in a senatorial province, there were more acceptable and equally persuasive means of doing so that would surely have met with success. He could have prepared the ground by emphasising the

dangers from Thrace and had the senators eating out of his hand, ready to give the command to him or to anyone else whom he indicated to them.

It has been assumed that after his failure to clear the name of Marcus Primus in court, Varro Murena began to fester and plot revenge, joining forces with Fannius Caepio, who for reasons unknown was already scheming against Augustus. The conspiracy was discovered and the guilty parties executed. That is the publicised version of events. The reasons and the details are lost, if indeed they were ever known to more than a few people. Dio¹⁸⁶ recounts the Caepio–Murena conspiracy under the year 22 BC. Some modern authors prefer to date both the trial of Marcus Primus and the discovery of the conspiracy to 23, so that the affair precedes and precipitates the so-called second settlement, made in that year.¹⁸⁷ The evidence, such as it is, about the Primus trial and the conspiracy has been re-examined and it seems that the chronology can be reversed. Rich prefers to date the conspiracy to 22 BC, just as Dio says, and therefore removes it as one of the causes of Augustus' resignation of the consulship.¹⁸⁸ The settlement was probably already completed when the problems arose with Murena and Caepio, and it could even be said that the conspiracy was a result, not a cause, of Augustus' rearrangements of 23 BC.¹⁸⁹ The truth will probably always be unattainable. The opposition theorists interpret many of Augustus' rearrangements as grudging reactions to pressure, rather than proactive measures, properly planned.

One of the emerging problems that gave rise to discontent if not fully fledged conspiracy was Augustus' monopolisation of the consulship. It may be true that Augustus was determined to be consul forever, or at least for as long as he could get away with it, but it was less and less of an excusable necessity now that there was no serious external threat and no internal discord likely to lead to war. Since there were only two consuls every year, his monopolisation of the office excluded others from ever attaining it, and without this experience of government and the holding of the elevated rank, the senators were no doubt beginning to feel deprived of the chances of advancement. The small use that Augustus made of the men of consular rank in his own entourage and in his provinces also frustrated the prospective candidates. No-one likes to think that promotion is blocked, even if the person being blocked has no ambition of rising any higher. Recognising this, Augustus may have made an attempt to retain his powers as consul, whilst still opening up avenues for senators to further their careers. According to Suetonius¹⁹⁰ he proposed that there should always be two colleagues when he was consul himself. Suetonius gives no date for this proposal, which is often associated with the events of 19 BC, but the context of 23 is the more likely.¹⁹¹ The proposal to the Senate may represent an attempt at compromise, so that Augustus could always rely upon being a sort of senior consul with the legal power that this would give him. An alternative, when this suggestion was rejected, would be to give up the consulship, but only in return for other powers. When he recovered from his illness, Augustus went to the Alban Mount where he formally resigned the consulship on 1 July,¹⁹² thus freeing the supreme office

for other candidates. Nothing suggests that he was reacting to any sort of crisis.¹⁹³ After 23 BC he did not take up the consulship again until his adopted sons Gaius and Lucius were to be introduced to public life, and he became their consular colleague. Once he had finally taken the decision to relinquish his monopoly of the consulship, he did so with resolution, and even when the people agitated to make him consul in 19 BC, he did not beseech the Senate for favours to allow him to satisfy the popular demands.

Since no-one can know what was in Augustus' mind, theories as to why he relinquished the consulship can never be more than unproven opinions. It is certain that he would not have done so without first ensuring that there was an alternative source of power ready for him to assume. He lost powers and privileges if not rank when he resigned from the consulship. As a partial exchange for his consulship he now received, for a limited term, *imperium proconsulare*. There is great controversy over the extent of these proconsular powers. The persistent debate about *imperium proconsulare maius* enters the scene once again. If Augustus was awarded this enhanced power, as Dio¹⁹⁴ says, then his authority would have exceeded that of all other provincial governors, thus modifying the basis of his legal authority,¹⁹⁵ but this conflicts with Augustus' own assertion that he never held any powers greater than those of his colleagues.

For various reasons, some modern researchers believe that there was never any question of *imperium maius* either for Augustus or for Agrippa.¹⁹⁶ If this is the case, Augustus received *imperium proconsulare aequum* or proconsular powers equal to all the provincial governors, and therefore had to rely upon prestige, influence and the undefinable persuasive power of his *auctoritas* if he wished to interfere in the government of provinces not directly under his control. *Imperium aequum* was much more compatible with republican precedent and held no distasteful connotations of domination. Augustus strove to avoid such blatant declarations, even though it was perfectly obvious that in reality he did dominate the state. In three respects he departed from his republican predecessors, who were usually granted such extraordinary powers solely to enable them to carry out a specific task, or a strictly defined series of tasks; they did not normally receive a command that extended to all the provinces at once, and they were obliged to lay down their powers when they crossed the *pomerium* on their return to Rome.¹⁹⁷ None of these restrictions applied to Augustus, except that his proconsular powers were set within a temporal limit. They had to be renewed at intervals, but not on an annual basis. Otherwise he was elevated to special status, since he was not limited to the performance of any special task as Pompeius had been when charged with clearing the Mediterranean of the pirates. He could exercise authority in all the provinces at all times within his temporal limit of five, or on occasion, ten years. There was a special legal enactment to grant him the exceptional privilege of exemption from having to lay down his powers when he crossed the *pomerium* on his return to Rome.¹⁹⁸ Augustus did not mention this grant in the *Res Gestae* where he refers to himself as *consulari cum imperio*.¹⁹⁹ Without this special enactment, he would have been obliged to enter Rome as a mere *privatus*, although as

Bleicken²⁰⁰ points out no-one could seriously think in terms of Emperor Caesar Augustus as a *privatus*. Augustus could of course rely upon the intimidating weight of prestige and influence to protect him for a while, but he had seen in the past how easily prestige could be eroded, descending very rapidly into powerlessness. Prestige was good. Laws were better.

Proconsular *imperium* was only one prop for his authority. He needed another, which he found in tribunician powers (*tribunicia potestas*). This too was confirmed by a law.²⁰¹ Dio links this to the Latin Festival,²⁰² which would date it to June or early July 23 BC.²⁰³ If this is correct, the assumption of the *tribunicia potestas* and the relinquishing of the consulship were timed very finely. Dio says that the Senate voted that Augustus should be tribune for life,²⁰⁴ which is unlikely as a vote and definitely not what happened, for as Dio himself points out in his next paragraph²⁰⁵ neither Augustus nor any other emperor ever took the actual title of tribune. Instead they held the powers of a tribune without holding the office. The separation of the powers from the actual office was new and revolutionary; the recent bestowal of censorial powers on Augustus and Agrippa while they were consuls is not a valid precedent, because they exercised this power via the consulship, and not independently.²⁰⁶

The problems associated with the *tribunicia potestas* have already been discussed in more detail above, but it is worth repeating that it remains uncertain as to whether he had already been granted full tribunician powers prior to 23 BC, either all at once, or by accepting them in gradual stages from 36 onwards. On balance, it is likely that he held only tribunician sacrosanctity until 23, and at that date he assumed all the powers of the tribunes when he relinquished the consulship. Augustus and his successors had no need to be reappointed every year, but perhaps Augustus' aversion to accepting anything in perpetuity prompted him to subscribe to the appearance of annual renewal. He counted his tribunician years, often abbreviated to *trib. pot.* on inscriptions and coins, from 23 BC. It was an innocuous and popular method of numbering his 'regal' years, and the system is of inestimable value to archaeologists and historians.²⁰⁷

The final elements of the tribunician power gave Augustus the right to act on behalf of the plebs and the right to convene the Senate (*ius cum plebi agendi* and *ius cum senatu agendi*).²⁰⁸ He made use of the tribunician powers to introduce legislation.²⁰⁹ He was not subject to the veto of other tribunes, but could veto any proposals in the Senate. The mere fact that he could do so seems to have obviated the need for him to exercise his authority, and it has been suggested that one of the principal reasons for assuming the tribunician powers was to keep the nobles in check with the threat that if necessary, he could revert to popular politics and achieve what he wanted without reference to them. In turn, it was his guarantee to the people that the nobles could not oppress them, which was a nice balance of control.²¹⁰ He did not make use of the powers of veto, and later emperors did so only on a limited basis. Whilst *tribunicia potestas* was not a major instrument of government on its own and could not be used to run the state²¹¹ when combined with *imperium proconsulare* (*maius* or not), tribunician power formed the complete basis for government.²¹²

The *tribunicia potestas* became the foremost imperial title, the *summi fastigii vocabulum*, the title of supreme eminence, as Tacitus²¹³ describes it. The successor to the throne was often marked out by bestowal of tribunician powers; those who shared it with Augustus were Agrippa and Tiberius,²¹⁴ but they were granted the powers for a limited term only, in keeping with the policy of continual renewal rather than permanence. Augustus had arrived at the most successful basis of imperial rule, and had managed to do so without inventing anything too disturbing or too outlandish. His powers were rooted in Roman custom, but tailored to fit the circumstances. The institutions established in 23 BC endured for many years, throughout the reigns of several emperors. Imperial use of the tribunician powers represented the complete integration of the tribunate into the organisation of the state.²¹⁵ Had there been a flaw, or the slightest loophole, it is to be supposed that someone would have noticed, and succeeding emperors would have made the necessary amendments.

Agrippa and Augustus in the east, 23–19 BC

At some time during the year 23 BC, perhaps before Augustus resigned as consul, Agrippa went to the east. It was said even by contemporaries that he removed himself in a fit of pique because of the favours shown to Marcellus,²¹⁶ or alternatively he did the tactful thing, removed himself, and allowed Augustus to groom his chosen successor in peace and quiet. If these far-fetched theories were even remotely based on truth, then it is difficult to explain why Agrippa did not return to Rome when Marcellus died unexpectedly, probably at the end of 23. Marcellus' death is probably not as suspicious as Robert Graves has depicted it in *I, Claudius*, even though Dio²¹⁷ casts suspicion on Livia. Despite the fact that there was plague in Rome, and many people succumbed to it, Livia was suspected of doing away with Marcellus in order to clear the way for her son Tiberius, who had not been so favoured with promotions. Augustus' hopes for the future were dashed, but he still could count on his daughter Julia, now a widow, and soon to be married to Agrippa when he returned to Rome in 21 BC. Thus the *novus homo* Agrippa was elevated to high position in the household of the princeps, which contradicts in large part those sources who state that Agrippa was banished, and in disgrace, in the latter half of 23. Dio²¹⁸ says that after the death of Marcellus, Maecenas commented that Agrippa had been raised so high that there were only two alternatives left in dealing with him: either he married Julia or he would have to be eliminated. It requires only a little imagination to hear the languid drawling tone, and to picture Maecenas, half joking, half serious, perhaps disinterestedly filing his nails, or more likely having his nails filed for him.

Maecenas and Agrippa supposedly disliked each other, but Maecenas was right, in that Agrippa had been raised very high, and disgrace, banishment, or piqued self-imposed exile in 23 are all totally at odds with Agrippa's position in the east.²¹⁹ Writing at a much later time, Josephus²²⁰ says that Agrippa was

Caesar's deputy in the lands beyond the Ionian Sea, in other words he was responsible for a vast territory including most of the eastern half of the Empire, acting as the deputy of Caesar. Dio²²¹ describes the command in more limited terms, confining it to Syria, but Agrippa based himself elsewhere and seems to have had freedom to travel where he liked and do as he liked, so he was certainly not under a cloud. Syme²²² points out that by basing himself on Lesbos, and governing Syria via deputies, Agrippa could also watch over the Balkans. Agrippa's command of such a wide area was perhaps an experiment to share the burden of imperial administration. Augustus was convalescing during the second half of 23 BC, and he was older now, turning 40 at the end of the year. Whilst this hardly made him a geriatric, his perception of the Empire had probably undergone some adjustment since the days of Actium and Alexandria. The hard work involved in administering it, while at the same time being ever vigilant about his standing in Rome, could not fail to take its toll. One possibility worthy of consideration is that Agrippa went to the east to prepare the ground for Augustus' own mission to the Parthians. It has been suggested that relations between Rome and Parthia had degenerated in 24 BC because of Augustus' involvement in the attempted usurpation of the Parthian throne by Tiridates, which had failed. The situation would have been sensitive and tense, so Agrippa's brief would have been to monitor developments, keep Augustus informed and to react quickly wherever and whenever it became necessary.²²³

But there was probably more to it than that. The east had been Antonius' preserve, and he had not managed the area as badly as propaganda would have it. As far as the people of the eastern towns and cities were concerned, Octavian was the victor and they were the defeated subjects. If they could have escaped from this position they probably would have done so with alacrity; it was a volatile and unstable region, ripe for some enterprising Roman general or an ambitious eastern potentate to stage a coup, with access to troops and rich resources. The east as a whole required careful handling, constant alertness, and a reliable intelligence service. Agrippa was the only man whom Augustus could trust, and the only man with sufficient knowledge, courage and authority to look after Roman interests in the east, and prevent anyone else from damaging them. As usual, there is controversy over Agrippa's powers, once more involving the perennial *maius/aequum* debate. There are several possible solutions, but as yet none of these can be confirmed. If Agrippa held *imperium proconsulare aequum*, while Augustus himself held *imperium proconsulare maius* to compensate him for the resignation of the consulship, then Agrippa was one step behind Augustus in rank. If both of them held the same powers, whether *imperium proconsulare aequum*, or *maius*, then Augustus and Agrippa were equal partners in all respects. A fragmentary papyrus document preserves part of the *Laudatio Agrippae*,²²⁴ Augustus' funeral oration for Agrippa delivered in 12 BC. Augustus says of Agrippa 'it was enacted by law that no-one should have powers superior to yours, no matter to which Roman territories you were sent'. The problems as always are several. First, there is no evidence of the date when this legal enactment was made;

second, there is no inkling of the duration of the powers that were granted by it to Agrippa; third, the phraseology is ambiguous, and can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it may mean that at some time and for some unknown duration, Agrippa had greater powers than all other provincial governors, or on the other hand it could be the case that his powers were equal to those of other governors, which still satisfies the spirit of what Augustus said, that no-one held powers that were greater than those of Agrippa wherever he went.

Different theories have been put forward in answer to the problems. Reinhold²²⁵ envisaged a gradual accretion of powers for Agrippa, rising from *imperium* over the imperial provinces, to *imperium maius* over the senatorial provinces east of the Ionian Sea, then to those in the west. Lacey²²⁶ suggested that since Agrippa had been made prefect of the fleet with authority over the entire Mediterranean coastline in 26 BC, it was under this command that he went to the east in 23 BC, then his position was redefined in 18 BC and he was granted greater powers. Rich makes a tidier and simpler suggestion²²⁷ that when Augustus was granted *imperium maius* in 23 BC, Agrippa was shortly afterwards given the same powers, which were renewed in 18 and again in 13 BC. The simplest proposal of all is that of Ameling,²²⁸ who denies the existence of *imperium maius* and therefore suggests that Agrippa was granted *imperium aequum* in 23 and retained it until his death in 12 BC.

It has to be admitted that no-one knows why Agrippa went to the east, or what he did whilst there; it is known that he returned in 21 BC, and was sent to Rome to restore order. He divorced his wife Marcella, Augustus' niece, and moved one degree up the social scale by marrying Julia, Augustus' daughter by his wife Scribonia. With no official post, Agrippa remained in Rome until 20 BC, when he went first to Gaul and then to Spain where in 19 he brought the province finally under Roman control.

As Augustus was setting out for the east in 22 BC, food shortages threatened to bring famine to Rome, and the usual response of the people in these circumstances was to riot.²²⁹ Augustus returned when it became clear that this was not simply a short-term disturbance. He was offered and refused the Dictatorship,²³⁰ which he probably regarded as a death sentence. The offer was reduced to an annual consulship, which could be constantly renewed in a similar fashion to his tribunician powers, but to accept that would negate all that he had achieved by giving up the consulship only months before. His refusal was quite spectacular, involving tearing of clothes, a descent to his knees, to beg the people not to force an offensive office upon him.²³¹ Such histrionics to express a point of view were probably necessary in an age before TV close-ups had been invented. He accepted instead the *cura annonae*, literally 'the care of the food supply'. He restored order and the regular supply of food apparently effortlessly, and quickly, in fact so quickly that he has been accused of having caused the shortage in the first place,²³² in order to make himself indispensable. The problem was presumably with the transport and distribution of food, not with the growing and harvesting of it. Once the crisis was over, a new senatorial committee was set up to oversee

the distribution of the corn dole. Finally, Augustus travelled to the east and installed himself on the island of Samos, where he spent the winter of 22–21 BC. He spent some time adjusting the boundaries and the actual rulers of the smaller eastern states, and settled internal disputes, but the real target was Armenia, and negotiations with Parthia for the return of the lost standards captured in battle from Crassus in 53, Decidius Saxa in 40 and Antonius in 36 BC.

There were other issues at stake as well as this emotive one of the standards. Public opinion would have been satisfied to see Augustus mount an expedition to regain the standards in an all-out war of revenge, but he was not inclined to succumb to pressure. He wanted to avoid war with a power that was Rome's equal, and one which moreover would be fighting on its own ground, with an established and irritating track record of winning; underhanded scheming and then shrewd and subtle diplomacy took the place of boorish battling. It has already been suggested above that Augustus may have hoped to avoid war but still achieve control over Parthia by installing Tiridates, or rather by allowing Tiridates to install himself with support in the shape of an expedition into Arabia conducted by Aelius Gallus from Egypt. When everything went wrong, Tiridates fled with the kidnapped son of King Phraates, and brought him to Augustus, who returned the young man to Phraates, and sent Tiridates to live in Rome. That experiment had failed, but another opportunity soon presented itself of coming to terms with Parthia. In 20 BC, while Augustus was still in the east, the Armenians erupted against their king Artaxias, and sent embassies to ask for the return of the king's brother Tigranes, who had been living as an honoured refugee in Rome for 10 years. Marcellus was dead, so Augustus called upon his stepson Tiberius, who was now aged 21, and eligible for command. He was instructed to gather an army, probably from Macedonia and Illyricum, and then to march to Armenia with the intention of replacing Artaxias with his brother Tigranes. As Tiberius approached, Augustus went to Syria, and the combined weight of Roman troops and the prestige of the princeps soon calmed everything down, like oil on troubled waters. Tiberius encountered no opposition and installed Tigranes as king of Armenia, literally, since he put the crown on his head with his own hands. Phraates probably reasoned that this show of force had real substance behind it, and handed over the Roman standards. It is possible that there may have been some agreement as to mutual boundaries and recognition of the Roman influence in Armenia, which Augustus says he could have made into a province, but he resisted, emulating instead the custom of Roman ancestors, and limiting himself to installing Tigranes as king. The arrangements made now endured as long as all these three main personalities survived. In 10 BC, Phraates sent his sons to be educated at Rome, but only eight years later he expired, perhaps the victim of an assassin. Augustus was forced to intervene, and sent his grandson Gaius on a military expedition.

In 20 BC, this development was still far off, and the success of Tiberius' expedition and Augustus' diplomatic victory were exploited as if they had been successful wars.²³³ Velleius Paterculus depicted the Armenian expedition as heroic,²³⁴ but

Dio thought that Tiberius reacted pompously and gave himself airs.²³⁵ Dio's sceptical comments about Augustus' achievements are not in keeping with the adulatory phrases of the contemporary poets.²³⁶ Artists too were drawn into the scheme. The Prima Porta statue, for instance, has as its centrepiece on the breastplate the Parthian king returning the standards to the victorious Augustus (Figures 5.8 and 5.9). The standards themselves were taken back to Rome, and placed in the temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger),²³⁷ the temple vowed in 42 and finally dedicated in 2 BC; the laying up of the standards was celebrated by Ovid.²³⁸ Slogans on the coinage spoke of Armenia captured (*Armenia capta*),²³⁹ and standards returned (*signis receptis*).²⁴⁰ Pictorially, the coins are unequivocal about Roman supremacy, since the coins show the subdued Parthian and Armenian just as Horace describes them 'on humbled knees'. Augustus was voted a triumph, which he did not accept, and was granted a triumphal arch in the Forum.



Figure 5.8 The statue of Augustus celebrating the return of the military standards lost by Marcus Licinius Crassus in his war against Parthia in 53 BC. The scene is commemorated on Augustus' breastplate, where the standards are being handed over. It was a tremendous diplomatic coup, achieved without going to war.

Source: Photo by author.



Figure 5.9 Detail from a replica of the Prima Porta statue erected in front of the Forum of Augustus. The figures on the cuirass represent the handing over of one of the captured Roman standards.

Source: Photo by author.

Augustus was no doubt satisfied and pleased with his achievements. His own military prowess was negligible, and without Agrippa he would probably never have reached the heights that he presently occupied. The Parthian negotiations had involved the gathering of troops to settle the Armenian question and to make it absolutely clear that Rome controlled the interests of this important state on the borders of Roman and Parthian territory. Augustus had made the necessary show of force without making war, which as a moral victory could be portrayed as superior to and more intelligent and less wasteful than fighting. The procedure was calculated and seemingly painless, a very smooth operation indeed; but the reality may have been much more tense, causing Augustus both metaphorical and physical headaches. He had committed himself, when he opened negotiations with Parthia, to achieving some worthwhile result, but if Phraates had determined not to co-operate, what would he have done next? As time went by, he would have looked more and more foolish, and the choice then would have been between a dignified withdrawal and loss of face, or open warfare, which he knew would be difficult if not disastrous. In the literature and as portrayed in the art and sculpture, it all seemed preordained, but the situation was probably one of extreme tension and uncertainty, not at all a suitable scenario for someone who allegedly suffered from liver problems.²⁴¹

During Augustus' absence, affairs in Rome had been far from smooth. The people reacted badly when Augustus resigned the consulship, especially since he underlined his decision by his refusal to accept the annual but perpetual version offered to him in place of the Dictatorship in 22. According to Dio²⁴² the people assumed that their misfortunes resulted from the fact that Augustus was no longer consul.²⁴³ The faith of the people in his ability to govern the state

excluded other ordinary mortals, and for 21 BC, they absolutely refused to elect more than one consul, hoping that Augustus could be persuaded to fill the vacant place.²⁴⁴ He was wintering on Samos, and sent his refusal by letter. It would have the appearance of vacillation if he gave in after two years and accepted the consulship, and it would probably throw him into an unfavourable comparison with Pompeius Magnus, whose tactic had frequently been to sit tight until the Senate and people begged him to do what he had always wanted from the beginning. Agrippa was sent back to Rome²⁴⁵ as Augustus arrived in the east, but he could not prevent a repeat of 22–21, when in 20 BC the people again refused to elect a second consul for the following year.²⁴⁶ In the year 19 BC, therefore, Sentius Saturninus became sole consul. Agrippa had gone to Spain, and Augustus was still in the east, so the Senate and the lone consul were left to deal with the exorbitant demands of the praetor Egnatius Rufus to be allowed to stand for the consulship; whether for the next year in the normal way, or for the vacant place for 19 is not certain.

Rufus' past successes with the populace seem to have gone to his head. He had performed excellently as aedile, gathering together at his own expense a fire brigade formed from gangs of slaves.²⁴⁷ This was an institution which Rome lacked, and with his new brigades Rufus successfully put out several fires in the city. There was a precedent in that Marcus Licinius Crassus had also formed a private fire brigade, but he used it to put out fires only if he could buy the property, so the only person who gained anything was Crassus. Egnatius Rufus was slightly more altruistic, but of course he was using his fire brigade as a vehicle for his own promotion, and the fact that some of the urban plebs had been rescued and their houses saved was merely a fortunate by-product. That did not matter to the practical lower-class Romans, who refunded him for his expenses in maintaining his gang of slaves. At the end of his term of office, Rufus boasted that he handed over the city intact to his successor, indicating that others had not enjoyed quite such an unsullied record, which is only to be expected in a closely inhabited area with a large quantity of wooden or wood-framed buildings and no fire service. The ordinary inhabitants of Rome, always grateful for innovations which assisted them, had enthusiastically elected Rufus to the praetorship. When Rufus was elected praetor immediately after his aedileship, violating the law concerning the intervals that ought to be observed between magistracies, the Senate had turned a blind eye, but the senators could not allow his candidacy for the consulship so soon after he had been praetor.²⁴⁸

If Rufus had been content with his achievements so far, and had had the grace or good sense to wait until he was eligible for higher office, he may have survived to enjoy an esteemed career. As it was, with the people behind him, the princeps absent and his most able lieutenant in Spain, Rufus began to cause trouble. The lone consul Sentius Saturninus refused his candidacy for the consular elections on perfectly reasonable grounds. The next stages are obscure, but resulted in the passing of the *senatus consultum ultimum* to bring about the instant suppression of a popular riot before it began, and then the condemnation of

Rufus for an alleged conspiracy, followed naturally by his execution. Velleius Paterculus²⁴⁹ accuses Rufus of conspiracy, which may or may not be true. Dio describes an incident dated to the year 18, which may refer to Rufus but he does not name him.²⁵⁰ The senators had acted responsibly and showed themselves capable and willing to defend the Senate and Rome against popular pressure, though whether the first priority of the senators concerned their own interests or those of Augustus is not established.

The long stay in the east was not a sinecure for Augustus. Administrative work did not cease, though there is evidence for only a little of it. Dio's account²⁵¹ contains details of the territories which he reorganised, together with the curious statement that Augustus wrote to the Senate to express his opinion that it would be wise not to extend Roman territory beyond what Rome already possessed in the east, and that he thought it best to leave the allied states to their own government. This may be an anachronism, for Dio was certain that Augustus consistently wished to retain the Empire within its limits, whereas this was probably only his later philosophy, formulated after the Varian disaster in AD 9. The source of Dio's information is unknown, but there may have been a small element of truth in the report, in that Augustus perhaps wrote concerning one or two specific states, affirming that he did not wish his arrangements with the client kings to be disturbed. At this period expansion was still very much alive, as witnessed by the campaigns in Spain, the Alps, and in Germany. Rome was a world power, destined to rule the earth; her fame had spread as far as the Indian subcontinent. Trade with India was already established, and while Augustus was in the east an embassy arrived.²⁵² There were many embassies arriving all the time, but none perhaps as splendid and outlandish as this one. The Romans saw tigers for the first time, and no doubt all kinds of luxurious goods were sent as presents. At Athens, Augustus reputedly witnessed a vivid self-sacrifice by one of the Indian sages, who was initiated into the cult of Demeter and Kore, and then immolated himself in the sacred fires. Augustus' response is not recorded.

As the troubles of 19 BC proceeded in Rome, envoys came to him to ask him to take the vacant consulship. Instead, he insisted upon the appointment of one of the envoys, Quintus Lucretius,²⁵³ who had been proscribed long ago but obviously escaped. It may be that Augustus intended to make a conciliatory gesture by appointing this man,²⁵⁴ but he would not take the consulship himself. Dio relates the troubles in Rome to the return of Augustus, but he probably did not rush home on account of the execution of Egnatius Rufus and the possibility that in his absence there would be a return to the days of the demagogues. In the autumn of 19 he set out for Rome, where more honours were voted to him. He declined most of them, except the foundation of an altar to *Fortuna Redux*, the goddess who presided over homecomings.²⁵⁵ Preoccupied perhaps with saving Augustus for the Roman world, the goddess of homecomings was not paying sufficient attention to Vergil, who had come to Athens to meet his patron, and died at Brundisium on the return journey.

Notes

- 1 Pelling 1988, 318–20.
- 2 Suet. *Aug.* 17; Plut. *Ant.* 86; Dio 51.14 all express doubts about the suicide of Cleopatra; see also Southern 2007, 227; 254 n.53; Grant 1972, 225; Huzar 1978, 227.
- 3 Suet. *Aug.* 17.5.
- 4 Suet. *Aug.* 17; Plut. *Ant.* 36; 54; 87; Dio 51.15.6–7.
- 5 Macrobius *Saturnalia* 2.4, translated by Chisholm and Ferguson 1981, 73–74.
- 6 Crook 1996a, 73.
- 7 Raaflaub and Samons 1990, 417–54.
- 8 Levick 2010, 164–201.
- 9 *RG* 34.
- 10 Syme 1939, 307.
- 11 Wickert 1974, 7.
- 12 Brunt and Moore 1967, 76.
- 13 Ameling 1994, 25 n.101.
- 14 Bleicken 1990, 83; Lacey 1996, 35.
- 15 Sherk 1969, no. 58 iii; iv; Millar 1973, 58–59; Lintott 1993, 113–14.
- 16 Lacey 1996, 59.
- 17 Jones 1968, 12–13.
- 18 Syme 1939, 304.
- 19 For a summary of the army at this period, and on the veteran settlements see Keppie 1996, 376–87; 1983, 73–82.
- 20 Suet. *Aug.* 32; Shuckburgh 1903, 113.
- 21 Tac. *Ann.* 4.5; Dio 55.24.
- 22 Suet. *Aug.* 25; 30; Dio 55. 26.
- 23 Sattler 1960; Brunt 1984.
- 24 Earl 1980, 83.
- 25 Syme 1939, 328.
- 26 Syme 1939, 310–11.
- 27 Syme 1939, 352–54.
- 28 Nicolet 1984, 111.
- 29 Dio 52.
- 30 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.
- 31 *RG* 34.
- 32 Petit 1976, 125–26.
- 33 Cooley 2009, 35 n.202, quoting Cotton and Yakobson 2002, 196–97 n.16.
- 34 Horace *Odes* 4.14.6; Syme 1939, 311–12. On princeps in general see Wickert (*RE* XXII 1998ff); von Premerstein 1937; Béranger 1953.
- 35 Magdelain 1947.
- 36 Galinsky 1996, 13.
- 37 Kienast 1982, 72–73, Crook 1996b, 121–23; Lacey 1996, 6.
- 38 Brunt and Moore 1967, 80.
- 39 Dio 51.20.1.
- 40 Suet. *Aug.* 22 says that the doors of the temple were closed three times during Augustus' reign.
- 41 Dio 51.20.4–5.
- 42 *RG* 27.1.
- 43 Dio 51.17.4.
- 44 Cornelius Gallus: *PIR2* C 1369. On an inscription from Philae (*ILS* 8995) Gallus is specifically named as an equestrian, and Prefect of Alexandria and Egypt. According to Reinmuth 1935, 2 the prefect stood in the place of the king of Egypt.
- 45 Crook 1996a, 74.

- 46 Dio 57.17.1; Tac. *Ann.* 2.59.
- 47 Lacey 1996, 64.
- 48 Dio 51.18.2.
- 49 Dio 51.20.1.
- 50 Dio 51.20.6–9.
- 51 Dio 51.19.1–51. 20.6.
- 52 Dio 51.19.1; 51.19.4.
- 53 Dio 51.21.2.
- 54 Dio 51.19.3–5.
- 55 Crook 1996a, 75.
- 56 Dio 52.41.3; see also Syme 1958, 172–88 = *Roman Papers* I 1979, 361–77. Galsterer 1990, 14–15 points out that the use of the title gained the support of the army.
- 57 *RG* 8.1.
- 58 Kienast 1982, 128.
- 59 Brunt and Moore 1967, 50.
- 60 Lacey 1996, 17–56.
- 61 Dio 51.19.2.
- 62 Dio 51.20.4.
- 63 Lacey 1996, 40–41.
- 64 Lacey 1996, 21–22.
- 65 Dio 51.21.4.
- 66 *PIR*2 C 1331; Kienast 1982, 91 n.94; Brunt and Moore 1967, 43.
- 67 Dio 54.12.1–2.
- 68 Suet. *Tib.* 9.2; Tac. *Ann.* 1.72.1.
- 69 *RG* 30.1; Dio 54.31.4.
- 70 Dio 51.21.4.
- 71 Dio 51.21.4.
- 72 Keppie 1983, 74.
- 73 *RG* 16.1.
- 74 Keppie 1983, 82.
- 75 Dio 53.1.1; Rich 1990, 132.
- 76 Chilver 1950, 417–19.
- 77 Tac. *Ann.* 3.28.
- 78 *RG* 20.4.
- 79 Dio 53.2.4.
- 80 Dio 52.42.1 is mistaken when he says that Augustus and Agrippa held the office of censor.
- 81 Dio 52.42.1
- 82 *RG* 8.2; *ILS* 6123.
- 83 Dio 53.2.2.
- 84 Dio 52.42.5.
- 85 Dio 53.1.3, linking the award of Augustus' title *princeps senatus* to the completion of the census.
- 86 Rich 1990, 132.
- 87 *RG* 7.2.
- 88 *CIL* 6.873 = *ILS* 81; *EJ²* 1976, 57 no. 17; Millar 1973, 62; Levick 2010, 75–76; 107 n.38.
- 89 Rich 2009, 153; Levick 2010, 69.
- 90 Rich and Williams 1999.
- 91 Rich 2009, 153.
- 92 Levick 2010, 69.
- 93 Mantovani 2008.

- 94 Ferrary 2009, 93.
- 95 Millar 1973, 62ff.
- 96 Vell. Pat. 2.89.
- 97 Dio 53.3.1–53.10.8.
- 98 Dio 53.17.1; 53.11.5; Bleicken 1990, 82–83.
- 99 Suet. *Aug.* 84.
- 100 Suet. *Aug.* 28.1.
- 101 Lacey 1996, 77–98; Crook 1996a 76–77.
- 102 Dio 53.2.7.
- 103 Bleicken 1990, 90–91.
- 104 Crook 1955; Syme 1939, 408.
- 105 Crook 1996a, 78.
- 106 Millar 1973, 65.
- 107 Bleicken 1990, 87.
- 108 Lacey 1996, 98; Eck 2007, 55.
- 109 Dio (53.13.5–6) explains how the system worked, and how Augustus appointed *legati Augusti pro praetore*.
- 110 Suet. *Aug.* 47; Dio 53.12.3–4.
- 111 Syme 1939, 326–28.
- 112 Jones 1968, 5.
- 113 Eder 1990, 107.
- 114 Dio 53.32.5.
- 115 Syme 1939, 314.
- 116 Kienast 1982, 74–75.
- 117 Raaflaub 2009 209; 218.
- 118 Suet. *Aug.* 37.
- 119 Syme in Schmitthenner 1969, 153–75, esp. 162 = *JRS* 36 1946, 149–58.
- 120 Dio 53.32.5 says that Augustus was awarded the proconsulship for life in 23 bc. For the inscription from El Bierzo see *AE* 1999, 915; 2000, 760; Eck 2007, 63; Richardson 2012, 101–2, n.76, doubts the validity of the inscription, referring to his article ‘The new Augustan edicts from northwest Spain’, *JRA* 15, 2002, 411–15.
- 121 Dio 53.15.4.
- 122 Sherk 1988, 4–6, no. 2; Brunt and Moore 1967, 83–84; Lacey 1996, 66.
- 123 Rich 1990, 170.
- 124 Eck 2007, 63–64.
- 125 Dio 53.32.5; von Premerstein 1937, 229ff.
- 126 Ferrary 2009, 115–16.
- 127 Ferrary 2009, 110; 121.
- 128 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.1; Lacey 1996, 3–4 n.9; 5; 12; 14; 210–32.
- 129 Dio 53.3–11.
- 130 Bleicken 1990, 85.
- 131 Lacey 1996, 90.
- 132 Lacey 1996, 92.
- 133 *RG* 34.
- 134 Vell. Pat. 2.91.1.
- 135 Vell. Pat. 2.83.1.
- 136 Syme 1939, 313.
- 137 Suet. *Aug.* 7.2; Dio 53.16.7. See also Rich 1990, 149 and J. S. Richardson ‘*Imperium romanum*: empire and the language of power’, *JRS* 81 1991, 1–9, esp. 8 n.64.
- 138 Dio 53.16.4–8.
- 139 Dio 53.17.1.
- 140 *BMC* 656.

- 141 Kent 1978, 277 no. 125.
- 142 Suet. *Aug.* 72.2.
- 143 The subject of the image of Augustus in art and literature has been covered in depth; only a few of the main sources are listed here, in which further references can be found to periodical articles, conference proceedings, Festschriften and so on: Galinsky 1996; Gurval 1995; Hannestad 1986; Kahler 1959; Levick 2010; Powell 1992; Toynbee 1961; Woodman and West 1984; Zanker 1988.
- 144 *RG* 20.5.
- 145 Dio 53.27.15; Rich 1990, 163.
- 146 *RG* 19; 21.2.
- 147 Zanker 1988, 27.
- 148 Dio 53.30.5.
- 149 Dio 51.23.2 to 53.27.
- 150 Livy 32.4.
- 151 Syme 1939, 307ff; Crook 1996a, 80 n.55; Bleicken 1990, 34; 89–91; Rich 1990, 137; Badian 1982, 38–41; L. Schumacher, ‘Die imperatorischen Akklamationen der Triumvirn und die *Auspicia* des Augustus’, *Historia* 34, 1985, 191–222, esp. 209–11.
- 152 Rich 1996, 98–99; 109–11; 126–27.
- 153 Syme 1939, 310 n.1 suggested that Gallus had to be sacrificed to conciliate the Senate.
- 154 Syme 1939, 309.
- 155 *ILS* 8895; *AE* 1964, 255.
- 156 Dio 53.23.5 to 53.24.
- 157 Syme 1939, 310 n.1.
- 158 Suet. *Aug.* 66.2.
- 159 The Arabian campaign of Aelius Gallus (*PIR2* A 179) has been reassessed and the connection with events in Parthia analysed by C. Marek ‘Die Expedition des Aelius Gallus nach Arabien’, *Chiron* 23, 1993, 121–56, esp. 151–52.
- 160 On Augustus’ campaigns in Spain, see Dio 53.25.2 to 26.5 and W. Schmitthenner ‘Augustus’ spanischer Feldzug und der Kampf um den Prinzipat’, *Historia* 11, 1962, 29–85.
- 161 *RG* 26.2.
- 162 Rich 1990, 156.
- 163 Strabo *Geography* 25.8; 4.5.3.
- 164 Tac. *Ann.* 6.11.3; Syme 1939, 403.
- 165 Syme 1986, 211–12; 200–243.
- 166 Dio 51.21.3.
- 167 Suet. *Aug.* 25.
- 168 Lacey 1996, 117–31.
- 169 Crook 1996a, 83.
- 170 *RG* 15.1.
- 171 Rich 1990, 164.
- 172 Dio 53.28.2.
- 173 Rich 1990, 164.
- 174 Eder 1990, 107.
- 175 Dio 53.28.4; 31.2–3.
- 176 Dio 53.28.3; Vell. Pat. 2.94.3.
- 177 Suet. *Aug.* 81.1.
- 178 Suet. *Aug.* 28.1; Dio 53.31.1.
- 179 Badian 1982, 34.
- 180 Dio 53.31.4.
- 181 Rich 1990, 167; Roddaz 1984, 312–19.

- 182 Syme 1939, 341.
- 183 Dio 53.31.1.
- 184 Vell. Pat. 2.91.2.
- 185 Raaflaub and Samons 1990, 425–26, nn.29–35.
- 186 Dio 54.3.2–3.
- 187 Syme 1939, 333; 341.
- 188 Rich 1990, 168–69. See also Bleicken 1990, 94; Kienast 1982, 86.
- 189 Badian 1982.
- 190 Suet. *Aug.* 37.
- 191 Bleicken 1990, 94.
- 192 Dio 53.32.3.
- 193 Eder 1990, 107–8 n.170 quoting Badian 1982 who refutes most of the crisis theories.
- 194 Dio 53.32.5.
- 195 Syme 1986, 384.
- 196 Ameling 1994, 14–15 n.61 enumerates the references, especially Bleicken 1990, 104.
- 197 Ameling 1994, 17–18; 22.
- 198 Dio 53.32.5; Lintott 1993, 115–16; L. Richardson, ‘*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the language of power’, *JRS* 81, 1991, 1–9, 8; Syme 1939, 336.
- 199 *RG* 8.3.
- 200 Bleicken 1990, 96.
- 201 *RG* 10.1.
- 202 Dio 53.32.3.
- 203 Rich 1990, 169.
- 204 Dio 53.32.5.
- 205 Dio 53.32.6.
- 206 Eder 1990, 109; Bleicken 1990, 95; Brunt and Moore 1967, 45–46.
- 207 Jones 1968, 11; Eder 1990, 110.
- 208 Eder 1990, 109.
- 209 *RG* 6.2.
- 210 Jones 1968, 11–12; Yavetz 1969, 91.
- 211 Bleicken 1990, 104.
- 212 Eder 1990, 109. See also Chilver 1950, 433 on the uses of the tribunician powers, and Brunt and Moore 1967, 11 n.1 on the use that other emperors made of it.
- 213 Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.2.
- 214 *RG* 6.5; Dio 53.32.5.
- 215 Galsterer 1990, 14.
- 216 Vell. Pat. 2.93.2; Suet. *Aug.* 66.3; *Tib.* 10.1; Tac. *Ann.* 14.53.3; 55.2–3; Dio 53.32.1.
- 217 Dio 53.33.4.
- 218 Dio 54.6.5.
- 219 On Agrippa in the east see Reinhold 1965, 169–75; Roddaz 1984, 319–28.
- 220 Josephus *AJ* 15.350.
- 221 Dio 53.32.1.
- 222 Syme 1939, 338.
- 223 On the connection with the Parthian situation just before Agrippa was sent to the east see C. Marek ‘Die Expedition des Aelius Gallus nach Arabien’, *Chiron* 23, 1993, 121–56.
- 224 *EJ²* 1976, 176 no. 366.
- 225 Reinhold 1965, 175.
- 226 Lacey 1996, 117–31.
- 227 Rich 1990, 168.
- 228 Ameling 1994, 27–28.
- 229 Kienast 1982, 92–93; Yavetz 1969, 26; 93.

- 230 *RG* 5.1–2; Vell. Pat. 2.89.
- 231 Suet. *Aug.* 52; Dio 54.1.3–4.
- 232 Kienast 1982, 93; Sattler 1960, 76.
- 233 Dio 54.8.1–2.
- 234 Vell. Pat. 2.94.4; see also Suet. *Aug.* 21.3; *Tib.* 9.1; Tac. *Ann.* 2.3; Rich 1990, 184.
- 235 Dio 54.9.4–6.
- 236 Horace *Epist.* 1.12.27–28; *Odes* 4.15.6–8; see also Galinsky 1996, 155–58; Rich 1990, 181.
- 237 *RG* 29.2; Suet. *Aug.* 21.3; Dio 54.8.3.
- 238 Ovid *Fasti* 5.585–86; 593–94.
- 239 *BMC* 18–21; 43–44; 671–78.
- 240 *BMC* 10–17; 40–42; 56–59; 332; 410; 415–16; 679–81.
- 241 Suet. *Aug.* 81.
- 242 Dio 54.1.2.
- 243 Dio 54.1.2.
- 244 Dio 54.6.1–2.
- 245 Dio 54.6.4–5.
- 246 Dio 54.10.1–2.
- 247 Dio 53.24.4–6.
- 248 Eder 1990, 112; Raaflaub and Samons 1990, 418–19.
- 249 Vell. Pat. 2.92.2–4.
- 250 Dio 54.15.4; Rich 1990, 191.
- 251 Dio 54.9.1–2.
- 252 Suet. *Aug.* 21.3; Dio 54.9.8–10.
- 253 Dio 54.10.2.
- 254 Sattler 1960, 86.
- 255 Dio 54.10.3.

TOTUS ORBIS TERRARUM

At his homecoming in the autumn of 19 BC, Augustus was in a much stronger position than at any of his previous returns to Rome, and from then onwards, as a result of the honours and powers that were granted to him, his supremacy was finally assured.¹ It had already been clearly demonstrated that when he was absent the state did not run quite so smoothly. Whilst acceptance of Augustus' pervasive influence may not have been quite as universal as he liked to claim, at least his power was legally sanctioned, and preserved by a combination of determination, alert watchfulness, and the latent if reluctant use of force. Military strength was never mentioned, but no-one could be in any doubt that should such drastic measures prove necessary, Augustus would not have hesitated to use armed force. The confirmation of his powers from 19 BC onwards meant that he never had to resort to such crude methods.

19 BC: the final settlement

Describing the events of 19 BC, Dio² says that the conduct of the people of Rome differed according to whether Augustus was absent or not; they quarrelled while he was absent, and while he was present, when they were afraid (of what is not stated), he accepted election as supervisor of morals for five years, along with the powers of the censor for the same period. These powers are discussed more fully below, together with the social legislation of 18 and 17 BC. Most important of all, Dio says that Augustus was offered the consulship for life. As with most other aspects of Augustus' power, there is great controversy over what exactly was granted to him on his return to Rome in 19 BC. Dio's statement that Augustus was granted consular power for life has been contested for generations.

Argument against acceptance of the consulship for life from 19 BC onwards is supported by the fact that the 'for life' element ran counter to everything else in Augustus' scheme of things, whereby he refused to accept any office, or the powers of any office, in perpetuity. In effect his tribunician power was perpetual, with the legal fiction and saving grace of annual renewal, though it was hardly likely that if it were to be put to the test, renewal would have been refused. As for lifelong consular power, he had been given the chance to accept it after his

success in dealing with the food crisis in 22 BC, when he was offered the consulship every year for life, and he refused it, making a point of saying so in the *Res Gestae*.³ To have refused such an offer in 22 BC but accepted it only three years later could be deemed somewhat inconsistent. But that alone is no valid reason for rejecting Dio's statement.

In 18 BC the powers that had been granted to Augustus for 10 years were due to expire. According to Dio these powers, which he does not explain in full, were renewed for a further five years, and shortly after that a second term of five years was added.⁴ Further renewals took place at successive intervals thereafter. In contrast, renewal of consular power is never heard of, which absence of evidence proves precisely nothing. It can be used to argue on the one hand that he never held consular power at all, or on the other hand that he did indeed adopt it for life, so there was never any need to renew it, which is why we do not hear of it. This spiral argument could run and run forever without resolution. It could be suggested that if in 18 BC Augustus still did not feel that *imperium proconsulare* could be granted for life, and had still to be bestowed on him by successive grants for specified terms, then it was not the time to accept anything as inflammatory as life-long consular powers. Hitherto, he had shown that he preferred to move forward imperceptibly, step by step, as Tacitus⁵ recognised when he described Augustus' gradual assumption (*insurgere paulatim*) of all the imperial powers that later emperors enjoyed. Augustus had so far been able to mollify the Senate by avoiding anything that hinted at permanence in his fusion of honours, influence and powers.

Crook⁶ points out that no other ancient source except Dio corroborates the fact that Augustus held consular power for life after 19 BC. It may be significant that Suetonius, with his predilection for classifying his information into categories, does not mention the 'consulship for life' at all. The best slot for any hint of this would have been immediately following the statement that at some date, which Suetonius⁷ does not specify, Augustus asked for two colleagues whenever he was consul himself. That idea was rejected, but if Dio is correct in saying that Augustus did eventually assume consular power in 19 BC, this would be the place for Suetonius to have added a footnote that Augustus eventually realised his ambition in a slightly different form. It is too simplistic to suggest that some tired-eyed copyist missed out the vital line that would have settled the matter once and for all. Nevertheless the omission of the relevant information in Suetonius' work does not constitute irrefutable proof that Dio was mistaken.

The detail that Dio provides is beguiling, suggesting that he had access to some other long lost source, rather than that he diverged from fact into fantasy as a result of an overworked imagination.⁸ After mentioning the consular powers, Dio goes on to say that Augustus henceforth had the right to 12 lictors and to take his seat between the two consuls in the Senate. Thus he was now granted by law the privilege that he had once claimed by sheer force in 32 BC, when he placed himself between Antonius' consuls. Following on from this passage, Dio⁹ says that the people begged Augustus to set the state to rights and

make whatever laws he wished, which would henceforth be called *leges Augustae* (rather than the usual *leges Juliae* after the family name of Julius Caesar). The people also desired to take an oath to obey whatever laws he passed, but Dio says that Augustus refused this demand for the oath-taking, because if the people approved of the laws they would obey them without the need for taking an oath, and if they did not approve they would simply ignore the laws.

It has been debated whether or not Augustus needed the extra power that the consulship would have brought him in 19 BC. Eder¹⁰ suggested that Augustus had relinquished far too much in 23 BC by giving up the consulship, because his *tribunicia potestas* and proconsular *imperium* could not compensate for all the powers that he had relinquished. In contrast to this argument, Richardson¹¹ questions whether Augustus had anything to gain from the settlement, since he already had sufficient powers to govern the state, with tribunician power, and from 23 BC the proconsulship with special privileges. The main differences between consular and proconsular powers were that a proconsul had to lay down his command when he crossed the *pomerium* to enter the city, and he could not convene the Senate, or preside over elections, which required consular power. From 23 BC Augustus as proconsul had been exempted from the rule about giving up his *imperium* on returning to the city, and he could convene the Senate by dint of his tribunician power, which also entitled him to put motions to the Senate and to introduce new legislation. Richardson suggests that from 19 BC, Augustus yielded to popular demand, and from then onwards he appeared to be consul, with 12 lictors and a special seat between the two consuls. His position of supremacy was clear to the people, who were thus satisfied. This opinion is shared by Brunt and Moore,¹² who suggest that after the disturbances in Rome from 22 to 19 BC Augustus was encouraged to give the people what they wanted, by acquiring the honorary insignia of a consul denoting the supreme distinction of his special rank, so that to all intents and purposes he looked like a consul.

But mere outward appearance and honours without power cannot have been all that was implied here. His rights to display all the consular insignia, to employ 12 lictors and to place his seat between the two elected consuls, were surely not curtailed by any limitation on his actions, even in theory, and if they were so limited, he would be able to express opinions but little else. His opinions with his influence and *auctoritas* behind them may have worked just as well as pronouncements, because in practice it would have required considerable fortitude for any senator to point out in a debate that the opinions just expressed by that man over there, sitting between the two consuls, carried no weight, since he possessed only the honours and not the powers of the consuls. The people may have been content with appearances, but the senators would have perceived the loopholes, and some of them may have been prepared to act upon them. It was better to pre-empt that situation before it developed, and if Augustus was prepared to accept anything at all as a result of the expressed will of the people in 19 BC, it would have been consular power with all that that implies, a tool with which he could achieve what he wanted to do.

Some scholars who accept Dio's statement that Augustus was offered consular power in 19 BC ignore the permanent aspect, arguing that it was not for life and querying the nature and duration of these powers. It is generally agreed that Augustus required consular powers to perform certain tasks, such as supervision of the election of magistrates, appointment of the city prefect, and to conduct the census.¹³ Augustus himself says specifically that he undertook the censuses of 8 BC and AD 14 by dint of consular power.¹⁴ If there were no censors in office, the consuls were authorised to conduct the census, so without becoming censor himself, Augustus was within his rights to use consular power to carry out the censuses, but debate centres round the question of whether this consular power was temporary or permanent. Some scholars suggest that far from holding consular power on a permanent basis, Augustus was given separate, temporary grants of such power specifically in order to conduct the census or other tasks.¹⁵ Jones considered such ad hoc grants unlikely; he accepts the idea that Augustus had consular power on a permanent basis, but Jones¹⁶ reinterprets Dio by suggesting that Augustus was granted power equal to that of the consuls, a subtly different matter. Augustus did not suggest in the *Res Gestae* that he took up consular power in order to conduct the censuses, but merely describes by what authority he carried them out, so it is still not absolutely clear whether he had been granted consular power temporarily for the performance of specific tasks, or permanently to be used whenever he wished.¹⁷

In the absence of firmly attested evidence to the contrary, there is no reason why Dio should not be taken at his word. It is perfectly possible that Augustus did accept the full panoply of consular powers for life, thus reaching his apogee at this point, being now endowed with all the powers that he needed to control the Empire. Levick¹⁸ harbours no doubts that from 19 BC onwards Augustus possessed the full powers of the consuls. This meant that he could now govern the Empire without the bother of holding office, and without the restrictions imposed by time limits, annual elections, and potentially obstructive colleagues. Augustus in 19 BC was in the same position as he had been in 23 BC, but now with the added benefit of tribunician power. If it is accepted that Augustus held *imperium consulare* from 19 BC onwards, it simplifies very considerably the problems relating to certain of his enactments and actions which cannot be attributed solely to tribunician and proconsular powers, or to his *auctoritas*. Similarly if Dio is correct about the privilege granted to Augustus of making whatever laws he liked, this too might explain how Augustus was able to act rather more freely than if he had kept strictly within the framework of his other constitutional powers.

Concerning the consulship in general, it is possible that Augustus and the Senate had reached an agreement in conferences which have gone unrecorded. Augustus' influence, *auctoritas*, was fully recognised and very firmly embedded in senatorial consciousness, without being defined too closely. Perhaps this is the key to the puzzle, in that neither Augustus nor the Senate ever progressed beyond a deliberate vagueness on the issue of consular powers and their duration. Prior to 23 BC, Augustus had clung tenaciously onto the consulship because

it allowed him to put his ideas forward, test the reactions, and if favourable he could then turn suggestions into reality with legal backing. When he relinquished the office, he was forced to find other ways of achieving what he wanted, and it may have been at some point during these four years that he suggested that whenever he held the consulship, two others should be elected, as Suetonius says.¹⁹

Among the reasons for giving up the consulship, apart from not wishing to seem like a Dictator, was the fact that by occupying it year after year he effectively blocked promotion for aspiring senators, some of whom had begun to resent the fact that only one consulship was available each year. If his proposal that he should be consul with two colleagues had been accepted, if and when it was made, the monopoly on the consulship would have been eased, two annual vacancies would have been opened up, and Augustus would not have lost any power. This is in effect what happened in 19 BC. Up to this point, Augustus had been forced to tread a careful path between his dealings with the Senate and the people, curbing the ambitions of the senators without laying himself open to the accusation that he was becoming a tyrant, while at the same time satisfying the people in so far as that was possible without risking the accusation that he was a *popularis*, pandering to the mob to get his own way. The people in turn had made it abundantly obvious on more than one occasion that the majority wholeheartedly supported him in a position of supreme authority, offering him the Dictatorship and the permanent consulship, which he had assiduously refused. The years between 30 and 19 BC had witnessed successive crises that demonstrated clearly enough that when he was not at the helm not only did things go rapidly downhill, but also it had been revealed that no-one else knew how to solve the problems either. It is possible that even if anyone else in the Roman world thought that he might have all the answers, freedom of action was curtailed, through fear of displeasing Octavian-Augustus and risking possible retribution. It was not an ideal situation, but after 19 BC, a sort of plateau was reached, so that government could proceed on more clearly defined lines, with possibilities for promotion and social advancement. With the unstinting support of the majority of the people, and now possessing consular power for ever, Augustus could relax his restrictive influence on the Senate, allowing more senators to follow a political career. Scholars have noted that after 19 BC the two parties seem to have been reconciled, and the future arrangements for the consulship in general and Augustus' consular power in particular may have been part of a compromise, a sort of package with more far reaching effects than the establishment of Augustus' personal authority. Prior to 19 BC, the consuls had been new men, all of them naturally acceptable to Augustus himself, while the nobles had scarcely been allowed a glimpse of the consulship. By keeping them out of government, Augustus pre-empted trouble, but it could not last for too long before discontent at having nowhere to go erupted in conspiracy and attempts at revolution. In the pre-eminent position that he had finally attained in 19 BC, Augustus probably felt that he could allow all classes of people to move onwards and upwards, because he was now strong enough to contain and

control potential troublemakers. After 19 BC, there was a noticeable decline in the numbers of candidates recommended by Augustus for the consulship, and the office was opened up to a wider recruitment base; more and more nobles, containing a noticeable Italian element, now began to reach consular rank.²⁰

The nobility was now a mixed bag of ancient Roman families and new nobles elevated by Augustus from both Roman and Italian stock. Thus the composition of the aristocracy was broadened but this was not enough. Without experience of the highest office, the nobles would lose their influence at an alarming rate, and both they and Augustus were fully aware of it. Having demonstrated that if he so wished he could exclude them from all further influence in the state, perhaps Augustus felt that it was time to permit a controlled resurgence of noble power. The old republican nobility had suffered enormous losses in the two great civil wars, and had now been diluted by Augustus' own creations of new patricians, but even though some of the nobility owed their advancement to him, Augustus probably did not trust them as a class, not for an instant, and so if he were to foster their advancement, he would need to be certain that by doing so he could not be eclipsed himself. If he were to be toppled from his supreme position, the resultant vacuum would soon be filled by the usual republican round of clever politicians turned victorious generals, warring on each other to retain their powers.

A balance was necessary, between the two extremes of obliterating the nobles altogether or allowing them so much influence that they posed a threat to his survival. In 23 BC Augustus had demonstrated his willingness to renounce the consulship for ever, and for over four years he had survived intact. A grant of consular power at this juncture could hardly increase his influence to any dangerous degree, because he was already indisputably supreme. The hypothetical compromise of 19 BC may have evolved from these considerations, as an offer made by Augustus himself at a point where the nobles were fully cognisant of reality, frustrated, impotent, and willing to come to terms. If the offer of compromise originated with the nobles, it signified only that they had given in, and Augustus obtained what he needed, but it is much more likely that he met them halfway, and made the following proposal: he would not hold the office of annually elected consul, but to all intents and purposes he would have every appearance of *being* consul with all the powers, and in return he would open up the much sought after magistracy to the nobility. As a guarantee of their good behaviour, they were to bear in mind at all times that he was in charge and they owed their advancement to him. Tacitus' general statement that Augustus called himself consul (*consulem se ferens*)²¹ strictly belongs to the previous era when Augustus was endeavouring to thrust the memory of the Triumvirate into the background, but since Tacitus was trying to compress into one paragraph all the elements of fully evolved imperial rule, his phrase may have wider relevance, extending to the final panoply of Augustus' authority. There is no proof that this is what happened in 19 BC, but the arrangement would have been very attractive. It would have the added advantage of calming the populace, who would no

longer need to indulge in disruptive riots in order to realise their desire for Augustus to be consul. Exhaustion may have played a part. Augustus had waited a long time while the people fruitlessly demanded that he should be consul, while the nobles were made aware that they could not progress without his sanction, and while the mutual distrust between populace and nobility worked itself to a climax. Now, and forever after, the two sides were held in check by one man, but at the same time the people and the senators could progress, assured of his protection. The waiting game had paid off handsomely.

Augustus and his family

Augustus was now in his forties, already the elder statesman by dint of his long experience. He could afford to allow himself a certain degree of satisfaction, both personal and public. At home he was perhaps content. His extended family had not yet begun to give him too much cause for concern. Livia's role in his life is recognised as important but it is not elaborately documented.²² Dio gives her a voice and opinions of her own, which she undoubtedly had, but Dio uses her as a vehicle to present a point of view that is not necessarily hers, much as he uses Maecenas and Agrippa to present alternative constructions of imperial government. In a long passage, Dio²³ provides dialogue for Augustus and Livia about the dangers of pre-eminence and the risk of conspiracies, in which Livia emerges as a wise, thoughtful and well informed individual, with a role to play in Augustus' life and in his government, in so far as women were allowed to participate (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). The fact that Dio considered his third-century audience well able to accept his portrayal of Livia only enhances her reputation.

More telling is Livia's interest in the people of Samos. She was unsuccessful in persuading her husband to grant them their freedom as they had petitioned him. Augustus wrote a letter to the Samians, preserved on an inscription from Aphrodisias.²⁴ In this letter he expresses regret that he could not accede to his wife's request on their behalf. He does not name Livia, but since she was patron of the community, she must be the subject of Augustus' letter. It is possible that while she accompanied her first husband Tiberius Claudius Nero on his flight from Italy, the couple may have found temporary refuge on the island of Samos. At any rate, her connection with the community is highlighted by the statues of her that adorned the temple of Hera on Samos.²⁵

Livia's support for the Samians cannot have been the only occasion when she expressed an opinion. She asked for citizenship for a Gaul, but Augustus declined to 'prostitute' the citizenship, and instead liberated the man from all tribute, since he could sustain financial losses better than the dilution of the privilege of Roman citizenship.²⁶ There will have been many more petitioners who sought access to Augustus via his wife, but there is little information on the case histories, and none at all about Livia's autonomy in making decisions about which items to refuse on her own account, and which items to refer to her husband. Suetonius gives the impression that Augustus' relationship with his wife



Figure 6.1 Statue of Livia as the goddess Ceres.

Source: Courtesy Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Photo by Ole Haupt.



Figure 6.2 Wreathed and veiled head of Livia.

Source: Courtesy Römisch-Germanisches Landesmuseum, Cologne.

was rather clinical, when he recounts the fact that Augustus used to write everything down, even when he wanted to talk to Livia, so that he would say no more and no less than he intended.²⁷ On matters of state, and most especially on occasions when he could be observed and overheard, this may have been true; an *aide memoire* is useful for a man who needs to remember many things at once, and the dangers of uncontrolled garrulousness are very serious. A loose tongue can lead to distraction which wastes time or gets the speaker involved in all sorts of difficulties that he can well do without, and then there is the danger that people who overhear can go off with half-formed stories which become more elaborate at every repetition. In off-duty hours, we are surely not meant to assume that he wrote down ordinary conversation, to remind himself to inform Livia that she looked becoming in her latest clothes, or that he had enjoyed his dinner. Augustus' public image is all that has descended through the ages, so that it is difficult to discern the man. In the glimpses that are afforded us, Augustus seems to have been subject to the same doubts, emotions, joys and angers as anyone else, which makes it all the more remarkable that he could overcome the human norms to emerge as an acknowledged super-being, and moreover sustain the act for so many years. The anecdotes about him belong mostly to the more relaxed time when his power was assured and he was older and more experienced; the earlier tales are reactive rather than self-instigated, though a witty response reveals the way of thought and self-possession of the individual just as much as an original statement. Augustus assiduously cultivated his political image, but never seems to have been bothered by what men thought of him as a person; he was self-sufficient, relied only upon himself in emotional terms if not in practical affairs, and had no illusions about humanity in general.

Perhaps because he was self-sufficient he could take a joke at his own expense, as several anecdotes suggest.²⁸ He possessed a sense of humour that was as cynical on his own account as it was on anyone else's. In his youth he had written, among other things, a tragedy about Ajax. Looking back on it later he cringed, and obliterated it; in the Roman world writings were wiped away with a sponge, much as pencil marks can be removed with an eraser nowadays, so when a friend asked him what had become of his tragedy, he said that Ajax had committed suicide by falling on his sponge. He was capable of making humorous gestures, as when he heard of an auction of the property of an equestrian who had fallen into huge debts, impossible to pay off. He instructed his agents to bid for the man's pillows, because if he could slumber on them while burdened with so many worries, then they must be especially effective in inducing sleep. On those occasions when he was bested by intelligent people or ironic circumstances, Augustus laughed instead of getting angry. People seem to have been allowed reasonable access to him and considerable freedom of speech; witty or biting retorts are on record which brought him down to earth, and sometimes made him change his mind. A Greek writer of epigrams used to approach him constantly, every time he came down from the Palatine to the Forum, offering samples of his work in an attempt to gain financial rewards. Tired of the man,

Augustus wrote some verses of his own and gave them to him, but the Greek turned it to his own advantage by telling him that he thought the verses were very good. He thrust some money into Augustus' hand, telling him that if he had possessed more money, he would gladly have given it to him. Augustus took the hint and gave in. He paid the epigrammatist 100,000 sesterces, probably aware that by the next day there would be a long line of versifiers queuing up on the Palatine as he emerged. In a circumstance of more serious consequence, a soldier asked for Augustus' support in a legal case, and in response Augustus chose a lawyer to act on the soldier's behalf. Not content with that, the soldier yelled, 'Caesar, when you were in danger at Actium, I did not choose a substitute! I fought for you myself.' Augustus did the decent thing and acted as counsel.²⁹ These tales reveal something of both the private and public image. Augustus was a hard-nosed realist with a full appreciation of the responsibility he owed to the state. His whole life was tailored to that end, rigidly controlled within the bounds of ordinary human experience. On his deathbed he asked the assembled family and friends if they had enjoyed the show,³⁰ acknowledging the fact that it had all been an act, though it was a highly successful one. The act was not always a sham, of course; it combined his own characteristics with a necessary performance of duty. His tastes were simple, his home life the embodiment of the old Roman virtues that he began to promote actively in the years after his return in 19 BC. In so long a reign, if these simple tastes had been contrary to his nature, the strain would have told, and been revealed, but apart from his alleged penchant for deflowering virgins, it is not recorded that he was ever discovered secretly revelling in a luxury he frowned on in others. The state and his life were inextricably intertwined, and he was prepared to devote all his energies to what he saw as his duty to the Roman world. Perhaps misguidedly, he expected and demanded the same of his family.

History may have been very different if Livia and Octavian had produced healthy, surviving sons early in their marriage. According to Suetonius,³¹ only one child was conceived and was born prematurely, by which he presumably means that the infant died at birth or was stillborn. There were never to be any heirs of Augustus other than those he promoted or finally adopted, and the fact that the ultimate heir was Tiberius, Livia's first son by her previous marriage, has led to speculation that she was behind the unfortunate deaths of all the others. Tiberius (Figure 6.3) was clearly not Augustus' first choice, and awareness of this cannot have been encouraging to Livia or to her son. Whether it caused family squabbles between Augustus and Livia can never be substantiated except via unreliable gossip. When Augustus returned to Rome in 19 BC one of his first acts was to bestow the rank of ex-praetor upon Tiberius, to allow him to reach higher offices so much the faster, and Tiberius' brother Drusus was permitted to stand for office five years before the usual age.³² It was apparent that their careers were to be promoted and that they had special status, but there was still the knowledge that they both held second place after direct heirs of Augustus himself. His daughter Julia, widowed by the death of Augustus' nephew

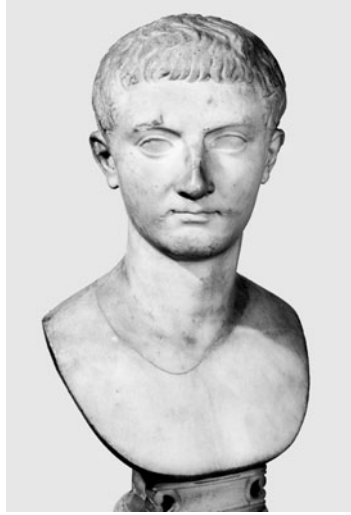


Figure 6.3 Head of Tiberius. As the son of Livia and her first husband Tiberius Claudius Nero, Tiberius became Augustus' stepson, but was not named as his heir until the designated successors Marcellus, Gaius and Lucius had died. Although this portrait shows Tiberius as a young man, it is thought that he was in his early forties when the sculpture was made.

Source: Courtesy British Museum.

Marcellus, was given in marriage to Agrippa, who divorced his wife Marcella, the elder daughter of Octavia and sister of Marcellus, in order to marry Julia. The abandoned Marcella was then married to Iullus Antonius, son of Marcus Antonius and Fulvia. He had been brought up by Octavia in her household, so he and Marcella could not have been strangers to each other. It did not matter whether they were happy so long as they were playing their parts in the scenario that Augustus was writing for them. Agrippa and Julia produced two sons, the first born in 20 BC and the second three years later, in 17 BC.

These two boys were marked out as successors from the start. Augustus eventually adopted both his grandsons, the elder named Gaius Caesar (Figure 6.4), and the younger Lucius Caesar. The adoptions cannot have stemmed from a decision made on the spur of the moment after the birth of the two boys; it is much more likely that it derived from long-term planning and was part of a pact made with Agrippa before he had even married Julia, to produce heirs that were doubly acceptable, stemming from the reliable Agrippa and Augustus himself. Julia's feelings were probably not consulted; her *raison d'être* was to bear children, nothing more. The future held great promise for the establishment of a dynasty, and that fostered a sense of security. In addition there were many satellites whose relationship to the family could be utilised. Marriages were kept as far as possible within the tight family circle. A year or so after Augustus

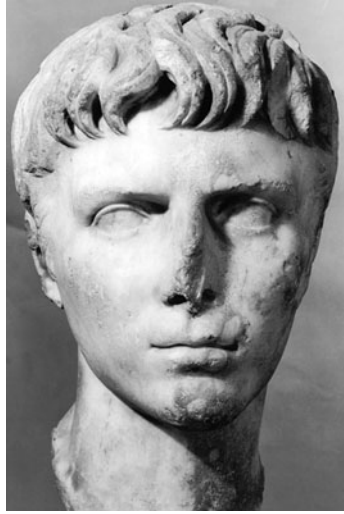


Figure 6.4 Head of Gaius Caesar, son of Julia and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, adopted as son and heir by Augustus, along with his younger brother Lucius. This portrait was made late in Augustus' reign, probably not long before Gaius' death in AD 4. *Source:* Courtesy British Museum.

returned to Rome, Tiberius was married to Agrippa's daughter Vipsania, who was the woman he truly adored; if he had been allowed to remain in this happy state instead of being used to further Augustus' dynastic schemes, the story of his reign might also have been happier. After the death of Agrippa in 12 BC, Tiberius was forced to divorce Vipsania and marry Julia, but he was far from happy, and whenever he met his former wife he followed her about with tears in his eyes; as a result, he was forbidden to see her ever again.³³ Duty to the state came before personal contentment, but by disallowing freedom of choice Augustus brought undeniable misery to his family and friends. He attended carefully to the psychological needs of the Romans, Italians and the provincials more assiduously than he ever considered the needs of his relatives.

Augustus the head of state

As yet the future cast no shadow. It may have been obscured by the sheer enormity of the administrative tasks that lay ahead, but the outlook cannot have seemed nearly as bleak as it probably had done on several occasions in the past. For the first time the benefits of peace could be put to good use; in the foundations which were laid now the nascent Empire is already visible, moulded out of older forms, tested by experiment, and remoulded now and then until most of the administrative machinery worked with varying degrees of success. There was some innovation but it was seldom startlingly new or spectacular and did not depart too far from established custom. Most legislative and administrative

measures went through evolutionary stages until they reached maturity, and some were still evolving after Augustus' death. It was perhaps impossible to arrive at the solutions all at once, even if it was obvious what those solutions should be. By opting for a gradual evolution instead of impatiently executed radical changes, Augustus allowed failures and defects to be revealed, with the result that amendments seemed vitally necessary rather than arbitrarily imposed.

The evolutionary process naturally has its darker side. Augustus stands accused by Tacitus³⁴ of deliberately gathering power into his own hands until he held everyone and everything in his grasp. It cannot be denied that such was the end result, and any judgement formed from that standpoint cannot help but be influenced by it, but it may be a little too cynical to suppose that the result fitted an original master plan conceived in its entirety, immediately after the Ides of March 44. It presupposes that Augustus had no other end in view, and denies his flexibility; it suggests that he did everything purely for self-gratification and ignores the devotion to duty and unremitting hard work. His policy was governed by location, circumstances and contingencies,³⁵ combined with his unerring opportunism. It has been said that the one consistent theme that Augustus pursued was promotion of himself as world conqueror.³⁶ In essence this is true but the judgement is a little harsh; life in the Roman Empire under Augustus could have been a lot worse.

If liberty was denied to some people because Augustus took over the state, it is well to remember that what 'liberty' actually meant to the senatorial class was freedom to exercise power among the few to govern the lives of the many. Liberty for all was something that the nobility would not have understood, let alone contemplated. Whole classes of people were subject to this so-called liberty without sharing in it. With Augustus in charge, there was now a limit to ambition on the one hand, but a growing social mobility on the other. No-one could rise to a pre-eminence equal to and certainly not superior to that of Augustus, but it was possible for people to rise further up the social scale even though, in order to arrive anywhere near the top, it seemed that one must curry favour with the master. Most contemporaries may have shrugged and remembered worse times in the past; writers like Tacitus and Pliny only knew that Augustus' achievements had very quickly led to domination by men such as Nero and Domitian. Their resentment coloured their perception of the era that preceded imperial rule, an era through which they had not lived and which seemed sweeter for being further away and unattainable, so they needed someone to blame for the loss of what they came to see as the innocent Golden Age, and the substitution of tyranny as they experienced it. If Augustus stifled ambition and initiative, then he also stifled the constant turnover of supreme military leaders with private armies, whose short-term plans did not include a strategy for Rome and Italy and the provinces, and whose long-term plans, if they entertained any, rarely if ever had the chance to come to fruition before they were overturned by the next general.

The provinces down to 19 BC

Like Caesar, Augustus had seen most of the provinces of the Empire,³⁷ and thought in terms of the whole Roman world. He has been accused of thinking only of Rome and Italy, but this perhaps requires modification. He saw himself at the head of all things, Rome as the mistress of the world, and Italy in a favoured position, but he also thought of the provinces and their welfare. It remains a mystery how he or any other emperor conceptualised the world without the aid of maps and atlases, rapid transport, and enhanced communications via email and satellite, but at least Augustus knew where there were strengths and weaknesses. He may not have formulated precise plans for integration and Romanization of the various peoples of the Empire, but neither did he plan for murderous exploitation at the expense of the provinces for the exaltation of Rome. Policy is difficult to discern at this distance in time and without all the fine details. Augustus did not have to prepare an election manifesto, nor did he have to account for himself in public debates on imperial television programmes, closely questioned by a Roman version of Jeremy Paxman. Augustus' retrospective account in the *Res Gestae* is carefully phrased and its purpose was to assess in the most positive fashion what had already happened. There is no mention of intentions and hopes which came to nothing, and very few of his contemporary thoughts or ideas are on record. Historians can only assess events and developments and extrapolate from them some consistency of purpose and planning, which is the wrong way round as well as haphazard. Current opinion favours a series of ad hoc decisions made on the spur of the moment, rather than the existence of a 'blueprint for Empire'.³⁸ The one extreme makes Augustus seem irresponsible to the point of vacillation and inconsistency, continually reactive with never the chance to be proactive, always running just to stand still. The other extreme imbues him with a foresight bordering on the clairvoyant. Most probably the truth lies somewhere between the two, depending on each individual circumstance. Although he would be occupied for much of his time with day to day minutiae, it is at least likely that he devoted some attention to the Empire and the directions and ideals he would have liked to follow. Perhaps he arrived in some cases at a broad general outline containing more than one option, so as not to be too rigid or inflexible.

The Roman world in 19 BC was far from homogeneous or pacified. Italy was in some areas still tribal,³⁹ and was certainly not unified. Rome did not yet govern the whole Alpine region, and so her communications with the Rhine and Danube were not everywhere secure. Dio⁴⁰ recounts the harassments of the Alpine tribe of the Raeti, who controlled the routes, exacted tolls on travellers, and not infrequently killed them, and Strabo⁴¹ says that the Salassi exacted like payments. In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus says that he brought the Alps under control from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian sea, making it sound as though he secured the Alpine passes single-handedly.⁴² In reality the process was long and drawn out and occupied several generals, among them Terentius Varro who

subdued the Salassi on the Italian side of the mountains. The establishment of a colony of veteran soldiers at Aosta helped to control the Great St Bernard and Little St Bernard passes.⁴³ Full control of the Alps was not finally established until 6 BC, with the campaigns of Tiberius and Drusus, following on from the achievements of other generals. It had been labelled brigandage when the Alpine tribes imposed tolls on travellers, but when the Romans gained control of the passes and imposed similar tolls⁴⁴ the procedure was presumably classified under the heading of good government.

Gaul had been fought over continually and Agrippa was there in 19 BC,⁴⁵ but the tribes were not fully pacified, and it was felt that there could be no such peace until Roman control extended to the Rhine, hence the campaigns that began in the next decade. Spain, especially the northern part, was rebellious and unstable. Augustus' campaigns in 26–25 BC had failed to subdue the Cantabri, who were brought to heel by Agrippa in 19 BC, but even then, after huge Roman losses, the spirit of the tribesmen remained proud and free. Agrippa was awarded a triumph, which he refused. One reason for his refusal may have been that he never wished to place himself above his friend and master Augustus, but the more compelling reason why he did not hold his triumph was that both he and Augustus were aware that victory in Spain was nowhere near complete.⁴⁶

The provinces of Africa, comprising a strip of territory bordering on the Mediterranean, had been handed to the Senate in 27 BC.⁴⁷ The younger Cornelius Balbus extended Roman control over the nomadic tribes on the borders of the province and subdued the Garamantes.⁴⁸ He was awarded a triumph in 19 BC,⁴⁹ the last to be celebrated by a provincial governor and a man who was not part of the imperial family. The *Fasti Triumphales*, the inscribed list of names of those generals and provincial governors who had celebrated a triumph, ends with Cornelius Balbus.⁵⁰ Henceforth triumphal processions through the city displaying captured booty and prisoners were restricted to members of the imperial family, and became less frequent, even for them. Tiberius was allowed to hold a triumph in 7 BC for his campaigns against the German tribes, but close family relationship to the emperor did not necessarily guarantee a triumph for every victory. For those family members, and for all lesser mortals, the triumph was converted into the less ostentatious *ornamenta triumphalia*, which bestowed the insignia and titles, minus the pomp and ceremony.

Egypt remained Augustus' own preserve, jealously guarded from senatorial influence and governed by equites with the title Prefect. The borders with Ethiopia were stable, secured by the prefect Publius Petronius⁵¹ or according to Dio, Gaius Petronius,⁵² who had conducted a campaign in 25 or 24 BC and again in 22 BC to subdue a rebellion by the Ethiopian queen Candace. Cooley⁵³ points out that Candace is not a personal name but a title approximating to Queen Mother, and that the Roman version of Ethiopia is not comparable to the modern country, being on the borders of Egypt and therefore encompassing what is today northern Sudan. Augustus says that the Ethiopian campaign was conducted under his command and under his own auspices.⁵⁴ He had

emphasised this point in the past, and now made it even clearer. The prefect of Egypt was answerable to Augustus as his legate, and a *legatus* was not allowed to celebrate a triumph, because he was not acting independently under his auspices. The operations were difficult because Petronius could not penetrate beyond Napata, nor could he sustain himself in the desert; Candace attacked his garrisons, but she was eventually brought to terms in 22 BC.⁵⁵ When she submitted she was allowed to send representatives to Augustus on the island of Samos, where he granted her favourable terms and magnanimously abolished or perhaps reduced the tribute exacted in the past.

The east had already claimed much of Augustus' and Agrippa's attention. Where there was stability, Augustus left matters as they were, but kept a vigilant eye on developments. His recent diplomatic success in retrieving the lost standards from the Parthians assured a temporary peace. Armenia was in the hands of a king favourable to Rome, and for the time being Rome and Parthia had reached a temporary balance. Elsewhere Augustus interfered when he felt it necessary to do so, sometimes deposing unsuitable monarchs, installing new ones, and on occasion annexing the territory of deceased rulers, as for instance when Amyntas of Galicia was killed, Augustus converted most of the territory into a Roman province and installed a governor, detaching those parts of Pamphylia that had been ruled by Amyntas and constituting it as a district of its own.⁵⁶ The key to the east was Syria, one of the provinces assigned to Octavian at the so-called first settlement in 27 BC. It was the base for military operations both internal and external, surrounded by client kingdoms and facing Rome's most co-ordinated and organised potential enemy, Parthia. In 19 BC it was supervised by legates of Agrippa, whose command in the east was still current,⁵⁷ but since he could not be in all places at once in such a large territory, even from the beginning his command entailed sending legates to govern the provinces.⁵⁸ Perhaps because of the recent tours of duty by both Agrippa and Augustus, it was quite secure. Judaea was as stable as its pro-Roman ruler Herod could make it, backed by Augustus; he played the game shrewdly and so did Augustus, and the balance was maintained until 4 BC, when Herod's death undid some of the stability.

The arrangements for provincial government in 27 BC were not immutable, and there were some adjustments, according to circumstances, as time went on. Gallia Narbonensis was given back to the Senate in 22 BC. Illyricum, which Dio⁵⁹ calls Dalmatia, had been previously allocated as a senatorial province, but it was converted to an imperial province when there was military activity in Pannonia, and it was felt that Illyricum would always require a garrison because of its proximity to an area of unrest. Technically the government of the senatorial provinces was separate from that of the imperial ones. Augustus appointed legates to govern his provinces, so there was always control over who was sent out, and the governors were answerable to Augustus, who answered for them to the Senate. Senatorial governors were chosen by lot and were directly answerable to the Senate, but in reality it was not so simple or clear cut as that.

Augustus' influence extended to all parts of the Roman world and beyond. Embassies came to him personally, effectively relegating the Senate to second place, but Augustus dealt very tactfully with such matters. When the Parthians sent an embassy to him, Augustus referred the ambassadors to the Senate,⁶⁰ but the senators immediately referred them back again for his decision. Augustus also received envoys while he was on Samos,⁶¹ and there were other missions which he may not have reported to the Senate.⁶² In his own words, Augustus says 'fugitives came to me', among them two British chieftains who had been ousted from their territories, Dumnovellaunus and Tincomarus.⁶³ He seems to have dealt with embassies from India in person, without referring them to the Senate, describing how the ambassadors came to him personally, *ad me ex India*.⁶⁴ The scene was set for him to take over all embassies in future, but he knew that the concept of the state was deeply embedded in the senatorial psyche, so that in dealing with and receiving embassies on his own account, his actions could be interpreted as a usurpation of the powers of the state, and a slight to Rome herself. Nonetheless he did not flinch from the task, nor did he delegate it.

Similarly he did not delegate command of the armies,⁶⁵ except in so far as those in the senatorial provinces were not under his direct control. But he was the paymaster, because he controlled state finances, and in any case the armies swore an oath of loyalty to him in person. There could be no doubt about who really commanded the armies. Eventually, Augustus was authorised to make treaties in his own name, which was bowing to the inevitable rather than honouring him. Outsiders, subject for generations to monarchs or chieftains, would not find this unusual; they were accustomed to dealing with a person rather than a state. The Paphlagonians, for instance, and those Romans who had businesses in the country, took an oath of allegiance not to Rome but to Augustus and his family and descendants, swearing to hold the same friends and enemies, risking death and destruction if they should break their oath, which they swore at the altars and shrines of Augustus.⁶⁶ In contrast to Octavian's insistence 27 years earlier that various temples in the east should be set up to himself in conjunction with Rome, this time Rome received no mention, as though the concept of Augustus now subsumed Rome. During the Empire, tribesmen who had made a treaty with Rome considered that their allegiance was invalidated when the emperor with whom they had made the treaty died, or the last of his family expired. This privilege of making treaties, in conjunction with command of the armies, gave Augustus control of foreign policy, with the implied ability to control expansion of the Empire, and rationalisation of its boundaries. It was not long before he embarked on the conquest of new territories, to take in the lands between Italy and the Danube, and the lands beyond the Rhine.

In all senses and nuances, Augustus really was the head of state. Such continuity, central direction and wide ranging powers had not been a feature of the Republic. It has been contested whether this continuity and central direction led to an increasing specialism and professionalism in government both at home and abroad. Senatorial governors chosen annually by lot were not given the

opportunity to develop any professional expertise except in a very general sense, but it can also be argued that Augustus did not necessarily choose the best man for the task when he made appointments to magistracies or to provincial commands. His criterion for administrative and military posts alike was not ability, but suitability. Loyalty to the regime and compatibility were the foremost attributes that he would look for.⁶⁷ This principle was flexible, especially when there was an emergency, as for instance in Africa, when generals were sent out who could best deal with the problem. But this somewhat negates the concept of a lack of professionalism, otherwise there would be no suitable soldiers to send when emergencies arose. Accumulated experience surely counts as a kind of professionalism. Mistakes in appointments were unavoidable even in a carefully scrutinised selection made for all the right reasons, but mistakes teach as much as successes, and if a species of professionalism did not grow up immediately among the administrative personnel, the continuity of the administration of Rome and the provinces would gradually build up into a corpus of knowledge that could be drawn upon by all, and the experience gained by one man provided a basis for imperial rule thereafter.

Augustus and the Senate

Augustus could not sustain the entire government without the co-operation of the Senate, or its complete subjection. Of the two options the first was by far the better method of working with the senators. A balance was difficult to achieve, because by reaching such a supreme position he had intimidated many people and thereby squashed initiative. He needed intelligent, talented and self-sufficient men in the top-ranking posts in the administration and as provincial governors, but not too talented and definitely minus overweening self-importance and ambition. No-one else should be allowed to rise to power as he had done, but on the other hand men must be encouraged to take up administrative posts and play their part in government. There were to be rewards, but they were in his gift, and he had blocked all avenues to personal advancement except through his patronage, so one of the most serious results was apathy. It was a persistent problem that although they dearly liked to retain their rank, with all its privileges, senators were not so enthusiastic about the duties that went with the rank and privilege, and had become disinterested in attendance at the Senate. Dio⁶⁸ says that apathy and poverty combined to discourage senators from attending meetings, and penalties for non-attendance had to be revived and enforced. The mechanism for levying fines for non-attendance was not a new idea, but Augustus made a point of enforcing the fines⁶⁹ and increased them later.⁷⁰ The quorum for passing the *senatus consultum* had to be reduced.⁷¹ The problem was still not solved 10 years later, for according to Dio,⁷² Augustus rationalised the Senate meetings in 9 BC, substituting two regular days per month for the irregular timetable that had been in operation in the past. On these two specific days there were to be no court sittings and no other meetings, leaving no valid excuse for non-attendance.

In order to inculcate interest in the state and devotion to duty, Augustus had to appeal to the stern old standards of the ancient Romans, employing a combination of conciliation and influence, example and legislation. By opening up the consulship to the nobles, he gave senatorial careers an impetus and a purpose. He made the rank of senator a hereditary one, encouraging the sons of senators to attend meetings with their kinsmen. This would provide the young men with experience of government before they entered the Senate as junior magistrates, and the longer-term effect would be to create a socially distinct group of senatorial families with a distinction between them and the equestrians and the people.⁷³ There was a price to pay for this distinction. Lack of conformity to the strict moral standards would be noticed, and penalised in the form of the *lectiones*, the revision of the composition of the Senate. Restructuring the Senate was not something that Augustus himself wished to dwell upon, and there is scant mention of these occasions in the *Res Gestae*, where Augustus passes over them with a terse notice that he overhauled the Senate three times (*Senatum ter legi*).⁷⁴ Suetonius⁷⁵ describes two *lectiones* together, and conflates some of the details, and Dio mentions five *lectiones* in 29, 28, 23, 11 BC and AD 4.⁷⁶ In 18 BC, instead of ejecting men himself, and thus becoming too closely involved on a personal level, Augustus tried a novel way of remodelling the Senate. His ideal was a Senate of 300 members, which would have been more manageable and at the same time would have elevated the chosen senators to a more restricted circle and therefore more elite status. He tried to achieve this low figure by delegation. He chose 30 senators himself, who were to swear an oath that they were the fittest men to be senators, then each of the 30 was to choose a further five men, and of these five one was to be selected by lot to name another five.⁷⁷ This is not quite as complicated as the government of medieval Venice, where there were several more elaborate selections before a viable list of officials could be produced. If Augustus' proposals had been implemented in Rome, it would have produced a neatly interlocked list of 300 men, all of whom owed their selection to the goodwill of another senator. Unfortunately the method was too cumbersome and complicated and broke down without reaching completion. Some men fought hard to remain in the Senate.⁷⁸ In one instance Augustus had to concede defeat, when he grew angry that Antistius Labeo had recommended that Lepidus should remain a senator. Labeo asked innocently why it should be considered harmful to recommend the man whom Augustus thought fit to hold the office of Pontifex Maximus.⁷⁹ Augustus had to draw up the final list of senators himself, and could not reduce the Senate to the manageable numbers he desired. The remodelled Senate was twice the size that he had originally aimed for, with a final total of 600 members.

Augustus began to work more closely with the senators and to involve them in decision making, by means of the *consilium principis* which was formally constituted at some time between 27 and 18 BC. Dio⁸⁰ describes the *consilium* as part of the settlement of 27 BC, as though it was fully operative by then. This may be anachronistic, or perhaps there were rudimentary traces of it which developed

further over the next few years. Crook⁸¹ assumes that it was established at some point between 27 and 18 BC, because up to 23 BC Augustus was not in Rome very often, and in 18 BC it is likely that when the social legislation began, the *consilium* would have been allowed to play a significant part in discussions.

The *consilium* grew out of the normal gathering of family and friends that surrounded any noble, and whose advice he would take on important issues. In its fully evolved form, Augustus' *consilium* comprised one or both of the consuls, a praetor, an aedile and a quaestor, and 15 senators drawn by lot. It is not certain whether any of the tribunes of the plebs were invited to attend. The personnel were not permanently appointed; Dio says that they were changed every six months, but this causes problems, because the consuls held office for the entire year until the introduction of six-monthly suffect consulships in 5 BC. It is possible that only the junior magistrates and the 15 senators chosen by lot were rotated on a six-monthly basis. The advantages and disadvantages of this procedure have been succinctly outlined: there was no better way of obtaining a cross section of senatorial opinion, and no worse way to achieve any degree of expert advice. This disadvantage probably did not concern Augustus in the slightest, who kept his own counsel and did not rely on such a system for advice; the *consilium* was an exercise in psychology. According to Crook,⁸² the *consilium* was never intended to perform as an executive body or to be a council of state. It was the overall appearance that was important. On really important matters, advice would be taken from a much smaller, select group of *amici*, one of whom was doubtless Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, and another Gaius Maecenas. Agrippa was Augustus' closest colleague, friend and family member, until his death in 12 BC. He had been delegated as deputy when Augustus was ill in 23 BC, and in 18 BC he was also granted tribunician power for five years.⁸³ This grant was made by a senatorial decree, confirmed by the people, so it had legal backing.⁸⁴ This was a signal honour, and a power not shared with many. Agrippa was Augustus' colleague in tribunician power, the first to be so honoured out of only five men who were appointed when the princeps asked for a colleague. Unfortunately, in the *Res Gestae* Augustus does not provide the identity of any of these five colleagues, not even naming Agrippa.⁸⁵

Any political business would be well prepared before it came anywhere near the *consilium*. Suetonius⁸⁶ says that the *consilium* met to discuss in advance those matters which were to be brought before the full Senate. Augustus could deduce from the preliminary meeting how the senators might react. He liked to encourage freedom of speech among members of the *consilium*, and on occasion, after listening to the opinions expressed at meetings, he changed his mind on certain issues, for instance in drafting some of the laws, where he would reword passages, or amend them in accordance with the recommendations of the *consilium*.⁸⁷ In turn the members of the *consilium* would feel that they had a part to play in government, and even though they may never have been allowed to discuss very serious matters before they had been thoroughly scrutinised by Augustus and his closest associates, they would still be left with a considerable share in the routine

administration. Augustus was assiduous in cultivating favourable perceptions in the Senate. He kept senators on their toes during sessions by asking them for their opinions out of turn, on a whim, to make sure that they were paying attention.⁸⁸ For most of the time he managed to make the Senate appear to be, in Brunt's description, 'the great organ of the state'.⁸⁹ The important point was that there should be no feeling of exclusion from policy decisions and legislative business, and no suspicion that senators were being hoodwinked, cheated, or imposed upon. The *consilium* was no safeguard against absolute rule, but it was important that it should appear that the senators had a voice that was heard by the princeps and that their opinions were given due consideration.

The social legislation of 18 and 17 BC

Dio⁹⁰ says that in 19 BC, Augustus was offered the post of *curator legum et morum* for a period of five years. This would have been less effective than the consulship, but prestigious enough in its own right. Augustus says that he was asked three times to take up the post of *curator legum et morum*.⁹¹ He cites the names of the consuls for each of these three occasions, which translates as 19, 18 and 12 BC. He refused each request because he would not take up an office which would have been inconsistent with the ancient customs. At all times, as far as possible, he wished to remain within the unwritten constitution of the Republic. A more compelling reason for his refusal probably stemmed from the fact that the post was offered with the highest powers (*summa potestate*) and without a colleague,⁹² which was too reminiscent of the turbulence of the past, and could be construed as the Dictatorship dressed up in different terminology.

Although Augustus himself indicates that he did not accept the responsibility of *cura morum et legum* when it was offered, Dio says that in 19 BC he took it for five years, and Suetonius⁹³ confuses the issue further by saying that he took on this task permanently (*morum legumque regimen perpetuum*). Sattler points out that while Augustus perhaps did not always tell the absolute truth, he had no reason to lie about this point, so Suetonius is probably mistaken when he says that Augustus took up the office permanently, and Dio⁹⁴ may also be mistaken when he says that the supervision of morals was renewed in 12 BC. The date accords with Augustus' own assertion that he was asked to take up the supervision of morals for the third time in 12 BC, but strictly speaking, if he had accepted it in 19 BC and it ran for five years, the renewal ought to have occurred in 14 BC, unless there was a two-year gap when Augustus did not have this responsibility.⁹⁵ Adding to the confusion, Dio separates the supervision of morals and the censorial power, declaring that as well as the post of *curator morum*, Augustus was made censor for five years, which is almost certainly an error.

To a modern audience, 'the supervision of morals' has sinister undertones, reminiscent of the darker side of more recent regimes, but in the Roman world of 19 BC, the need for moral and social reforms had become acute in the aftermath of the civil war between Pompeius and Caesar, and the situation had not

been improved by the unhappy years of the Triumvirate. The fact that Augustus was asked three times to attend to the reformation of laws and morals indicates that the need for such measures was deeply felt.⁹⁶ Roman values and virtues had given way to self-interest, lack of scruple, and moral degeneration. It has to be admitted that during his early career Octavian had set the example for at least the first two of these, but in later years he had managed to substitute a rather more wholesome reputation.

In more normal circumstances, the two censors, usually appointed every five years for a limited term, would have attended to the morals of the people, since in drawing up the census lists they could eject unsuitable senators from membership of the Senate, and demote other citizens, depriving them of voting rights.⁹⁷ During the turmoil of the civil wars, strict attention to the census had lapsed. There was certainly a need for reform, but it may not have been put into effect by Augustus in the official post of *curator morum*. In 18 BC he attempted to bring about the reform of public morality by means of legislation, a novel concept at the time.⁹⁸ In chapter 6 of the *Res Gestae* he says that he did not accept any post that was contrary to custom, and then goes on to say that whatever the Senate wished to be done, he organised everything via his tribunician power. This enabled him to introduce new legislation; Augustus does not elaborate further, but since the passage comes immediately after the three requests made by the people that he should take on the supervision of morals, the mention of tribunician power in this context is probably related to the social legislation of 18 and 17 BC, with the oblique reference to the Senate's demand for the measures to be taken. Brunt and Moore⁹⁹ suspect that Augustus was not quite truthful when he puts the onus on the Senate for the moral and social legislation.

The laws of 18 BC were concerned with curbing displays of wealth, promoting regular marriages and thereby encouraging family life, penalising adultery, and preventing corruption at elections.¹⁰⁰ Augustus was proud to announce in his *Res Gestae* that he led by example,¹⁰¹ by which he was presumably referring to his post-triumviral attitudes and behaviour. He could claim that he would not impose laws on the people that he was not prepared to obey himself.¹⁰² Despite his access to wealth, he had always lived simply. He reserved pomp and ceremony for state occasions and could maintain that what he did was for Rome, not himself. Simplicity and lack of ostentation was suited to his character; it was genuine rather than a calculated act designed to deceive, so when he introduced his sumptuary laws as part of the social legislation beginning in 18 BC, he was immune from the charge of hypocrisy.

In other respects, though, he could not escape the charge entirely. His marriage was outwardly stable, but childless, and his adulteries were not denied even by his friends, so the marriage laws and the legislation concerning adultery cast a dubious light on his integrity. At best the social legislation can be seen as a cosmetic exercise, or a response to a perceived set of problems. The principal question concerns whose perception prompted the legislation. Before he introduced his laws designed to increase the population, Augustus read out in the

Senate the speech of Quintus Metellus, titled 'On increasing the progeny',¹⁰³ dealing with exactly the same social problems. He wished to demonstrate that the situation was not new and the measures he was about to propose were in no way novel. As usual, he called upon the cushioning effects of tradition, and tried and tested customs, as a background for his acts in case he should be accused of Dictatorial innovation. He also insisted that he had not acted alone, on his own initiative, being careful to explain by the laconic reference in the *Res Gestae* that he carried out the measures that the Senate asked for, but he does not specify which measures. It is an acknowledged technique in management that instead of forcing through new and unaccustomed ideas, it is better to allow people to imagine that the new ideas are their own. Augustus subscribed heavily to this concept, waiting for permission to act and then taking the proposals a little further than had perhaps originally been envisaged. It is also debatable whether Augustus truly believed that he could reform morals and the general social situation by legislation. It is not entirely out of the question that it was just as important to be seen to attempt to improve matters as it was to succeed. The fact that the request that Augustus should be offered the post of *curator legum et morum* was repeated, seven years after the social legislation was put into effect, would seem to indicate that it had not been as successful as had been hoped, or that it had not gone far enough for some people's tastes.

The social legislation evolved over a period of time. Just how much time cannot always be documented. According to Dio,¹⁰⁴ Augustus was empowered to make whatever laws he liked and these laws were to be called *leges Augustae*. It would have been very helpful if Augustus had adopted this suggestion, and labelled all his laws from 19 BC onwards with his own acquired name, but instead he chose to follow the customary procedure, and to use his family name Julius to denote authorship of his laws. The inevitable result is that in some cases where no dates are available they cannot be distinguished from the laws of Julius Caesar.

It is suggested that there was an abortive attempt to begin this programme of social reform as far back as 28 BC, or at least before 23 BC,¹⁰⁵ but this derives from a reading of Propertius¹⁰⁶ and Dio¹⁰⁷ and the theory has been discounted. Rice-Holmes¹⁰⁸ believed that some legislation was enacted before 18 BC, but then was repealed very quickly, so it did not enter the historical record. On balance, most of the legislation probably belongs to 18 or 17 BC, but the evidence is not complete, so it is not possible to date it all accurately, nor is it possible to document the exact course that it took.¹⁰⁹ The ideology behind it seems to be consistent, in that overall it was designed to restore the old Roman virtues of *dignitas* and *gravitas*, to encourage thrift and stamp out corruption, to define the various social orders and keep them distinct but not mutually exclusive, and to propagate an active participation on the part of the upper classes in state affairs. Augustus' task was to weed out undesirable elements from the Senate and to ensure that worthy men remained in its ranks. Second, he wished to elevate the Senate to a deservedly elite position and then to preserve it in that

state, which entailed regulation of its morals, and encouraging a legitimate increase in its numbers by appointing only suitable men.

Below the ranks of the Senate there were other groups of people who needed to be given a sense of identity and position in the state. The various orders required closer definition as part of a descending hierarchy beginning with the senatorial body, and extending downwards through the equestrians, the free citizens, the freedmen of varying status, down to the slaves and the unfree. It was not quite so clinical as it sounds, though Augustus' ideology can fairly be described as a place for everyone and everyone in his place. The definition of social orders entailed the establishment of clear boundaries between Romans and non-Romans,¹¹⁰ and Augustus advised Tiberius to limit the number of manumissions of slaves, to preserve the distinctions between themselves and their subjects.¹¹¹ Dio's description of social classes encapsulates to a large extent the opinions of his own day on social orders. Social mobility was not prevented, but it was well regulated, so promotion when it came was theoretically deserved. Men of Roman or Italian stock were given preferential treatment, but care was taken to ensure that the lower orders did not swamp the upper classes, and Italians were always slightly behind the Romans, with the provincials ranking after the Italians. The upper classes were the main focus of Augustus' attentions in his social legislation. The restructuring of the Senate was a continuous process, and though reshuffling was carried out at various intervals, it never seems to have been completely successful in pruning away the undesirables in their entirety. Financial qualification for entry to the Senate was increased to 1,000,000 sesterces, which served to elevate the senatorial class to a reasonably exclusive level, while the census qualification of the equestrians was set at 400,000 sesterces, which would help to preserve the distinctions and the hierarchy,¹¹² though it must be admitted that there were many equestrians and freedmen whose fortunes greatly exceeded this figure, or even the census qualification of the senators. Many of them could probably have bought and sold any number of senators quite happily without so much as noticing the turnover in their account books, but wealth did not provide them with an automatic entry to the Senate. For that they required legitimate promotion.

It has been mentioned above that Augustus failed in his attempts to create a viable Senate of 300 members. If he had been able to reduce membership of the Senate to this desired total, this would have made the body even more elite than it was already, but he had to be content with a more broad-based Senate of 600 members. The exclusive status, once established, required constant monitoring, since unsuitable men gained entry to the Senate, or on occasion existing members degenerated. The dwindling numbers of the nobility had given cause for concern in the recent past, and in consequence Augustus had been granted the right to create patricians. But these measures did not fill all the gaps. Whenever it came to his notice that worthy men could no longer maintain the expenses of the senatorial class, Augustus would help them out financially, giving money to deserving men.¹¹³ Dio makes Maecenas advise Augustus not to eject men from

the Senate simply because of lack of money.¹¹⁴ But the financial assistance was only a partial remedy that merely solved the problem for one generation only. As Levick¹¹⁵ points out, the financial assistance and promotion of individual senators was not all sweetness and light. Other more wealthy senators would probably have despised the less wealthy individuals, because this was the way of the snobbish upper-class Romans, and any man who had been elevated or helped to retain his status by Augustus would have found it difficult to speak against anything proposed by him.

Posterity loomed large in Augustus' social legislation, especially in his attempts to encourage the nobles to replicate themselves. The laws concerning marriage and adultery were primarily directed to this end, though they were designed to address several other moral and social problems as well. There was no lack of Roman population in general, as the rising census figures show. Augustus preserves the statistics in the *Res Gestae*.¹¹⁶ In 28 BC there were 4,063,000 citizens, increasing to 4,233,000 in 8 BC, and to 4,937,000 in AD 14. As with all statistics, these are not as straightforward as might first appear. When the census was conducted in 70 BC when Pompeius Magnus and Licinius Crassus were consuls, there had been 900,000 registered citizens, so in just over four decades the population had increased dramatically to more than four million. Various solutions have been proposed, one being that there were great numbers of enfranchised citizens among the provincials and many soldiers and freedmen had been made citizens.¹¹⁷ Brunt suggested that for the first time, women and children were now included.¹¹⁸ Another factor may have been that registration of citizens in earlier years had been less than complete. For several reasons people would avoid being caught up in the census, most especially because by escaping the record they could avoid the taxation that was bound up with registration.¹¹⁹ There are always some people who manage to escape official records, even in modern times; as all genealogists are aware, some of our ancestors have slipped through the net of the census records in Britain, established in 1801, even though, ostensibly, people living in caves, barns and sheds were counted.

The Roman census figures show that there was no lack of people, but it was a question of the right sort of people. The Roman world in general and the city of Rome in particular were rapidly filling up with citizens of the lesser sort, while the nobles were beginning to shun legitimate marriage and turn their backs on family life. It was much more attractive to live the single life, take pleasures where and when required, and meanwhile to cultivate rich relatives and friends while waiting for the legacies to materialise. The marriage laws, comprising the *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* of 18 BC, and the amendments of AD 9, the *Lex Papia Poppaea* were designed to enforce the proper order of things. There was a great irony in that these amendments to the laws to promote marriage were passed by two consuls who were not married.¹²⁰

Carter¹²¹ points out that the legislation was aimed primarily at the upper classes, those with money or those who were eligible for office. He attempts to distinguish the clauses of the *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* and the *Lex Papia*

Poppaea, but this is an almost impossible task. Later Roman jurists usually quoted both laws together, without affording modern scholars the opportunity to unravel the various stages of the process. The amendments of AD 9 were made in response to objections raised by the people most affected by the marriage laws. According to Suetonius¹²² the equestrians made use of their prerogative to make demonstrations in the theatres and at the games, and did so vociferously. The amendments reduced the penalties on citizens who were married but childless, and they may also have incorporated changes made because of practical difficulties in enforcing the laws. It is possible that there were intermediate amendments that have since been lost to sight between the two main laws of 18 BC and AD 9.

The legislation of 18 and 17 BC seems to have comprised a straightforward attempt to regulate marriage and the production of children. It was held that men between the ages of 25 and 60, and women between the ages of 20 and 50, had a duty to marry and to procreate. Even after divorce or the death of the husband or wife, people were expected to remarry within a specified period. Quicker promotion was offered to married men with children, and it was enacted that unmarried men and women were ineligible to inherit legacies. Marriages among the classes below senatorial level were not set about with too many restrictions, but senators were forbidden to marry beneath themselves, and were especially prevented from marrying their freedwomen. The prohibition extended to the next two generations. This meant that in future all senators must think very carefully about their choice of wives, not least because the women in question would be the mothers of their children. The purity of the upper classes must be preserved down the generations.

Marriages between senators and freedwomen had become uncomfortably common during the last decades, and were attributed to the rise in status of Roman women in general. Some women had achieved considerable influence and wealth. They were on the verge of enjoying as much freedom of action as men, and worse still they had begun to voice their opinions. Fulvia of infamous memory had had the temerity to lead armies and meddle in politics. The more chaste Hortensia had confronted the triumvirs with well-reasoned objections to the taxation of women, and moreover she had won the day. It seemed that women as well as men preferred a life of freedom of choice, and they too were turning their backs on family life, thus ignoring the one purpose that the Romans thought that women were designed for, namely the production of children and the propagation of the human race. A reaction to this dreadful state of affairs was bound to occur as soon as there was time to think of matters other than war. The new generation of Roman women were intractable and difficult to live with, so men who were unable to cope with all this chose instead to marry their favourite ex-slaves who owed everything to them and therefore remained docile, biddable and probably faithful. Even Augustus was unable to answer for himself when asked by the senators how to curb the influence of women. According to Dio he could offer no practical advice, and simply muttered about decent dress and chaste behaviour.¹²³ In private he was no doubt extremely thankful that

Livia played by the rule book and set the required example to the women of Rome. This newly established liberty for women threatened the very existence of the nobility, so having set up laws to enforce legitimate marriage, there was now a need to protect and preserve it. This was embodied in the *Lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis*. Adultery was henceforth a punishable offence. Loopholes were closed as far as possible. Husbands could turn a blind eye to the affairs of their wives, but if they did so they could be prosecuted themselves, risking the same penalties as men who lived off immoral earnings, which reduced them to the status of pimps and their wives to that of prostitutes. A husband or father was allowed 60 days to bring about a prosecution himself, and thereafter anyone over the age of 25 could do so independently. The wronged husband must divorce his wife as a matter of course. Naturally, given the circumstances, a profitable trade in domestic spying grew up; it was a sort of Roman neighbourhood watch with a slightly different slant. Women were not granted the same rights as men. They could not prosecute unfaithful husbands, and could only resort to undercover activities to make sure that their errant spouses were punished by the relatives of the 'other woman'. Morality was not the most important issue that the adultery laws were intended to reform. It was not extra-marital sex that was frowned upon. The crucial factor was the legitimacy of offspring. A man needed to be certain that the child that his wife was carrying was his own, and the only way to ensure that the husband and no-one else had access to her, was to lock her up and keep her immune from contamination by other men. If that did not work, there was the deterrent of recourse to law, and the draconian penalties that attached to condemnation. The mildest form of punishment was banishment from Rome. There is evidence from an inscription¹²⁴ and from the work of Horace¹²⁵ that suggests that laws on marriage and adultery were in operation by 17 BC, which gives some indication of the importance attached to them by Augustus, who obviously thought there was no time to be lost. He probably reflected with some satisfaction that he had set the senatorial class on its feet and prepared the ground for its future growth, along the lines that he had laid down for it. Apart from a periodic readjustment here and there, he had only to wait for the next generation to grow up, schooled in the service of Rome. It is unlikely that he could foresee that 16 years later he would have to exact the penalties that his laws demanded in the case of his own daughter. It was more than ironic that while he was busily ensuring the legitimacy of offspring for the entire senatorial class, doubts were already being engendered as to the exact origins of his beloved grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, adopted as his own sons. There was of course no doubt that Julia was their mother, but however chaste and well-guarded she had been while she was married to Agrippa, her later behaviour gave plenty of scope for widespread, if silent, speculation as to whether Agrippa really was the father of these two boys. Julia's wide ranging sexual activities were no secret to anyone, except her father, who had no choice when he was informed of it in 2 BC, but to apply the full rigour of the law and banish his only daughter, his only child in fact, to the island of Pandateria.

All forms of unnatural vice among free citizens were prohibited by the adultery laws. Instead of trying to stamp out aberrant sexual practices altogether, the laws permitted such behaviour as long as it was perpetrated upon people other than the nobles and the upright free citizens of Rome. There was a large population who received no protection from the sexual attentions of the upper classes and freeborn citizens, because the principle behind the laws was the preservation of Roman dignity, which did not extend to the lower orders. This class did not have a voice except by resort to rioting and violence, reserved mostly for life-threatening crises such as food shortages. The most voluble opposition to the social legislation came from the equestrians, who expressed their feelings at the theatre.¹²⁶ In retaliation, Augustus brought out the sons of Germanicus and put them on display, to demonstrate that his laws were designed to produce stalwart citizens like these. The brother of Germanicus, and therefore the uncle of these children was the future Emperor Claudius, who with his stutter and his limping gait was not exactly a prime example of Roman manhood, and the irony would not go unnoticed. Claudius had the last laugh, of course. Augustus was as attentive to the equestrians as he was to the senators.¹²⁷ He defined the class more closely, establishing the property qualification at 400,000 sesterces. He tried to limit the use of the term *eques* to those men who were eligible to receive the public horse. This was an antiquated right that originated during the early Republic, when the need for cavalry had been met by providing mounts at public expense; hence the title equestrians for the class of men who formed the early cavalry. The military functions had fallen into abeyance, but Augustus revived the ceremonial and formal display. His main purpose seems to have been to recreate the procession of socially acceptable, physically fit young men, which at one and the same time proclaimed the glory and strength of Rome and provided him with an opportunity to review the equestrians and make adjustments. He excused the physically infirm from taking part in the procession, and eventually he extended this to all those over the age of 35. He desired quality not quantity, and above all else appearances mattered. Though there was an element of charlatanism, the display served its purpose as a cohesive link for the class as a whole, and as a source of pride and self-respect. The equestrians were also distinguished by their right to wear a gold ring, and by the broad purple stripe on their togas. They sat at specially designated seats in the theatre. All these distinctions and privileges served to mark the equestrians as a distinct class, second in line after the senators, whose sons were members of the equestrian class until they entered the Senate and took up their first magistracy. Augustus established and strengthened an unequivocal civic hierarchy, but did not erect rigid barriers between the classes. He monitored the equestrians as he monitored the senators,¹²⁸ rejecting men whose conduct was scandalous, allegedly after asking each of them to render an account of his life. Social mobility was not denied to equestrians who provided new blood for the Senate when they were adlected to it.¹²⁹ There were reprimands and punishments for notorious behaviour, and rewards for co-operation. Administrative and military posts were

opened up to those equestrians who wished to avail themselves of the opportunities. Eventually, over a long period of time, the four great prefectures were established and came to represent the summit of an equestrian career; the Prefect of Egypt was an early innovation dated to the post-Actium phase in 30; the Praetorian Prefects were established probably in 2 BC, while the prefectures of the *Vigiles* and the corn supply (*annonae*) were developed somewhat later, in AD 6 and 8. Aspiring equestrians could rise even further, though it might require time to do so. The acquisition of the necessary wealth, accompanied by imperial approval, could ensure entry to the Senate. Perhaps the most famous example is that of Vespasian, whose grandfather and father were equestrians; by means of the accumulated wealth of their immediate family and the association with the right people, Vespasian and his brother Sabinus became senators, and the rest, as they say, is history. Such startling social mobility did not flourish immediately under Augustus, but it took root in the ground that he prepared for it.

Probably in 17 BC, by means of the *Lex Junia*, Augustus began to address the problem of the massive increase in the numbers of freed slaves in Rome. The date of this law is disputed. Duff¹³⁰ narrowed its authorship down to two consuls named Junius who held office in 25 and 17 BC, the former while Augustus was in Spain, and the latter when Augustus was in Rome, which seems to pinpoint the date more securely. In part the problem arose from the easy options available to a master who wished to free his slaves without incurring the five per cent tax on manumissions. The formal method of freeing slaves required the presence of a magistrate to witness the proceedings; the manumission tax was levied at the same time. The advantage to the freedman was that this legal procedure entitled him to Roman citizenship. The effect on the administration of the city was to add yet another potential name to the lists of those who received the corn dole. On the other hand the less formal method of freeing slaves avoided this particular complication, but created a different one in its place. All that the master had to do was to assemble his household and make an announcement to them that certain of the slaves, or all of them, were now technically free. This meant that a whole category of ex-slaves were thrust into the wide world without the means to support themselves, nowhere specific to go, no employment, and lacking the advantage of citizenship. Between 17 BC and AD 4, the *Lex Junia*, the *Lex Fufia Caninia*, and the *Lex Aelia Sentia* were successively put into operation to try to stem the flow of manumissions, and to cater for those already freed by the informal processes. A specific category was created by the Junian law, whereby the slaves freed informally were recognised. They were technically free, but their property reverted to their original master when they died and they were not allowed to bequeath it to anyone else. This category of ex-slaves became known as Junian Latins, and they were granted rights that were similar to those of the Latin cities, regarded as the preliminary to Roman citizenship. The provisions of the subsequent laws¹³¹ illustrate the loopholes that had been detected in the previous legislation. First there was a limit to the number of slaves that could be freed at the same time, based on a percentage of the total number of slaves

owned by the master in question. Then the age of both the master and the slaves to be freed were stipulated. No-one under the age of 20 could free his slaves without good reason, and slaves had to be aged 30 or more to be eligible for the status of a freedman. Some of the legislation was designed to prevent a young man from freeing slaves in order to swell the ranks of his *clientelae*, which provides a sidelight on the political activity of the upper classes. Life was not as dire as it may seem for many freedmen, who amassed great fortunes and lived well, owning slaves themselves. They were not necessarily passionately interested in Roman citizenship or in politics, though social mobility was not completely denied to them. Suetonius says that Augustus gave dinner parties with great regard for rank. His liberality did not extend beyond the first few classes, and he never invited an ex-slave to dinner,¹³² wishing always to preserve that distance of caste which he thought necessary to good government. He instructed Tiberius to maintain a distinction between himself and his subjects. Modern society condemns such inflexible class distinction, but this attitude is a phenomenon of relatively recent lineage, and it is unfair and ineffective to judge Augustus by modern standards.

Where slaves were concerned he was at least conscious of basic humanitarian principles. When he was at a dinner party given by Vedius Pollio, a slave accidentally broke a cup which the master of the house valued highly. Pollio ordered the slave to be thrown to the lampreys in the garden pool, which would have been a particularly horrible death, similar to, but slower than, being eaten by piranhas. The slave appealed to Augustus, who asked to see the rest of the set of valuable cups. Deliberately he smashed every one of them.¹³³ In one destructive act he managed to express both his disgust at Vedius Pollio's cruelty, and his disapproval of the unwarranted display of wealth and luxury, which ran counter to his sumptuary laws. Almost incidentally he saved the life of the slave, but of course no-one has recorded what perhaps happened to the unfortunate slave on the morning after the dinner party; there may still have been one or two over-fed lampreys in Vedius' pool. What has gone down in history, and has lost nothing in the retelling, is that Augustus thought it inhuman to value a cup more highly than a slave.

Administration of Rome and the Empire

As for the populace at large, Augustus did not curry favours or indulge the people unnecessarily. He catered for them in his administrative measures, most of which came to fruition at a much later stage in his career. The rudiments of many of his later achievements had already been laid, revealing that he was conscious of the problems. Administratively the burden of work was increasing, so he created more praetors to deal with it in 23 BC, increasing their numbers from eight to ten.¹³⁴ The lack of a fire brigade has already been noted, and the successful exploits of Egnatius Rufus underlined the need for a regular system of dealing with fires in the city, so in 21 BC Augustus gave the aediles charge of 600

public slaves, who formed the prototype *Vigiles*, but that body was not fully formed until AD 6. Mindful of the need for rapid communications and of a properly organised scheme for road building and repair, in 20 BC Augustus appointed men of praetorian rank to the new posts of *curatores viarum*. The food supply required constant attention, and was of first priority if riots were to be avoided. Until the elevation of Gaius Turranius to the post of *Praefectus Annonae* the corn supply was administered by the *Praefecti frumenti dandi ex SC* whose title indicates that the Senate had been consulted in their appointment. The date of Turranius' appointment as *Praefectus Annonae* is not established; Rickman¹³⁵ places it late in Augustus' reign at some point between AD 8 and 14. Julius Caesar had regulated the numbers of recipients of the corn dole, and had tried to establish a novel way of enumerating and listing them, street by street and block by block, no doubt in an attempt to weed out cheats and the inevitable claimants of dead men's rations.¹³⁶ He seems to have established the names of those who had died and ordered the praetors to insert new names as substitutes for them. Augustus inherited the same problems that Caesar had experienced, and dealt with them in a similar fashion, revising the lists of eligible people district by district. The number of citizens receiving the corn dole exceeded 200,000 in 2 BC,¹³⁷ when Augustus was consul for the thirteenth time; at various times the numbers were revised, and the task of keeping track of the names of those eligible for free corn was entrusted to two ex-praetors in 22 BC; four years later they received two further colleagues. Once the quota had been fixed, no new names were to be added, unless there was a vacancy caused by the death of one of the official recipients, in which case new men could be chosen by lot, or could buy their right to the corn dole.¹³⁸

In the city of Rome, building was going on all the time; Augustus' boast that he found a city of brick and left one of marble¹³⁹ must be allied to the old adage that Rome was not built in a day, particularly Augustan Rome. The populace benefitted from all the improvements, and the world looked on. Rome was entering on a new age, which Augustus chose to proclaim by the ancient ceremony of the Secular Games.¹⁴⁰ In the *Res Gestae*¹⁴¹ he records with lapidary restraint the celebration of these prestigious games, listed along with the other games and shows that he gave. The Secular Games had been held for the first time after the war with Carthage in 249 BC, and again in 149 BC. They were held only at intervals of 100 years, and were meant to be witnessed only once in a lifetime. The games had therefore achieved a very special nature. Augustus bent the rules somewhat, referring to the Sybilline Oracles kept by a college of 15 priests. By this means, probably orchestrated, Augustus was able to revise the centennial cycle and substitute for it a period of 110 years. This calculation arrived fortuitously at 17 BC for the celebration of the games.¹⁴² It hardly mattered that the strict rule was not observed, and no-one was likely to contradict him.

The organisation and effort that went into these Secular Games would have rivalled any of the arrangements for a modern Olympic event, and the pleasure and excitement with which they were greeted cannot be overestimated. The

games comprised sports, literature, entertainment and religious ceremonial. The poet Horace was commissioned to write the *Carmen Saeculare*, a hymn to Apollo, sung or recited by boys and girls whose parents were still alive. During the sacrifices conducted by Augustus and Agrippa, prayers were said, invoking the help of the gods for Augustus and his household. The text is preserved on an inscription, 'for me, my family, and my household' (*mihi, domo, familiae*).¹⁴³ Self-advertisement had so far been restricted to individual successes gained on Rome's behalf; now there was an element of supremacy and guardianship, ever present but now fully acknowledged. The difference is subtle but indicative of how far he had come since 44 BC. The games, races, theatrical performances, religious ceremonies and sacrifices that constituted the whole festival of the Secular Games laid emphasis on the greatness of Rome, peace and prosperity, and behind it all the genius and achievements of Augustus. In celebrating the Secular Games in 17 BC Augustus would have felt great satisfaction. It was the beginning of a new era, the past eradicated or at least amended, and the future a more brilliant prospect than it had been for some long time.¹⁴⁴ As Brunt and Moore¹⁴⁵ point out, Augustus was celebrating nothing less than the return of the standards captured by the Parthians, the peace and prosperity of the Roman world, the restoration of the old Roman morals and customs, and the revival of religion.

Though there was still much to accomplish, Augustus probably allowed himself a brief glow of satisfaction with progress so far in 17 BC. In that year Agrippa and Julia presented him with a second grandson, who was immediately adopted by Augustus himself and named Lucius Caesar. There were now two heirs, and if Augustus himself were to die before the boys had gained enough experience, Agrippa could be entrusted to continue his policies and government until Gaius and Lucius were judged old enough to take over. Livia's sons Tiberius and Drusus, though not designated as heirs, were both of them proving themselves more than capable in the military and administrative spheres. Augustus' world was as secure as he could make it. It seems that his social legislation and the adoption of heirs did not meet with the approval of everyone, but that is only to be expected, given the diversity and perversity of human nature. The question is, how far were men prepared to go in expressing their discontent? Dio¹⁴⁶ places the first of the plots against Augustus in this context in 17 BC when 'many immediately and many later were accused, whether truly or falsely'. There is little evidence that such plots ever existed, or if they did, it seems that they were not very deep seated or serious, and history attests that no-one succeeded in eliminating Augustus.

It is true that the adoptions of Gaius and Lucius revealed dynastic tendencies that were not confined to purely domestic or personal affairs. Augustus had fostered the myth that he held only those offices that were authenticated by hallowed tradition, but it was becoming increasingly obvious that despite the built-in safeguards of adherence to traditional forms and the temporal limits on his various offices, Augustus had monopolised power on a permanent basis, and moreover the

situation was not going to change with his death. In 16 BC his grip on affairs was still tight. The consuls were Publius Cornelius Scipio, the son of Augustus' ex-wife Scribonia by her former marriage, and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, who was married to one of the daughters of Octavia and Antonius.¹⁴⁷ Halfway through the year Scipio was replaced for reasons unknown by Lucius Tarius Rufus, and thereafter, as has been noted, the consulship was opened up to the nobles. Augustus may have felt that there was a certain insecurity in allowing the nobility access to high office, especially when he was absent from the city. In 16 BC, both Augustus and Agrippa left Rome, each going their separate ways, Augustus to Gaul and Agrippa to the east. Perhaps as a precautionary measure to safeguard his interests while he and Agrippa were absent, Augustus appointed his loyal and trustworthy friend Statilius Taurus to the post of prefect of the city and of Italy, according to Dio.¹⁴⁸ The post is not specifically named, but Dio's language will bear the interpretation that city prefect is meant. Jones¹⁴⁹ points out that Augustus would require consular power to make this appointment. Unfortunately it cannot be said with any certainty that this is the exact origin of the city prefect of later times. It is a forerunner, but not necessarily a prototype, and if Taurus was also in charge of Italy then his office was probably more extensive than that of the normal, later city prefect. The crucial point is that while he was not in Italy, Augustus ensured that he had reliable deputies on the spot. Some said that his leaving Rome in 16 BC was a shrewd move because he had become unpopular after the social legislation. Dio¹⁵⁰ compares him to the ancient Greek Solon. It is a truism that familiarity breeds contempt, and this may be one of the reasons why Augustus never stayed in Rome for protracted periods, always keeping on the move throughout the Empire as long as he was physically able to travel.

There were many other reasons why he travelled round the Empire, of course; it cannot have been simply to prevent himself from becoming stale that he journeyed to various provinces, and nor can it have been to enjoy repose. Dio¹⁵¹ inserts the scurrilous story that he left Rome to enjoy the charms of Maecenas' wife Terentia more fully, but this is nonsense. He could enjoy those in Rome perfectly adequately, and probably had already done so many times. Crisis theorists, then as now, claim that he went to Gaul on account of the so-called disaster incurred by Lollius on the Rhine. Suetonius¹⁵² calls the affair a disaster (*clades*), but Dio says that Augustus hurried to the scene but found that there was nothing to do,¹⁵³ which would seem to indicate that the so-called Lollian disaster was not as serious as all that. Troops had been mauled, certainly, but it was hardly a disaster, or at least if the Romans of the day thought of it as such, then they were in for a rude awakening 25 years later as to the true nature of disasters; Lollius' defeat could not be compared to that of Quinctilius Varus. Lollius was an enemy of Tiberius, so his activities on the Rhine may have been labelled disastrous to discredit him. There was no full scale war when Augustus reached Gaul, and in fact the full scale offensive did not begin until 12 BC, so it is possible to interpret his presence in Gaul for the next years as

extremely thorough preparation for the Rhine campaigns.¹⁵⁴ One of his measures was to establish a mint at Lugdunum (modern Lyons) to enable him to pay the soldiers without conveying money from Rome. He also conducted a census in Gaul and levied taxes.¹⁵⁵ Dio simply describes how Augustus occupied this year and the next in Gaul 'arranging other matters'.¹⁵⁶ This passage casts some doubt on the date of the so-called Lollian disaster, since Dio says that the second year that Augustus spent in Gaul was during the consulship of Marcus Libo and Calpurnius Piso, which according to the *Fasti* was 15 BC. Syme¹⁵⁷ places the affair of Lollius in 16, not 17 BC.

The question must be asked, what were his plans for the province of Gaul, and for the lands beyond the Rhine, and for that matter the Danube? From 15 BC onwards, Tiberius and Drusus fought to subdue the Alpine tribes, thus opening up communications through northern Italy to the Danube, and most importantly providing access via a land route from there to the eastern provinces, all of which can be seen as practical necessities. It would have constituted a completely nonsensical situation to administer the growing Empire to the west and east of Italy without being certain of communications through the Alps. On the other hand the campaigns beyond the Rhine have attracted considerable controversy, because they do not fall into the same category as the subjugation of the Alps and the establishment of Roman control over essential routes. No-one can be certain of what was in Augustus' mind. The idea that he was bent on total conquest has been rejected by modern scholars, and Gruen makes a nice distinction between appearances and reality which fits the facts very well. In his view, there was never any master plan for world conquest. Augustus probably recognised very clearly that total subjection of Free Germany was not possible, nor even desirable, but what *was* desirable was to foster the idea of world conquest, to tranquilise the Roman populace into thinking that it was possible, that it was going to be carried out, and that success was just around the corner. Ever onward, ever upward, ever greater is an inspiring concept, and it is perhaps possible that Augustus thought he could sustain this ideology for ever, relinquishing it only after the disaster of Varus and the loss of three legions in Germany. In contrast, the practical school of thought merely imbues Augustus with the rather more down to earth desire to search out and establish secure frontiers, either by grand design, which is no longer a popular concept among modern scholars, or by lurching without direction from one reactive response to another, making a series of ad hoc decisions, tailored to the particular set of circumstances and needs that obtained at the time. The theory that Augustus was searching for secure frontiers to the provinces may contain a germ of truth, though it is anachronistic to talk of frontiers until much later, when demarcation of territories became much more pronounced. It was all a question of finding the best place to stop, balanced against Roman resources and the ability to administer the territories so far taken in. One reason for campaigning across the Rhine in the next few years may have been to secure the province of Gaul, always subject to Germanic influence and disruption. Caesar had crossed the Rhine, building his

famous bridge and then destroying it again; some years later, Agrippa had also campaigned across the river and received honours for doing so. These campaigns had not solved the problem, so now it was time to pick up the pieces and do the job thoroughly. That was the official story, but an additional and perhaps more compelling reason was that Augustus needed an army, and moreover one that was fully trained, properly equipped and ready to move. Caesar had dominated Italy from Gaul, and Antonius had followed suit, but their timing was flawed and the political situation weighed against them. They both fell under suspicion because their motives were for personal advancement, rather than for the benefit of the state. More subtle than either of them, Augustus bided his time until the ideology of Rome's world mission was firmly established, and he was accepted as the selfless leader who could direct that mission. Security of the Gallic provinces and the glory of conquest beyond the Rhine was the noble aim that he fostered, but at the same time he just happened to have found the perfect excuse, sanctioned moreover by the Roman people, for keeping a sizeable number of men under arms, all of whom swore an oath of loyalty to himself.

He attended to the needs of the army assiduously all through his reign, without appearing to indulge the soldiers too much. Land settlements and the creation of colonies for veterans had never ceased; in 26–25 BC, and again in 19 BC, colonies were established in Spain, and in 21 BC in Sicily. These settlements receive little attention in Augustus' account, but the settlements of 14 BC, in the consulship of Marcus Crassus and Gnaeus Lentulus, are singled out for specific mention. This special notice may derive from the fact that the men being settled on the land in 14 BC were veterans who had been recruited to fill gaps after Actium, who had thus served for 16 years.¹⁵⁸ This is the term of service that Augustus fixed in 13 BC for legionaries, who were to serve for four years as reserves after the initial 16, while the praetorians were to serve for 12 years.¹⁵⁹ Another significant factor is that after 14 BC land settlements in Italy ceased, and henceforth veterans were pensioned off with cash payments, which became the norm. At first the soldiers, mainly Italians, found it hard to adjust to the new arrangements, because they had been expecting land grants upon retirement.¹⁶⁰

Augustus mentions settlement of veterans in different sections of the *Res Gestae*. He enumerates the total numbers of men settled by him at 300,000, who either received lands or cash payments.¹⁶¹ This total probably includes the 120,000 men who were settled in colonies and received a cash payment from him in his fifth consulship in 29 BC.¹⁶² He devoted the whole of chapter 16 of the *Res Gestae*¹⁶³ to the subject of veteran settlement, noting that he paid cash for lands in Italy and the provinces for the settlement of veterans in 30 BC and again in 14 BC, an important point because presumably this did not involve enforced evictions. The total cost was 600,000,000 sesterces for Italian lands, which may have provided farms for 24,000 veterans,¹⁶⁴ and 260,000,000 sesterces for estates in the provinces. Later, Augustus expended 400,000,000 for cash payments to time-served soldiers every year from 7 BC to 2 BC, except for 5 BC. These men were settled in their own municipalities, perhaps as many as 30,000 of them between

7 and 2 BC.¹⁶⁵ Veterans were settled in many provinces of the Empire, in Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, the two provinces of Spain, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Gallia Narbonensis and Pisidia, and there were 28 colonies in Italy.¹⁶⁶

The evidence suggests that Augustus devoted considerable attention to all aspects of the army at this period, making regular arrangements for recruitment, terms of service and rewards on completion of service. Recruitment during the civil wars had been for a cause, or for the support of a leader, and soldiers would fight until the enemy was defeated and then go home, or to new lands designated for them by their leader, but now conditions had changed. A standing army, distributed over the provinces of the Empire, regularly recruited and kept up to strength as far as possible, regularly paid and properly pensioned, was now a fact of life. The enemy was outside the Empire, often far from Rome. Motives for joining the army were different, and had to be encouraged by means of a 'package deal' which outlined the terms and promised rewards. There was comfort for the soldiers in that they knew where they stood and could expect regular rewards, and reassurance also for the people of Italy and the provinces that they were not under any threat from seizure of their lands, nor from marauding, penniless veterans. The fully evolved military system was not yet in operation, but in 13 BC it can be seen in its embryonic form. Cash pensions were funded by Augustus himself until AD 6, when he set up the *aerarium militare* as a separate treasury to cater for discharged veterans. Having placed the terms of service on a regular footing in 13 BC, Augustus extended the number of years later on. The legions and the praetorians were thus established, while the auxiliary arm had yet to develop, but the use of native levies was already in operation, and it remained for Augustus and his successors to make adjustments of detail and put into effect the fine tuning to the army as a whole. One of the eventual results would be to divorce the soldiery from the populace and create two separate classes, whose interests were not necessarily the same.

Augustus' movements from 16 to 13 BC are not known, and neither the ancient sources nor modern archaeology can shed very much light on the matter. Dio¹⁶⁷ sums up the three years spent in Gaul, Germany and Spain under an administrative heading, describing in general terms how Augustus spent large amounts of money on some areas and extracted large amounts from others, and granted freedom and citizenship to some and took it away from others. Such anodyne terminology, describing fairly mundane procedures without detailing names, dates and places, implies that Dio had no specific source material to guide him. Similarly, Agrippa's activities in the east are not well documented, except that he was awarded a triumph for crushing rebellious factions in the kingdom of Bosphorus and settling the country afterwards.¹⁶⁸ He declined the triumph that was voted to him, in Dio's opinion because none of his peers was allowed a triumph.¹⁶⁹

Return to Rome, 13 BC

The five-year term for both Augustus' and Agrippa's powers ran out in 13 BC, so they both returned to Rome. Renewal of their powers in some form or other

was no doubt a foregone conclusion, but neither of them wished to seem complacent or to risk rejection. There was no protracted debate or opposition, but though the renewal was relatively straightforward, it is not without its complications for modern scholars. According to Dio,¹⁷⁰ Agrippa received tribunician powers for five years in 18 BC. Just before this passage Dio says that Augustus realised that affairs of state needed constant strict attention, and that he might one day be the victim of a plot, and so he elevated Agrippa to supreme power without giving this power any proper title. Agrippa still held tribunician power for a second term when he went to Pannonia in 13 BC, to quell a rebellion that had broken out the year before. The revolt itself receives only scant mention by Dio, who says that the Pannonians revolted and were subdued. End of story.¹⁷¹ In 13 BC Dio recounts how Agrippa's tribunician powers were renewed,¹⁷² which causes few if any problems, but then Dio follows this with a statement about Agrippa that is fraught with difficulty. He describes how Augustus sent Agrippa to Pannonia, 'entrusting him with greater authority than the officials outside Italy ordinarily possessed', an ambiguous statement which has caused great debate as to whether Agrippa now held *imperium maius* for the first time, or indeed at all. Obviously something important was planned for the Pannonian front, requiring a general of Agrippa's calibre to deal with it, but the main point at issue is the nature of Agrippa's command. In the past it was accepted that this is the first time that Dio mentions *imperium maius* in connection with Agrippa; opinions have differed about this matter, especially since this is not precisely what Dio says, though his phraseology could imply that Agrippa was granted *imperium maius* when he received tribunician power.¹⁷³

This perennial debate has already been described with its significance for the powers of Augustus himself. The minimalist view, that there was no such thing as *imperium maius*, entails finding some alternative explanation for Dio's statement concerning the nature of Agrippa's command in Pannonia in the winter of 13 to 12 BC. It may be that the intention was to start the Rhine campaigns and the Pannonian offensive at the same time, with Agrippa in overall command of the whole front and Drusus in subordinate command in Gaul and Germany, but this is fanciful conjecture, incapable of proof. Suffice it to say that Augustus had implicit trust in Agrippa and was quite prepared to grant him extensive powers, which he knew that his friend would not abuse. It is to be regretted that he never explained what those extensive powers actually were.

The accent in 13 BC was definitely on family and friends of Augustus. Drusus was left behind as legate in Gaul, and Tiberius was consul with Quinctilius Varus as colleague. Iullus Antonius was praetor, and gave games on Augustus' birthday, while Tiberius presided over the honours and celebrations for Augustus' return from the western provinces.¹⁷⁴ True to form, Augustus refused most of the honours, and he foiled attempts of the people to greet him by entering the city at night. The importance of the family of Augustus, both living and dead, was emphasised in 13 BC when the Theatre of Marcellus (Figure 6.5) was finally dedicated,¹⁷⁵ but although he wished always to remind people of the solidarity



Figure 6.5 View of the remains of the Theatre of Marcellus from the modern road named after it. It was converted into a fortress for the Pierleoni family in the eleventh century, then into a palazzo in the sixteenth century. Modern apartments now adorn the upper storeys. Only about one-third of the theatre is still visible, so it can be appreciated from the photo how large it was originally, with a seating capacity of over 20,000, the upper seating rows being built of wood. It was initially a project of Julius Caesar, but never finished, so it was completed by Augustus and named for his nephew Marcellus, who was to have been his heir, but who died in 23 BC.

Source: Photo by author.

of his family circle, Augustus also liked to pretend that he advanced various relatives only because they were the best men to carry out the tasks that he gave them. According to Suetonius,¹⁷⁶ whenever Augustus sought offices for members of his family, he invariably added ‘If they be worthy’, thus subscribing to his own fictional notions that everyone had been granted the opportunity to object, and therefore lack of opposition must necessarily denote agreement. Whilst he actively promoted his relatives he objected to the adulation that the populace was ever willing to display. He let it be known that he did not approve of the demonstrable favours shown to Gaius Caesar, aged six, at the festivities arranged for his own safe return from Gaul, and yet at the same time he did all in his power to advertise his grandsons and made little secret of their hereditary position. His dual standards perhaps blinded him to the obnoxious behaviour of his spoiled adopted sons, who most likely employed dual standards of their own and behaved perfectly well when he was watching. The solidarity of the family was underlined in several ways, not least in representative art. As part of the honours for Augustus on his return from Gaul, it was decided to build the monument that has attracted constant attention and the most intensive study from scholars,



Figure 6.6 The reconstructed Ara Pacis in its modern location near to Augustus' Mausoleum. The altar to peace was voted by the Senate in 13 BC on the return of Augustus from Gaul and dedicated in 9 BC. The celebration of peace was central to Augustan ideology, as indicated by the ceremonial closing of the doors of the temple of Janus, left permanently open in times of war.

Source: Photo by author.

namely the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (Figure 6.6), or the Altar to Augustan Peace.¹⁷⁷ It was not finally dedicated until January of 9 BC. Augustus had always attached great importance to the closure of the doors of the temple of Janus, thus promoting himself as the author of universal peace; now the idea was given concrete form, combining portraits of the members of his family with his own, elevating them all into the religious sphere without making them actually divine. Its significance for contemporaries cannot be underestimated. It epitomised all that Augustus wanted to promulgate in his lifetime and probably gave him immense satisfaction. Modern scholars argue about the identification of the individuals portrayed on the altar, but it is very likely that contemporaries would recognise them, and they would certainly be aware of the family as a corporate entity.

There were few honours or offices that Augustus lacked, save that of Pontifex Maximus, which he took for himself when Lepidus died in 12 BC. He refused the accompanying honours that the Senate voted to him, which Dio does not enumerate. Since his official religious functions now stipulated that he had to be accessible to the people, Augustus converted part of his house for public use instead of taking up residence in the official house of the Pontifex Maximus.¹⁷⁸

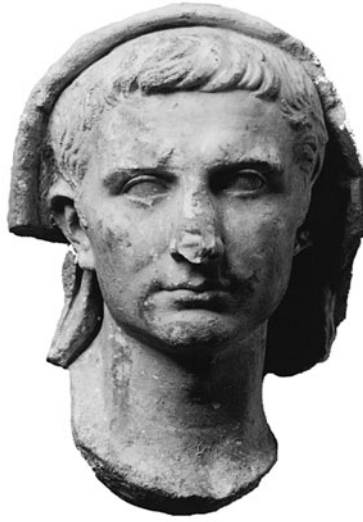


Figure 6.7 Veiled head of Augustus, depicted as priest preparing to make a sacrifice.
Source: Courtesy Römisch-Germanisches Landesmuseum, Cologne.

He had shown admirable restraint in refusing to wrest the priesthood from Lepidus while he still lived (Figure 6.7). This behaviour brought him credit, which weighed more heavily with him than obtaining the priesthood, but leaving his rival in office and waiting politely for him to expire had not been an entirely benign process. In the *Res Gestae*¹⁷⁹ Augustus contrasts what he terms Lepidus' usurpation of the office with his own election by popular acclaim, modestly describing how the crowds that turned out were unprecedented. There had been no love lost between the two men.

Augustus now controlled the whole state, including its religious policy, and his sense of completeness would perhaps have been supreme, were it not for a substantial loss that occurred in the same year. Agrippa had left Rome for Pannonia in the winter of 13/12 BC, but had scarcely begun a campaign. Dio insists that the natives calmed down when they heard of his approach, which sounds far too simple. It is perhaps more likely that Agrippa fell ill before he had begun operations in Pannonia, which may explain why Dio includes no details about any campaign. Having achieved peace without fighting, Agrippa returned home in the early spring of 12 BC, but his illness brought him to a halt in Campania.¹⁸⁰ Crook follows Syme in speculating that there was a plague at this time,¹⁸¹ and that both Lepidus and Agrippa may have fallen victim to it. When Augustus heard the news that Agrippa was ill, he rushed to Campania to meet him, but by the time he arrived, his lifelong friend, his son-in-law, his most devoted, loyal and reliable assistant, was dead.

Notes

- 1 Levick 2010, 90.
- 2 Dio 54.10.5.
- 3 *RG* 5.3.
- 4 Dio 54.12.4–5.
- 5 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.1; on encroachment as a recurrent theme, especially after 23 bc, see Lacey 1996, 3–4 n.9; 5; 12; 14; 210–32.
- 6 Crook 1996a, 91–92.
- 7 Suet. *Aug.* 37.
- 8 Dio 54.10.5–6.
- 9 Dio 54.10.6.
- 10 Eder 1990, 113.
- 11 Richardson 2012, 114.
- 12 Brunt and Moore 1967, 13–14.
- 13 Kienast 1982, 95–96.
- 14 *RG* 8.
- 15 E. T. Salmon, ‘Evolution of the Augustan Principate’, *Historia* 5, 1956, 456–78, esp. 473; Crook 1996a, 91.
- 16 Jones 1968, 13–15.
- 17 Brunt and Moore 1967, 13 n.2.
- 18 Levick 2010, 89–90.
- 19 Suet. *Aug.* 37.
- 20 Dio 53.32.3; Syme 1939, 372–73; Kienast 1982, 96–97; Salmon 1982, 147; Richardson 2012, 100.
- 21 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.
- 22 On Livia see Syme 1939, 385–86; Barrett 2002; Dennison 2010.
- 23 Dio 55.14.2–55.21.4.
- 24 Reynolds 1982, no. 13; Sherk 1988, 7 no. 3.
- 25 Barrett 2002, 198.
- 26 Suet. *Aug.* 40.3.
- 27 Suet. *Aug.* 84.2.
- 28 The anecdotes listed here derive from Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 2.4), translated in Chisholm and Ferguson 1981, 73–76.
- 29 Dio 55.4.2.
- 30 Suet. *Aug.* 79.1.
- 31 Suet. *Aug.* 63.1.
- 32 Dio 54.10.4.
- 33 Suet. *Tib.* 7.2–3.
- 34 Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.1.
- 35 Gruen 1996, 194–95.
- 36 Gruen 1990, 396.
- 37 Suet. *Aug.* 47.
- 38 Gruen 1990, 396; 1996, 147; Eck 2007, 58; 89; 2009, 231; 242; 248.
- 39 Salmon 1982.
- 40 Dio 54.22.
- 41 Strabo *Geography* 4.205.
- 42 *RG* 26.3.
- 43 Cooley 2009, 222–23.
- 44 Brunt and Moore 1967, 71.
- 45 Gruen 1996, 179–82.
- 46 Dio 54.11.2–6; Roddaz 1984, 402–10; Gruen 1996, 166.
- 47 Dio 53.12.4.

- 48 Gruen 1996, 167 nn.93–94.
- 49 Balbus found his way into literature via Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.792–95, and Pliny *NH* 5.35–37 describes his triumph.
- 50 Richardson 2012, 111 n.106, referring to Beard 2007, 61–71.
- 51 Pliny *NH* 6.181.
- 52 Dio 54.5.4–6.
- 53 Cooley 2009, 225.
- 54 *RG* 26.5.
- 55 Strabo 17.1.53–54.
- 56 Dio 53.26.3.
- 57 Josephus *AJ* 16.3.3.
- 58 Dio 53.26.3.
- 59 Dio 54.34.4.
- 60 Dio 53.33.1.
- 61 Dio 54.9.7.
- 62 Dio 53.21.6.
- 63 *RG* 32.
- 64 *RG* 31.
- 65 Crook 1996a, 95–96; Lacey 1996; 212–13.
- 66 *OGIS* 532; English translation in Chisholm and Ferguson 1981, 140–41.
- 67 Crook 1996b, 126–27.
- 68 Dio 54.26.3.
- 69 Lacey 1996, 217.
- 70 Dio 5.3.2–3.
- 71 Dio 54.35.1; Crook 1955, 13.
- 72 Dio 55.3.1.
- 73 Richardson 2012, 118.
- 74 *RG* 8.
- 75 Suet. *Aug.* 35.
- 76 Dio 52.42.1; 54.13.1; 54.26.3; 54.35.1; 55.13.3; Cooley 2009, 138–39.
- 77 Dio 54.13.1–14.1.
- 78 Dio 54.14.3.
- 79 Dio 54.15.7–8; Richardson 2012, 117.
- 80 Dio 53.21.4.
- 81 Crook 1955, 11.
- 82 Crook 1955, 9.
- 83 Dio 54.12.4.
- 84 Cooley 2009, 132.
- 85 *RG* 6.
- 86 Suet. *Aug.* 35.4.
- 87 Dio 53.21.3–4.
- 88 Suet. *Aug.* 35.4.
- 89 Brunt 1984, 423–44; Eder 1990, 114–15.
- 90 Dio 54. 10.5.
- 91 *RG* 6.1.
- 92 Cooley 2009, 130–31; Ridley 2003, 105–6.
- 93 Suet. *Aug.* 27.5.
- 94 Dio 54.30.1.
- 95 Sattler 1960, 88–89.
- 96 Richardson 2012, 116; Cooley 2009, 131; Ridley 2003, 102.
- 97 Cooley 2009, 131; Lintott 1999, 117–19.
- 98 Cooley 2009, 131–32, quoting Williams 1962, 28–29.

- 99 Brunt and Moore 1967, 46–47.
- 100 Levick 2010, 129–32.
- 101 *RG* 8.5.
- 102 Cooley 2009, 144.
- 103 Suet. *Aug.* 89.2.
- 104 Dio 54.10.6.
- 105 Crook 1996a, 92–93.
- 106 Propertius 1.8.21; 2.7.1–3.
- 107 Dio 53.13.1–2.
- 108 Rice-Holmes 1931, 42.
- 109 For an overview of the legislation see Richardson 2012, 118–24; Levick 2010, 129–32.
- 110 Eder 1990, 117; Nicolet 1984, 98.
- 111 Dio 56.33.3.
- 112 Nicolet 1984, 92.
- 113 Nicolet 1984, 95.
- 114 Dio 52.19.2.
- 115 Levick 2010, 141.
- 116 *RG* 8.
- 117 Cooley 2009, 141–42.
- 118 Brunt 1971.
- 119 Cooley 2009, 142, following Lo Cascio 1994.
- 120 Dio 56.10.3. A recent in-depth study of the legislation concerning marriage and adultery is by Mette-Dittman 1991.
- 121 Carter 1982, 143–44.
- 122 Suet. *Aug.* 34.
- 123 Dio 54.16.3–5; see also Lacey 1996, 188.
- 124 *CIL* VI 32323, line 57.
- 125 Horace *Carmen Saeculare*, line 45.
- 126 Suet. *Aug.* 34.
- 127 Levick 2010, 141–44; Carter 1982, 151–52; Brunt and Moore 1967, 56–57.
- 128 Suet. *Aug.* 38–39.
- 129 Nicolet 1984, 103–4.
- 130 Duff 1958, 210–14; see also *CAH* X 1934, 431 n.1; 888 n.9.
- 131 Gaius *Institutes* 1.17.2.29; 2.195; 3.56; Ulpian 20.14; see also Tac. *Ann.* 13.27.
- 132 Suet. *Aug.* 74.
- 133 Dio 54.23; Seneca *On Anger* 3.40.1–4; *de Clementia* 1.18; Pliny *NH* 9.23.39; 9.53.78; Tac. *Ann.* 1.10; 12.60.
- 134 Vell. Pat. 2.89.3.
- 135 Rickman 1980, 48; 63–64; Vell. Pat. 2.94.3; Tac. *Ann.* 1.7; Suet. *Tib.* 8.
- 136 Suet. *Iul.* 41.3.
- 137 *RG* 15.4; Dio 55.10.1.
- 138 Cooley 2009, 173–74.
- 139 Suet. *Aug.* 28.3.
- 140 Lacey 1996, 182–83; *EJ²* 1976, 60–61, nos 30–32.
- 141 *RG* 22.2.
- 142 Richardson 2012, 124–25; Cooley 2009, 205–7.
- 143 *ILS* 5050; Sherck 1988, no. 11.
- 144 Richardson 2012, 125.
- 145 Brunt and Moore 1967, 64–65.
- 146 Dio 54.15.1.
- 147 Syme 1986, 53–63; Crook 1996a, 94.

- 148 Dio 54.19.6; Tac. *Ann.* 6.11.
- 149 Jones 1968, 14.
- 150 Dio 54.19.1–2.
- 151 Dio 54.19.3.
- 152 Suet. *Aug.* 23.1; Vell. Pat. 2.97.1.
- 153 Dio 54.20.5–6
- 154 Wells 1972, 95.
- 155 Crook 1996a, 96.
- 156 Dio 54.21.1.
- 157 Syme 1986, 402 n.116.
- 158 Brunt and Moore 1967, 42–43.
- 159 Dio 54.25.6.
- 160 Keppie 1983, 82; 208; Cooley 2009, 175.
- 161 *RG* 3.3.
- 162 *RG* 15.3; Cooley, 2009, 172–73.
- 163 *RG* 16; Cooley 2009.
- 164 Keppie 1983, 76; Cooley 2009, 175.
- 165 Keppie 1983, 178; Cooley 2009, 178.
- 166 *RG* 28. For detailed commentary on these colonies see Cooley 2009, 236–41.
- 167 Dio 54.23.7; 54.25.1.
- 168 Dio 54.24.4–8.
- 169 Dio 54.24.8.
- 170 Dio 54.12.4.
- 171 Dio 54.24.3.
- 172 Dio 54.28.1.
- 173 Dio 54.12.3–4; 54.28.1. Brunt and Moore 1967, 47; Richardson 2012, 116.
- 174 Dio 54.27.1.
- 175 Dio 54.26.1.
- 176 Suet. *Aug.* 56.2.
- 177 The *Ara Pacis Augustae* has been discussed by many authors, notably Toynbee 1953; 1961, Zanker 1988 and Galinsky 1996 to name but a few. It was dedicated in 9 BC, and is described more fully in this book in its chronological context and in Appendix I.
- 178 Dio 54.27.2–3.
- 179 *RG* 10.
- 180 Dio 54.28.2
- 181 Crook 1996a, 97 n.139.

PROFIT AND LOSS

Following the death of Agrippa, Augustus' next decades were marked by well-earned successes offset by tragic deaths and misfortunes that beset the imperial family. The future had probably looked secure before 12 BC, but from now on Augustus was forced to adapt to constantly changing circumstances, over which he had very little control. He gave Agrippa a public funeral and buried his remains in his own family mausoleum, even though Agrippa had already prepared a burial place for himself in the Campus Martius. Five years later funeral games were held in honour of Agrippa.¹ A small part of the funeral oration given by Augustus has come down to us, preserved on a fragmentary papyrus from the Fayum in Egypt. It is rendered in Greek,² and its tantalising contents add to the confusion about Agrippa's powers. The language is unofficial and imprecise; the occasion would not demand formal titles or political precision, and the phrase that causes the most problems is tortuous to say the least: 'it was sanctioned by law that wherever you were sent, your powers should never be less than those of magistrates in other provinces'. Then Augustus says that Agrippa reached the supreme height of power, which refers to *tribunicia potestas*, by dint of Augustus' zeal and his own superb qualities, with the consent of all men. This last phrase may have bent the truth a little. Agrippa's popularity was by no means universal, and the senators did not flock to take part in the funeral celebrations.³ The oration is revealing for the light that it sheds on Augustus' opinion of the salient points of Agrippa's career. It demonstrates the importance which he attached to tribunician power and proconsular *imperium*, and the cautious way in which he described the latter is quite consistent with his claim that he accepted no office that was at odds with accepted custom; this claim extended to his friends and subordinates as well.

In his will Agrippa left his gardens to the Roman people, and everything else to Augustus, who distributed 400 sesterces to all citizens, saying that it was Agrippa's wish.⁴ Personal grief scarcely enters the historical record, but it was no doubt there, with all its regrets. Even if he was unaffected as far as his emotions were concerned, Augustus would certainly be affected in practical terms. Agrippa's death upset the balance. One of the best generals, arguably the best Augustus would ever know, and his acknowledged eastern specialist, was removed. There was as

yet no-one of the same calibre who could replace him, so Augustus was now left with the full burden of Empire on his own shoulders. There were capable men in Augustus' immediate circle, who might have been profitably cultivated. Statilius Taurus, for instance, could have been elevated to higher rank and schooled to take over some of Agrippa's official duties. He was a military man, he had been left in charge of Rome and Italy while Augustus was in Gaul, and he had the necessary administrative experience. He was not the only candidate with some of the requisite qualifications. Valerius Messalla could easily have been recruited to the highest office. But no-one had undergone the evolutionary education and companionship with Augustus that Agrippa had experienced from his earliest years, and no-one else was part of the Augustan family. It was too late now to begin all over again by suddenly taking into the family circle men who had hitherto been outside it, no matter what their status or compatibility. Dio says that Augustus was anxious to avoid envy and intrigue, and indeed it would have given rise to both if he had elevated an outsider, at a time when he had made peace with the Senate, opened up careers to the nobility, and established the elements of a hierarchy with himself and his family at the head of the state.

At this potential turning point in history, when Augustus could have chosen to broaden the base of his power, he chose instead to continue on his inward course, and 'reluctantly' according to Dio, he began to cultivate Tiberius, as though he had not considered this possibility before. The portrait of Tiberius that has come down to us is one of an embittered, resentful man, disliked, even loathed, in his lifetime. Reasons for his extreme unpopularity have been sought in his early development, sometimes projected as far back as his youth. An almost certainly fictional rivalry with his brother Drusus is said to have derived from the fact that Drusus was the real favourite of both Augustus and the people. Tacitus⁵ indicates that Drusus was the more popular of the two brothers, enjoying the favour of the people (*favor vulgi*), but with his usual twist Tacitus merely uses the popularity of Drusus to illustrate the fact that the favour of the populace was not a guarantee of success. The popularity of Drusus as opposed to the unpopularity of Tiberius may not have been true, and although an impression does not have to be true for a person to feel it very deeply, it is unlikely that Tiberius allowed his perceptions, whatever they may have been, to colour his relationship with his brother. He and Drusus remained fond of each other. A man who is devoid of feelings for his brother does not ride hundreds of miles in a very short time to try to reach him before his death, as Tiberius famously did when Drusus suffered a fatal fall from his horse.

Another cause for Tiberius' supposed discontent is the implication that it was painfully obvious that he was not Augustus' first choice as successor, and that he was cast in the role of caretaker while Gaius and Lucius grew to manhood, much as Agrippa had been. This perception of Tiberius' position leads very easily to the conclusion that he was resentful because he was fighting all the battles and doing all the hard work while perpetually relegated to the background. But it is by no means certain that he was ever relegated to the background. Both he and

Drusus had already embarked on distinguished careers, painstakingly advanced in successive stages to allow for respectable gaps between offices, which they held at the same age, and even if on occasion they were accorded the rank of a particular office prematurely, Augustus usually ensured that they also at some time held the actual office, so that they gained the relevant experience of it. The distortion of Tiberius' image comes about with the death of Agrippa, when it is implied that Augustus was left with no alternative except to choose to promote Tiberius, with the unspoken subtext that he would never have done so if there had been an available substitute. Agrippa was dead, and Gaius and Lucius were still too young. Augustus' alleged reluctance to promote Tiberius, as described by Dio,⁶ may derive from a tortuous form of retrospective reasoning: Tiberius turned out badly; Augustus was good; therefore he must have discerned the true character of Tiberius and cannot possibly have made the error of voluntarily choosing to advance such a man, so of course he must have done so only under duress, when he was a victim of circumstance. The same reasoning apparently did not apply to Claudius who was followed by Nero, or to Marcus Aurelius who was succeeded by Commodus, or to Severus who was succeeded by Caracalla. More credence might attach to this theory if Tiberius had lingered without office or military command until now and then had been suddenly brought out of the closet to find rapid promotion in 12 BC, simply because Augustus needed someone to fill the vacancy left by Agrippa. One glance at Tiberius' previous career and achievements prior to 12 BC gives the lie to the theory that he was a mere stopgap, chosen because there was no-one else. He had always constituted part of Augustus' training programme for government, but he had not yet held quite such a prominent position because there were others in the limelight who took precedence. Levick⁷ argues that advancement of Tiberius was part of Augustus' consistent plans for the succession. It has been suggested that Augustus employed the personnel available to him in a hierarchy of paired colleagues: Augustus himself and Agrippa constituted the first line in the government; next came Tiberius and Drusus, promoted to the same offices at the same relative ages; and after them Gaius and Lucius.⁸ The theory is attractive, partially masked, perhaps, by the fact that Augustus resolutely limited his choice of trainees to the immediate family, and to all appearances it was simply coincidental that there were two pairs of brothers in each of the successive generations. Kienast⁹ thinks that Tiberius was Augustus' chosen successor, and not simply a kind of regent who would hold the reins of government until Gaius and Lucius grew up. What has been interpreted as reluctance to advance Tiberius may have derived from Augustus' innate caution. He did nothing startlingly out of context to bring honours to Tiberius before they were due. True to form, Augustus did not rush things, and continued the promotion of Tiberius in stages, patiently allowing him to grow in stature and experience. He may have regretted the delay, but he did not attempt to create a duplicate Agrippa all at once.

The death of Agrippa left Julia a widow for the second time. She now had three sons; the youngest was born in 12 BC after the death of his father, and

named accordingly Agrippa Postumus. Julia was still young enough for child-bearing, and the marriage laws dictated that eligible widows should eventually remarry, so she required an acceptable husband. To Augustus this meant someone within the family circle. His choice was Tiberius, Livia's son.¹⁰ Livia may have played a great part in bringing about the marriage, and there were considerable political advantages.¹¹ It seemed to Augustus an ideal way of propagating the imperial household, to marry his own daughter to his stepson. It was clever, and tidy, and disastrous. Tiberius was very reluctant to divorce his wife Vipsania, who was Agrippa's daughter.¹² Seemingly no-one thought of consulting her feelings. She had lost her father, and then her husband was taken from her, all within a very short time. Tiberius' feelings were not considered either. He probably experienced a wide range of conflicting emotions, including grief because of his enforced separation from Vipsania, gratification of his ambitions which cannot have been entirely absent, and anger at being manipulated in this way for the good of the state. He was no doubt angry at himself for complying. There were few options open to him. For instance, he could not abandon public life altogether and go to live with Vipsania on a remote farm. He clearly possessed a sense of duty to the state, and probably wanted the honours that service to it would bring. Nor could he choose to act the perfect husband in public and carry on seeing Vipsania in private, because the adultery laws must be upheld by the immediate family of the man who had promulgated them. He was forbidden to see Vipsania at all, especially after he had encountered her by accident one day and then followed her around with tears in his eyes. The situation might have been relieved somewhat if he had grown fond of Julia, but there is general agreement in the ancient sources that he never did; quite the opposite in fact. The early years of their marriage were perhaps not fraught with discord. Suetonius¹³ tells us that the marriage to Julia was at first reasonably harmonious, but after the death in infancy of their only child, probably in 10 BC, Tiberius and Julia grew apart. There was probably very little time for the couple to devote to each other, which may in part explain their ultimate estrangement.

After the death of Agrippa, Tiberius' energies were directed to wars on the northern front. He subdued the restless tribes of Illyricum, and the province, which up to now had been governed by the Senate, was handed back to Augustus, because of its perpetual internal turmoil and its proximity to the new theatre of war in Pannonia.¹⁴ Syme outlined the importance of Illyricum as the province which bound the eastern and western parts of the Empire together.¹⁵

For his achievements in Pannonia, Tiberius was acclaimed Imperator by the soldiers.¹⁶ Augustus acknowledged in the *Res Gestae*¹⁷ that it was through the agency of Tiberius that Pannonia was conquered, but he gives himself the credit for bringing it within the rule of the Roman people. Dio¹⁸ treats the campaigns as suppression of revolts, but there was more to it than that, and Tiberius brought more territory under Roman control.¹⁹ As a result of the Pannonian victories, Augustus took the title Imperator twice, in 12 and 10 BC. Tiberius' Pannonian campaign, taken over from Agrippa, was undertaken in tandem with

the Rhine offensive, and has been interpreted as a two-pronged attack, strategically planned by Augustus, perhaps in consultation with Agrippa.²⁰ The campaigns in Germany have been studied intensively by archaeologists and historians. Many Augustan fort sites are known and have been well documented, and more are coming to light as research progresses, but the dating evidence is not precise enough to be able to allocate the forts to specific campaigns. Agrippa had crossed the Rhine and penetrated Germany many years before Drusus repeated the performance with greater intensity, and after Drusus' campaigns, Tiberius took over. Some of the military bases would be used only once, some would be occupied repeatedly and others may have been intended as permanent depots. Archaeologists can define these categories with considerable accuracy, but can only speculate about who used the bases and when. The movements of the various generals within Germany are difficult to trace on the ground, and the ancient authors were not particularly interested in documenting the finer details of the campaigns.

Lacking the details, debate centres on what Augustus was hoping to achieve. Argument continues about whether Augustus intended to stop at all, and whether he believed in the proud claim of *imperium sine fine*, power without end, propagated in literature. This claim was probably never more than hyperbole, designed to bolster and encourage the Roman people, since the practicalities of forging ahead as far as the Baltic or the Urals rendered such vast conquest very unlikely. If the intention was not total conquest, then argument descends to the search for a valid frontier, so the previous generation of scholars settled upon the Elbe and the Danube rivers as Augustus' ultimate aim. Drusus reached the Elbe, but did not garrison the territory, and nor did anyone else. The failure to overrun, garrison and annexe does not deter those who maintain that the Elbe was originally the ultimate aim, because the disaster in AD 9, when Quintilius Varus was defeated and lost three legions, can be portrayed as the turning point, when the aims were modified and the hopes of distant conquest abandoned. More recent reassessments have been more down to earth, reasoning that Augustus upheld the Roman ethos of total conquest, but realised only too well the practical difficulties, but this leaves uncertain his plans for Germany. He never annexed the territory beyond the Rhine, which for much of its length in its lower reaches became the boundary of the Empire.

To return to the chronological context of 12 and 11 BC, there were honours for both Tiberius and Drusus, but of a muted kind, compared with the pomp and circumstance of the Republic. Even though they were acclaimed by the soldiers, neither of them was allowed to take the title of Imperator, since they were fighting under the auspices of Augustus.²¹ At this time, it is possible that Augustus was unwilling to let the army forget that he was the sole commander, and so he appropriated the title Imperator for himself, adding the two imperatorial salutations of Tiberius and Drusus to his own.²² Tiberius was *Imperator iterum* by 8 BC²³ having waited through five years of campaigning to share this honour, by which time his worthiness and military prowess was plain for all to

see. Eventually he was to share the title with Augustus seven times.²⁴ Although they had achieved considerable successes in 12 and 11 BC, neither of the brothers was allowed to hold a triumph. They were granted triumphal insignia instead, a new kind of distinction²⁵ which Suetonius²⁶ says that Tiberius was the first to receive, in 12 BC. The following year Drusus was accorded the same honours. While Agrippa was still alive, the question of a triumph did not arise. Augustus had long since renounced the idea for himself, and his colleague followed suit. The Senate consistently voted triumphs for Agrippa, who just as consistently refused them. Honour was thus satisfied on all sides, without the need to parade troops through the city of Rome, with all the connotations of Republican rivalry and jealousy. Tiberius and Drusus had not yet reached the comfortable plateau of acknowledged success that had attended Agrippa. They had yet to establish themselves in that position, so the Roman people needed a reminder of their growing importance, and the brothers themselves needed some form of encouragement that would convince them that they were not exerting themselves for no rewards at all. Denial of honours and distinctions from the outset might discourage them, but on the other hand, Augustus could scarcely reverse the policy of renouncing triumphal processions without good cause. Apart from the possibility of opening up avenues for rival claims from other generals and repeating the problems that Crassus had posed to Octavian, when he demanded a triumph for his successes, it would cheapen the distinction to grant Tiberius and Drusus such an honour, when it was clear that the campaigns were not yet properly concluded. The invention of new honours signified by the bestowal of the triumphal insignia was a neat way of circumventing the need to hold a real triumph, while still granting the distinction. Augustus knew that appearances very often carry more weight than reality; he had found a suitable compromise.

If the marriage of Tiberius and Julia (Figure 7.1) in 11 BC²⁷ could be counted as a gain, it was offset by loss. In the same year, Augustus' sister Octavia died.²⁸ He accorded her full honours, for she had been loyal and useful to him throughout her life, quite apart from the affection he felt for her. Her body was laid in state in the shrine of Julius, where Augustus delivered his funeral oration. Drusus delivered another from the Rostra. The senators dressed in mourning clothes, and voted many honours for Octavia, most of which Augustus prudently refused. Finally, Octavia was buried in the family mausoleum. Augustus cannot have failed to take stock of his slowly diminishing circle of family and friends; Marcellus had died long before, but now within two years Agrippa and Octavia were interred in the mausoleum. The government of the Empire now devolved upon himself, supported by the family members who remained, but only Livia shared his long experience, and the others would have to be trained and brought to prominence; meanwhile he was alone.

For the third time in 11 BC, in the consulship of Paullus Fabius Maximus and Quintus Tubero, Augustus was asked to take on the *cura legum et morum*,²⁹ with the highest powers, but he refused, as on the other two occasions. Dio³⁰ confuses the problem by his insistence that Augustus was made supervisor of morals for a



Figure 7.1 Cameo of Augustus' daughter Julia by his first wife Scribonia. As a pawn in the dynastic plans of Augustus, Julia was betrothed to Antyllus, the son of Marcus Antonius, but was never actually married to him. She then became the wife of her cousin Marcellus, the son of Octavia and Marcus Claudius Marcellus. After the death of Marcellus she was married to Augustus' friend Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, and produced four children: Gaius and Lucius who were adopted by Augustus, a daughter Vipsania Agrippina who married Germanicus, and another son, Agrippa Postumus, born after the death of his father. The widowed Julia was then given to Tiberius, who was compelled to divorce his wife Vipsania, the daughter of Agrippa by his first wife. It is perhaps not surprising that Julia indulged herself in scandalous affairs that resulted in her exile to the island of Pandateria in 2 BC, where her mother Scribonia accompanied her.

Source: Courtesy British Museum.

second five-year term in 12 BC, which is presumably an error. It is permissible to ask why morals still needed attention after the rigorous legislation put into operation from 18 BC onwards. It may have been considered that there were still too many undesirable people enrolled as citizens. Dio³¹ says that in 11 BC Augustus conducted a census, registering his own property like any other citizen, and that he revised the membership of the Senate. This may be erroneous, since Augustus does not mention the census in the *Res Gestae*, nor does he mention his review of the Senate. There is no direct evidence to prove that Augustus received censorial powers in 11 BC, but Crook³² thinks that Dio mangled the facts, and that Augustus revised the Senate by dint of a temporary grant of *censoria potestas* granted to him for that specific purpose. There may not have been a full scale revision of the Senate; Dio merely says that he made a list of senators, without implying that he revised the total or ejected anyone. Talbert³³ says that Augustus had obviously devoted some thought to the composition of

the Senate at this time and wanted it to function properly. According to Dio³⁴ he reduced the quorum for passing decrees. Dio does not record that he set a new figure, but says simply that Augustus allowed decrees to be passed if fewer than 400 senators were present. It was no doubt a source of great irritation to Augustus that after having tried to reduce the Senate to a practical but elite 300, and being thwarted in the attempt, he then found that about one-third of the 600 men who fought to retain their senatorial status did not take the business of being senators seriously enough to turn up to meetings. Two years later, in 9 BC, he fixed the days for meetings at two per month,³⁵ and forbade court sessions on those days, to reduce the number of excuses that could be made for non-attendance. The senators had to be encouraged to play their parts in government, but only up to a point. Everyone knew that ambition was capped, even for ardent supporters of the regime. Augustus had not found the incentive which could replace republican private ambition.

The honours voted to Tiberius and Drusus in 11 BC did not mark the end of the campaigns. Augustus travelled to Gaul in 10 to keep in touch with the armies, taking Tiberius with him.³⁶ He was most likely still absent from Rome when the Ara Pacis, voted in 13 BC, was finally dedicated in January 9 BC. This altar is one of the most famous and most meticulously discussed monuments of Augustan Rome.³⁷ Its current location near the river Tiber, next to the Mausoleum of Augustus, is not its original site. It was erected further to the southeast, on the west side of the ancient Via Flaminia, the modern Via del Corso, and was reassembled and relocated under Mussolini. The dedication in 9 BC may have embraced the whole religious precinct around the altar, as well as the altar itself. It was situated within a public area in the northern sector of the Campus Martius, where the *solarium Augusti*, the huge sundial and astrological clock, was laid out.³⁸ The whole area had great astronomical significance, oriented in accord with Augustus' conception and his birthday. The gnomon or pointer of the sundial was one of the obelisks brought from Egypt (the other was placed on the *spina* of the Circus Maximus). The Ara Pacis was positioned so that the line of the autumnal equinox, Augustus' birthday, passed through the centre of it. The altar was set within a square enclosure open to the sky, pierced by two doorways before and behind it. On the four panels flanking the doorways, there are relief sculptures representing mythological scenes, and on the two long sides religious processions are depicted. Artistically the altar and its enclosure are of superb quality and the portraits are executed with sensitivity and care. Augustus and his family are depicted on the south side. Some scholars are certain that names can be assigned to most of the persons represented, but others are more cautious, and wonder if even contemporaries could recognise everybody in the processions.³⁹

Another problem is the nature of the processions. They have been dated to specific events, such as the return of Augustus from Gaul in 13 BC, when the altar was voted by the Senate. One objection to this is that if Augustus is indeed depicted as Pontifex Maximus, then the date ought to be after the death of Lepidus in 12 BC. An additional complication is that Agrippa is shown, veiled as

a priest should be in the procession, but he died in the spring of 12 BC, so if the sculpture commemorates a real event then it ought to have occurred in the early months of 12 BC. In opting for this date Bowersock⁴⁰ is forced to speculate that Agrippa returned to Rome shortly before he died in Campania. Arguably, the procession could have taken place later than 12 BC, and Agrippa was perhaps depicted in the place that he would have occupied, had he been alive. Zanker⁴¹ points out that it was the Senate which commissioned the monument, and the principle concern would be to ensure that the priests in the processions were depicted in the correct classifications, so that the correct portrayal of the actual persons took second place. There is controversy about some of the children portrayed on the friezes; for instance, the identification of two small boys, commonly labelled Gaius and Lucius, has been contested, because in 9 BC when the altar was dedicated, they were older than the infants depicted in the procession.⁴² Artistic licence in these matters is not unknown; for instance, in 1804 Napoleon's mother refused to attend his coronation as Emperor of the French, but she is nonetheless depicted in David's painting, sitting in the gallery seat that was reserved for her. The planning stages for the decoration of the Ara Pacis would perhaps have been undertaken immediately after the Senate decided upon its creation in 13 BC, and after Agrippa died, Augustus would presumably desire that a portrait of him should still be included. An alternative suggestion that obviates the need to date the processions is that they are hypothetical, quite unrelated to any specific events. The ideology of the altar to Augustan peace precluded any reference to military aspects; it is far removed from a triumphal arch, but the peace which it celebrated extended only to Rome and Italy. Wars were going on along the borders of the Empire, but such had been the case when the doors of the temple of Janus were closed in 29 and 25 BC. Foreign wars, comfortably distant from Rome and posing no immediate threat, were not viewed in the same light as civil wars fought between Romans for political supremacy, and principally it was the end of all those years of uncertainty which was being celebrated. The Pax Augusta had subsumed and absorbed the Pax Romana. From now on, Augustus was viewed both as the bringer of peace and as the guardian of it. Confidence in him was such that wars in the distant provinces could be discounted, because he could be relied upon to bring them to successful conclusions.

According to Dio many dire omens presaged the death of Drusus in 9 BC. He was consul *in absentia* during that year, and embarked upon a campaign against the Chatti and Suebi across the Rhine.⁴³ He had reached the Elbe and erected a monument, but he did not garrison the territory. Tracing the movements of these campaigns is hampered by lack of very precise dating evidence. Despite extensive archaeological excavation and research, which has identified many sites as Augustan or Tiberian in origin, it is not generally possible to distinguish between the two. Wells⁴⁴ classifies the known forts into two groups, legionary bases and auxiliary forts, and then assigns them to known campaigns by date. The Roman forts along the river Lippe constituted an important line of

penetration into Germany, and have been studied by H. von Schnurbein,⁴⁵ and Schönberger discusses the Augustan campaigns in general and provides a catalogue of sites,⁴⁶ including marching camps, since more and more of these camps are coming to light in Germany.

Drusus withdrew from the Elbe, warned by a woman of huge stature, so the story goes, that his end was nigh. His horse fell, his leg was badly injured, and he never recovered. Tiberius' famous ride from Ticinum (modern Pavia) to Germany in a few days is often used as a yardstick for the possibilities of travel in the ancient world, but it was not the norm; it required great endurance, and determination. Drusus was barely alive when Tiberius arrived, and died very soon afterwards.⁴⁷ He was given a magnificent funeral, and his descendants were granted the honorary name Germanicus.⁴⁸ The honours granted to his family, and the public solemnities of his funeral, run counter to the rumours spread about that Drusus intended to force Augustus to restore the Republic, and that he had written to Tiberius to say so. The story may have been a later invention; there may have been no suspicions among contemporaries on this score, save perhaps that Drusus was republican in attitude, but in a way that was acceptable to Augustus. Suetonius⁴⁹ repeats, but personally discounts, the story that Augustus was suspicious of Drusus. Not everyone with Republican sympathies was a potential conspirator. Augustus sometimes reproached Livy for being such a confirmed Pompeian, but it was not a serious accusation, so no charges of plotting were laid at Livy's door. The Drusus story is used by accusers of Tiberius to demonstrate the depths to which he would sink. Suetonius⁵⁰ says that he produced Drusus' letter in order to compromise his brother, because he hated him. The exhausting ride to Germany does not fit in with this theory. The sub-plots are more important than the facts. Drusus emerges as the unsullied hero, but safely dead; Tiberius is cast as the treacherous villain, and Augustus as the autocratic ruler whose grip on Rome strangled freedom. The main point at issue is that Drusus could see the stark truth behind Augustus' claim to have restored the Republic in 27 BC. Without actually saying so in as many words, it is implied that it was all false, and Tiberius, by revealing the so-called plot, condoned the perpetuation of autocracy. There is no need to read into the tale any suspicion of plots against Augustus' life, or even of discord in the imperial house. Augustus immediately transferred Tiberius to the Rhine front, and in that same year he allowed him to share the title *Imperator*,⁵¹ Augustus' fourteenth and Tiberius' second. The relaxation of Augustus' personal guidelines on this issue probably elevates him from the status of legate to that of a commander in his own right, or at least it suggests that Tiberius had special status while fighting under the auspices of Augustus. But despite the fact that Tiberius was allowed to accept the title *Imperator*, it has to be admitted that there is no record of him being granted an independent *imperium*.⁵²

Augustus' powers, bestowed upon him for five years in 13 BC, were due to expire in 8 BC. As was by now customary, he returned to Rome to wait upon events. With apparent reluctance, he accepted renewed powers for 10 years,⁵³

which extended term was in itself a vote of confidence. This was probably carefully orchestrated, for without Agrippa, he perhaps felt the need of a secure tenure for a practical length of time, to allow Tiberius to gain experience, and Gaius and Lucius followed in his footsteps. He had always been able to rely upon Agrippa, and could have rested secure in the knowledge that if he were to die, for after all he had been the one who was always ailing, then Agrippa would nurture his sons and keep order in the Empire until they took over. Intermediate heirs were Tiberius and Drusus, but now there was only Tiberius. The smooth succession was once again threatened. No-one in the Roman world, except Augustus himself, now possessed the relevant experience or authority. The show of reluctance when his powers were renewed this time may not have been due to play acting; he was 55 years old and was now facing an extended period of almost sole rule, and beginning all over again in creating a colleague with acceptable administrative experience, military prowess and general all-round credibility. Consistent with his whole approach to Roman politics, he would not elevate Tiberius too rapidly. His policy was to try to ensure that Tiberius, and Gaius and Lucius, earned their promotions. They must be visibly distinguished first, and worthy of the offices to which they were appointed. Too much, too soon would make them stand out in the wrong way, and would leave nothing in reserve, so that future honours would have to be denied altogether, or invented anew, most likely as a departure from hallowed custom. In 9 BC after the death of Drusus, and certainly in 8 BC, Augustus had no doubt already decided upon the course that he wished Tiberius to follow; significantly, Dio outlines all the honours that were to come to Tiberius, the consulship and triumph of 7 BC in tandem with the events of the previous year.

The year 8 BC was a busy one for Augustus. He records that he completed another census, where 4,233,000 citizens were registered. He carried it out alone, by means of his consular power,⁵⁴ which opens up the debate once again as to whether he possessed this power on a permanent basis or whether he now received a special temporary grant in order to conduct the census. Cooley⁵⁵ opts for permanent consular power. Despite the fact that Augustus does not mention any specific grant of censorial power,⁵⁶ several scholars are of the opinion that he must have sought some other authority besides the consular power, permanent or otherwise, to undertake the census of 8 BC. The consuls could conduct some of the duties of the censors if the post was vacant, but it would have been an uncharacteristic departure from customary practice if Augustus had neglected to obtain all the properly sanctioned official powers to support his actions, especially since he conducted the census alone. He did not allow Tiberius to share in this power in 8 BC, presumably because he did not yet consider him eligible. It need not constitute any slur on Tiberius' abilities or Augustus' opinion of them. Everything would come to him in its proper time.

Augustus attended to other administrative matters, such as strengthening the banks of the Tiber,⁵⁷ but without creating any permanent body to take charge of the problem on a regular basis; that was one of Tiberius' contributions to the

administration of the city, when he created a special board to take charge of the proceedings. Electoral corruption was brought to his attention, but he did not undertake a full investigation, merely insisting that prospective candidates should pay a deposit, which was to be forfeited if they were found guilty of bribery.⁵⁸ Elections were obviously still held for some of the magistracies in Rome, and there was evidently a surfeit of candidates, otherwise bribery would not have entered into the scheme of things.⁵⁹ The popular interest in the proceedings was great enough to incite complaints if there was any evidence of bribery and corruption, but the down-to-earth measures that Augustus adopted suggest that he did not think the matter serious enough to recommend recourse to legal proceedings. Among his other administrative changes, he enlarged the city of Rome by extending the *pomerium*.⁶⁰ The city was presumably growing all the time, so the new boundaries probably took in areas already settled rather than new ground which allowed for future expansion. The growth of the citizen body is attested by the rise in the census figures, but this would represent only half the picture, because it does not take account of the many groups of people who came under the heading of non-citizens, all of whom required somewhere to live. One administrative change, desired by the people and accepted by Augustus, was a considerable honour. The month Sextilis was renamed August. The people wanted to rename the month of Augustus' birth, September, but he preferred to distinguish the month when he was made consul; besides, it made an innocuous association with the past, since it followed the month of July, named after Caesar.

The gains of the year were also attended by losses. Maecenas died, and so did the poet Horace. Augustus seemed destined to reach an old age in isolation, as his contemporaries expired, one by one. Maecenas had been ill for some three years before his death, which is recorded by Dio together with various anecdotes about him.⁶¹ Dio credits Maecenas with the ability to control Augustus' sometimes violent temper, for which theory there is some support in Augustus' own statement, after he had failed to keep silent at a meeting of the Senate, that if Agrippa or Maecenas had been present he would have been prevented from making an exhibition of his feelings for all to see. Maecenas seems to have been allowed more liberty than many others, and may have been a trusted confidant. Dio illustrates his benign influence by the story of the court session where Augustus seemed intent on passing the death sentence on several people; Maecenas was unable to speak to him, so he sent him a message on a writing tablet, addressing him as 'executioner', which brought Augustus to his senses and stopped the proceedings. Concern for the victims was no doubt peripheral to Maecenas' concern for Augustus' reputation. As an arbiter of public perception Maecenas perhaps fulfilled this role on more than one occasion. Being only human, Augustus presumably at some times required a listener, or a friend with whom to exchange ideas, or a calming influence in times of stress. He had now lost his two closest friends, Agrippa and Maecenas, each of them valuable in completely different ways, and who had been with him constantly from his early

youth. Their absence created a lacuna in his life that could probably not be filled by anyone else. Practical advice may have been forthcoming from several sources but would not carry the weight of that of his oldest friends, and emotionally perhaps not even Livia could compensate; talented though she undoubtedly was, she was not a soldier or a politician, and had not shared those moments at Apollonia, when Caesar's death presented Octavian and his friends with a great opportunity and a momentous challenge. Augustus was surrounded by people all the time, but had probably never felt quite so alone. Grief was becoming a way of life, subordinated to the government of Rome. The show must go on, and the principal actor had to be on stage.

Augustus spent the rest of the year in Gaul, while Tiberius crossed the Rhine. This time they took Gaius with them, to broaden his experience and accustom him to warfare. The German campaigns are not well documented, but the conclusion of the wars in 8 BC seems to have been regarded as satisfactory. Velleius,⁶² full of admiration for Tiberius, says that he penetrated every corner of Germany, with few losses to his army, and reduced the country almost to the status of a tributary province, *paene stipendiariae redigeret provinciae*, but the qualifying 'almost' reveals the incomplete nature of the campaigns. Other than this laudatory general description, Velleius gives few tangible details. According to Dio,⁶³ all the tribes submitted except the Sugambri, and Augustus refused to make a treaty with any of them unless this recalcitrant tribe could be included in it, probably hoping that by holding them all to ransom in this way, the pressure of the majority of the tribesmen would prevail upon the Sugambri. He arrested and imprisoned some of the leaders, who killed themselves, and there the wars seem to have ended, at least for the time being. The army received monetary rewards, distributed in honour of Gaius Caesar. Augustus wanted to ensure that the soldiers should not be in any doubt as to whom they owed their extra cash, and was rather less than subtle in laying foundations for the future.

Tiberius entered upon his second consulship in January 7 BC, remaining outside the city until he celebrated his triumph. This was not necessarily a guarantee that Germany was completely conquered,⁶⁴ and indeed there was a minor outbreak of trouble later in the year. Tiberius returned briefly to the army, but there seems to have been no serious fighting; Dio dismisses the matter with the brief notice that nothing worthy of mention happened in Germany in 7 BC.⁶⁵ The lack of detail implies that there had been no definite gains. Germany had been resolutely invaded, subdued for the time being, and impressed with Roman strength, but as in Spain, the native inhabitants had proved just as elusive and determined to remain free. It would be many years before Germany was ready for pacification, and the Romans misjudged both the mood and the moment when they attempted it. Tiberius' triumph was not a definitive celebration of the conclusion of the wars, but it was a signal honour, designed to impress the people with his newly acquired status, and no doubt to extend to him the encouragement and marks of distinction that he needed to boost his morale and compensate him for the sacrifices he had made in his private life. As part of the

scheme for promoting him in public life, he embarked upon the repair of the temple of Concord in his own name and that of Drusus,⁶⁶ and gave a banquet for the senators on the Capitol. It was the usual round of building work and entertainments such as Agrippa had undertaken, all of which served to advertise the regime and keep the populace happy with it. Augustus attended to their well-being and safety in his administrative measures in 7 BC. After a serious fire which destroyed many of the buildings around the Forum, he restructured the fire-fighting service, dividing the city into 14 regions,⁶⁷ subdivided into *vici*, with *vicomagistri* elected by the inhabitants in charge of them (Figure 7.2). These officials, usually freedmen, were also put in charge of the public slaves, formerly under the supervision of the aediles, who had been trained to put out fires. The division of the city into regions was an intelligent innovation that made administration easier in many departments of life other than fire fighting and policing; the very longevity of the system is testament to its usefulness and success. Rome is still divided into regions, attested by the street signs on buildings explaining which region they belong to. The establishment of the fire service may have been Augustus' own idea, germinating from the previous problems caused by the difficulties in controlling fires without a localised body of trained men. The division into regions perhaps also derived from Caesar's methods of counting those eligible for the corn dole, giving responsibility for collecting names and monitoring deaths to officials who had charge of several groups of houses or

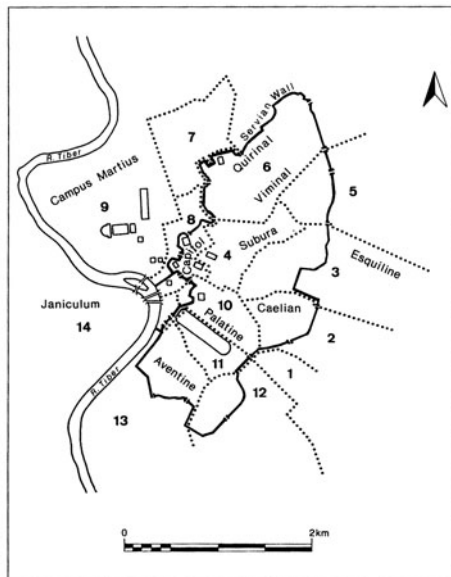


Figure 7.2 Plan of the 14 administrative regions of Rome.
Source: Drawn by Graeme Stobbs.

entire blocks. Divide and rule is a useful maxim which might be better rendered sometimes as divide and administer.

While Tiberius returned briefly to Germany, Gaius presided over the celebrations held in honour of Augustus' return to Rome.⁶⁸ Gradually, the Romans were becoming accustomed to seeing Gaius in official roles, minor ones at first, consistent with his age and experience. He and his brother Lucius appeared dressed in black at the funeral games for their father Agrippa,⁶⁹ held five years after his death. Such public display of the two boys resulted in notoriety that was not altogether positive. Dio points out that not all the flattery was sincere, because many people were intent only on furthering their careers by means of their supposed attachment to Gaius and Lucius. The people demonstrated their partiality in 6 BC when they chose Gaius to be consul. He was 14 years old in that year, and assumed the *toga virilis*, just as Octavian had done. Some scholars think that the election was probably arranged with Augustus' knowledge, and indeed Tacitus⁷⁰ accuses him of wanting the consulship for Gaius. It may have been an elaborate way of testing the reactions of the people, or it may have been a spontaneous gesture in response to the fact that Gaius was now legally a man. Augustus either was, or pretended to be, very angry at the election.⁷¹ He deferred the consulship for Gaius until AD 1, when he would reach the age of 21. Anticipating the obvious charge that he had become consul himself at the age of 19, he made a speech deploring the circumstances which had necessitated that he become consul at such an early age. No-one should take up the office before the age of 20, he proclaimed. He bestowed a priesthood on Gaius, and gave him the right to attend meetings of the Senate, which would give him experience of administrative proceedings, and of how senators behaved. The management of people was just as important as management of affairs.

Tiberius retires to Rhodes

There now begins one of the most puzzling episodes of Augustus' reign, when Tiberius retired to Rhodes in 6 BC. He had just celebrated his triumph, and had been granted *tribunicia potestas* for five years. Everything seemed to be progressing smoothly, he had reached heights that he had never before experienced and was now second only to Augustus, and then suddenly he announced that he wished to withdraw. His disappearance from Rome is usually interpreted as a self-imposed exile, or even as banishment, but so many conflicting reasons are enumerated for his departure that it is clear that even contemporaries, and the writers who came shortly after, could not penetrate the mystery. Dio⁷² illustrates the confusion and uncertainty that existed at the time of Tiberius' stay on Rhodes. He rounds off his account of the likely circumstances of Tiberius' withdrawal with the phrase 'all possible conjectures were made', indicating that not even contemporaries knew why Tiberius left Rome.

The account of Velleius Paterculus is the earliest that survives of this strange episode.⁷³ He was a contemporary of Augustus and Tiberius, and served in various capacities under Tiberius, at one point foregoing the offer of a post as

provincial governor in order to remain as a legate of Tiberius in Pannonia in AD 7 and 8. Velleius' grandfather, Gaius Velleius Paterculus, had been *praefectus fabrum* under Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Brutus, and had been attached to Tiberius' father Tiberius Claudius Nero. In 41 BC, when he could not accompany Tiberius Nero and Livia as they were fleeing from Naples, he committed suicide. The author Velleius was therefore well connected to Tiberius and can be accused of a certain bias, especially as his constant application of superlatives with regard to Tiberius becomes somewhat tedious. Velleius wrote his history of Rome to celebrate the election of his friend Marcus Vinicius to the consulship in AD 30. He would probably have been the first to admit that he did not possess outstanding talents as an author and a historian, but nevertheless he is the closest contemporary who has left some account of what happened during Tiberius' seven-year sojourn on the island of Rhodes. Velleius puts a rather milder slant on Tiberius' removal from Rome than did the later authors. He insists that Tiberius was full of consideration for Augustus, and left Rome so as not stand in the way of Gaius and Lucius, so Velleius acknowledges that there was some kind of rivalry, but does not construe this as total overt hostility. He implies that the glory that Tiberius had already won might have impeded Gaius and Lucius. By way of afterthought, he adds that of course Tiberius also needed rest from his labours in the strenuous German campaigns.

Suetonius⁷⁴ treats his readers to a whole catalogue of possible reasons for Tiberius' withdrawal, without deciding firmly upon any single cause, which implies that there was no available source that would have given the true reasons for the seven-year self-imposed exile on Rhodes. Had there been such an unequivocal source, Suetonius could have set this out in detail, preceded or followed up by a brief list of contemporary and later speculative solutions. He does add another possible factor, not elaborated upon in the other sources, explaining that Tiberius wished to underline his prestige by absenting himself, to let the world see how it survived without him. He also says that Tiberius himself gave out two different reasons why he departed to Rhodes. When he left Rome he let it be known that he required rest and repose, but later on he changed this story and attributed his absence to his desire to avoid suspicion of rivalry with Gaius and Lucius. In one passage Suetonius⁷⁵ compares Tiberius to Agrippa, who went away to Mytilene when Marcellus embarked on his public duties, so as to avoid the suspicion that he opposed or wished to overshadow the young man. This, says Suetonius, was the real reason for the withdrawal from Rome, though Tiberius only admitted it later. In another passage, Suetonius⁷⁶ dates this admission to 1 BC, when Tiberius' tribunician power came to an end, and when the two boys Gaius and Lucius were grown up and were by this time unequivocally the heirs of Augustus. This meant that there was no further cause for mutual suspicion or rivalry.

Velleius⁷⁷ is quite certain that it was Julia's outrageous behaviour that drove Tiberius away, and he lists some of her alleged adulterous companions for good measure. Dio⁷⁸ recounts, but clearly does not believe, the story that Tiberius left Rome because his marriage had irretrievably broken down. Nor does Dio believe

the version that claims that Tiberius went to Rhodes to further his education and fill the gaps in his knowledge, because he had missed so much in the educational sphere while he was occupied with his military campaigns. Dio's opinion⁷⁹ is that Augustus bestowed the tribunician power on Tiberius in order to elevate him above Gaius and Lucius, the main object being to pull them both up sharply and make them behave properly. The tribunician power was the highest mark of distinction, and not one to be idly distributed simply in order to teach someone else a lesson. It sounds rather extreme as an indirect admonition, when all Augustus really needed to do was to call the boys to a meeting and explain that there were other potential heirs besides them, and if they wished to remain as his designated successors then they had better adopt the right frame of mind and adapt their behaviour accordingly. The bestowal of tribunician power on Tiberius was surely not carried out on a whim with short-term consequences in mind. Having granted such power to Tiberius, while the five-year term was still current, it would have been difficult for Augustus to wrest it from him without a reasonable and provable excuse, and even that would have involved some loss of face in having to admit that he had judged badly. Although Tiberius' tribunician power was not renewed when it expired in 1 BC, it can be assumed that at least at the beginning of the five-year term, Augustus was perfectly willing to demonstrate his faith in Tiberius and trusted him to act as his lieutenant, much as Agrippa had done.

Tiberius' request to leave Rome was at first refused by Augustus, and the people demonstrated their unwillingness to let him go. Velleius⁸⁰ describes how the citizens shed tears at the prospect of losing such a great man. On being obstructed in this way, Tiberius is supposed to have refused food for four days to indicate the strength of his desire to leave Rome.⁸¹ Before he departed, he read his will to Augustus to prove that he had no nefarious designs on the Empire or any plans to damage his stepsons, who were now clearly in the first rank for the succession. Augustus complained in the Senate that Tiberius was deserting him, and he fell ill as a result of the stress. The illness has been construed as either genuine, or psychosomatic, or possibly even feigned, to induce Tiberius to remain in Rome. When he heard that Augustus was indisposed, Tiberius had already embarked from Ostia. He lingered off the Campanian coast until he was reassured that Augustus was not going to die, and then made for Rhodes.⁸² He took no large retinue with him,⁸³ and lived very simply on the island. He retained his tribunician power, but the fact that it was not renewed in 1 BC when the five-year term expired lends support to the theory that he was in disgrace. It was said that he received the title of *legatus*, but only because Livia interceded for him and induced Augustus to grant him something that sounded official and important, so as to disguise the fact that he was out of favour. Suetonius labels Tiberius' post as quasi-*legatus*, indicating that in Suetonius' opinion Tiberius' position was not perhaps as official as it might first appear.⁸⁴

The withdrawal of Tiberius will probably never be explained. The permutations are endless and beyond resolution. That leaves speculation, of which there is a surfeit. From the statements of the ancient authors, and the subtext implied

in them, it is easy to extrapolate further, as ancient and modern authors have done, to suggest that Tiberius' advancement, underlined by his tribunician power, made Gaius and Lucius jealous, therefore they protested and made threats, so Tiberius now had reason to fear his stepsons, and conversely Gaius and Lucius had reason to fear their stepfather. Building upon that, it is assumed that the boys' mother Julia must somehow be implicated, and that there were two factions in the Augustan household, one led by Julia agitating on behalf of the Julians, and the other by Livia, who carried the flag for the Claudians.

The evidence ranged on the side of voluntary exile is in keeping with Tiberius' later development, and naturally invites parallels with his eventual withdrawal to Capri. Levick⁸⁵ and Keinast⁸⁶ argue that Tiberius retired because of hurt pride. In a later work, Levick⁸⁷ says that Tiberius went off in a huff, and Barrett⁸⁸ uses the same phrase. All this hypothetical flouncing implies that the powers and honours that had been granted to Tiberius were simply not good enough for him. Dio⁸⁹ says that Tiberius was annoyed because he had not been designated Caesar, but in the context of the first century this is anachronistic. When Dio wrote his history in the third century AD, the titles Augustus and Caesar had assumed connotations of rank, and the designation of heirs to imperial rule as Caesars was the norm, but there was no such process in Augustus' day.⁹⁰ Dio presumably means that Tiberius was aiming for a firmly designated hereditary position with the succession assured in his favour. This is echoed by Sattler,⁹¹ who suggests that Tiberius wanted full adoption as Augustus' son, but as Levick⁹² points out, this would not have solved the problem entirely, because it would not have been possible 'while Julia remained unemancipated' and it would still merely have placed Tiberius on an equal footing with Gaius and Lucius, so the status quo and the supposed rivalry that went with it would have remained exactly the same.

Rather than going off in a huff into a voluntary exile from Rome, it is possible that Tiberius may have been sent on a mission to the Mediterranean area by Augustus. There is an obvious parallel with Agrippa's withdrawal in 23 BC, when he left Rome allegedly on account of his rivalry with Marcellus. It has been suggested that Agrippa's mission was an official one, not widely publicised, to watch over the volatile east while Augustus attended to Rome and the western provinces, and this possibility should not be entirely discounted for Tiberius. The title of legate, allegedly an empty title that he asked for to disguise the fact that he was in disgrace, sounds a note of discord with the theory that Tiberius had been exiled, or had exiled himself. On face value, it means that he was Augustus' deputy, though how wide an area the vague title covered remains obscure; perhaps deliberately so. If he was in reality only a private citizen exiled to Rhodes, with no power or influence after his tribunician powers had expired in 1 BC, the title *legatus* would have fooled nobody, most especially if there was no sphere of activity attached to it or any mention of a specific task.

There is another element of this story, which was never properly elaborated upon or fully elucidated in the ancient sources. While Tiberius was staying on the island of Rhodes, Velleius⁹³ says that provincial governors, whether chosen

by the Senate or appointed by Augustus, all made a point of visiting him on the way to their provinces. On meeting Tiberius, all these governors lowered their *fasces* to him, to acknowledge his superiority, or more specifically 'confessing that his retirement was more worthy of honour than their official position'. Is Velleius mistaken, or worse still is his account completely fabricated? When he wrote his history in AD 30, there would have been plenty of people still alive who remembered Tiberius' seven-year stay on Rhodes, along with at least some of the provincial governors who were active at that time and who could therefore deny what Velleius said. Why would Velleius make up such a story if it was not at least partially true, risking the charge of telling blatant lies? By the time that Suetonius was writing in the first half of the second century AD, the negative aspects of Tiberius' character and reign were embedded in Roman consciousness, so it was acceptable for Suetonius to portray him as living in perpetual fear and cowering in the countryside well away from the coasts. Despite this attempt at seclusion, officials still sought him out. As Suetonius says, echoing Velleius Paterculus, 'no general or magistrate who was on his way to any province failed to put in at Rhodes'.⁹⁴ He uses the words *nemine cum imperio aut magistratu*, indicating that these men were endowed with military powers or official appointments, and were not simply senators who were pursuing their own private interests, and who had suddenly decided that while they were in the vicinity they might as well go and see how old Tiberius was getting on.

If Tiberius was in disgrace, forcibly exiled and even at one time suspected of plotting against Gaius and Lucius, these visits of provincial governors of senatorial and imperial provinces would surely have been regarded with dismay. Such visits could not have been kept secret, even if that had been the intention. On the premise that Velleius was correct in saying that governors and generals openly sailed to Rhodes to see Tiberius, why was there no investigation at Rome as to whether Tiberius was creating a faction of his own, subverting various officials, or conversely, whether governors were sounding him out as to the possibility of a rebellion that might place him in command of the Empire? If these little conferences were going on for the entire seven years that Tiberius remained on Rhodes, it must be assumed that Augustus knew all about it and had no occasion to be worried. He was not exactly a shy and retiring wallflower when it came to prosecuting and condemning men whom he considered dangerous, and even if Tiberius was not to be punished because he was Livia's son, the suspect generals with *imperium* and the provincial governors would have been rounded up. So too would other associates of Tiberius, and he seems to have had many friends with him on Rhodes or in territories within easy reach of the island. The personnel in the provinces around Rhodes have been examined by Levick,⁹⁵ who concludes that all of those for whom there is any evidence were associates of Tiberius, and if they were not close friends then at least they were not enemies. Bowersock⁹⁶ points out that Tiberius had many clients in the eastern provinces. These details may be coincidental, or they may point to a coherent policy, never elaborated upon and veiled in secrecy.

To take the episode as a whole it is necessary to review past and future events and describe them out of chronological context. Events in the east revolved as always around the kingdom of Armenia and its relationship with Rome and Parthia. In 7 BC or thereabouts, Tigranes III, king of Armenia, died or was murdered. He had been installed and crowned by Tiberius himself, and ensured that Armenia was ruled in a pro-Roman atmosphere.⁹⁷ After the death of the king, Dio says that Tiberius was assigned to Armenia in 6 BC⁹⁸ but he appears to have ignored this assignment and retired to Rhodes instead. Gruen⁹⁹ accuses Tiberius of failure to fulfil his mission, and Cooley says that he shirked it.¹⁰⁰ The balance between Rome and Parthia, always delicate, was now even more fragile, as it always was when the Armenian throne was vacant or unstable. According to Dio,¹⁰¹ after the death of Tigranes, Armenia became estranged to the Romans, and as Richardson¹⁰² points out, the rulers of Armenia after the death of Tigranes were not pro-Roman, which would provide opportunities for the Parthians to intercede and take control of this important state, often described in modern terms as a buffer between the two rival empires of Parthia and Rome. With the Parthians in control of Armenia and the routes into Roman territory, the other eastern provinces were under immediate threat.

The chronology of the reigns of the various successors of Tigranes is confused, and reliable information is next to non-existent. With lapidary simplicity and no dates, Augustus records in the *Res Gestae* that he handed over the kingdom of Armenia to Ariobarzanes, son of Artabazus king of the Medes. After the death of Ariobarzanes, his son Artavasdes succeeded him, but his reign was short. Augustus eventually called in another member of the royal house of Armenia, who became Tigranes V. Augustus says that the situation was sorted out by Gaius, his (adopted) son.¹⁰³ This short description conceals a convoluted period in Armenian and Parthian history upon which Augustus does not elaborate; for instance he does not dwell on the fact that while he was trying to install Artavasdes as king, there were rival claimants, Tigranes IV and his sister Erato, the son and daughter of Tigranes III. The Romans did not recognise this pair as rulers, but the Parthians did, and with their assistance Artavasdes was ejected, and some Romans died.¹⁰⁴ Tacitus¹⁰⁵ also keeps the account of the situation very brief, explaining how Artavasdes was forced out not without some disaster to the Romans. Cooley says that it is not surprising that Augustus was deliberately vague about this episode.¹⁰⁶

In 2 BC, the Parthian king Phraates IV died, and was replaced by the more aggressive Phraates V, who had designs on Armenia. It was an opportune moment for Phraates V. Naturally he supported Tigranes IV and Erato rather than the pro-Roman Artavasdes. Velleius¹⁰⁷ merely notes that the Parthians laid hold of Armenia, without giving specific dates or any further details. The statement is made in the context of the worldwide influence that Tiberius wielded, and the dire effects caused by his absence on Rhodes, in that the world fell apart because he was not on hand to stop it. Unfortunately, Velleius unwittingly lends support to those who accuse Tiberius of doing nothing to stop the Parthians laying hold of Armenia. Augustus responded in 1 BC by sending out the 18-year-old

Gaius, with advisers and assistants, to lead an armed expedition to the east, with the intention of restoring the balance.¹⁰⁸ By this time, Tigranes IV was probably dead, killed in some battle, and at the same time or shortly afterwards, his sister Erato abdicated.

Gaius went to the east by way of Arabia and Syria, while Phraates and Augustus entered upon a rather high-handed correspondence, in which each addressed the other insolently without the customary flattering series of titles.¹⁰⁹ There was a general expectation of war between Rome and Parthia.¹¹⁰ Some years went by, until in AD 2 the Parthian king came to terms. According to Dio,¹¹¹ Phraates V, whom he calls Phrataces, could not rely upon the loyalty of his own people, and on learning that Gaius was in Syria, he decided to pre-empt Roman aggression, and voluntarily offered to give up control of Armenia. The simplistic scenario reported here probably entailed much more diplomatic negotiating and displays of military strength than is implied in Dio's brief description. Gaius and Phraates met on an island in the Euphrates,¹¹² compliments were exchanged, and accommodation was reached. For the time being at least Armenia was free from the threat of Parthian domination, and under the influence if not control of Rome.

And then Tiberius came home.

Tiberius had been in Rhodes from the death of the Armenian king Tigranes III in 7 BC or possibly some months later, to the settlement in AD 2 between Phraates V and the Romans. This was a significant and somewhat tense period. To suggest that it was all undercover work, while all the time Augustus had allowed the world to think that Tiberius had gone to Rhodes as an exile, is to invite comments on the overworked imagination of a manic devotee of espionage films, with the Parthian king sitting before a map of the known world and stroking, appropriately, a white Persian cat. The problem with the whole episode is that the adoption of any single theory invariably involves rejection or tortuous explanation of some conflicting parts of the so-called evidence, but this undercover observation theory is no more crackpot than some of the ancient ones. It is worth repeating that no ancient source that has come down to us can explain in words of one syllable exactly why Tiberius was in Rhodes for seven years, so the ancient historians had to resort to setting out for their readers the theories and opinions of contemporaries and later commentators, then each author could choose to emphasise the particular theory that he favoured. Modern authors have to follow suit and advance their own theories.

It is not entirely impossible that for seven years Tiberius played the part of a finger-on-the-pulse, otherwise innocuous private citizen with no apparent armed force, but nonetheless a legate of Augustus, situated in the Mediterranean, where communications were fairly rapid in all directions. It provides a reason, other than simple good manners, for the visits of provincial governors, who might have been calling in for briefings and debriefings on their way to and from their provinces. There are naturally some stories which conflict with the theory. When Gaius reached the east, a vitriolic rivalry broke out between him and his stepfather, egged on by Marcus Lollius who was now Gaius' principal adviser.¹¹³ Lollius was an

enemy of Tiberius. He had suffered a defeat by German tribes in 16 BC, sufficiently disastrous to be labelled *clades Lolliana*, and one of his legions had lost an eagle standard. His Rhine disaster may have been exaggerated in importance, but Tiberius had always been successful in his campaigns, so there may have been some acrimonious exchanges between the two men. While Gaius was advised by Lollius, Tiberius is said to have become so fearful for his life¹¹⁴ that he withdrew even further into the countryside of Rhodes. He begged for an observer to be sent out, to monitor his behaviour and proclaim his innocence to the world. The tales may be true, in so far as they were in current circulation at the time, but this does not necessarily mean that they had any basis in fact. They are redolent of sensationalism and vindictive glee, as evidenced by the tale reported by Suetonius¹¹⁵ that an inhabitant of Nemausus made an offer to Gaius to go to Rhodes and bring back the head of 'the exile', as Tiberius was called.

The unaccountable factor in these strange tales is that Augustus would surely not countenance negotiations with Parthia while there was serious dissension in the Roman presence in the east. Bitterly divided forces, constantly bickering and making accusations of subversion against each other, are not the best tools with which to set out to impress a potential enemy who has recourse to the organised strength of an empire behind him. The best way to put an end to it would have been to give sole command to Gaius, recall Tiberius to prevent him from doing any more harm, and then watch him closely, especially since Tiberius allegedly asked to be allowed to come home. But the story goes that Augustus would not let him come back. It was said that he referred the matter to Gaius, who eventually relented in AD 2 and allowed his stepfather to return. It is worth considering that the story that Tiberius was not allowed to come home until Gaius approved may not have concerned family rivalry at all, but perhaps referred to the political situation. Augustus could not let Tiberius return to Rome until he was certain that the Armenian and Parthian problems were settled, and he would certainly maintain a regular correspondence with Gaius about the situation, especially as to the question of whether the Parthian king was likely to adhere to the agreement he had made, and whether it was safe to let Tiberius leave the area.

It was said that when Gaius consented to Tiberius' return, it was only on condition that he took no part in public life. Suetonius¹¹⁶ explains that Gaius had by this time fallen out with Marcus Lollius, and since he was no longer under the malign influence of Tiberius' enemy, he was able to relent. This imbues Lollius with enormous influence, and implies that Gaius was quite unable to think for himself. The truth possibly resides somewhere between the two extremes. The theory that it was on Gaius' instructions that Tiberius withdrew from public life may have derived from retrospective knowledge, based on what he actually did after he returned to Rome. He lived very quietly, as a private citizen without office. He had been living on the west side of the Esquiline hill, on the site of the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, but now he moved into Maecenas' property with its secluded gardens further along the same hill.¹¹⁷ It is not recorded that he made any effort to seek appointments. He may have reasoned that he would be needed soon enough

when wars broke out, whether or not he held office. His reluctance to enter public life may have been his own choice rather than something that was forced upon him, but since it was perhaps not explained in official bulletins, it could be embroidered upon by a spiteful audience who loved a scandal. The truth will never be known, and each must make his or her own additions and subtractions.

Events at Rome

During Tiberius' exile, or his fulfilling some unknown purpose on Rhodes, Augustus took his twelfth consulship in 5 BC, in order to introduce Gaius into public life. He did the same for Lucius when his turn came three years later. He made each of the boys in turn *princeps iuventutis*, one of the stages by which he hoped to accustom them to leadership.¹¹⁸ Lucius received the same honours as Gaius when his turn came; Dio¹¹⁹ says this happened after the lapse of a year, which in the extant text implies the year after Gaius, but it was in reality three years. There was no political significance to this titular honour, but it signalled the fact that Augustus had marked down Gaius and Lucius as his eventual successors. They had already been designated as consuls by the Senate when they were 14 years old, Gaius in 5 BC and Lucius in 2 BC, though Augustus thought it proper to make them wait for a suitable interval until they reached the age that he considered proper to take up the office.¹²⁰ Though he does not mention it in this passage, the five-year gap would bring them closer to his own age when he became consul at 19. Gaius was consul in AD 1 but Lucius died before he was able to take up his appointment.

The sources are very slender for the next few years, rendering a full account impossible. From 5 BC onwards, the suffect consulship was introduced, at irregular intervals at first, to provide a larger supply of experienced men to fill posts in the administration of Rome and the provinces.¹²¹ In 4 BC, Augustus reformed the procedures allowing provincials to seek redress for extortionate practices of governors, but he made a change which seemed to benefit senators rather than provincials in that the accused men were to be tried by senatorial committee rather than in the old fashioned way by non-senatorial juries. The years 4 and 3 BC witnessed further veteran settlements, which Augustus thought worthy of mention in the *Res Gestae*, where he says that the soldiers were settled in their home towns with monetary rewards, which he paid himself.¹²² This was preparatory to the major reform of AD 6 when he introduced regular pensions paid out of the *aerarium militare*, the treasury specially created for the purpose.

There is much more information about the year 2 BC, which was eventful to say the least. Augustus was consul for the thirteenth time, shepherding Lucius into his public role, as he had done for Gaius three years earlier. Administrative measures are the least well documented, perhaps subsumed by the superlative honours and harrowing scandals that occurred during the year. Augustus restructured the corn dole, limiting its distribution to 200,000 recipients, according to Dio.¹²³ Augustus does not mention any limitation on the numbers of recipients but he corroborates Dio's figure in the *Res Gestae*, when he says that

in his thirteenth consulship he gave 60 denarii each to the plebs in receipt of the corn dole, who at that time numbered slightly more than 200,000.¹²⁴ This figure was not the final version, nor was it intended to be the top limit that Augustus was aiming for; later he reduced the number to 150,000.¹²⁵ He also tried unsuccessfully to reorganise the way in which the corn dole operated. According to Suetonius,¹²⁶ who gives no precise dates, Augustus noted that the monthly distribution took too many men away from their work on a regular basis, so he decided to abolish the monthly system and to substitute instead three distributions per year, each one allowing the plebs to draw four months' supply of corn. Popular discontent was soon felt very clearly, so he dropped the idea. The plebs probably had nowhere to store such a large supply and there would be the problem of keeping it fresh and dry, and safe from rodent pests, and not least with rationing it out to last for four months, not to mention the possibility of large scale thefts. The evolutionary development of the corn supply extended over a long period, and was not complete until the end of Augustus' reign.

During this year of 2 BC, the temple of Mars Ultor, the Avenger, was dedicated (Figures 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5). According to Suetonius the temple had been



Figure 7.3 The remains of the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus, showing the grey firewall at the rear with a slight kink in it to the right, which may suggest that Octavian-Augustus was not successful in buying up all the private land in order to build the Forum and temple complex. It is said that he vowed the temple to Mars the Avenger in 42 BC at the battle of Philippi, but the building was not dedicated until 2 BC. The photo shows the steps up to the temple and some of the columns along one side, though the work is not all of Augustus' time, having been repaired in the second century by the emperor Hadrian. Only part of the Forum can be seen; the rest of it is hidden under the modern road. It extends underground to the buried sections of the Forum of Julius Caesar.

Source: Photo by author.

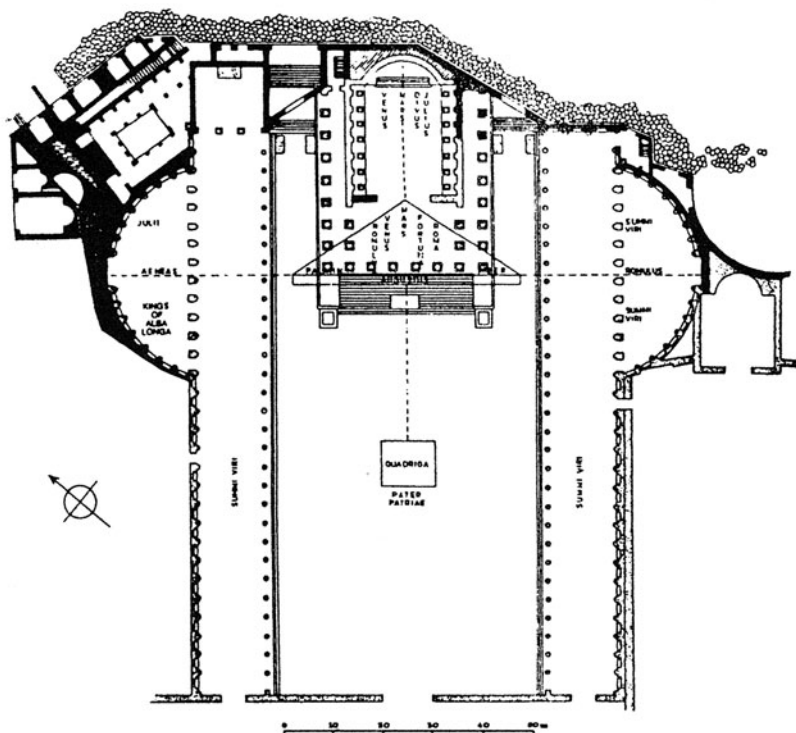
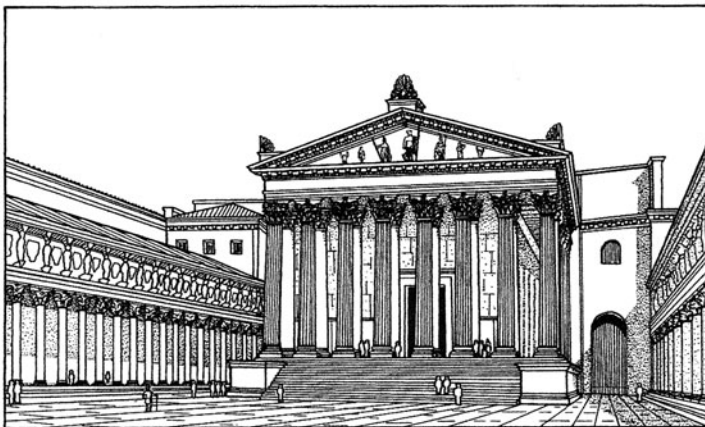


Figure 7.4 Reconstruction drawing of the temple of Mars Ultor and plan of the Forum of Augustus.

Source: Redrawn by Graeme Stobbs after Zanker 1988 and Ward-Perkins 1981.



Figure 7.5 Part of the high firewall behind the Forum of Augustus, showing the slight variation in its course. The cars and vans give some idea of scale.

Source: Photo by author.

vowed 40 years earlier, when the battle of Philippi was about to be fought, and the outcome of the struggle against the conspirators was yet uncertain. In return for victory Octavian promised to honour Mars, in vengeance for the death of Caesar. Not all modern scholars accept this origin for the temple,¹²⁷ and it could be asked why it took so long to build it, not that the actual foundation date is known. The ensuing decades after Philippi and the Triumvirate had in any case changed much of the ideology behind the establishment of the temple, and time had hopefully suppressed the memories of how Octavian had started out on his quest for power, finally emerging as Augustus. The temple was magnificent, described by Pliny as one of the three greatest and best architectural achievements of his day.¹²⁸ Perhaps, in 2 BC, less emphasis was laid on the aspects of vengeance for Caesar than on the Forum of Augustus, where the temple formed the centrepiece, and on the games held in honour of Mars, which Augustus says he was the first to offer.

At the beginning of the year, in February, the Senate, the equestrians and the people, voted that Augustus should be granted the title *pater patriae*.¹²⁹ It was a tremendous honour, the highest that the Romans had to offer him, and it became an important part of imperial titulature, though it was not generally taken up until late in the reign of those who were awarded it. This honorary title had been voted to Augustus once before, but he refused the honour, because he maintained that neither he nor the world was ready for it. He accepted it now, though it seems to have been a long drawn out process. The people came to him

at Antium, then demonstrated in the theatre in Rome, and finally Valerius Messalla beseeched him to accept, in a speech in the Senate house. The emotion attested in the sources is no doubt accurate; Augustus had tears in his eyes when he made his answering speech, in which he expressed the hope that he would always retain such high esteem and good opinion. He knew very well how fragile it was, and how difficult it could be to avoid falling victim to adverse rumours. Augustus celebrated the honour on the coinage, and significantly he rounded off the *Res Gestae* with the honour,¹³⁰ but it was not necessarily intended as a political statement.¹³¹

From these heights, a descent to the depths was not long in coming. Dio infers that Augustus already knew something of Julia's behaviour, but refused to believe it. When the facts (whatever they really were) came forcibly to his attention in 2 BC, he could not ignore them. On this occasion he gave way to an outburst of violent rage in the Senate, and regretted it immediately, admitting that Agrippa or Maecenas would have prevented him from so far forgetting himself.¹³² His image was irretrievably tarnished, on two accounts, his own and his daughter's. It was alleged that Julia had taken dozens of lovers, either because she was bored and objected to being used as a political pawn, or because she had entered upon some convoluted political intrigue of her own, though with what ultimate purpose is hard to define. Iullus Antonius, the son of Marcus Antonius and Fulvia, was executed along with a few other men.¹³³ Their involvement with Julia may have included anything from simple lust to treasonable intentions, but if the latter, what were they intending to do? Did they have some scheme to restore the Republic, or remove Augustus in favour of Gaius and Lucius, or remove Gaius and Lucius in favour of Iullus Antonius? Human nature is capable of extreme and dreadful things, but any plot in which Julia was involved surely necessitated doing some harm to one or more members of her family. The search for complicated plots may not be necessary. Augustus had passed laws designed to curb adultery, restore the integrity of the family and establish undoubted paternity. All of that, especially the latter, was now thrown into disarray in his own family. It was not simply a question of her infidelity to Tiberius, but whether she had been unfaithful to Agrippa, and therefore there was a possibility that Augustus' adopted sons may have had unknown and probably even different fathers. Augustus had no choice except to banish his daughter.

It may have been as simple – and as painful – as that. Julia went to the island of Pandateria, and her mother Scribonia chose to accompany her. Tiberius wrote from Rhodes to try to influence Augustus to lighten the punishment, which does him credit, even though he very properly divorced her, or rather, Augustus set in motion divorce proceedings on his behalf and he did not protest. Modern scholars have interpreted the scandal of 2 BC as a state crisis, reading into it conspiracies, potential assassinations, restoration of the Republic, or internal palace revolutions. It is suggested that the creation of the two praetorian prefects in the same year must somehow be related to the crisis, because

Augustus felt the need for greater security. Augustus had possessed a bodyguard of troops since his days as consul and triumvir, so it is very likely that he was authorised to give orders directly to the praetorians. He adapted republican forms in creating this bodyguard,¹³⁴ but it is not known how it was commanded before the creation of the first two prefects, the equestrians Publius Ostorius Scapula and Publius Satrius Aper. Collegiality can be seen as a safeguard against corruption and plotting,¹³⁵ but the insertion of two extra men in the line of command could possibly have furnished potential plotters with two more opportunities for subversion. The prefects probably accompanied Augustus into the Senate, but in the reign of Tiberius the machinations of the notorious praetorian prefect Sejanus, who succeeded in establishing himself as sole prefect, seems to have put an end to the practice. According to Dio,¹³⁶ Claudius revived it, which indicates that it had been Augustus who had instituted it.¹³⁷ Purcell¹³⁸ points out that Augustus made available to the magistrates more personnel for the policing of Rome. It is possible that in 2 BC Augustus decided to widen the scope of the praetorians, enabling them to provide security for the city as well as himself, necessitating the extra personnel to cope with the increased administration that would be involved.

The situation in the east was becoming more and more dangerous, so in 1 BC, as already described in connection with Tiberius' withdrawal to Rhodes, Gaius was sent on his mission to establish the balance of power with Parthia.¹³⁹ He was consul in AD 1, having been designated to the office aged 14. The two boys were growing up and relieving Augustus of several tasks. His letter to Gaius, preserved by Gellius,¹⁴⁰ is revealing, for he writes of his two sons taking over from him, in the most benign sense. Lucius was sent to Spain in AD 2. The purpose of his visit is not clear. All that is known is that he never arrived to carry it out. He died at Massilia,¹⁴¹ perhaps of a contagious disease. Rumours circulated even then that Livia was behind all this, eliminating rivals to Tiberius one by one, but in this case there is probably no reason to doubt that Lucius simply fell ill. Augustus bore the loss stoically. Tiberius returned to Rome in AD 2, while Gaius was still in the east, having succeeded in coming to terms with Phraates V. In the following year, AD 3, Augustus' powers were renewed for a further 10 years. By now it was probably just a formality. The interesting point is that he took no colleague even at this late date, though it was not a demonstration of dominance; Dio¹⁴² says that Augustus mellowed in his old age, and forbade people to call him master (*dominus*).

In AD 3 Gaius had been wounded in a skirmish, and seems to have become slightly deranged; he announced that he wanted to retire.¹⁴³ Tiberius was in Rome but still without office. The turning point came about in AD 4. Gaius died in the east. Augustus was alone again in supreme power, and he was not a young man any more. He brought Tiberius back into the government, granted him tribunician power for 10 years, and adopted him as his son on 24 June,¹⁴⁴ which Velleius¹⁴⁵ calls a day of good omen. Velleius also says¹⁴⁶ that for reasons of state, Augustus adopted Agrippa Postumus as well. The conditions were that Tiberius should adopt his nephew Germanicus, as companion to his own son

Drusus.¹⁴⁷ Thus there were once again two generations of successors, as there had been before in the two pairs of brothers, Tiberius and Drusus, and Gaius and Lucius; all that had happened was that the personnel had become Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus, and Germanicus and Drusus. Syme¹⁴⁸ maintains that Germanicus was the preferred candidate, and all the others, including Tiberius, were peripheral to the scheme, but it could be argued that Augustus had arrived at such an unassailable degree of political influence that if he had wished to do so he could have adopted Germanicus himself, in direct anticipation of his succession. Innate caution for both political and practical reasons may have made Augustus hedge his bets by adopting Tiberius and surrounding himself with potential heirs in a two-tiered arrangement. It is true, as Syme points out, that Germanicus was advanced much more rapidly than Agrippa Postumus or Tiberius' own son Drusus, but this does not necessarily detract from Tiberius' own position, which could still have been second to Augustus. Tacitus¹⁴⁹ implies that everything revolved around Tiberius: *Nero solus e privignis erat, illuc cuncta vergere*. Whatever Augustus' intentions were in AD 4, the imperial family was reconstituted, battered as it had been by fate, and possibly divided by internal quarrels, but it was still intact and he was still at the helm.

Notes

- 1 Dio 55.8.
- 2 The funeral oration is given in the original Greek in *EJ*² 167–68 no. 366 and in translation in Sherk 1988, 24–25 no. 12; Dio 54.28–29 provides a short obituary and lists all Agrippa's fine qualities.
- 3 Dio 54.29.6; see also Kienast 1982, 103; Wiseman 1991, 104.
- 4 Dio 54.29.4.
- 5 Tac. *Ann.* 2.41.3.
- 6 Dio 54.31.2.
- 7 Levick 1972, 780–86.
- 8 Levick 1966; 1972, 782–83 n.4; see also Kornemann 1930.
- 9 Kienast 1982, 107 n.162; see also Corbett 1974.
- 10 The betrothal and then the marriage are described by Dio 54.31.2–4; 54.35.4; Suet. *Aug.* 63.2; *Tib.* 7.2.
- 11 Sattler 1969, 494–502.
- 12 Suet. *Tib.* 7.2; Dio 54.31.2.
- 13 Suet. *Tib.* 7.3.
- 14 Dio 53.34.4.
- 15 Syme in *CAH* 1 X, 355.
- 16 Dio 54.33.5.
- 17 *RG* 30.
- 18 Dio 54.34.3–4.
- 19 Cooley 2009, 247.
- 20 Kienast 1982, 303.
- 21 Brunt and Moore 1967, 73; Kienast 1982, 108 n.165.
- 22 Dio 54.33.5.
- 23 *ILS* 95.
- 24 Brunt and Moore 1967, 47.
- 25 Dio 54.31.4.

- 26 Suet. *Tib.* 9.2.
- 27 Dio 54.35.4.
- 28 Dio 54.35.4–5.
- 29 *RG* 6.1; Brunt and Moore 1967, 45–46; Cooley 2009, 130–31.
- 30 Dio 54.30.1.
- 31 Dio 54.35.1.
- 32 Crook 1996a, 97.
- 33 Talbert 1984, 222.
- 34 Dio 54.35.1.
- 35 Dio 55.3.1–2.
- 36 Dio 54.36.3–4.
- 37 The Ara Pacis Augustae has a considerable bibliography of its own, covering the artistic, social, religious and political aspects; see Toynbee 1953; 1961; Zanker 1988; Elsner 1991; Galinsky 1996.
- 38 Bowersock 1990, 384 thinks that the *solarium Augusti* may have been dedicated in 9, at the same time as the Ara Pacis, but Zanker 1988, 144 dates it to the previous year.
- 39 Elsner 1991, 60–61 argues that not even contemporaries would be able to identify all the figures, but Crook 1996a, 96 disagrees.
- 40 Bowersock 1990, 392.
- 41 Zanker 1988, 121.
- 42 R. Syme, ‘Neglected children on the Ara Pacis’, *American Journal of Archaeology* 88, 1984, 583–89.
- 43 Vell. Pat. 2.97.2–4; Dio 55.1–2; Florus 2.30.26 writes of fort building on the Rhine.
- 44 Wells 1972, 246–48.
- 45 Von Schnürbein 1981.
- 46 Schonberger 1985, 324–44; 425–38.
- 47 Vell. Pat. 2.97.3; Suet. *Claud.* 1.3; Dio 55.1.4.
- 48 Dio 55.2.3.
- 49 Suet. *Claud.* 1.4.
- 50 Suet. *Tib.* 50.1.
- 51 Dio 55.6.5.
- 52 Brunt and Moore 1967, 73.
- 53 Dio 55.5.2; 55.6.1.
- 54 *RG* 8.3.
- 55 Cooley 2009, 142.
- 56 Brunt and Moore 1967, 45–46.
- 57 *ILS* 5293 a–d.
- 58 Dio 55.5.3.
- 59 Richardson 2012, 142.
- 60 Dio 55.6.6.
- 61 Dio 55.7.1; Kienast 1982, 106 n.153; Seneca *de Benef.* 6.32.2.
- 62 Vell. Pat. 2.97.4.
- 63 Dio 55.6.3.
- 64 Gruen 1990, 406.
- 65 Dio 55.9.1.
- 66 Dio 55.8.1.
- 67 Dio 55.8.6–7.
- 68 Dio 55.8.3.
- 69 Dio 55.6.5.
- 70 Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.
- 71 Dio 55.9.2–4.

- 72 Dio 55.9–5–8.
- 73 Vell. Pat. 2.99.1–2.
- 74 Suet. *Tib.* 10.1–2.
- 75 Suet. *Tib.* 10.2.
- 76 Suet. *Tib.* 11.5.
- 77 Vell. Pat. 2.100.3–5.
- 78 Dio 55.9.7.
- 79 Dio 55.9.4–6.
- 80 Vell. Pat. 2.99.3.
- 81 Suet. *Tib.* 10.2.
- 82 Suet. *Tib.* 11.
- 83 Dio 55.9.5.
- 84 Suet. *Tib.* 12.1.
- 85 Levick 1972.
- 86 Kienast 1982, 109.
- 87 Levick 2010, 183.
- 88 Barrett 2002, 55.
- 89 Dio 55.9.7.
- 90 Levick 1972, 782.
- 91 Sattler 1969, 511.
- 92 Levick 1972, 782 n.2.
- 93 Vell. Pat. 2.99.4.
- 94 Suet. *Tib.* 12.2.
- 95 Levick 1972, 801–9.
- 96 Bowersock 1984, 176–79.
- 97 Vell. Pat. 2.122.1; Suet. *Tib.* 9.1.
- 98 Dio 55.9.4.
- 99 Gruen 1996, 160.
- 100 Cooley 2009, 232.
- 101 Dio 55.9.5.
- 102 Richardson 2012, 149.
- 103 *RG* 27.2.
- 104 Richardson 2012, 161.
- 105 Tac. *Ann.* 2.4.1.
- 106 Cooley 2009, 232.
- 107 Vell. Pat. 2.100.1.
- 108 Dio 55.10.18–19; Vell. Pat. 2.101.1.
- 109 Dio 55.10.20.
- 110 Dio 55.10a.3.
- 111 Dio 55.10a.4.
- 112 Vell. Pat. 2.101.2–3.
- 113 Vell. Pat. 2.102.1; Suetonius *Tib.* 11.5; 12.1; Dio 55.9.5. Tac. *Ann.* 3.48 accuses Lollius of instigating the hostile attitude of Gaius.
- 114 Levick 1972, 810–12.
- 115 Suet. *Tib.* 13.1.
- 116 Suet. *Tib.* 13.2.
- 117 Suet. *Tib.* 15.1.
- 118 Dio 55.9.9.
- 119 Dio 55.9.20.
- 120 *RG* 14; Cooley 2009, 164.
- 121 Kienast 1982, 110; Talbert 1984, 21.
- 122 *RG* 16.2.

- 123 Dio 55.10.1; Rickman 1980, 62–63.
- 124 *RG* 15.4.
- 125 Cooley 2009, 174.
- 126 Suet. *Aug.* 40.2.
- 127 Suet. *Aug.* 29.2; there is a lacuna in the text of Dio 55.10.2, with a chapter heading that indicates that in the lost passages he described how the temple was dedicated. Levick 2010, 217; 244 n.88 expresses doubt that it was vowed at Philippi, quoting Weinstock 1971, 130–32 and supporting references.
- 128 Pliny *NH* 36.102; Richardson 2012, 155 n.69.
- 129 *RG* 35; Suet. *Aug.* 58.2; Cooley 2009, 273–75.
- 130 Brunt and Moore 1967, 5; 80.
- 131 Crook 1996a, 102.
- 132 Seneca *de Benef.* 6.32.3.
- 133 Dio 55.12.10–16; Tac. *Ann.* 4.13.3; 44.3; 44.5.
- 134 Durry 1938, 67.
- 135 Durry 1938, 158.
- 136 Dio 60.23.
- 137 Durry 1938, 177.
- 138 Purcell 1996, 793.
- 139 Vell. Pat. 2.101; Dio 55.10.16–19.
- 140 Gellius *Attic Nights* 15.7.3; Crook 1996a, 104 n.71.
- 141 Dio 55.10.9.
- 142 Dio 55.12.2.
- 143 Dio 55.10.9.
- 144 Dio 55.13.2.
- 145 Vell. Pat. 2.103.3–5.
- 146 Vell. Pat. 2.104.1.
- 147 Dio 5.13.2.
- 148 Syme 1986, 93–94.
- 149 Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.

FINALE

The adoption of Tiberius signifies for some authors a capitulation in the face of the inevitable, and for others merely the culmination of the perpetual grand design. Ancient authors assume that there was constant discord and distrust between Augustus and Tiberius, but there is no contemporary record unsullied by retrospective bias, so their relationship cannot be truthfully assessed. There is no doubt that Augustus intended to hand over the government of the Empire to a successor; a return to the republican system would have negated most of his life's achievement. The only unknown factor is his choice of personnel. Even his own statement on the matter is characteristically ambiguous: 'This I do for reasons of state' he said when he adopted Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus,¹ leaving uncertain and unpronounced his inner thoughts. It is not recorded that he made such a statement when he adopted Gaius and Lucius, so he may have considered that there was a need to excuse himself for adopting Tiberius, who was already over 30 years old, or he may have wished to explain why he included Agrippa Postumus in his plans, or indeed Germanicus as Tiberius' adopted son. Enemies of Tiberius naturally seized upon the alternative possibilities, for instance Dio² links the adoption with the immediate need for a commander in the German war. Mutual distrust between Augustus and Tiberius is taken as read in the ancient sources. According to Dio,³ Tiberius returned frequently to Rome in case Augustus should prefer someone else during his absence. In reality, though, Augustus chose Tiberius precisely because there *was* no-one else, and since he was no longer a young man, he could not afford to wait until he found someone.

He was beginning to feel the effects of his age and his labours for the past five decades, but he could not afford to relinquish control of state affairs. What may have seemed like delegation was in fact only delegation of the physical burdens of power. He reduced his exertions gradually, but there was still no hint of this in his portraiture (Figure 8.1). He ceased to attend the courts, but heard judicial cases in the palace from a special tribunal. Eventually he gave up appearing at public banquets as well.⁴ In AD 8 he chose three ex-consuls to receive and deal with embassies.⁵ Unless it was considered that the matters under discussion should be referred to the Senate and the emperor for debate, these ex-consuls were empowered to make decisions,⁶ but it is to be presumed that Augustus

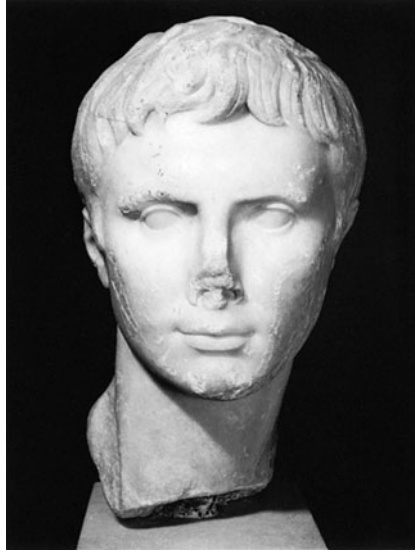


Figure 8.1 This head of Augustus, eternally youthful, was produced late in his reign, but in keeping with all other portraits, including those on coins, he was never portrayed as anything but a young man.

Source: Courtesy British Museum.

received written or oral summaries of the main business. Opportunities for manipulation of foreign policy by the three senators in question would have been minimal. Augustus would not allow them to deal independently with politically sensitive areas, and in all other circumstances he could ensure that there were no meetings in secret to talk of details which were kept from him. The senators would take on the exhausting but necessary hospitality and entertainment functions for ambassadors.

Delegation of the northern wars to Tiberius was nothing new. Although Augustus claimed in the *Res Gestae* that he added provinces to the Empire and led armies, he recognised reality, and recognised that the Roman people would know the truth. He never claimed to be a general; he occupied a position which did not really exist, as commander-in-chief. He was the man who authorised the movements of the armies, who paid the soldiers and ensured that they received rewards on retirement, but he did not direct them in the field. Agrippa's vital contributions were recognised tacitly by the rewards and honours he received, but he was mentioned only once in the *Res Gestae*, not in a military capacity, but as consul and colleague (*conlega*) in taking the census.⁷ Cooley points out that in the *Res Gestae*, Agrippa is the only Roman to be acknowledged as a peer of Augustus.⁸ Tiberius received similar acknowledgement as *conlega* of Augustus⁹ and is also noted as *legatus meus*¹⁰ in the conquest of Pannonia, but he was not mentioned in connection with Germany, most likely because no province was

ultimately created there, despite all the battles. The German campaigns of the years AD 4–6 were successful, suitably lauded by Velleius,¹¹ who provides a full narrative which is admittedly biased, but Velleius was the best qualified to write about the campaigns, because he took part in them, and names several tribes subdued by Tiberius. Dio¹² is perhaps more realistic in that the end result was negligible, but when he wrote his history, the disaster and loss of three legions under Quinctilius Varus had probably altered the course of Roman policy in Germany. No-one knows what Augustus had in mind, but some modern scholars have suggested that he intended to subdue all the tribes up to the river Elbe, and convert the territory into a province or provinces. Tiberius did reach the Elbe, and bases were set up on the river Lippe. At the end of the campaigning in AD 4, only the Marcomanni under their king Maroboduus remained to be subdued, and preparations were set in motion in AD 5–6 to carry out this task. If the Varian disaster had not occurred, it is possible that much of modern day Germany would have been occupied and made into a Roman province.

While Tiberius was absent, there were sufficient tasks for Augustus to attend to in Rome. This time he did not accompany the armies to Gaul to be near to the theatre of war. There was some discord with Gaius Cornelius Cinna Magnus, accused of plotting against Augustus. This man was a grandson of Pompeius through the female line. Virtually nothing is known about his intentions, or even the date of his so-called plot; it is usually slotted into the events of AD 4. Crook¹³ dismisses the Cinna conspiracy as a moral fiction. Seneca¹⁴ uses the tale as an illustration of merciful treatment, and Dio¹⁵ mentions it as the preface to a long dialogue between Livia and Augustus about the problems and privileges of monarchical rule, always threatened, never secure, but better supported by clemency than force. This long scenario is more relevant to Dio's own times than the first century, though there are truisms enough in the speeches of both the main characters. If there was opposition to Augustus in AD 4 it did not make itself keenly felt. Whatever the problems with Cinna, no punishment was meted out, and there seems to have been no widespread circle of accomplices to root out. It was perhaps simply a squabble, overheard and embroidered. Far from falling out of favour, Cinna became consul in the following year. As Syme¹⁶ points out, Cinna cannot have done anything very serious if he was rewarded with the consulship so soon after his alleged offence.

In AD 4, Augustus purged the Senate once again, this time via a watered down version of the method he had tried to institute once before, to make the senators fulfil the task for him. He chose 10 senators, of whom three were appointed by lot to oversee the business. Dio records that there were few problems.¹⁷ Many of the senators resigned voluntarily, and only a few remained to face the erasure of their names from the lists against their will. Augustus was not trying this time to reduce the Senate to a workable but elite 300 members; this was more in the line of quality control. The same could be said perhaps of his census in Italy, recorded by Dio,¹⁸ of all those who possessed fortunes of 200,000 sesterces, or in other words, those who had reached the halfway mark to equestrian qualification.

He made further adjustments to the freedman problem via the *Lex Aelia Sentia*, which tied up most of the loopholes still in evidence after the laws of 17 and 2 BC.¹⁹ Age restrictions were placed on both the slaves to be freed and the masters who wished to free them; the slaves had to be at least 30 at the time of manumission, otherwise they could not be citizens, and masters had to be at least 20 years old. Those slaves with any sort of criminal record were debarred from citizenship, and were not even allowed to reside in Rome. Other grades were properly regulated; young freedmen probably became Latins rather than full citizens. These and the Junian Latins were encouraged to become citizens after they had satisfied the relevant criteria, such as marriage to a Roman and production of children, or service in the *Vigiles*. There were reasonable avenues to citizenship, provided that the freedmen made some relevant contribution to the state.

Natural disasters marked the year AD 5, and there were stirrings of the discontents and problems that surfaced repeatedly from the following year onwards. Dio records an earthquake, the flooding of the Tiber, a partial eclipse of the sun, and famine in Rome.²⁰ As if that were not enough, the soldiers were restless and unhappy.²¹ These were ongoing problems that caused some discontent. The food supply was only gradually taken in hand; most of the measures adopted up to now were reactive responses to shortages. In 22 BC Augustus had taken on the *cura annonae* for a few weeks, then later he had handed over the task to two ex-praetors, elected annually to supervise distribution. The number of ex-praetors was increased to four, chosen by lot from among men nominated by the magistrates of the year. When the shortages became acute in AD 6, the praetors were replaced by ex-consuls, but they were still only in charge of distribution.²² The real need was for centralised organisation of supply, which seems to have remained for some time in the hands of private businessmen, who operated without co-ordination. Eventually, before the end of Augustus' reign, at some unknown date between AD 8 and 14, the system was regularised, and an equestrian *praefectus annonae* was placed in charge of the corn supply, the first appointee being Caius Turranius.²³

The acute shortages in AD 6 necessitated the removal from Rome of all unnecessary mouths. The gladiators and slaves who were up for sale were sent 100 miles from the city;²⁴ the courts were allowed to go into recess, and senators allowed to leave. It is assumed that there was sufficient food outside Rome itself for these temporary exiles, and that it was easier to send them away than to bring the food into the city, where fair distribution would probably have been problematic. Suetonius²⁵ quotes from Augustus' own writings, where he says that he once thought of abolishing the corn dole altogether, because dependence on the free distributions had an adverse effect on Italian agriculture, but then he reconsidered on the grounds that the corn distributions would be renewed anyway by men desirous of winning popular favour. So in the long run it was better that he controlled them himself.²⁶

The year AD 6 was one of innovation, improvement and organisational changes. It was now that Augustus put the payment of soldiers' pensions on a regular

footing. In describing the attempts to provide funds for a pension scheme, Dio²⁷ traces the first efforts back to the previous year, AD 5. Augustus made an initial contribution, and promised that he would do so on an annual basis, and he accepted voluntary contributions from kings and cities, but not from private individuals.²⁸ Discontent with the search for revenues was revealed in AD 6, and Augustus dealt with it by asking the senators for ideas on how to raise the necessary cash. By involving them in the process, he encouraged the senators to think for themselves about the magnitude of the problem, and hopefully underlined for them the importance of creating a properly organised system for the settlement of veterans. Perhaps he thought privately that they were too ready to leave the matter to someone else, and moreover that they wanted provincial government and expansion of the Empire at unrealistically low costs. Perhaps also he hoped to promote the idea that the army, especially the care of its veterans, was a communal concern, which would help to disguise the fact that the person who had the most urgent interest in maintaining an army was himself. Dio²⁹ says that by handing the problem to the senators, Augustus could more easily persuade them to adopt his own plan, which was to institute a five per cent tax on inheritances (*vicesima hereditatum*). He endorsed this plan by insisting that he had found the outline of it among Caesar's memoranda.³⁰ It may be true. Whatever its origins, the tax was not well received and did not increase in popularity as time passed.³¹ The problem of veteran settlement was a perennial one, and it may be that Caesar had discussed with the young Octavius the severity of the matter if ever there were to be a standing army, discharging men at regular intervals. Augustus had thought about the system in some depth. There were to be exclusions for those inheritances which were small, or destined for poor people, or for very close relatives. It had already been revealed at the time when he was pushing through his marriage laws that there was a whole body of men and women in Rome whose main purpose in life was professional legacy-hunting. These were the people who, in the main, would forfeit the tax of five per cent. Another source of finance was the one per cent tax levied on sales of goods at auctions (*centesima rerum venalium*), which was collected not by the tax gatherers as in the case of the inheritance tax, but by the auctioneers. As a class, the auctioneers probably did not suffer too much from the imposition of this tax, except in so far as it made for more paper work. These taxes were destined for the new military treasury, the *aerarium militare*, set up for payment of soldiers' pensions. Suetonius³² and Dio³³ seem to think that the two taxes went towards paying the soldiers' wages as well,³⁴ but Brunt and Moore³⁵ argue that this is not so. Since the taxes were new, it was not possible to accumulate sufficient capital for immediate use, so Augustus paid 170,000,000 sesterces into the new treasury,³⁶ to provide a basis for its proper functioning. It is estimated that the amount that Augustus provided would have paid pensions for 14,000 legionaries. The administration of the new treasury was entrusted to three ex-praetors.

Finance was also needed for the payment and organisation of the *Vigiles*. After a serious fire had broken out in 7 BC, Augustus had reorganised the city into 14

regions, and placed officials called *vicomagistri* in charge of the smaller districts or *vici*.³⁷ These men also commanded the 600 slaves of the first fire brigades created in 22 BC. This prototype fire service, formed originally from Egnatius Rufus' band of slaves, proved inadequate for the control of large fires. There had been yet another conflagration in Rome in AD 6, which highlighted once again the need for a properly organised system which included, as far as possible, fire prevention as well as fire fighting.³⁸ The final version of the fire service, also combining some of the duties of an urban police force, was the formation of the seven cohorts, each 1,000 strong, of the *Vigiles* in AD 6. A tax of four per cent was levied on sales of slaves to pay for the new cohorts. Each cohort of *Vigiles* was placed in charge of two of the city's 14 regions (Figure 8.2), and the whole body



Figure 8.2 The remains of the headquarters (*statio*) of Cohors VII of the *Vigiles* in the Fourteenth Region of Rome, in the modern Trastevere area. This building is not of Augustan date, being a Severan adaptation of an earlier structure, but it is the only visible representation of the important institution that Augustus founded. He established the fire brigade in AD 6 and placed each of the seven cohorts in charge of two regions of the city, with a watch-house in each region where equipment would be stored. The site of another watch-house is known, belonging to Cohors V of the *Vigiles*. It lies underneath the ninth-century church of S. Maria Domnica on the Caelian Hill.

Source: Photo by author.

was commanded by an equestrian prefect. The *Vigiles* certainly went on night patrols and had some policing functions, including combating all kinds of fire hazards from carelessness to deliberate arson, but it is not certain to what extent they could intervene to preserve general law and order. The juridical competence of their commander provides a clue; the *Vigiles* could arrest runaway slaves and oversee building regulations, and the prefect had jurisdiction over cases of petty crime.³⁹ It was a logical development to combine the fire-watching and fire-fighting service with a kind of police force, since it was not to be expected that the *Vigiles* would be concerned with fires every minute of every hour of every day, so they would have some spare time, and as for police work, these were the men who knew their neighbourhoods and their inhabitants inside out. The way in which he tackled the formation of the *Vigiles* was also indicative of Augustus' state of mind. It was the first time that he had taken personal charge so firmly and decisively of any feature of the administration of the city, without consultation or waiting for evolution to follow a more leisurely pattern. He was on safe ground, of course. Everyone could see the need for an efficient and centrally directed fire service, so he could not be accused too readily of making arrangements that were only of benefit to himself. The jurist Paulus commented that Augustus decided to take the matter into his own hands, and it was agreed that there was no-one else who was better qualified to guard the *res publica*.⁴⁰ Augustus perhaps felt that he had little time left, and also that he was secure in his position; like Caesar as Dictator, he still had much to do, but by anybody's standards he was an old man, and could no longer be so liberal with time and patience.

When there was controversy over the elections of magistrates in AD 8, he simply appointed all of them, to avoid faction, as Dio⁴¹ describes it. The measure was wholly Caesarian, not Augustan. Three years earlier, in AD 5, he had discovered that there was a dearth of men willing to serve as aediles, so he had compelled ex-quaestors and ex-tribunes to serve, selecting them by lot.⁴² He had always been an autocrat, but had never acted like one until now. The calm exterior that he strove to maintain, and succeeded in doing so most of the time, seems to have been overcome on occasion with a contempt for dithering subordinates, sorted out at one fell swoop with an impatient gesture.

There was much to try his patience in his last years. Family discord broke out again in AD 6 and seems to have continued sporadically until AD 8. First Agrippa Postumus abdicated from office and was exiled from Rome, first to Sorrento, and he was then eventually relegated to the island of Planasia in AD 7. The following year saw the banishment of his sister, the younger Julia, and of her lover Decimus Iunius Silanus, who survived but remained in exile until he was allowed back home by Tiberius.⁴³ For some reason the younger Julia's husband Lucius Aemilius Paullus was accused of treason and exiled as well, though at what date is uncertain. It used to be thought that he was executed, but Syme revealed that he survived.⁴⁴ Julia's crime was said to have been adultery, and the child born to her in exile was killed. Augustus ordered her house in Rome to be destroyed,

which indicates either an explosion of passionate anger, or possibly that her adulteries were not the only problem. She was to be excluded from burial in the mausoleum that Augustus erected for his family. Whether there was any connection between the exile of Agrippa and Julia is not known. Attempts have been made to detect a convoluted plot involving all the main characters, and sometimes outsiders, unconnected to the family except by their designs of revolution.

The exile of Ovid is generally considered to have occurred in AD 8, and often allied to the scandal of the younger Julia, though the date has been disputed, and some authorities have linked Ovid with the scandals of 2 BC when the elder Julia, the daughter of Augustus, was banished. Syme⁴⁵ opts for some involvement with the younger Julia and her husband Lucius Aemilius Paullus. Ovid gives tantalising clues in his later works, declaring that the causes of his banishment were a poem and a mistake. According to Syme,⁴⁶ this double crime that Ovid writes of concerns the publication of his poem *Ars Amatoria*, and the mistake probably meant that Ovid had been foolish, not a criminal; perhaps he had been a witness to some misdemeanour or other. Obviously, Ovid knew very well what the real problem was. Sexual scandal may have been at the root of it, and his *Ars Amatoria* may have been one of the factors which tipped the balance. His books were banned, which is of course an excellent way of engendering interest in them and therefore ensuring that they would be read and would survive.

Rejecting the conspiracy theory, it is pointed out that the case is very weak, not least because the gap between Julia's transgressions, whatever they were, and her banishment was too long, and neither her lover Decimus Iunius Silanus, nor her husband Paullus was executed, whereas if there was even a hint of conspiracy it is to be expected that quick action would have been taken to remove them all. Some authors interpret the episode from AD 6–8 as a long-term domestic squabble, or indeed two domestic squabbles, not necessarily related. Agrippa Postumus is often dealt with as peripheral and unimportant, but at the time, given his inheritance from Agrippa and the elder Julia, he possessed quite considerable political worth. It was said that there were plots to liberate both Agrippa and Julia, though there is some confusion as to whether Agrippa's sister or his mother is meant. There was also a story that Augustus visited Agrippa on his island, in AD 14. Raaflaub and Samons⁴⁷ conclude that the affair was just a palace revolution which had gone wrong, and reject the ideas of those who link the exile of Agrippa and Julia with larger plots. Kienast⁴⁸ blames the unrest caused by the food shortages for the outbreak of attempted rebellion, centring on Agrippa Postumus. Suetonius indicates⁴⁹ that a certain Junius Novatus had circulated a most scathing letter about Augustus, written in the name of the young Agrippa (*Agrippae iuvenis nomine*). The ambiguity is probably not the fault of Suetonius, since the whole affair may have been just as ambiguous in Augustus' day as it is now. It is thus not clear whether Agrippa had authorised the letter. It is quite possible that Novatus was entirely responsible and the unfortunate Agrippa need not have had anything to do with it. Suetonius also says⁵⁰ that Audasius (appropriately named!) and Epicadus planned to take Augustus' daughter Julia

and his grandson Agrippa from their islands, but it cannot be the elder Julia that was meant because she had by this time been allowed to come back to the mainland, still banished from Rome, but no longer on her island. It is thought that there may have been an error, in that Suetonius should have said granddaughter, meaning the younger Julia.⁵¹

The remarkable point about the conspiracy, if such it was, is that no-one among Augustus' contemporaries seemed to know the truth. He never made a statement, and was not called upon to do so; there can be no clearer indication of autocratic rule. The official verdict on Agrippa was that he was brutish and not socially acceptable,⁵² but that begs the question as to why he was adopted and promoted from AD 4 and then dropped in AD 6. His transgression may have been simple discontent, too blatantly expressed. He had not been adopted as a young child, like his brothers Gaius and Lucius, and it is not certain what position he would have held if they had both survived. He had never known his father, and from the age of 10 he had been deprived of his mother in scandalous circumstances. Little more could have been done to convince him that he was an outsider, and much the same could be said of his sister Julia. It is possible that they both suffered from suspicions on Augustus' part about their true parentage, after the adulteries of their mother became public property. On the whole these affairs are perhaps best judged as domestic, internal problems rather than attempts at revolution. Some men were punished and exiled, but there was no witch hunt, and nothing like the proscriptions of the Triumvirate. Revolutions and depositions generally do not take place via so few people, and it seems certain that Augustus' life was not endangered. It has been pointed out by more than one author that it was Tiberius who profited from the removal of Agrippa, and that as soon as he came to power he had Agrippa killed, or someone kindly took care of the removal of Agrippa on his behalf, without waiting for orders.

Trouble erupted in several different provinces in the same year that famine, fire and family disputes disturbed the Augustan peace in Rome. Dio reports raids by the Isaurian tribesmen in the east, but does not explain how and by whom they were brought to a halt.⁵³ In Africa, Cornelius Cossus earned himself triumphal honours and the name Gaetulicus by subduing the rebellious Gaetulians who had risen up against their king, Juba. Herod Archelaus of Judaea was driven out by his brothers and sent by Augustus to Gaul, in permanent exile, and in Sardinia the pirate raids had begun again, necessitating the presence of troops under an equestrian commander,⁵⁴ who was appointed by Augustus and left in office for an indefinite term at his discretion, in contrast to the more normal senatorial proconsul chosen annually by lot. Dio adds to this tale the cryptic comment that in the provinces governed by Augustus' appointees, men were left in office for a longer period. This may have been merely an explanatory paragraph to illustrate the fact that the arrangements in Sardinia were perfectly normal while it was governed by the equestrians chosen by Augustus; or it may mean that there was more trouble in other provinces that Dio was not prepared to elucidate. It is true that AD 6 was not a good year. Just as the conquest of Germany seemed to be

within reach, and the onslaught against Maroboduus was beginning, Tiberius was recalled to the Pannonian front, where rebellion had broken out and gave him his work to do all over again.⁵⁵ It took years of heavy fighting to set it all to rights again, and brought Roman armies to the brink of disaster. There was considerable panic in Rome when the news broke. Augustus informed the Senate that the Pannonians could be in Italy in a matter of days,⁵⁶ and at the gates of Rome very shortly afterwards. In purely logistical terms that was probably true, but not necessarily likely, though even Suetonius, writing at a much later time, compared the Pannonian threat to the wars with Carthage.⁵⁷ The hyperbole of Augustus' own day was probably brought on by the difficulties in recruiting men for the army. Augustus had already lengthened the term of service as part of a cost-cutting exercise, keeping men under arms for longer and allowing recruitment to catch up with shortages, but the extra years of service did not solve his immediate problem of manpower. He recruited freeborn men as far as possible, creating the *cohortes civium Romanorum ingenuorum*, but then was forced to buy slaves from their owners and free them for service in the army, in the *cohortes civium Romanorum voluntariorum*.

Then there was the supposed falling out with Tiberius; Augustus was said to have accused him of not conducting the war vigorously enough.⁵⁸ He sent Germanicus, who was only a quaestor, with extra troops; Tiberius sent some of them back, saying he had enough soldiers, thanks all the same. Perhaps he was exasperated that he had been given troops who had next to no training, and at this point he was hardly in a position to devote much time to fashioning city dwellers into experienced soldiers. Augustus travelled to Ariminum to direct the campaigns, or more likely to lend moral support, in AD 8. He had slowed down physically, but Dio says that he showed enough energy when there was need.⁵⁹ For a while it was very serious, and Tiberius and Germanicus only began to gain the upper hand after hard fighting. Dio reports that at one point at the siege of Salona, Tiberius' supply lines were cut.⁶⁰ It was difficult terrain, and the locals knew it better than the Romans. Eventually Tiberius was able to make peace on terms favourable to Rome, while Germanicus mopped up resistance. They came home in AD 9, to a rapturous welcome. Tiberius and Augustus were both hailed as Imperator, and voted triumphs; Germanicus received the *ornamenta triumphalia*, the rank of praetor, and the right to stand for the consulship before reaching the correct age.⁶¹ Tiberius' son Drusus had not taken part in the fighting, but was promoted with his father and adopted brother. He was granted the right to attend meetings of the Senate before becoming a senator, and promised that when he should be quaestor he would be given the right to vote before the ex-praetors. Augustus employed the victory to advance his relatives and give them experience. The planned celebrations were to be magnificent, but were cancelled before they could take place. While Tiberius was bringing the Pannonian wars to a successful conclusion, his one-time consular colleague Quintilius Varus was transforming the recently conquered German tribes into Roman provincials, organising their territories and levying taxes. But the tribesmen were not ready

to become Romans, and they demonstrated their reluctance quite unequivocally by wiping out Quintilius Varus and three Roman legions.

The setback was severe. Dio⁶² describes at length the plight of the Romans, and lays the blame squarely upon Varus, who allegedly would not listen to his advisers. Varus was informed that the Germans were becoming restive, but he dismissed the claims as unfounded rumours. The leader of the Germans, Arminius, was a noble of the Cherusci tribe, but also a Roman citizen who had fought on the Roman side, and he was an associate of Varus, who trusted him. The harsh judgement of Varus is a little unfair. He had been governor of Africa and Syria, and though he was not necessarily a gung-ho military man, he was not altogether inexperienced.⁶³ In Germany, his task was to Romanise an area that was thought to be pacified and ready for settlement and annexation. The error in judgement about the readiness of the German tribes to enter the Roman world was not his alone, but the Roman government in general. The major battle in the Teutoburg forest had already been fought and lost by the time the news reached Augustus. The search for the site of this disastrous battle has occupied archaeologists for several centuries, but the problem now seems to have been solved. Claims have been made for a location north of Osnabrück, around Kalkriese, where finds of military equipment and coins support the theory that this was the site of the 'Varusschlacht'.⁶⁴

The legions which were wiped out were not named in the ancient sources, but archaeologists and historians deduce that they were the XVII, XVIII and XIX.⁶⁵ These legions disappear from the record and were never reconstituted, nor were their numbers reused, so it is a safe assumption that these were the units annihilated by the Germans in AD 9. The losses could not be taken lightly. Roman armies had been at full stretch since AD 6, recruitment was once again vital, but had to be undertaken from depleted resources, and perhaps most important of all, Roman prestige was badly dented. Tiberius was the only man capable of taking command, so after years of campaigning he was sent once again to Germany. Augustus dismissed his German bodyguard, because the men were felt to be untrustworthy.⁶⁶ It was a cosmetic operation as much as a prudent safeguard to do so, because public opinion would have turned against the German soldiers anyway, however loyal they might have been. Freedmen were recruited for the army, and veterans were recalled. The situation was not as bad as was at first believed; some soldiers had survived, and the Germans had not crossed the Rhine, nor had they even penetrated as far as the river.⁶⁷ Tiberius retrieved the losses, remaining in Germany for another two years, in AD 10 watching in case the tribesmen penetrated to the Rhine and in AD 11 campaigning inside German territory – but not too far.⁶⁸ Augustus wrote in the *Res Gestae*⁶⁹ that he pacified Germany to the mouth of the Elbe, passing over in silence the losses of AD 9. Jones⁷⁰ suggested that earlier versions of the *Res Gestae*, drafted before AD 9, would probably have stated 'I pacified Germany to the Elbe', but after the disaster of Varus, the claims that German territory was overrun were reduced to the more modest 'to the mouth of the Elbe', but this begs the question of Augustus'

intentions towards Germany. Simply because he mentioned the river Elbe cannot be taken to mean that this was initially where he intended to draw the boundary line. As Cooley⁷¹ points out, the Romans crossed the river in AD 1 and set up an altar on the north bank. Perhaps at that date the concept of *imperium sine fine* was still valid, but whatever Augustus' initial intentions had been, dreams of conquest had faded. Augustus never recovered from the Varian disaster, and turned his back on expansion of the Empire. He was said to give vent to his feelings on occasion by shouting out loud, 'Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!'⁷² and he certainly advised Tiberius not to attempt further conquests.⁷³ It was probably not necessary to say it; Tiberius had had enough of fighting.

After the German disaster, there were no further major wars for many years. Augustus concentrated on guaranteeing the succession in so far as he could direct affairs, to clear the path for a seamless join between his own style of government and that of the next princeps and his entourage. It was obvious that Augustus intended that there should continue to be a group of family members, all of them schooled in Roman administration. Tiberius' son Drusus was quaestor in AD 11,⁷⁴ and Germanicus was consul in the following year,⁷⁵ and held the office for the whole year even though suffect consuls holding office for half the year were the norm. Germanicus had not been praetor in his turn, so since he had omitted this tour of duty,⁷⁶ Augustus perhaps wished him to gain the full experience of the consulship and its administrative duties. It was also his intention that Drusus was to be treated in the same fashion, reaching the consulship without having been praetor, in AD 15. In the past he had insisted that his adopted sons should as far as possible fill each office in turn, but he desired a streamlined training scheme for his heirs now that he was so much older himself. He wrote a letter commending Germanicus to the Senate, and the Senate to Tiberius, but did not read it out himself, because his voice was failing. Germanicus read it, which implies that this had become Augustus' normal method of communicating with the Senate. Possibly his eyesight was failing, too, just as in later years Vespasian had to rely upon his son Titus to read communications to him and deliver speeches for him. The Romans would have really appreciated spectacles, magnifying glasses and telescopes.

Augustus' powers were renewed for a further 10 years in AD 13; he was in his mid-seventies, and cannot have held out realistic hopes of reaching the stage where he would need to have his powers renewed again. This time he made Tiberius his colleague, with *imperium* equal to his own, and *tribunicia potestas*. Velleius⁷⁷ maintains that Tiberius' powers were equal to those of Augustus, and Suetonius⁷⁸ says that the consuls had passed a law that he should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus and conduct the census with him. At this stage in AD 13, he restructured the *consilium*, ostensibly because Augustus was too old to attend the meetings of the Senate,⁷⁹ but this reorganisation was perhaps also an attempt to make it more manageable for Tiberius and his successors. He probably realised that personality as well as *auctoritas* counted for a great deal in this respect, and that Tiberius had neither the experience nor the inclination for the

looser, more relaxed style of government. Crook⁸⁰ assumed that Augustus was aware that Tiberius 'had not the temperament to guide successfully a purely senatorial probouleutic body of the old kind'. The *consilium* certainly became more like an executive council and lost its informal, experimental, advisory capacity. Tiberius, Germanicus, and Drusus were to be regular members of it, with the consuls of the year and 20 senators, who each served for a year. Augustus' advisers had previously numbered 15, and had served for six months. The *consilium* was given greater powers in that its resolutions were given the same validity as *senatus consulta*.

Not that Augustus had any intention yet of retiring altogether. When there was further discontent with the inheritance tax levied for the military treasury, he repeated his former offer to the senators, to let them find a better way of raising the revenues. Dio adds an interesting note that Augustus instructed Germanicus and Drusus not to say a word about the matter, because if they did speak out, then people desiring to please him would seize on the ideas in the expectation that this was what he really wanted.⁸¹ Some written reports reached him, but he ignored them and proposed a land tax instead. He even started to collect statistics and to measure up estates,⁸² probably tongue-in-cheek with no intention of carrying out his threat. Knowing that a land tax would hurt far more people, and do it far more deeply than an inheritance tax, he had only to wait until the senators capitulated and settled for his original plan. After all the tribulations of his last years, he may have permitted himself a wry smile, fully aware, like modern salesmen, that you put up the price so you can knock something off.

In AD 14 Augustus and Tiberius conducted a census, in which 4,937,000 citizens were registered in the *Res Gestae*.⁸³ If Augustus did not hold this power on a permanent basis, this may have been a special grant made for the specific purpose of conducting the census. Suetonius⁸⁴ refers to a law passed by the consuls, that Tiberius should govern provinces jointly with Augustus and carry out the census as his colleague. The problem is that it is not known whether this law was restricted to Tiberius alone, or whether it also applied to Augustus. Some authorities assume that the law could have bestowed consular power on him for the same task of conducting the census. Once again there is no absolute clarity about Augustus' consular power. It has been suggested that Tiberius did not hold consular power in Italy,⁸⁵ but the passage recording the census in the *Res Gestae*⁸⁶ can be taken as evidence that he did, and so was in all respects the equal of Augustus in AD 14.⁸⁷ The debate goes on because there is no proof for what must remain cleverly argued theories.

After completing the census, Tiberius set off for Illyricum, and Augustus went to Capri, which he reputedly liked very much, having received it from the city of Naples in return for Ischia.⁸⁸ He attended the games at Naples, but fell ill. By willpower and determination he reached Nola, where his family owned property. Dio⁸⁹ recounts the omens that occurred before Augustus' death, though it is not known if Augustus himself was aware of them. Certain that his end was

approaching, he made himself presentable, had his cheeks rouged and sat up in bed to ask the audience gathered around him if they had enjoyed the performance.⁹⁰ He knew better than anyone that successful rule of any collection of people, from a village to an empire, is a combination of good luck, good management, opportunism, guile, quick-thinking and self-presentation. He had devoted considerable care and attention to the last of these requirements, cultivating the personality of saviour of the state, and creating the universal visual image to match.⁹¹ He was in his seventies when he died, but all over the Empire coins and sculptures still portrayed him as he was when in his prime.

On 19 August AD 14, appropriately enough in the month named after him, Augustus died in the same room as his father Gaius Octavius.⁹² According to Velleius,⁹³ Augustus conversed with Tiberius and died in his arms, but Velleius was a Tiberian groupie, and although this is probably the tale that he heard from Tiberius himself, it may have been a fictional version. Tacitus⁹⁴ admits that no-one knows whether Tiberius found Augustus alive or dead when he returned to Nola. Suetonius⁹⁵ says that only Livia was present when Augustus died. Barrett⁹⁶ suggests that there may have been a common source used by Tacitus and Suetonius for the death scene of Augustus. Suetonius and Tacitus use similar language in some instances, which implies that either Suetonius used Tacitus as one of his sources, or there was a shared source used by both authors, and possibly by Dio as well. Dio⁹⁷ is full of suspicion, inferring that Livia was suspected of poisoning her husband by smearing poison over some figs, and she kept his death a closed secret until Tiberius safely reached Nola. Barrett⁹⁸ outlines the similarity of the circumstances surrounding the allegedly unnatural deaths of Augustus and Claudius, the roles of Livia and Agrippina who may have poisoned their husbands, and the accession of their respective sons Tiberius and Nero. The allegations that Livia caused the death of Augustus are brilliantly perpetuated by Robert Graves in the novels about Claudius, but she may have been innocent. Augustus was an old man even by today's standards, and Tiberius' place as designated successor was secure enough to obviate any need for hastening the end of his adoptive father. As for the deliberate concealment of Augustus' death, Livia was not the first or the last to resort to this means of securing the succession. It is a natural political response, and throughout history, in many kingdoms and empires, this subterfuge has occurred, or is said to have occurred, to try to ensure that the accession of the new ruler is unequivocal and uncontested. The emperor Hadrian succeeded Trajan under somewhat similar dubious circumstances.

Augustus had started life as Gaius Octavius, the great-nephew of Gaius Julius Caesar. His prospects during his childhood, even though he was related to the rising general who became Dictator, were not outstanding. The turn of events in the latter years of Julius Caesar's pre-eminence brought Octavius to power at an early age, and he clung to it tenaciously throughout his long reign. He had gone through several transformations in the course of it, and now he transformed himself for the last time, into an enduring legend and god.

Notes

- 1 Vell. Pat. 2.104.1.
- 2 Dio 55.13.1a.
- 3 Dio 55.27.5.
- 4 Dio 56.26.2–3.
- 5 Dio 55.33.5.
- 6 Richardson 2012, 179.
- 7 *RG* 8.2.
- 8 Cooley 2009, 141–41.
- 9 *RG* 8.4.
- 10 *RG* 30.1.
- 11 Vell. Pat. 2.104.3–105.3.
- 12 Dio 55.28.5.
- 13 Crook 1996a, 105 n.182.
- 14 Seneca *de Clem.* 1.9.
- 15 Dio 55.14.1.
- 16 Syme 1986, 266.
- 17 Dio 55.13.3.
- 18 Dio 55.13.5–6.
- 19 The details of the *Lex Aelia Sentia* are set out by Carter 1982, 154–55 and in *CAH2*, 895–96.
- 20 Dio 55.22.3.
- 21 Dio 55.23.1.
- 22 Dio 55.31.4.
- 23 Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.
- 24 Dio 55.26.1.
- 25 Suet. *Aug.* 42.3.
- 26 The organisation of the food supply under Augustus is documented by Rickman 1980, 63–64.
- 27 Dio 55.24.9.
- 28 Dio 55.25.3.
- 29 Dio 55.25.4.
- 30 Dio 55.25.6.
- 31 Suet. *Aug.* 49.2.
- 32 Dio 56.28.4–6; Cooley 2009, 181.
- 33 Dio 55.25.9.
- 34 Richardson 2012, 171.
- 35 Brunt and Moore 1967, 60.
- 36 *RG* 17.2.
- 37 On the neighbourhoods of Rome see Lott 2004.
- 38 Dio 55.26.4–5.
- 39 Nippel 1995, 96–97; Fuhmann 2012, 116–17; Richardson 2012, 176.
- 40 Fuhmann 2012, 116 n.94.
- 41 Dio 55.34.3.
- 42 Dio 55.25.1.
- 43 Tac. *Ann.* 3.24; 4.71.
- 44 Syme 1986, 115–27.
- 45 Syme 1986, 121–22.
- 46 Syme 1986, 412.
- 47 Raaflaub and Samons 1990, 431; see also B. Levick ‘Abdication and Agrippa Postumus’, *Historia* 21, 1972, 674–97.
- 48 Kienast 1982, 119.

- 49 Suet. *Aug.* 51.1.
- 50 Suet. *Aug.* 19.1.
- 51 B. Levick 'The fall of the younger Julia', *Latomus* 35, 1976, 307–9.
- 52 Suet. *Aug.* 65; Dio 55.32.1–2.
- 53 Dio 55.28.3.
- 54 Dio 55.28.1.
- 55 Dio 55.29.3.
- 56 Dio 55.30.1.
- 57 Suet. *Tib.* 16.1.
- 58 Dio 55.31.1.
- 59 Dio 55.34.3.
- 60 Dio 56.12.
- 61 Dio 56.17.1–3.
- 62 Dio 56.18–56.22.
- 63 Richardson 2012, 183.
- 64 Edward Manking (ed.) *Kalkriese: Ort der Varusschlacht*. Regensburg: Verlag Schnell und Steiner GmbH (English edition) 1994; D. Timpe 'Geographische Faktoren und politische Entscheidungen in der Geschichte der Varuszeit' in Wiegels and Woesler 1995, 13–28; W. Schluter 'Neue Erkenntnisse zur Örtlichkeit der Varusschlacht: die archaologischen Untersuchungen in der Kalkrieses-Niewedder Senke in Vorland des Wiehengebirges' in Wiegels and Woesler 1995, 67–96; Tony Clunn *In Quest of the Lost Legions: The Varusschlacht*. London: Minerva Press, 1999.
- 65 Watson 1969, 23.
- 66 Dio 56.23; see also M. P. Speidel *Riding for Caesar: The Equites Singulari Augusti*. London: Batsford, 1995.
- 67 Dio 56.24.
- 68 Dio 56.24.6 to 56.25.1.
- 69 *RG* 26.2.
- 70 Jones 1970, 77.
- 71 Cooley 2009, 222.
- 72 Suet. *Aug.* 23.2.
- 73 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11; Dio 56.33; see also J. Ober 'Tiberius and the political testament of Augustus', *Historia* 31, 1982, 306–28; T. Cornell 'The end of Roman Imperial expansion' in J. Rich and G. Shipley *War and Society in the Roman World*. London: Routledge, 1993, 139–70.
- 74 Dio 56.25.4.
- 75 Dio 56.26.1.
- 76 Dio 56.28.1.
- 77 Vell. Pat. 2.121.1.
- 78 Suet. *Tib.* 21.1.
- 79 Dio 56.28.2–3.
- 80 Crook 1955, 14–15.
- 81 Dio 56.28.4–5.
- 82 Dio 56.28.6.
- 83 *RG* 8.3.
- 84 Suet. *Tib.* 21.1.
- 85 Jones 1968, 16; 1970, 77.
- 86 *RG* 8.4.
- 87 Brunt and Moore 1967, 51 consider that the law mentioned by Suet. *Tib.* 21.1 empowering Tiberius to take the census may well have included Augustus in the special grant of consular power.
- 88 Suet. *Aug.* 92.2; Dio 52.43.2.

FINALE

- 89 Dio 56.29.
- 90 Suet. *Aug.* 99.1.
- 91 Levick 2010, 202–50 on ‘Self-presentation of a monarch’; Beacham 2005.
- 92 Suet. *Aug.* 100.1; Dio 56.30.5.
- 93 Vell. Pat. 2.123.2.
- 94 Tac. *Ann.* 1.5.
- 95 Suet. *Aug.* 99.1.
- 96 Barrett 2002, 243.
- 97 Dio 56.31.1.
- 98 Barrett 2002, 245–46.

THE LEGACY

The Roman world held its breath for a short time, waiting to see what would happen. Augustus had ruled the Empire for a very long time, and the longevity of his rule had lent stability to his regime. There would be many people who had known nothing else except the rule of the princeps; some people could have been born and died while he was still in power, and all the generations born in and after 30 BC would know nothing of the Republic and the turmoil that heralded its end, except for hearsay and their history books. Velleius¹ speaks of the narrow margin between stability and chaos, until the accession of Tiberius was assured (Figure 9.1). Dio² points out that the length of Augustus' reign gave the world stability, and that many people would know no other form of government. One of Tiberius' first acts was to write to the armies spread over the Empire, and to secure the loyalty of the troops in Italy by means of the oath established by Augustus.³ The secret of Empire, fully revealed after the death of Nero and the civil wars that followed, was already known quite distinctly to Augustus and Tiberius. In his will Augustus had left 300 sesterces to each of the legionaries, with the stipulation that it should be paid out immediately. He knew his men, and the value of money in maintaining loyalty. Even so, the ancient sources record military discontent among the northern legions. Some of the legions expressed their support of Germanicus, thus compromising his position vis-à-vis Tiberius. The discontent was quelled by Tiberius' son Drusus and Junius Blaesus.⁴ The soldiers had no high minded desires to restore the Republic, nor to elevate anyone except a member of Augustus' family; the main thing on their minds was more likely a possible rise in pay and the extraction of privileges from whoever was to be their new paymaster. Tiberius may have increased the pay of the Praetorian Guard to make sure of their loyalty; Watson⁵ points out that at an unspecified date between AD 6 and 14 praetorian pay doubled, and though this may have derived from a measure promoted by Augustus, Watson thought that it was due to Tiberius, 'who as the designated future ruler of Rome would find it desirable to secure the loyalty of what to an emperor was the most important section of the army'.

After the army, the next hurdle for Tiberius was the Senate. There was little resistance. The consuls, the prefects of the Praetorian Guard and the *praefectus annonae* swore the oath of loyalty to Tiberius, followed by the Senate, the people



Figure 9.1 Statue of Tiberius as emperor.
Source: Courtesy Vatican Museums.

of Rome, then the soldiers and the people of the provinces. Tacitus accuses the senators of rushing into slavery,⁶ but this view is obviously coloured by Tacitus' own experience of living through the reign of Domitian. The taking of the oath to Tiberius cannot have happened overnight, but the intention to administer it all over the Empire was what counted for immediate purposes. Tiberius summoned the senators by means of his tribunician power, a factor which lends support to the theory that he did not hold consular power in Italy. The context does not necessarily bear this out. The source for the episode is Tacitus, and the passage describing Tiberius' actions should be taken as a whole, since its main point is that Tiberius was anxious not to overstep the mark by too blatant a display of power. He insisted that each first step should be taken by the consuls, as though the Republic still existed, and to indicate that he was not yet certain that he wished to take on the Empire. He wanted to keep a low profile, and so the use of tribunician instead of consular power to summon the Senate was one

of the least provocative ways of doing so. This was merely for the sake of good form, because he had already assumed command of the troops and the Praetorian Guard, but it was prudent to show some fastidiousness about the method of summoning the Senate. It could be argued that taking control of the military forces was simply inevitable, not a sign of megalomania; somebody had to do it, to prevent a descent into chaos, and thereafter Tiberius was merely playing Augustus' old game of reluctantly taking on the burden of Empire only after he had been asked to do so. Velleius⁷ becomes quite emotional when he describes how the Senate and people had to force control of the Empire upon Tiberius and he took it on in the end only because he saw that if he did not protect Rome and the Empire, it would perish. But Tacitus says that when Tiberius expressed reluctance to take on the government of the Empire, he was more dignified than convincing, and furthermore he 'nowhere manifested the least hesitation, except when speaking in the Senate'.⁸ The main trouble, of course was the comparison with Augustus, who did this sort of thing rather better and was altogether more plausible.

Augustus left a will and three other documents which were read out in the Senate after his death. These three items comprised his written instructions regarding his funeral, the text which is now known as the *Res Gestae*, which he wished to be placed at the entrance to his tomb, and the account of the Empire's resources, which Suetonius⁹ calls the *breviarium totius imperii*. This document is also briefly described by Tacitus.¹⁰ The will was read out in the Senate by Augustus' freedman Polybius.¹¹ It was in two parts, one written in his own hand and one by Polybius, who read it out, and Hilarion.¹² His chief heirs were Tiberius and Livia, then Germanicus and Drusus, then members of his extended family. Livia was to be adopted into the Julian family, effectively becoming Augustus' daughter rather than his wife, and she was to be granted the title Augusta. No actual powers accrued to her as a result of receiving this title, but it was a significant honour. The agreement of the Senate would have to be sought to authorise the adoption into the Julii clan, perhaps by a *senatus consultum* ratified by the people, and the Senate would also be involved in arranging matters so that she could inherit the money left to her in Augustus' will.¹³

Augustus left a total of 43,000,000 sesterces to the people, 1,000 sesterces apiece to the praetorians, 500 to each man of the urban troops, and 300 to each legionary soldier. The account of the Empire contained an enumeration of the soldiers in active service, the money in the public treasuries, and the revenue in arrears. Appended to the document was a list of names of those freedmen and slaves of his household and official staff who could render account of the state finances. Dio¹⁴ adds that there was a fourth document, containing instructions to the people and to Tiberius, to the effect that they should not free too many slaves and thereby risk releasing upon the city an indolent rabble; that they should not enfranchise too many people, because to do so would blur the distinctions between the Romans and the rest of the world; that they should entrust public business to those best qualified to understand it, and never allow the

whole to fall into the hands of one man, to avoid tyranny or collapse if one man died or was killed; and that they should be content with their gains so far and not try to expand the Empire, because it would be too difficult to guard it. Whether this document did once exist is not known, but Dio was on safe ground since all these alleged instructions are in keeping with Augustus' policies as evidenced by his legislation, his use of various members of his family to undertake official tasks, and his later opinions on expansion of the Empire after the disaster of Varus in Germany.

Augustus' body was brought from Nola in several stages, travelling by night because it was the hot season, and the bier was placed in the basilica in each town where it rested during the day. From Bovillae, the equestrians escorted the body to Augustus' house in Rome. The funeral took place with suitable pomp and ceremony.¹⁵ Drusus and Tiberius delivered orations as the cortege halted in the Forum near the Rostra. Augustus' body was burned in the Campus Martius, with the Senate and equites and their families looking on, then the remains were conveyed to the mausoleum. On 17 September, the Senate decreed that Augustus should be deified, and temples should be set up to his cult; Livia reputedly paid a million sesterces to Numerius Atticus, who said that he had seen Augustus' spirit rising to the heavens.¹⁶ It sounds like a prearranged scenario, of which Augustus himself would have been proud. After the funeral and the deification came the assessments of Augustus' life and career. Tacitus weighs the pros and cons in two sequential passages,¹⁷ succinctly summing up the divergent opinions about motives and intentions, and the good and bad effects of the reign. The end results were law and order, centralisation of the administration, a lack of coercion in the later years and the creation of government by the princeps instead of a Dictatorship. On the other hand there were the means by which Octavian had come to power, the proscriptions, the Triumvirate, the civil wars, and the appalling fact that what Augustus had really bequeathed to the Roman world was Tiberius and the unalloyed monarchy. Tacitus does not draw the comparison between his own times and the accession of Tiberius, but he did not need to comment, because it was quite clear that the reign of Augustus' successor had led to the accession of Domitian, everyone's *bête noire* at the time when Tacitus wrote. The significance of Tacitus' assessment of Augustus is that all the positive aspects belong to the later period, and all the negative ones, save for the suppression of a few conspiracies, belong to the death struggles of the Republic. It is hard to escape the conclusion that for the average man in the street the reign of Augustus had not been too detrimental. The positive aspects survived, and with the passage of time became hallowed. Later emperors had a vested interest in presenting Augustus as the founder of the Empire, and could hardly admit that he might have got it wrong. Dio¹⁸ employs his largely invented funeral oration of Tiberius as an assessment of Augustus' life and achievements, echoing more than once the opening, self-justificatory remarks of the *Res Gestae* by claiming three times in his narrative¹⁹ that Augustus had put an end to the strife caused by the various warring factions in Rome. Dio's audience had

good reason to know at first hand the disruption and despair caused by factions and civil wars, since this is what happened after the assassination of Commodus and the eventual rise to sole power of Septimius Severus at the turn of the second and third centuries AD; it would strike a curiously modern tone to them to hear how Augustus had faced and overcome the same problems two centuries earlier.

The more recent judgements of Augustus have also been influenced by their own milieu. The 1930s and 1940s had seen the darker side of political supremacy, and scholars of the period naturally interpreted Augustus' seizure of power and prolonged grasp on it as something less than admirable. More relaxed times have seen a more relaxed version of Augustus, with great attention paid to his use of art (see Figures 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4) and literature to promote his image, or perhaps his acquiescence in the undirected developments in these areas.²⁰ There is still argument about how far his control of these political tools invaded the realm of private initiative; some see him as totally committed to rigid censorship and eradication of the slightest criticism, and to promotion and direction of favourable representations of himself, while others have depicted him as tolerant to a great degree, perfectly willing to let art follow its own course. It cannot be



Figure 9.2 Cameo of Augustus in a seventeenth-century setting.
Source: Courtesy Römisch-Germanisches Landesmuseum, Cologne.



Figure 9.3 Sardonyx cameo of Augustus, with gold diadem added in the Middle Ages.
Source: Courtesy British Museum.

denied that he was aware of and utilised every means of self-advertisement to elevate himself and then maintain his pre-eminence once achieved. A recent author has rightly labelled him an expert showman, which he was, in the sense of being a talented actor, but it is not known if he was the sole author of the scripts that he acted out. It may be that there was a person or even an unofficial committee behind the presentation of Augustus to the world. It is important to realise that the constant promotion of the image was not simply to impress the Senate and the Roman people, nor the soldiers and the provincials, but also the world outside Rome, where prestige counted for as much as armed force. This promotion of the image was certainly not accidental, but it is not known how, or if, it was co-ordinated and centrally directed. Nameless subordinates have been postulated, acting as ancient versions of publicity agents, not an impossible scenario in the circumstances. Crook²¹ describes Augustus as a showman, and is prepared to believe in some faceless assistant or assistants who attended to the promotion of Augustus. Other monarchs have employed the same means, with important parallels for Augustus' reign. A well-researched study by Peter Burke²² has revealed that the presentation of Louis XIV was orchestrated by his minister Colbert, who glorified and celebrated his master by all the means at his



Figure 9.4 The *Gemma Augustea*, created from a piece of onyx with an upper layer of white and a lower layer of blue, so that the figures are created by cutting away the white layer down to the blue layer. The scene at the top shows Augustus being crowned with the oak wreath by Oikumene, one among several similar representations in Augustan art. Augustus is equated with Jupiter with an eagle by his feet. The goddess Roma stands next to him, and the figure descending from the chariot is thought to be Tiberius. Soldiers erect a trophy in the lower section, and prisoners are shown crouching on the left and being dragged along on the right. The occasion may be Tiberius' victory over the Germans in AD 12. This work of art reveals the divinity of Augustus in an unmistakable fashion, and since it was probably created towards the end of his reign rather than for Tiberius as emperor, it is thought that it could not have been intended for public viewing. It was probably made for circulation among the private family of Augustus.

Source: Courtesy Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

disposal. The process was noted and summed up by Ezechiel Spanheim, a professor of rhetoric from Geneva, who became a diplomat at Versailles; his description could apply equally as well to Augustus as to Louis XIV: 'They present him as the sole author and inspiration of all the successes of his reign, attributed entirely to his wisdom, prudence and courage.' Everything throughout the Roman world was exploited to present Augustus; monuments were adorned with his name and statues; sculptures of him still abound from all parts of the Empire; coins portrayed his face and the topics of the moment; literature praised his historic and current achievements.

There has been argument about the intended audience for these various artistic and literary works, and about how far their influence permeated everyday life. As for the monuments and buildings that appeared in Rome and all

over the Empire, it is not known how much direct involvement Augustus had in their design, nor how much interest he took in them afterwards.²³ In Rome, buildings were meant to impress, not just the inhabitants but also visitors from the provinces and from foreign states to what was in effect the centre of the world as far as the Romans were concerned. But they were not simply massive edifices without purpose; they were public amenities with specific functions. If Augustus did not finance them or oversee the building himself, he encouraged his family and friends to do so, but in general there was a decline in private enterprise. The coinage as a propaganda tool has been questioned because it is not known who dictated the legends and images appearing on coins.²⁴ Levick too expresses doubt about the propaganda value, but says that however the designs of the coinage originated, nothing was produced that did not suit Augustus,²⁵ not all of which may have been organised by Augustus himself, but may have stemmed from personal initiative at different times. It is also questionable how much notice people took of the images and legends on coins in everyday transactions; how many modern people could describe, without looking at them to check, the images on coins beyond a vague notification that there is a head of the queen, king, president or other ruler on one side and something on the other with words round both images? And yet coins and banknotes are used nearly every day.

It is certain that the image of the princeps was constantly before the eyes of almost everyone in the Empire in one form or another, and that moreover the presentation of the image was never allowed to lapse.²⁶ The formality of the portraits was paramount; no evidence has come to light that Augustus was ever depicted in anything other than formal dress, or performing anything other than official tasks, full of Roman *gravitas* and dignity. In everyday life he made jokes and laughed, grew angry from time to time, was frequently ill, and functioned like any other human being, but nothing of this reached the public in visible concrete form. Similarly there was a consistent portrayal of Augustus as an eternal youth, who never aged. The image makers of Hollywood would have nothing to teach Augustus. Once having created the legend, it is difficult to watch it wither away, and having maintained the youthful image for so long it becomes incongruous to present to the world a sudden dramatic change to the reality of old age. It would have suggested to the Roman world an infirmity that would have contradicted the reliance placed on the self-advertised strength of the ruler.

In the religious sphere, Augustus restored the rituals if not the religious feeling of the people. There was a general consensus that during the civil wars the gods had not only been neglected but also deeply offended, and therefore amends had to be made. The functioning of the state depended on a sort of bargain with the gods, who would protect and assist the people if the proper observances were made, so Augustus set about restoring buildings and also antique priesthoods such as the arval brethren, who were originally associated with agriculture, but whose functions under the Empire included praying for the safety of the emperor and giving thanks for his recovery from illness. Another priestly group

that Augustus revived was that of the *sodales Titii*, whose functions are not well documented.

Augustus became Pontifex Maximus only in 12 BC when Marcus Aemilius Lepidus died, and so he could not be said to stand at the head of the state religion from the very beginning. Even without this highest priestly office there was no threat to his supremacy on this score. He did not suffer from the problems of the medieval kings of Europe, who frequently found themselves in conflict with, and sometimes dominated by, the Church. He did not have to undergo a coronation ceremony where he had to enter into agreement with the priests of the state religion for protection, like medieval monarchs.²⁷ Religious observances in the Roman world could proceed without the need for Augustus to be chief priest, so when he at length combined the chief priesthood with all his other powers, Augustus hardly needed the extra authority that this gave him. While Lepidus still lived, Augustus contrived to marginalise him and circumvent him. He received the right to present candidates for all other priesthoods²⁸ and filled the colleges of priests with his own supporters.²⁹ The Pontifex Maximus had prestige and authority but he could not act unless the Senate asked him to do so, and therefore Augustus simply avoided any circumstances in which he had to involve Lepidus, finding alternative methods of achieving his aims without consulting or requiring any action from the pontifex.³⁰

Augustus was integrated into the religious system of Rome by another means. The growth of the imperial cult was one of the most remarkable and novel methods of bringing Augustus to the notice of the people.³¹ The eastern provinces subscribed to the notion of his personal divinity very early, just after the battle of Actium, but according to Dio,³² Octavian, as he then was, objected to plans for worship of himself as a living god, and so he prudently combined the divinity of Rome with worship of himself. In Rome and the west the process was slower to develop. Rome was a more sensitive area, where proclaiming oneself a god was not the wisest of courses to follow. He set limits on the ruler cult in Rome and Italy, without quite abandoning the general concept.³³ When Agrippa wanted to dedicate his new temple in Rome as the Augusteum, Augustus refused the honour, and would not allow a statue of himself to be placed inside the temple, choosing to depict Julius Caesar instead, who was a god in his own right. Divinity was bestowed on Augustus at one remove as the son of the deified Caesar. Later in his life, when he had created the 14 regions of the city, he allowed the *magistri* of the subdivisions of the regions to administer the worship of his *genius* rather than himself as god on earth.³⁴ The *lares compitales* or local shrines thus became the *lares Augusti*.

The worship of Augustus as a living god seems to have been more acceptable in the western provinces than it was in Rome itself. Altars were dedicated to him as a god during his lifetime in some provinces. Taylor³⁵ concluded that in the west Augustus was worshipped as a god in his own lifetime, and Hanlein-Schafer endorsed this conclusion, judging that temples were established to Augustus himself, and not just to his *genius* alone, on an equal basis in the eastern and

western halves of the Empire.³⁶ The eastern provinces were well used to this concept, but the western provinces were virgin territories to be moulded into this religious context. The ruler cult had to be manufactured there, and was concentrated on specific sites. At the two main sites there was an open-air sanctuary and an altar but no actual temple; the Altar of the Three Gauls was established at Lugdunum, and the Altar of the Ubii at Cologne on the Rhine. An altar to Augustus was set up on the north bank of the Elbe in AD 1, though it was presumably not a long-lived affair after the withdrawal from Germany. These focal points in the provinces helped to spread the cult throughout the western provinces. There was no pressure from Augustus or the Roman Senate for the establishment of these altars, but there were presumably some guidelines for the members of the provincial assemblies who wished to set up such features. Priests were recruited to officiate at the ceremonies, but beyond the existence of the cult, not much is known of their rituals and procedures. They were *sacerdotes*, not *flamines*, so they were provincial, not Roman priests. The process would require considerable time to become embedded in public consciousness, and probably yielded more benefits to Augustus' successors than to himself.

His successors built upon the administrative foundations that he had laid, so gradually and seamlessly that at one time it seemed to scholars that the whole system sprang from Augustus' master plan for the government of the Roman Empire. That assessment has been revised in the light of more detailed research which has revealed that only some of the administrative procedures had reached their final form when Augustus died. It had been argued that he took over functions, not powers, especially in the judicial and legislative spheres.³⁷ He did so very gradually, just as Tacitus says, and without usurpation of anyone's position. He took on judicial functions, attending the courts sometimes as onlooker and sometimes hearing cases himself. As he grew older he heard them in his own house. It was probably inevitable that he or his successors would assume the position of supreme judge, simply because people would look to the emperor as arbiter, and he would have to make decisions. Eventually the word of the emperor became law, but this posed a few anomalies, as outlined by Crook; no-one seemed to be certain how this had come about, but it was known that it had not always been the case. Augustus promulgated laws through the proper channels, and declined the honour of applying to them the name *leges Augustae*. It meant that he wanted to remain within the normal range of legislative procedure, calling them instead *leges Juliae*. Nonetheless he needed to be able to guide the legal process in all its aspects. Similarly he guided administration, but he did not establish anything more than a rudimentary form of centralised bureaucracy. The administration of the Empire evolved from the form that Augustus gave it, but without precise dates for the institution of various procedures it is difficult to analyse the full contribution that he made. Millar³⁸ analysed the changes brought about by one-man rule, and Nicolet³⁹ dealt with the administration in so far as it affected the upper classes. In a series of papers, Lacey⁴⁰ traced the development of the Principate as a system, and Millar,⁴¹

Lintott⁴² and Levick⁴³ examined provincial government. These are only a few of the main studies of this vast subject.

The administrative staff under Augustus seems to have been quite small, and consisted mostly of freedmen, two of whom are named in the ancient sources, Polybius and Hilarion. The division into specialised departments dealing with incoming and outgoing correspondence, and the career structures of the freedman and equestrian administrative classes were developed later. Augustus' most important administrative functions embraced the appointment of the important officials in his own provinces, and the commanders and subordinate officers of his own troops, from legionary legates downwards. He does not seem to have aimed at total control of the appointments to all magistracies, except at times when there was conflict. The government and administration of the city of Rome evolved empirically, as did the government of some of the provinces, except in one respect which could not be left to chance. By dint of the command of various provinces and his *auctoritas* he controlled foreign policy, and although it could be said that he did so on an ad hoc basis without any master plan to guide him, it was vital to ensure that this aspect of Empire never fell into the hands of anyone else. Much of his success came from his government of the Roman Empire, but equally his success depended upon how he dealt with the outside world.

Analysis of Augustus' power and how he came by it and wielded it has produced a vast quantity of literature for many years. Tacitus' *Annals* should be the starting point for an acute observation of how Augustus controlled the state. More recent scholars and authors have highlighted the problems, minutely discussed them, and acutely dissected them, but have not yet unequivocally solved them. The most important contributory factors in Octavian's rise were the control of most of the armed forces after the fall of Alexandria, and the sole possession of the wealth of Egypt. Without armies and the private means of remunerating them, he would have failed to make more than a fleeting impression. But the arrival is not as difficult as remaining in power, and he did so through all the vicissitudes of his life for the next four decades. As commander of the armed forces and holder of the purse strings he had a head start, but then there were other attributes which enabled him to win over the Senate and people. He possessed patience and tact in his dealings with everyone, which masked his real power and gave the impression that all the people, whatever their status, had a contribution to make almost equal to his own. Modern team-building instructors could benefit from studying Augustus' methods. While preserving the class distinctions in Roman society, he tried and mostly succeeded in meeting the needs of each class, despite the fact that, as in most societies, gratification of the needs of one sector sometimes offended the sensibilities of another. He can hardly be said to have established a meritocracy, but from his reign onwards there were some opportunities for upward social mobility, provided of course that individuals met with his approval. He struck a fine balance between completely suppressing ambition and initiative and allowing men to over-reach the boundaries. Senators still governed some

provinces and commanded armies and received appropriate rewards, and a career structure was established by degrees for the equestrians, with prestigious goals in sight such as the prefecture of Egypt or of the Praetorian Guard.

The populace at large were persuaded that Augustus had their best interests at heart, and he kept them entertained and diverted with games and shows, festivals and spectacles. In this respect and in many others the whole of his reign was a continual piece of theatre. With the advantage of hindsight, Dio invents a speech for Maecenas concerning the government of the Empire, in which he tells Augustus that he will be living in a theatre, with the whole world as spectators.⁴⁴ It has been said that theatricality was embedded in every aspect of public life in the Augustan era, utilising art and architecture, literature, and political and religious ceremonial.⁴⁵ Augustus was not alone in this of course, since Antonius was just as conversant with spectacle and display in the east, but he was not given enough time and space to transport his performance to Rome. Levick⁴⁶ includes a section called 'Theatricality' in the chapter on how Augustus presented himself to the world, indicating that this stage management was not limited to entertaining the people, but was an integral part of the entire political and social image of Augustus. In the end he became what he presented, and the image subsumed the living breathing human being, of which there are only tantalising glimpses here and there.

As well as keeping the populace amused and entertained Augustus also, for the most part, kept them fed. He attended to the food supply whenever it was necessary, sometimes not quite soon enough before the people made their opinions abundantly clear. Although ensuring the delivery and distribution of food was simply common sense, not all regimes throughout history have a brilliant track record in this respect, and even good rulers who do have a brilliant track record can be toppled in a food crisis. The ordinary people, as well as the senatorial and equestrian classes, had to be made to feel that life was worth living, and there was the possibility of progress, whatever each individual conceived that to be. For slaves there was not much comfort or improvement in the Augustan regime, and Augustus himself was anxious to preserve the distinctions between slaves and freedmen on the one hand and free-born men and women on the other. But there was at least the hope of manumission for some slaves, and many freedmen became very wealthy. Being barred from political life did not necessarily involve misery.

Augustus' position as princeps, or first citizen, was supported by his modest behaviour and restraint. *Auctoritas* was a concept that he invoked once he was in power to explain to the world how he had arrived at this position, rather than an ideology that he had set himself to aim for. He could not predict how things would turn out, but he was guided by the knowledge of what people would tolerate and what they found unacceptable, and within that framework he exploited all opportunities that came his way.

When he had established peace, he required some reason for control of and access to the armies. He found it by taking on the government of the potentially disruptive half-formed provinces, where the need to establish and consolidate

Roman supremacy could be used as the mainstay of his control. He did not need to invent for himself a new post equivalent to commander-in-chief of all the armed forces, since proconsular power gave him control of military forces. He could afford to allow a few other men to command troops in different parts of the Roman world, because he was overall paymaster of the armies and the soldiers swore an oath of loyalty to him personally. This placed him on the moral high ground; it would not be sufficient to prevent the rise of potential usurpers, but anyone attempting to dislodge him by means of a military coup would probably weigh up the odds and think twice. Augustus was not alone at the head of the state. Agrippa was on hand and would have to be fought as well as Augustus, as second line defence. When Agrippa died there was Tiberius, and Gaius and Lucius, then Tiberius, Germanicus and Drusus. Augustus unashamedly used his family for state and dynastic purposes. He gave important commands to others who were outside the family circle, but reserved for his immediate family the direction of serious wars, and especially the command of troops in sensitive areas, or of large numbers of troops.

As time passed, the idea of the imperial family and its developing court, if such it can be termed at this stage, would become the norm. It may have been questioned whether the relatives of Augustus were the best men to undertake the various campaigns, but behind them all was Augustus himself, whose prestige was almost unassailable. The indefinable quality which he managed to foster was credibility, which scarcely ever wavered. Its component parts are several, including the carefully promoted image, based on tangible successes, but the overriding component is personality. Innate characteristics combined with experience enabled Augustus to rule men; the machinery by which he did so was already available, and all he had to do was recognise how to use it. He saw that men generally distrust innovation, especially if applied by force, and that they usually look back to precedents and procedures that they understand. As the title of his famous book makes clear, Syme treated Augustus' reign as a revolution, and his chapters on the government, the cabinet and the so-called National Programme analyse how Augustus worked within the existing framework, but nonetheless took total charge.⁴⁷ Useful synopses of Augustus' assumption of power can be found in commentaries on the *Res Gestae*.⁴⁸

The powers that Augustus assumed were embedded in republican tradition. Proconsular and tribunician power were not too alarming, even if he did have to bend the rules a little to assume the latter. Whether he wielded *imperium maius* has been questioned ad infinitum, and consular power is a constant problem, but all these thorny constitutional questions are in the end somewhat academic. It would be nice to know the answers, but if those particular tools of government had not been available to him, he would have adapted what there was and made new tools for personal rule. He would never have outlined distinctly what his powers were, and if challenged he would have redefined himself, without necessarily inventing anything new. He had to evolve continuously, adapting to circumstances as he went along, and for most of his rule he succeeded in keeping

one step ahead. But nothing lasts for ever, and towards the end of his reign things were beginning to tarnish a little.⁴⁹ Finance was a perennial problem, the provincials on the northern boundaries had begun to rebel against Roman rule, and these revolts had absorbed much time, effort and cash to bring under control. The loss of three legions in Germany was the most serious reverse that the Romans had suffered at foreign hands for a long time, although they had been quite adept at destroying each other during the prolonged civil wars. Had he been younger and more vigorous, Augustus would most probably have found ways of dealing with it all and still emerged intact and smelling of roses. As it was, Tiberius inherited a set of problems that he was not equipped to deal with, not because he was politically inept, or incapable or unintelligent, but because he had never developed the personality that would have allowed him to endear himself to the senators, the equites and the people alike. Augustus ruled the Roman world not simply because he rooted his powers in the older forms and did nothing too politically startling, but because he understood how to manage people without making it too obvious that this was what he was doing. He had the capacity to make people believe in him, and then make them grateful.

Notes

- 1 Vell. Pat. 2.124.1.
- 2 Dio 56.44.3–4.
- 3 Dio 57.3.2.
- 4 Dio 57.4.1–4; 57.5.1–3.
- 5 Watson 1969, 98.
- 6 Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.
- 7 Vell. Pat. 2.124.2.
- 8 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.
- 9 Suet. *Aug.* 101.4.
- 10 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.
- 11 Dio 56.32.1.
- 12 Suet. *Aug.* 101.4.
- 13 Barrett 2002, 75; 148–53.
- 14 Dio 56.33.
- 15 Suet. *Aug.* 100.2–5; Tac. *Ann.* 1–8; Dio 56.34–56.42.
- 16 Dio 56.4.61–62.
- 17 Tac. *Ann.* 1.9–10.
- 18 Dio 56.35–41.
- 19 Dio 56.37.1; 41.3; 44.2.
- 20 Levick 2010, 202–50 on the self-presentation of a monarch, and 251–87 on Augustus in art and literature.
- 21 Crook 1996b, 133; 137.
- 22 Burke 1992, 26; 49.
- 23 Jones 1970, 159.
- 24 Crook 1996b, 138 n.113.
- 25 Levick 2010, 208; 242 n.42.
- 26 The image of Augustus has been extensively and intensively studied in all aspects in the past few years; see among others Zanker 1988; Galinsky 1996; Levick 2010.
- 27 Wardman 1982, 67.

- 28 Dio 51.20.3.
- 29 Scheid 2005, 180.
- 30 Scheid 2005, 188.
- 31 Fishwick 1987; Pollini 1990; Ostrow 1990.
- 32 Dio 51.19–20.
- 33 Scheid 2005, 189.
- 34 Taylor 1931, 190–93.
- 35 Taylor 1931, 244.
- 36 Hanlein-Schafer 1985, reviewed by S. Price, *JRS* 76, 1986, 300–1.
- 37 Crook 1996b, 113.
- 38 Millar 1984.
- 39 Nicolet 1984.
- 40 Lacey 1996.
- 41 Millar 1966.
- 42 Lintott 1993.
- 43 Levick 2000.
- 44 Dio 54.34.2.
- 45 Beacham 2005, 151.
- 46 Levick 2010, 205–8.
- 47 Syme 1939, 389–418; 440–58.
- 48 Brunt and Moore 1967; Cooley 2009.
- 49 Levick 2010, 145.

APPENDIX I

The buildings of Augustan Rome

There are many buildings in the city of Rome which Augustus established or reconstructed, but an account of them does not readily slot into a chronological framework, so it is worthwhile giving a brief description of them for anyone who wishes to discover Augustus by means of so-called armchair travel or on an actual visit. Augustus was justifiably proud of his achievements in rebuilding the city of Rome, devoting the whole of chapters 19 to 21 of the *Res Gestae* to listing all the restoration work and new buildings that he carried out. He was fortunate that he was able to put an end to civil wars and bring peace to the core of the Roman world if not the whole growing Empire, and doubly fortunate that his reign was mostly unopposed and of such a long duration, allowing him the time and resources to remodel Rome over a period of four decades.

In claiming all the credit for building work, he was not exactly telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Some of his projects had been initiated by Julius Caesar, but there is only scant acknowledgement of Caesar in the *Res Gestae*, because by the time Augustus wrote the final version, his connection with the Dictator had been played down almost to extinction. Similarly there is no mention of the achievements of Agrippa, who was responsible for attention to the aqueducts and the water supply, the sewers for drainage, road repairs, and the first version of the Pantheon. Close by this temple, Agrippa built the first public baths in Rome. During the late Republic several private individuals were responsible for new buildings and repairs to old ones, but these men receive no acknowledgement in Augustus' account, save for a reference to the restoration of the theatre of Pompeius. Augustus encouraged wealthy men to contribute to the repair and upkeep of temples to gods with whom their families were connected, but after 30 BC private initiative died out. Republican politicians had used their building programmes to gain prestige and political advancement, and after the fall of Alexandria and the beginning of his personal supremacy, this was the last thing that Augustus wished to promote. All achievements, reforms, promotions and benefits must be seen to derive from Augustus himself.

He had inherited a dilapidated city that had been neglected for many years during the prolonged civil wars. There was no lack of impressive buildings, each fulfilling some necessary function, such as Pompeius' theatre in the Campus

Martius, with its temple, meeting rooms, and surrounding portico, but there had never been any corporate plan for Rome, or forward thinking for progressive development. Buildings were erected because the Senate decreed that they should be established, or because someone with a desire to impress and in possession of the necessary cash thought a new temple or basilica was called for. Augustus did not sweep everything away and impose a new corporate plan for the city, but he did initiate a programme of building and restoration work, which according to Suetonius (*Aug.* 28.3) enabled him to boast that he found a city of brick and converted it to a city of marble.

The monuments and buildings that Augustus built or repaired are not all visible today, or if they are, they do not necessarily retain the appearance that they would have presented in his day. Some of them were damaged or disappeared in the frequent fires in Rome, perhaps the most famous being that of Nero's reign, during which he allegedly fiddled while Rome burned, which is not true. He was probably not even in Rome at the time, and he hurried back to do what he could to remedy the situation. However, after the conflagration, he swept aside many buildings to establish his vast Golden House and gardens, glorious but short-lived though it was. There was another serious fire in AD 80 that enabled the emperor Domitian to indulge his virtual obsession with erecting buildings, a list of which was drawn up in the fourth century. A fire in AD 283 also destroyed much of Rome, so that the extant version of the Senate House, for instance, is a fourth-century work, though based on the original outline, but with added buttresses. Apart from destructive fires, many buildings required successive reconstruction, so the original Augustan work has been obscured, and in addition, some of the temples and minor buildings listed by Augustus in the *Res Gestae* are known only from his reference to them, and there is as yet no clue as to their locations. Two famous monuments visible today are not in the places where Augustus established them. The Ara Pacis, situated between the Tiber and Augustus' mausoleum, was originally built further south, close to the Via Flaminia, now the Via del Corso. The obelisk of the Meridian that once stood to the west of the Ara Pacis has been relocated to the south of its original position, in the small piazza in front of the Palazzo di Montecitorio.

When Augustus embarked on his long-term restoration project, the priorities were to re-establish buildings that facilitated the government and administration of the city and the Empire, works that contributed to the functioning of the city, such as aqueducts, roads and bridges, and religious establishments which helped to encourage the reinvigoration of religion itself.

The Forum Romanum

The work of Augustus can be traced all around the Forum Romanum. Even though successive alterations have obscured his versions of the buildings, they are all still in the same place, aligned in the same way, and constructed on more or less the same foundations. The Senate House was among the first to receive

attention, and indeed it would have seemed inappropriate to devote time and resources to work on other buildings before the senators had a permanent place to conduct meetings. The Senate House had been derelict for some time, having been burned down in 52 BC, when an over-enthusiastic populace determined to give the murdered darling of the people, Publius Clodius Pulcher, a good send off. Since there was no Senate House to meet in, Julius Caesar summoned the senators to the theatre of Pompeius in March 44 BC, where he was assassinated, allegedly falling at the foot of the statue of Pompeius. Caesar had formulated grand designs for rebuilding the Senate House, but since he was engaged in building his Forum behind it, his plans for a rectangular layout necessitated a slight relocation of the Senate building. Since it was in ruins anyway, this was not such an audacious project, though it is permissible to wonder if Caesar would have gone ahead with his plans even if the Senate House had been intact. Permission for relocating the Senate House was not forthcoming from the senators until 44 BC, by which time it was too late for Caesar to begin the work. Augustus completed the project, dedicating the finished building on 28 August 29 BC. He also finished work on the Forum of Julius Caesar (Figure AI.1) behind the Senate House, and the temple of Venus Genetrix at one end of it. The



Figure AI.1 The Forum of Julius Caesar, dedicated in 46 BC but completed by Augustus. The photo shows the arcade arches of the southwest side, and two of the three extant columns of the temple of Venus Genetrix that stood at one end of the Forum. These columns have been re-erected after modern excavation, and date from the rebuilding work done by the emperor Trajan at the beginning of the second century AD.

Source: Photo by author.

statue of Cleopatra was allowed to remain inside it. Caesar had dedicated the temple and the Forum in 46 BC, but it had not been completed, being some metres short of its projected length because of the delay in relocating the Senate House. The building visible now represents a reconstruction under the emperor Trajan, and the three columns and entablature at the side of the temple of Venus Genetrix have been re-erected in modern times. Approximately one-third of the long side of the Forum is obscured by the modern road, Via dei Fori Imperiali, so visitors have to imagine how the Forum of Caesar originally joined up with the new Forum of Augustus in front of the temple of Mars Ultor, the two vast areas now separated from each other by wide pavements, the busy road and constant streams of traffic. On Sundays, visitors can cross without this hazard.

Running roughly southwards from the Senate House is the Basilica Aemilia (Figure AI.2), also known as the Basilica Paulli, after Aemilius Paullus. This was built and rebuilt several times. Originally established in 179 BC, it was reconstructed in 55 BC, only to burn down in c.35 BC. Augustus rebuilt it, inaugurating it in 2 BC, adding a portico with shops in front of it, dedicated in the names of his adopted sons Gaius and Lucius. Part of the large inscription with the name of Lucius still extant on it can still be seen at the right hand side of the building. The serious fire of AD 283 destroyed the basilica, so the present remains are of the fourth century.



Figure AI.2 The Basilica Aemilia, or Basilica Paulli, with columns on the line of the Portico of Gaius and Lucius that Augustus built in front of it when he reconstructed the building towards the end of the first century BC.

Source: Photo by author.

At right angles to the Basilica Aemilia, Augustus built the temple of Divus Julius. This had been decreed by the triumvirs in 42 BC, but was not completed until peace was restored after the war against Antonius and Cleopatra. It was dedicated on 18 August 29 BC, shortly before the completion of the Senate House. What remains of the temple is not impressive, consisting of a shapeless mound, the core of the podium, minus the outer cladding which has been robbed out. Facing down the length of the Forum Romanum there is a semi-circular recess in the remains of the podium, containing the stump of a round monument, behind which modern visitors still lay flowers and other offerings to the ghost of Caesar. This may have been the spot where his body was burned.

Springing from the side of the temple of Divus Julius there was the Arch of Augustus (Figure AI.3) connecting the temple to the larger one of the Dioscuri, or Castor and Pollux. There were originally three arches, but very little is still visible, except for the truncated base of a pillar in the roadway. The date when this arch was erected is not certain. A coin of 29 BC shows a three-arched monument which may be a depiction of it, and the date accords well with the rebuilding of the Senate House and the dedication of the temple of Divus Julius,



Figure AI.3 This is the site of the now vanished Arch of Augustus, linking the temple of the Divine Julius on the right to the temple of Castor and Pollux to the left. The photo seems to show that there were two archways supported in the centre by the brick and stone pile at the edge of the paved section, but in fact there were probably three archways, as depicted on a coin of 29 BC. This does not necessarily prove the date of the arch, however, since it is also argued that it belongs to 19 BC after the return of the military standards from the Parthians in the previous year.

Source: Photo by author.

but it is also thought that the arch may have belonged to 19 BC, celebrating the return of the Roman standards lost by Crassus and handed back by the Parthians. The arch may have disappeared in the sixteenth century when it is known that an arch of some description, but not precisely named or located, was destroyed. The panels in the Capitoline Museum, containing the *Fasti* or lists of consuls and the names of generals who held a triumph, may have come from this arch.

Continuing clockwise around the Forum Romanum, the temple of Castor and Pollux at right angles to the Arch of Augustus was destroyed in a fire at some unknown date before 9 BC. The original temple was built in 484 BC, after the twins Castor and Pollux appeared on the Roman side at the battle of Lake Regillus, fought in 499, or possibly 496 BC. They then appeared in the Forum, watering their horses, having assisted the Romans to win the battle. The new Augustan temple was dedicated by Tiberius in AD 6. It had an imposing high podium, which is now reduced to its concrete core, but in the long side facing southeast, the three Corinthian columns with their fragmentary pediment give some idea of how enormous this temple must have been.

The Basilica Julia (Figure AI.4) runs to the northwest from the temple of Castor and Pollux, towards the temple of Saturn. Underneath this building there



Figure AI.4 The Basilica Julia in its final version, but on the same general plan as Caesar's building, in the Forum Romanum. The lower levels underneath the Basilica were once occupied by a large private residence, replaced in 169 BC by Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus. Caesar dedicated the building in 46 BC when it was not properly finished, and Augustus completed the work. It was burned down and rebuilt after the fire at the end of the third century.

Source: Photo by author.

was a private house which was obliterated when the first basilica was erected. Julius Caesar rebuilt the basilica and dedicated it in 46 BC, along with his Forum and the temple of Venus Genetrix. Augustus completed the work but it was destroyed in a fire of around 9 BC. The new version was finished and inaugurated in AD 12. It lay opposite the portico in front of the Basilica Aemilia which had been named for Gaius and Lucius, and so Augustus tried to adopt this name for the reconstructed basilica, but the Julian name is the one that survived. The building housed the civil courts, possibly some administrative offices and those of bankers and moneylenders. In AD 283 it burned down in the large fire that destroyed many buildings around the Forum Romanum, and was rebuilt in the fourth century.

At the southwest end of the Forum Romanum, Augustus rebuilt and extended the Rostra, the raised platform where orators delivered their speeches to the assembled populace. Cicero delivered his speeches here, including some versions of the Philippics against Antonius, who allegedly nailed Cicero's head and hands to the Rostra after the triumviral proscriptions were put into effect. Funeral orations for eminent people were also delivered from the Rostra. Reconstruction work was begun by Caesar as part of his plans for embellishment of the whole Forum area in 46 BC, but Augustus finished it. The name Rostra is derived from the Roman custom of decorating speakers' platforms with the beaks or prows of enemy ships. Slots in the side walls of the Rostra are presumably the places where these were attached. In the later Empire the Rostra was moved to the other end of the Forum Romanum.

The Palatine Hill

Augustus lived in a relatively modest house on the Palatine, where parts of a building labelled the House of Augustus can still be seen, though the identification is not certain. It was built on two levels and was probably joined to the so-called House of Livia, now separated from it by a modern pathway. This part of the Palatine area housed the temple of the Great Mother, *Magna Mater*, otherwise known as Cybele. The temple dates from the late third century BC, when the war against Hannibal was not going well, and the consultation of the Sibylline Books, traditionally used as oracular predictions, indicated that the Mother Goddess should be brought to Rome. Accordingly her statue was imported from her temple in central Turkey and installed in a new temple on the Palatine. More relevant to Augustus perhaps there was also the so-called House of Romulus nearby, a primitive hut that had been assiduously preserved by the Romans and shown to visitors. The connection with Romulus was emphasised by Augustus whenever he had the chance.

Close by Augustus' house there was the temple that he built to Apollo. In 36 BC, lightning struck the newly acquired house. Octavian was absent from Rome, fighting against Sextus Pompeius, and finally winning the battle of Naulochus, in which he was assisted not only by Agrippa, but by the goddess Diana, Apollo's twin sister. On his return to Rome, Octavian-Augustus decided to build the temple near his house, dedicating it to Apollo, Diana and the mother of the twins, Latona. Hardly anything is left of this temple now, except a massive base of concrete, from

which the tufa facing stones have all been robbed out. It is not known which way it faced, though it is likely that it was intended to impress visitors coming up from the base of the Palatine and past Augustus' house. It may have had four columns along its front, or possibly six, like the other temple to Apollo next to the Theatre of Marcellus.

The Theatre of Marcellus and the Portico of Octavia

The modern road named for the Theatre of Marcellus offers a broad vista of the remains to anyone coming south along the road, which was cleared in the late 1920s. Before that time the theatre was buried for several feet in the accumulated earth and surrounded by a conglomeration of shops and buildings. The theatre had been converted into a fortified residence in the eleventh century by the Pierleone family, and modern dwellings can still be seen on the upper levels. About two thirds of the theatre have disappeared, but what remains is impressive enough. It had been part of Julius Caesar's building schemes, finished off by Augustus and named for his nephew, the son of his sister Octavia and the elder Marcellus. Another temple of Apollo (Figure AI.5) stood nearby, its position



Figure AI.5 View from the Theatre of Marcellus towards the corner of the temple of Apollo, probably begun by Antonius' general Gaius Sosius, and finished by Augustus. The earliest temple of Apollo on this site was built in the fifth century BC, rebuilt around 179 BC. Augustus' temple survived, but only a small part of it can be seen now. The three columns shown here were found at the opposite end of the temple and relocated here on a modern base, but nonetheless they give an idea of how large and imposing the temple may have been.

Source: Photo by author.

marked by three tall columns on a modern base, but the columns are not in situ, having been found originally at the other end of the temple, when the construction of the modern road was carried out. The temple had an ancient predecessor of the fifth century BC, destroyed by the Gauls in the fourth century and rebuilt in the second century. The Augustan temple may have been planned and begun by Gaius Sosius, the consul of 32 BC and an adherent of Antonius. Pliny called the temple by Sosius' name, and it is sometimes referred to as Apollo Sosiana, but it was probably Augustus who built it. He also rebuilt the temple next to it, dedicated to Bellona, a goddess of war. It was originally founded by Appius Claudius Caecus in 296 BC, and therefore had strong associations with the Claudians, and by dint of this with Livia. The triumphal processions passed by this temple, which is also where Octavian assembled the senators and onlookers to carry out an ancient ritual to declare war on Cleopatra, a patch of land in front of the temple being designated foreign territory, into which it is said that he cast a spear, symbolically beginning hostilities.

A modern footpath between the Theatre of Marcellus and the temple of Apollo leads to the Portico of Octavia (Figure AI.6) in the street named after the monument. Augustus' building replaced an earlier version erected in 146 BC by



Figure AI.6 The remains of the entrance of the Portico of Octavia, built in honour of Augustus' sister. The Portico extended a long way back from this entrance and to either side of it, enclosing two temples. Along the architrave there is an inscription, not legible unless one stands right beneath it, recording repair work done after a fire by the emperor Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla.

Source: Photo by author.

Quintus Caecilius Metellus after his victory in the Macedonian war. The massive enclosure surrounded the two temples of Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator. Only a few traces of the Portico remain on view. Some truncated columns mark part of the facade, and the gateway is still visible, with two of its columns now replaced with brick infill and a round-headed brick arch, fronting the church of S. Angelo in Pescheria. The Portico was repaired several times, the work of AD 203 under the emperor Severus being recorded on the architrave of the gateway.

The Forum of Augustus and the temple of Mars Ultor

The temple was probably vowed at the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, though this does not meet with universal agreement. The name Ultor means Avenger, so it is associated with the assassination of Caesar and the punishment of the conspirators who brought him down. It was not dedicated until 2 BC, but part of the long 40-year delay may have been caused by prolonged negotiations to buy up the properties and the land on which the temple and Forum were established. In chapter 21 of the *Res Gestae* Augustus says that he paid for the private lands out of his own funds. The high rear wall of the temple and Forum is not straight, but follows a slightly erratic course, which may indicate that there were some properties that were resolutely not for sale, so Augustus may have decided to halt negotiations and start to build, despite the fact that he did not possess a completely rectangular plot. The grey tufa wall at the back of the temple and Forum is still extant (see Figure 7.5). It acted as a firewall between the Forum and the crowded Suburra region beyond it, and the wall can be followed along its rear side up to the ruins of Trajan's Market.

The podium and the steps of the temple of Mars Ultor are still visible, along with a few Corinthian columns along one side (see Figure 7.3). The temple was surrounded by a portico defining the Augustan Forum, with two semi-circular exedrae or apses on either side, the aisles containing statues of famous Romans, including Romulus. Part of the Forum is underneath the Via Alessandrina and the Via dei Fori Imperiali, so it is possible that there were two matching exedrae further along the long sides of the portico, but this must remain hypothetical. The Augustan Forum extended to join the Forum of Julius Caesar on the other side of the modern road.

The Mausoleum, the Ara Pacis and the Meridian

The ruins of the Mausoleum of Augustus (Figure AI.7) were long neglected in Rome, but restoration work began in the twenty-first century, rescuing the monument from the ignominy of what used to be a crumbling refuse dump cluttered with empty bottles and beverage cans. The tomb for Octavian and his family was built before he had become Augustus, so his dynastic tendencies were obvious before he was firmly in control of Rome and the Empire. It was finished by 28 BC, and was the largest tomb in Rome until Hadrian built his own on the

banks of the Tiber. The survival of Hadrian's tomb was due to the need of the popes for protection within easy reach of the Vatican, so it was converted into the castle that it eventually became, Castel S. Angelo, but Augustus' Mausoleum did not fare so well for quite so long. It was a circular tomb like Hadrian's, with one entrance, which is obvious from the present day ruins, but no-one knows how high it would have been or how it was finished off, either in a dome or a series of steps and terraces. It was faced with gleaming white limestone, which has all disappeared, leaving only the rubble and concrete core on view. It supported vegetation and trees, perhaps in concentric circular stages up to the top, but there are several conflicting theories as to its original appearance. Just as Hadrian's tomb was converted into a fortified dwelling, Augustus' Mausoleum was used as a stronghold by the Colonna family, but this was destroyed in the twelfth century. In the sixteenth century the upper levels of the Mausoleum were planted out as a formal garden belonging to the Soderini family, which gives some impression of its enormous size. It was intended for the remains of Augustus and his family, though it is not known how many people were installed



Figure AI.7 Augustus' Mausoleum undergoing repair and restoration in 2012. This photo shows the single entrance and the exposed brick and stone work of the circular drum. The superstructure has disappeared and no-one can say how the upper sections of the Mausoleum were originally constructed. Like Hadrian's Mausoleum on the opposite bank of the Tiber, it was once converted into a fortress but went out of use in the medieval period, when gardens were laid out inside the top of the drum. In the later twentieth century this monument was seriously neglected and had become somewhat overgrown and desolate, so the restoration is very heartening.

Source: Photo by author.

in it. He could not have known when he built it that his intended heirs Marcellus, Gaius and Lucius would die before him. When Augustus was interred in AD 14, the text of the *Res Gestae* was inscribed on bronze tablets and placed on either side of the entrance.

The Ara Pacis Augustae, or Altar to Augustan Peace, now lies between the Mausoleum and the river Tiber, but it was originally sited further to the south-east, in line with the Via Flaminia. It was reassembled in 1938 from hundreds of fragments that had been collected over the years, a task that was probably more difficult than building it in the first place. The altar is now housed in a new building that replaced the adequate but uninspiring edifice that protected the monument in the twentieth century. The Ara Pacis is a truly magnificent work that requires a whole volume to describe it properly, but after the brief description given here, the best advice is: there is no substitute for visiting Rome and going to see it.

The altar was decreed by the Senate in 13 BC after Augustus' safe return from the western provinces. It was finished and dedicated on 30 January 9 BC, which was Livia's birthday. By this time, Aemilius Lepidus having died, Augustus was Pontifex Maximus and could play his proper part in the dedication ceremony, and he is depicted as such on the carved panels on the walls surrounding the altar. The emphasis on peace was a feature of Augustus' reign, and it was celebrated symbolically by closing the doors of the temple of Janus, always open in time of war, and on the coinage and in literature. The goddess Pax as a deity rather than a concept was not widely honoured until this time, but Augustus incorporated Pax into his imperial ideology in an Empire-wide context. There never was total peace over the Roman world, and wars and rebellions continued to break out, but for Romans in Rome the end of the civil wars was to be welcomed and celebrated, along with the tacit promise that from now onwards wars would always be external ones.

The altar is accessed up steps inside a rectangular enclosure open to the sky, with entrances through the enclosure on the east and west sides. The inner walls of the enclosure are decorated with sculptured garlands of flowers hanging from ox heads, and between them there are relief sculptures of shallow bowls called paterae. Augustus was born in a house 'at the Oxheads' and ox skulls and paterae were both of ancient religious significance. On the outside, flanking the entrances, there are four rectangular panels, two on the east side and two on the west. The scenes depicted are related to Rome's history and Augustan ideology. One of the panels, to the right of the western entrance, is thought to show Aeneas sacrificing to the *Penates*. Aeneas arrived in Italy after the fall of Troy and is incorporated into the Roman foundation story, so he would be an important choice for Augustus to display on the altar, though it is also suggested that the figure might be that of the great lawgiver Numa Pompilius, the second king of early Rome. The panel facing Aeneas, on the left side of the entrance, is very fragmentary, but is thought that it showed the wolf with the twins Romulus and Remus. On the east side, the left hand panel is the most complete of all the four panels, and the most disputed. In the centre is a seated goddess figure flanked by



Figure AI.8 The so-called panel of Tellus, or Earth Mother, on the eastern facade of the Ara Pacis, to the left of the entrance. It is the most complete of the four panels but the most disputed. The central goddess may be Venus Genetrix, but she has also been identified as the personification of the *Pax Romana*. The panel is in keeping with Augustus' promotion of peace, prosperity and family values.

Source: Photo by author.

two small children, and holding fruits of the earth on her lap (Figure AI.8). On her right and left are two other goddesses, with cloaks billowing over their heads. Various suggestions have been made as to what the scene represents. The central figure may be the personification of Italy, to match the fragmentary sculpture on the right side of the entrance, identified as the goddess Roma. Alternatively, the central deity of the left hand panel might be Tellus, or Mother Earth, representing fertility, or Ceres, goddess of harvests. Perhaps the scene conveyed many different layers of meaning to Augustus and his contemporaries, not least his promotion of family life and the peace and prosperity that helped to foster it.

The sculptured panels on the long sides of the outer walls are divided into lower and upper sections, the lower occupied by stylised vegetation arranged in curls, with depictions of animals and birds among the leaves, known as inhabited scrolls. Above these there are the famous processions on the long sides, showing members of Augustus' family and entourage, most of whom are recognisable, though some of the figures carved in relief are not identifiable with complete certainty. Augustus is shown in the procession on the south side, though much of his figure is missing. He is depicted as Pontifex Maximus, followed by the *flamines*,



Figure AI.9 The procession on the south side of the Ara Pacis. The altar was decreed by the Senate in 13 bc but not dedicated until 9 bc. Agrippa was dead by this time but he is shown here with his head veiled, the third figure from the left on this photo, with perhaps his son Gaius clinging to his toga. The lady behind Gaius may be his mother Julia, but she has also been identified as Livia.

Source: Photo by author.

priests wearing their distinctive caps. Agrippa comes next, his head draped by a fold of his toga, though he was dead by the time the altar was dedicated (Figure AI.9). The child clutching his toga is thought to be his son Gaius, and the lady behind Gaius, with her right hand protectively placed on his head, may be his mother Julia, though it is also suggested that in the procession led by Augustus this figure is more likely to represent Livia. Gaius' younger brother Lucius is shown on the opposite side, again with a female figure who may be either Julia or Livia.

A great deal of time and study has been devoted to the identification of the individuals portrayed on the two long sides of the altar enclosure, without fully resolving the problem. In general it can be said that the two processions on the north and south sides show Augustus' family and friends, and among the groups, it is to be expected that Livia, Tiberius and Augustus' daughter Julia must be portrayed. Two ladies in the south procession are thought to be the daughters of Marcus Antonius, Antonia Major and Antonia Minor, with some of their children, though identification of these is disputed (Figure AI.10). On a model in the museum of the Ara Pacis numbers are assigned to each figure of the processions, together with names and possible alternatives wherever feasible.



Figure AI.10 Rearward part of the procession on the south side of the Ara Pacis. The smaller child near the centre of the photo may be Germanicus, holding the hand of his mother Antonia Minor, the younger daughter of Marcus Antonius and Octavia. Behind them the man is probably Drusus, and further to the right, the family of Antonia Major and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus is shown with their children Gnaeus and Domitia. Identification of these individuals is not without debate.

Source: Photo by author.

The Ara Pacis in its original location was in a precinct which also contained the Meridian and obelisk, designed to establish the Roman calendar year. Measurement of the annual cycle was never very accurate, and by the mid-first century BC the seasons no longer matched the months that were supposed to mark them. Julius Caesar undertook a drastic reform of the calendar in 46 BC, using the expertise of Egyptian priests who reckoned that one year consisted of 365 and one quarter days, necessitating an intercalation of one day every four years, just as the modern leap year extends every fourth year by one day. In order to bring the seasons and the months onto line, Caesar extended the year 46 BC by more than two months. The calendar would have worked well for some time, were it not for the fact that the priests in charge of it had been inserting one extra day every three years, so by Augustus' day there was once again a discrepancy which he rectified, and he also created a system for accurate measurement for the future.

While the Ara Pacis was being constructed, Augustus established a Meridian line in the paving of the precinct around the altar, and an Egyptian obelisk mounted on a pediment. The obelisk dated from the sixth century BC and had

stood for five centuries at Heliopolis in Egypt, until after the fall of Alexandria when Octavian carried it and another obelisk back to Rome. Together with its pediment the obelisk was 32 metres high, and its shadow cast on the Meridian line at noon each day marked the progression of the year. On the shortest day in midwinter, when the sun was at its lowest in the sky, the obelisk's shadow reached its furthest extent along the Meridian, and then gradually started to shorten again as the summer approached.

The Meridian line was made of a wide strip of bronze set into a channel in the paving of the precinct. A grooved line down its centre was marked by short lines incised across it, interspersed with longer cross-lines that marked the signs of the zodiac, their names marked in Greek. By correcting the calendar and establishing it on a steadily maintained course, Augustus did not simply establish the dates for people's birthdays and anniversaries, but he also facilitated political and legal proceedings, and the observance of religious festivals. There were days when it was permissible to conduct public business and days when it was not, such as Antonius' birthday, which had been declared *nefas*, and it was in everyone's interests to know exactly when these good and bad days were to fall.

The Meridian and the obelisk functioned properly for only about half a century, failing possibly because the plinth supporting the obelisk sank or tilted, throwing its shadow out of line. The Meridian was renewed after the disastrous fire of AD 80, and again in the second century AD. The obelisk stood until the medieval period when it finally fell down and broke up. Pieces of it were revealed in the sixteenth century but covered over again, waiting until the eighteenth century to be dug up and reunited. The obelisk now stands in the small piazza in front of the Palazzo di Montecitorio, with Augustus' inscription on the pediment restored. A modern Meridian line stretches from the obelisk to the front of the Palazzo (Figure AI.11).

Public works

In the *Res Gestae* Augustus mentions his repair of all the bridges in Rome except the Milvian and the Minucian, and the fact that he paved the Via Flaminia all the way to Ariminum, modern Rimini. Roman roads are generally envisaged as paved, but this was not always the case, and care of roads was a constant theme because without paving they were easily eroded and subject to potholes, much as modern tarmac roads are damaged after a bad winter. The bridges were all repaired, or at least repairs began, in 27 BC when Augustus was consul for the seventh time, but they would require constant monitoring thereafter. For instance, the oldest extant bridge in Rome, the Pons Fabricius joining the bank of the Campus Martius to the Tiber island, bears an inscription of 21 BC, recording the action of the consuls of that year in checking that the bridge was safe after a disastrous flood two years before. The aqueducts and the water supply had been overhauled by Agrippa, but the only mention of this topic is the



Figure AI.11 The Egyptian obelisk and the Meridian line in their modern position in the Piazza Montecitorio in Rome. The original location was close to the Ara Pacis in the Campus Martius, but the obelisk may have tilted or sunk into the ground, thus rendering the measurement of the year via its shadow on the Meridian line inaccurate.

Source: Photo by author.

repair of aqueduct channels by Augustus and the increase of the supply delivered by the Aqua Marcia by dint of leading the waters of an additional spring into it.

By far the greatest number of buildings that were repaired and embellished were temples and shrines. Augustus devoted considerable attention to the temples of the Capitol Hill, mentioning them twice in the *Res Gestae*. In chapter 19 he describes the restoration of the temples of Jupiter Feretrius and Jupiter Tonans (the Thunderer), and then in a separate passage in the next chapter, he lists the main Capitoline temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Augustus says that he did not place his own name on the temple, much as Hadrian completely altered the Pantheon but left Agrippa's name on the pediment. On the Aventine, the temples of Jupiter Libertas, Juno, Minerva and Quirinus (the deified Romulus) were restored, all labelled as *aedes* in the *Res Gestae*, though the distinction

between *aedes* and *templum* is not clear. According to a decree of the Senate eighty-two temples were restored, not all of which can be located in modern Rome.

The building and repair work that Augustus undertook in Rome had several functions. The restoration of religion was important for the populace and would help to create the image of a caring leader who wanted the best for his people. The resultant magnificence of Rome would engender the image of a prosperous, well-ordered city for the Romans themselves and more importantly for foreign and provincial visitors. The building, repair and upkeep of existing administrative and legal premises, and the provision of new ones, helped the city to function properly, as did the maintenance of water supply, roads and bridges. Administrative measures such as the corn dole, the creation of the *Vigiles* and Urban Cohorts for the prevention of fires and the maintenance of law and order, supplemented the building programme and engendered a feeling of safety and well-being. It could be said with cynicism that all this was designed to support Augustus in his supremacy without drawing too much attention to the underlying potential despotism, but surely the overall achievements outweigh the variety of motives.

Further reading

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APPENDIX II

Augustus and the Roman army

Augustus was responsible for the establishment of the standing army of the Roman Empire. The imperial army did not spring into being fully fledged from 30 BC onwards, but continued to evolve for many years, and gradually changed as the centuries progressed and Rome met with different crises from within and from outside the Empire. During the Republic the army comprised the legions made up of Roman citizen conscripts who met the required census qualification, supported by additional units of auxiliary troops contributed by Rome's allies, originally commanded by their own leaders, and latterly by Roman officers. The troops were raised whenever there was a need for them and disbanded when the wars were ended or the campaigning season was over. The census qualification ensured that only those men who owned property, and were therefore in possession of the requisite standard of wealth, were conscripted. These men would be able to afford to provide their own equipment and subsistence for the duration of the campaign. This left a large residue of population of able bodied but less wealthy men who were not eligible for service. According to Roman tradition, pay for the soldiers was introduced when the Romans were engaged in the siege of the Etruscan town of Veii at the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries BC. The siege went on for years so that the campaigning season could not be brought to a close in time to gather the harvests, so some form of compensation had to be found to keep the soldiers in the army.

When the army was disbanded the soldiers would go home to their farms, but as Rome expanded and wars were fought more frequently in different parts of the Roman world, the farmer-soldiers sometimes had no farms to return to, and therefore required new land grants to enable them to earn a living. The settlement of veterans had become a perennial problem by later Republic times. Raising an army was less troublesome than dealing with its disbandment, and the reluctance of the Senate to adopt a regular policy of finding land for veterans resulted in an interdependent partnership of victorious generals and their troops, who between them could cause considerable disruption if their demands were not met. Lucius Cornelius Sulla had shown how the government could be overturned by a general with troops at his back, and when succeeding generals and their soldiers realised how great was their combined power, or rather

coercive force, the Senate would have done well to meet them at least halfway in order to pre-empt problems. Perhaps the most famous example of their short-sighted intransigence is their opposition to Pompeius Magnus when he returned home in 62 BC, having defeated Mithridates, one of Rome's most troublesome enemies. He had reorganised the whole of the east, comprising Roman provinces, allied states and client kings, and he had enriched the treasury by millions of sesterces. If he had so wished he could have emulated Sulla, marched on Rome and obtained everything he wanted at the point of the sword. Fortunately that was not his way, so he obeyed all the rules and came home quietly, confident perhaps that since his demands for ratification of his acts and for lands for his veterans were not outrageous, then he would probably not meet with any opposition. But the senators delayed him and obstructed him for months, led by Cato, a distinguished orator who could talk literally until the cows came home, or until public business had to be adjourned until the next day, and the next, and the next. What the senators reaped by sowing this discord was the consul of 59 BC, Gaius Julius Caesar, who introduced, among other legislation, a land bill that was carefully drawn up to avoid the pitfalls of other land bills and veteran settlement; but this was still obstructed in senatorial debate. Caesar finally lost patience, and pushed through the legislation by means that were just about legal, but which showed his tendencies towards despotism, not in his ideas, but in his methods.

As Rome expanded to take in most of the countries around the Mediterranean, wars became more or less a permanent feature of Roman life and political development. Wars were fought on more than one front in different countries, so that armies continually had to be raised under different generals to deal with the problems. There was no standing army, but there was an army in the field somewhere in the Roman world almost continuously, enabling soldiers to follow a military career by enlisting for different campaigns. There was, however, no clear promotional path, because even if a man had reached the rank of centurion during one war, when he enlisted again he could not guarantee that he would be awarded the same rank. Still, it was a career of sorts, and men could accumulate wealth. Besides the soldiers' pay there was the chance of booty and occasional handouts from the victorious generals.

Republican soldiers were conscripted but were only obliged to serve in six campaigns, and were only eligible for conscription for a period of 16 years, plus another four years when they could be called up only if there was an immediate threat to Rome, or to Italy. This system implies that records were kept, so the state could identify those eligible for service, and individuals could not be called upon to fight if they had already completed the legal terms of service.

When Octavian-Augustus finally defeated Antonius and Cleopatra and gained control of Egypt in 30 BC, he had to deal with about 60 legions under arms, accompanied by an unknown number of auxiliary allied troops. Clearly this was an impossible number to sustain, and now that the wars were ended there was no suitable employment for so many men. Octavian had a choice at this point.

He could disband all the troops, find lands for them somewhere in the Roman world, and revert to the Republican system of raising legions only when necessary. Dio invents speeches for Agrippa and Maecenas about the best way to run the Roman Empire, covering several relevant topics. On the subject of armies, Dio makes Agrippa recommend that there should be a return to the Republican standards, while Maecenas advises that some armed forces should be retained. The literary device of presenting two opposing views through the invented speeches of historical characters enlivens the narrative, but the views of these two men, close associates of Octavian, cannot have diverged to such an extent. All three colleagues would have understood that armies were needed to ensure the safety of the provinces, and also to shore up the supremacy that Octavian was surely aiming for after 30 BC. He reduced the number of legions at his disposal to about 28. Instead of making a clean sweep and starting from scratch to raise legions numbered from I to XXVIII, he retained the original numbers and titles so that there were some duplicates with the same number, distinguished from each other by their names. There were three legions with the number III, one raised by Julius Caesar and labelled Gallica, one formed in the late Republic called Cyrenaica, and one raised by Augustus or renamed by him as Augusta Pia Fidelis, the last two words indicating that the legion had performed well in battle or proven particularly loyal.

The main requirements of a standing army were not hard to discern, since the lessons of the later Republic had highlighted them. The terms of service and pay scales needed to be properly established, regular income had to be found to provide the wages for the soldiers and officers, and systems put into place to sustain the armies in food supplies and equipment. Bases had to be established for the soldiers to live in. There was already an infrastructure in place for all these things. Legions consisted of ten cohorts, each containing six centuries of 80 men, each century commanded by a centurion. The legionary legate, familiar from the early Empire, had not yet become firmly established. Early *legati* in Caesar's army were simply his deputies, who often commanded a group of soldiers, or more than one legion. Such commands were usually temporary, changing as situations developed, but the evolved command structure eventually enabled Augustus to appoint a *legatus legionis* to each legion. The military tribunes were retained, as were the camp prefect, the *primus pilus* and the centurions in each legion. There is no record of a cohort commander within the legions at any time, so the backbone of the army is always said to have been furnished by the centurions, who were equivalent to modern non-commissioned officers, but who wielded considerable power and were respected in civil communities.

No ancient source provides information as to the size of a legion, so modern estimates vary from 5,000 to 6,000 men; probably legions were never of standard size in the first place, possibly being enlarged in war time and reduced in peace time, and in any case it must have been a constant struggle to keep numbers steady. In 30 BC the task of forming complete legions from the available manpower would not have been quite so difficult, but it is clear that not all the

men, conscripted under Octavian or Antonius, were interested in remaining with the legions. Some depleted legions could be brought up to standard by adding soldiers of other units, but as time went on, continued recruitment would probably have become sporadically problematic, and the recruitment base had to be widened to include Roman citizens from the provinces where the legions were stationed. Modern research has revealed that Italians formed the majority of the legions until the reign of Caligula, but from then onwards provincials started to equal and finally outnumber them. Italians were recruited into the Praetorian Guard and the Urban Cohorts in Rome.

In 30 BC Augustus instituted a massive settlement programme for the veterans. In chapter 28 of the *Res Gestae*, he lists the provinces where he founded colonies for the time-served soldiers, in Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, Hither and Further Spain, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Gallia Narbonensis and Pisidia, as well as 28 colonies in Italy. These were not always new foundations, but would be grafted onto existing towns and cities. Not all of the colonies have been located, so it is impossible to provide a full list of them, but the magnitude of the settlement programmes is obvious from the extent of territory all over the Roman world that was affected. In 14 BC there was another massive discharge of soldiers, significantly 16 years after 30 BC, which relates to the Republican period of service and presumably concerns the 28 legions established after the fall of Alexandria. Some of the colonial foundations mentioned in the *Res Gestae* may have been utilised in 14 BC, but no dates are provided. From 14 BC onwards land grants for veterans ceased, and were replaced by cash payments. This was the beginning of the pension scheme for veterans which was not finalised until the formation of the *aerarium militare*, or military treasury, in AD 6. From then onwards, soldiers who enlisted were certain of a future after they had served their terms under arms, receiving a cash payment if they survived long enough to be honourably discharged. Some men would inevitably die from wounds, accidents or diseases before this time, and some were dishonourably discharged after misconduct or even criminal behaviour, and forfeited their pension rights. Therefore the numbers of recruits did not necessarily represent the numbers in eventual receipt of pensions. The *aerarium militare* was set up with an injection of 170 million sesterces from Augustus, and maintained by the proceeds of two taxes, a one per cent levy on auctions, *centesima rerum venalium*, and a five per cent tax on inheritances, *vicesima hereditatum et legatorum*. Other funds could be diverted to this treasury, such as gifts from client kings. The taxes may have been resented, but it was preferable to pay money rather than endure the presence of impoverished ex-soldiers who were not yet old and feeble, and who had been trained to use weapons with considerable expertise.

The discharge of soldiers in 14 BC probably represents a 16-year term of service from 30 BC, in keeping with Republican tradition. In AD 5, this term was extended to 20 years with five years in reserve, similar to the Republican term of four years as reserves. These men stayed with the army, but were excused military duties unless there was some crisis, just as the Republican four-year reservists

remained subject to call-up if Rome was threatened. Besides signing up for their length of service, soldiers had to swear an oath of allegiance to Augustus, and later to the reigning emperor. When Augustus embarked on the war with Antonius, he had engineered an oath to himself throughout Italy and the provinces. The relationship of this oath to the military one is debated, but the intent is clear: to establish sole control of the troops, including those that remained for a while in one or two senatorial provinces. Augustus was the sole source of bounties, benefits and promotions, and while soldiers had to obey the orders of their commanders, these men too were subject to Augustus.

The enlisted men were forbidden to marry, or if they had wives, the act of enlistment constituted an automatic divorce. The date when Augustus established this law is not certain. It was an adaptation to circumstances. In the old days the farmer-soldiers would go off to fight, leaving behind their families to whom they returned at the end of the campaigns, but those days were long gone. The armies were not operating close to home any longer. They were dispersed in the various provinces, but not settled permanently in one place, and subject to the demand for mobility as circumstances dictated. Family ties would impede mobility, and although soldiers formed relationships with local women, the ban on marriages remained in force until the early third century, when the emperor Severus realised that service in the army must be made somewhat more attractive.

Pay for the soldiers remained as it had been under Julius Caesar, who had awarded them a rise, and pay was not increased until the reign of Domitian in the last two decades of the first century. It is not clear where the money came from to meet the wage bill. Augustus controlled the finances of the whole Empire, and the census surveys eventually undertaken in the provinces gave him a better idea of what revenues to expect from them. Using the collected information he could work out some rudimentary balance sheet between income and the expense of the army and of wars. It seems that he did not consult the Senate about much of this, except that on occasion he issued financial reports, though it is not known how much freedom of debate there would have been. The Romans did not work to a budget in the modern sense, but relied on periodic injections of cash from booty, or from opportune conquests giving access to mineral wealth. For instance, in the island of Britain there was so much lead, from which silver could be extracted, that production had to be limited, and in the later first and early second centuries AD it was worth the effort of subduing the troublesome Dacians of modern Romania, because there were silver deposits in the Carpathians.

Less is known about the non-Roman auxiliary troops of the early Empire. The evolution of these troops was still continuing under the emperor Claudius, but the rudiments of the organisation of the permanent auxiliary units were present under Augustus. The Republican armies had always contained allied troops fighting alongside the Roman legions. Alliances made with the Latin states around Rome and the Italian communities stipulated how many troops

they should contribute when called upon, both infantry and cavalry. Although the Roman equestrian classes denoted their origin as horsemen, the Romans were not brilliant in the mounted arm, and the allies furnished better cavalry units. Since the cavalry traditionally fought on the wings (*alae*) of the army, this name was transferred to the units themselves, while the infantry units were called *cohortes*. These names transferred from Republic to Empire without change, though organisation and unit size may have undergone some alteration. The commanders of the allied troops in Augustus' day may have been a mixture of natives and Romans. Some units of Gallic cavalry who fought under Julius Caesar had names derived from Roman officers, but in the recruitment drive for both Antonius and Octavian leading up to Actium, some units may have been commanded by their native princes, who probably also financed and supplied their units. After the fall of Alexandria, many allied troops were presumably sent back home, but there is no information to elucidate how many there were under arms or what they were called, let alone which were disbanded and which were retained. Some of them were probably sent into the provinces to provide additional troops on the boundaries between Roman and non-Roman territories, though it is not yet possible to talk of frontiers in the sense of solid barriers, which developed much later. If such auxiliary units were dispersed in this way, their commanders were most likely Roman officers, and their numbers may have approximated to those of the early Empire. In their evolved form, the auxiliary units constituted cavalry (*alae*) or infantry units (*cohortes*), and hybrid forms combining the two, known as *cohortes equitatae*. They were either 500-strong (*alae/cohortes quingenariae*) or more rarely 1,000-strong (*milliariae*). The soldiers served for 25 years, and were given Roman citizenship on discharge, together with their cash pensions and their savings, to which they were expected to contribute from their pay. How far these developments had gone under Augustus is impossible to say, but the evolved system presumably derived from antecedents already in place in his day.

The location of Augustan military units is only partly elucidated, largely because the armies were operating in a more fluid scheme of things than they were under emperors of the later first century, when there was a general movement towards the provincial boundaries and a consequent development of more permanent forts and fortresses, built to a more or less regular pattern and style, with the customary outer ditch or ditches, walls built in the playing card shape with rounded corners, pierced by four or six gates. Within the ramparts there was an internal road running along the whole circuit, and usually a grid layout for barracks and workshops, with the headquarters, commander's house, and granary in the middle range. Under Augustus, some of the forts that have been found do not display such regularity. Defences were built according to the topography, and occupation was not meant to be permanent.

The army under Augustus was integral to his supremacy, as it was to all emperors who succeeded him. The age of the supreme generals such as Sulla, Marius, Pompeius and Julius Caesar, who wielded power by dint of their large territorial commands, or personal influence, or both, was now a thing of the

past, because there was only one such individual, Augustus himself. The command structure whereby all army commanders and governors of the imperial provinces derived their commands from Augustus pre-empted any attempts to emulate the Republican generals in a bid for supremacy. Some of the reasons for doing so had been removed. The former interdependence of generals on their soldiers to back them up in passing legislation, or of soldiers on their generals for their just rewards, no longer existed. A properly regulated army with regular pay, clearly defined terms of service, and a career structure in which steady promotion and more pay was possible, was divorced from the commander as the potential source of these benefits. The oath of loyalty to Augustus further diminished the relationship between soldiers and commanders. It did not prevent rebellions under certain governors and legionary commanders during the reigns of later emperors, but in its initial stages the oath helped to unify the army under Augustus' overall command.

In the provinces the army served to keep the peace within the Empire and foster development that became possible because of that peace. The army also offered a reasonably comfortable living to soldiers, with comradeship, cash payments that were still attractive after all the deductions for clothing and food, regular meals and prospects of promotion on a greater scale than had been on offer in the Republic. The role of the army in spreading Romanisation in the provinces has been debated. It may not have been an active role, deliberately promoted by the emperors, but the mere proximity of the troops with money to spend would encourage people to trade and to learn Latin in order to sell the sorts of goods and services that soldiers liked. At its best the long-lived army that Augustus established served to protect the provincials and also to help to make some of them rich; at its worst it exploited and oppressed them, especially in the later Empire. Modern views of the Roman army tend towards polarisation to these two extremes. As an institution, however, Augustus' creation endured. If it wasn't working, surely someone among the succeeding emperors ought to have noticed and thought of something else.

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APPENDIX III

Governance of the provinces

After 27 BC when Octavian-Augustus made the so-called first settlement with the Senate, the provinces of the Roman world were divided into two kinds: those governed by Augustus via his legates, and those governed by the Senate and People of Rome. Augustus' provinces were those on the frontiers with non-Roman states or tribes which constituted a potential threat to security and therefore demanded the presence of troops. Senatorial provinces were the more peaceful ones, not under threat and enjoying the benefits of the *Pax Romana*. The status of these provinces was not immutable. Some hitherto imperial provinces could be converted into unarmed ones if territories beyond them were taken into Roman control; for instance, Macedonia was made a senatorial unarmed province when Augustus took over Illyricum, Pannonia and Moesia on the Danube.

The governors of senatorial provinces were called proconsuls, irrespective of their actual rank, and were forbidden to wear military dress or to carry swords. They were chosen by lot from among the eligible senators, and held their posts for one year. The *Lex Pompeia* of 52 BC, stipulating that there should be a five-year gap between the holding of a magistracy in Rome and the appointment as provincial governor, was upheld. In the past, politicians had counted on being able to enter office in Rome, mostly having spent, or worse still, borrowed a lot of money to bribe the electorate in order to obtain the office, and then pass straight to a post as governor of one of the provinces, where it was usually possible to recoup the expenses if not by accepting so-called gifts, then by demanding them instead. An alternative to what amounted to and sometimes surpassed extortion was to wage war somewhere in or on the edges of the province, and collect booty, as Caesar did in Spain. Then the governor in question could return to Rome, take up another more senior magistracy, and accumulate even more wealth by going on to govern a larger province. Pompeius' law was designed among other things to put a stop to this practice. In the first few years it resulted in a dearth of candidates for posts as provincial governors. Not all the senators wanted to be governors, but of those who would have qualified for governorships and were keen to obtain them, many of them were temporarily disqualified because they had held magistracies in the last five years. As a result, reluctant men had to be dragooned into accepting posts, and Cicero, for whom

the centre of the universe was Rome itself, was called upon to go and govern Cilicia for a year.

In retaining the five-year gap of the *Lex Pompeia*, and also ensuring that senatorial governors would be randomly selected by lot, Augustus eradicated some of the mechanism that had previously enabled senatorial ambition to flourish. In compensation he had to offer other rewards for senators so that ambition was not completely squashed, ultimately leading to apathy. There had to be a fine balance between allowing the senators free rein and maintaining undisputed control, Dictatorship in another form, as it were. Therefore it was essential to set up a career path with significant and valued rewards at each stage, but at the same time it was important that Augustus should maintain control as the sole source of these rewards.

In effect, what he had to try to achieve was a complete change of mindset among senatorial families. The provinces had been regarded, until Caesar's day, as a collection of territories to be exploited, as each self-interested governor took over, firmly focussed not on the development of the province and the benefit of the provincials, but wholly on his own political and military advancement, for which he required gargantuan amounts of cash to maintain his status and, in the rampant bribery and corruption of the times, to buy his way into political office. The Republic had been plagued with the growing rapaciousness of its provincial governors, and various consuls had passed laws to deal with the problem. In theory, the provincials were able to lay their grievances before the Senate, and the accused governor could be prosecuted for *repetundae*, but it was an expensive business for provincial delegates to come to Rome, and probably not worth the effort, or the dangers involved, unless the extortion had been off the scale, like that of Gaius Verres in Sicily. In this case Cicero undertook the prosecution of Verres. He travelled to Sicily to see for himself what had happened, and having gathered the evidence he prepared four speeches to deliver in the courts, being somewhat thwarted when he secured a condemnation after only the first one. He published all of them, thus unwittingly providing set texts to be studied for exams in those future times when Latin was taught in schools. Gaius Verres took flight to Massilia (modern Marseilles), probably carrying some of his loot with him, probably to enjoy a life of comparative ease in a pleasant climate, until Marcus Antonius proscribed him for his possession of stolen works of art. The prosecution of Verres was a political coup for Cicero, but not such a victory for the Sicilians, whose claims for damages were much reduced as a form of compensation for the supporters of Verres. The trial showed that the Romans were still more interested in their own prestige than in fair treatment of the provincials.

The provincials who did risk coming to Rome were not always assured of a successful prosecution like the one that Cicero secured. The juries of the *quaestiones repetundarum*, the courts where extortion cases were tried, were senators who had vested interests in protecting each other and ensuring that they too could indulge themselves in the provinces. Politicians tried to counter this problem by changing the membership of the jury courts to include equestrians, but the problem remained whatever the composition of the courts.

The governors appointed by Augustus were restricted by rules, which grew out of Republican tradition or were influenced by what had happened in the past, especially during the late Republic. Human nature being what it is, exploitation and extortion could not be entirely eradicated, but the provincials soon learned that they could approach Augustus himself and in many cases receive a rapid response, even if it was not always in their favour. There were other pre-emptive measures designed to make governors behave properly. According to Dio, governors were forbidden to raise troops, or to extract more money than had been specified in their instructions. It had probably never been forgotten how Brutus and Cassius had gathered large amounts of money when they seized the eastern provinces, and had been able to take over the troops already based there, and also raise even more men. It was probably to pre-empt another source of trouble that Augustus enacted or reaffirmed laws that stated that a governor of a senatorial province had to leave as soon as his replacement arrived, and he had to be back in Rome without undue delay, or at least within three months. This would help to prevent ugly scenes if any governor tried to retain control of his province, which had not been unknown in the past, and would also prevent any disgruntled senator from spending too long a time touring other provinces to air grievances, and perhaps suggest a slight change of government in Rome.

Whilst the senators could exercise a certain amount of discretion in their provinces, it was clear that ultimately it was Augustus who was in overall charge. The Cyrene edicts of 7 or 6 BC and 4 BC reveal that Augustus could and did intervene directly in provincial affairs. One of these edicts concerns a case where he had received complaints from the cities of the province of Cyrene about collusion between Roman judges, who continually acted either as accusers or witnesses for each other to bring about condemnation of people brought to the courts, some of whom were probably innocent. Augustus was careful to avoid issuing direct orders, but recommended that the fairest course of action would be for the governors of Crete and Cyrene to draw up a list of Greek judges with the highest census qualification, and aged over 25 years. Referring to this list, the men who had been accused of capital offences could then choose to be tried by a jury consisting half of Romans and half of Greeks. There is much more to the Cyrene edicts than these points, but it is clear that in this instance Augustus responded rapidly to complaints addressed to him, and the recommendations were made on his own initiative. He did not lay the matter before the Senate and wait for a decision, since he says that the process that he recommends 'will suffice until the Senate may decide on the matter, or I myself can think of something better'. The story also reveals that embassies from senatorial provinces could and did approach him directly. Foreign embassies also bypassed the Senate and addressed themselves to him.

Imperial provinces were directly controlled by Augustus, who made all the appointments himself. Governors were called *legati Augusti propraetore*, legates of Augustus with the rank of propraetor, whether or not they had reached the

praetorship or the consulship. On inscriptions the title is often abbreviated to read *leg. Aug. pr. pr.* The fact that Augustus used his own name in his governors' titles says much about his ideas of personal rule. It was only later in the Empire that the name Augustus was used as a title indicating the emperor, and later still in the late second century the title Augustus denoted seniority to the Caesar, or junior emperor.

The legionary legates were also appointed by Augustus, and though they were subject to the authority of the governors of the provinces where their legions were stationed, the fact that both governor and legionary commander were dependent on Augustus for advancement of their careers meant that they were all subject to a higher power, which was no longer the Senate, as in the Republic. The system had been foreshadowed but not made permanent when Pompeius commanded his land forces and his navy in and around the Mediterranean via his legates, who were specifically answerable to him. In practical terms, for Pompeius as well as for Augustus, a three-way governmental system would not have worked. There were already limits to the speed of communications, in both directions from overall commander to local commander and vice versa, and to wait until the Senate had debated the problem and finally arrived at a corporate decision would only have made matters worse.

In all provinces, whether senatorial or imperial, Augustus appointed procurators to deal with financial matters. Since he controlled the finances of the whole Empire, he required officials who reported to him alone, rather than allowing the governors to undertake such tasks. The governors had usually appointed their own financial officials, the quaestors, employing the nepotism or patronage that was usual at the time, but Augustus separated the linkages between the governors and financial officials. These procuratorial posts were offered to the equestrians and sometimes to freedmen, sowing the seeds of social mobility that increased as the Empire progressed. Augustus could have argued that provincial governors had enough to do in dealing with justice and administration, and in imperial provinces they were in control of military matters as well, but given that some of the senators of the late Republic had shown such a pronounced penchant for extortion, it was prudent to install financial officials who might be able to counter this tendency. The procurators themselves, of course, were not entirely innocent of the same acquisitive urges as the senators.

The governance of the provinces remained much as Augustus had left it for many years. He forged a framework that succeeding emperors could build on and adapt. The system evolved but did not substantially change until the later second and early third centuries. Augustus employed equestrians as governors of Egypt and would not allow senators to enter the province, but he did not extend this to other provinces. This was left for later emperors, and over time, equestrian governors took the place of senators, not all at once and not all over the Empire, but there was a continuing trend in this direction. There came a point when equestrians absorbed all military commands, to the virtual exclusion of senators.

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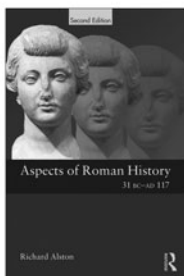
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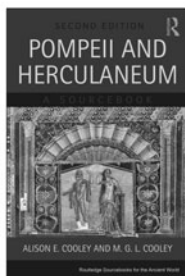
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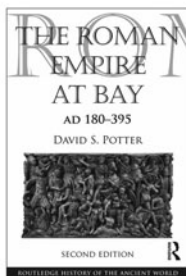
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