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## Augustan War and Peace: Analyzing the Role of the Military in Maintaining the Pax Augusta in the Augustan Age

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**Augustan War and Peace:  
Analyzing the Role of the Military in Maintaining the *Pax Augusta* in the Augustan Age**

**by  
Max Hovasse  
HIS 481 History Honors Thesis**

**Department of History  
Providence College  
Spring 2021**



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## Introduction

The arrival of the Augustan Age in Rome began both the new Roman principate, and the golden age for the city. Beginning his rule after the devastating civil wars of the late Republic, Augustus inherited a population weary of war. Sensing the popularity he could gain by giving the people this peace and stability, Augustus began to represent himself as a bringer of peace, and brought Rome into the period known as the *Pax Augusta*, or the period of Augustan Peace. This saw the new Roman Empire enter an era of relative peace, which lasted for centuries, far longer than Augustus's own life. Despite the name, there was plenty of war occurring between Rome and its neighbors during Augustus's time and beyond. Augustus oversaw many wars and was able to expand the borders of Rome more than any other ruler before or after him. This puts the fundamental idea of the *Pax Augusta* into question, with Augustus remaining more concerned about war than peace, despite him representing himself as a peace bringer. While Augustus was doing this, he was also representing himself as a military conqueror, further showing the shortcomings of the *Pax Augusta*. When combining these aspects, it is clear that the *Pax Augusta*, while about peace in name, was more about military power.

The relationship between the military and *pax*, or peace, comes from the cultural attitude Romans had toward peace. To the Romans, *pacare*, to pacify, took on a meaning of subjugation. *Pax* came after a military conquest in which a foreign rival was subjugated. Peace only existed after the Romans had forcibly beaten an opponent militarily to the point that they could no longer challenge Roman authority, which left the area free of military action.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, peace was merely temporary, existing between periods of military campaigns around the empire. According

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<sup>1</sup> Stefan Weinstock, "Pax and the 'Ara Pacis'." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960): 44-58. Accessed May 29, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/298286>, 45.

to Stefan Weinstock, the famed Roman orator Cicero wrote to his brother that by Roman subjects paying taxes, they were paying for *pax*, because paying taxes meant the area was thoroughly subjugated under Roman rule.<sup>2</sup> From a modern perspective, it is obvious that this state of peace was not truly peace. Peace, in modern times, is an absence of war. While peace exists after a military conflict has been settled, it is able to exist on its own. Peace is meant to be a permanent state, and can exist among all peoples, rather than only between a subjugated people and their conqueror. Looking at these rival interpretations of peace, it is necessary to ask the question, how peaceful was the *Pax Augusta*? It is clear when analyzing the different aspects of Augustus's reign and the *Pax Augusta* he created, that the *Pax Augusta* only existed through the power of the military machine. Augustus's diplomacy, foreign campaigns, and his plan for succession, while all related to peace and preserving the *Pax Augusta*, all also were heavily influenced by the military, making the *Pax Augusta* not only about peace, but also about Roman military might.

Before looking at the *Pax Augusta* and Augustus's sole rulership over Rome, it is necessary to track his rise to power through the civil wars, to see how both he and the Roman public viewed war. Julius Caesar was named dictator for life soon after he was victorious in his civil war against Pompey the Great. To some in Rome, this unprecedented action made it seem as if Caesar was becoming a king of Rome, something that the Roman Republican constitution sought to avoid. As a result, a group of senators led by Brutus and Cassius assassinated Caesar. This brought more civil war to Rome and brought Augustus into Roman politics. Then called Octavian, he was named heir of Caesar, and set off to punish the men responsible for assassinating him. Suetonius gives the reason for this engagement, citing "In all cases his reason

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 45-46.

and motive for embarking on civil war was the following: he had held that his foremost duty was to avenge the death of his great-uncle and protect his achievements.”<sup>3</sup> In this war Octavian worked together with Marc Antony, and defeated Caesar’s assassins at the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC, which was won despite Octavian’s own military setbacks.<sup>4</sup> This ended the first civil war Octavian fought in his rise to power, but peace still did not exist across the Roman world after Philippi.

Before the Battle of Philippi, Octavian formed the second triumvirate with Marc Antony and Marcus Lepidus, with the approval of the Senate. This division of power was meant to establish a balance between the most powerful men in Rome, but like the first triumvirate before it, this would not last. After Philippi, wars were still being fought. One of these was the war against Sextus Pompey, the son of Pompey the Great. The Sicilian War caused disturbances in Rome’s grain supply, which put pressure on Octavian to either solve the issue or maintain peace in the Mediterranean to allow the grain to flow.<sup>5</sup> Augustus chose war and vanquished Pompey with the help of Agrippa and the arrival of Marcus Lepidus in 36 BC. After the final battle, Lepidus tried to take control over Octavian’s soldiers, but this failed and he lost control himself, reducing the triumvirate to just Antony and Octavian.<sup>6</sup> Tensions between Antony and Octavian remained high, with the first instance involving Antony’s brother Lucius. He tried to have the triumvirate declared illegal, but this failed and instead he ended up being besieged by Octavian

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<sup>3</sup> Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. Catherine Edwards, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, 2.9.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History*, trans. J.C. Yardley and Anthony A. Barrett, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2011, 2.70.1-5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 2.77.1-3.

<sup>6</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.16.



and his forces between 40 and 41 BC.<sup>7</sup> The resulting surrender of the city was a brutal affair.

Octavian was ruthless to the inhabitants of the city for siding with Antony. Suetonius recounts,

After the capture of Perusia, he inflicted heavy punishment on a large number of people, responding to all those who begged for mercy or sought pardon with the same words: 'you must die.' Some people record that three hundred senators and equestrians were selected from those who surrendered to be slaughtered like sacrificial victims on the Ides of March at the altar dedicated to the Divine Julius.<sup>8</sup>

This brutal treatment of the defeated highlighted how terrible civil conflict was in Rome at the time, and this treatment was in stark contrast to Octavian's values later on. The relationship between Octavian and Antony continued to deteriorate, with many in Rome fearing that war would once again erupt. Velleius Paterculus notes the fear of civil conflict arising upon one of Antony's returns to Italy, but peace luckily prevailed.<sup>9</sup> This peace could not last however, and civil war began between the two most powerful men in Rome once again.

This final civil war reached its climax at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, a naval engagement between Octavian and Agrippa against Antony and his Egyptian ally Cleopatra. This battle was a decisive victory, with Antony and Cleopatra fleeing to Alexandria, where they both committed suicide.<sup>10</sup> However, sensing the end of civil war, Augustus was a lot more lenient with the surrendering troops. Letting Antony's allies return home as long as they remained loyal to him, Augustus enrolled Antony's soldiers into his army and then they were allowed to return

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<sup>7</sup> Werner Eck, *Age of Augustus*, Williston: Wiley, 2007, Accessed September 4, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central, 20-21.

<sup>8</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.15.

<sup>9</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.76.3.

<sup>10</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.17.

home.<sup>11</sup> Augustus's first act as sole ruler was to hold a triumph, which was the grandest Rome had ever seen, lasting three days and celebrating three different military successes at Actium, Egypt, and Dalmatia.<sup>12</sup> With himself at the helm, Octavian established a Rome that was free of civil war, and ushered the empire into a new era.

Most of Rome was excited to have its new leader, and for entering this new era of stability. Paterculus writes about this new attitude, explaining, "The civil wars were at an end after twenty years, foreign wars extinguished, peace restored, and the fury of armed conflict everywhere lulled to sleep; the laws were given back their force, the law courts their authority, and the senate its sovereignty."<sup>13</sup> There was the feeling that peace had been finally brought back to Rome. Octavian disbanded many of his troops, and began to settle them around the empire, and there were no more challengers to Octavian in Rome.<sup>14</sup> The people of Rome were more than happy to accept Octavian's claim to power, cherishing the arrival of peace with his ascent to power, acknowledging that they were entering a new era in Rome, of peace and stability guided by Octavian.<sup>15</sup> However, Rome did not remain at peace this whole time, and Augustus continued to wage many wars across the empire, expanding the territory greatly. War remained heavily involved in all aspects of Rome's functions under Augustus, in areas such as diplomacy, foreign war, and his plans for succession. However, when analyzing the violent rise of Octavian, the

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<sup>11</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.85.4-6.

<sup>12</sup> Lucius Cassius Dio, *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, trans. Ian Scott Kilvert. Penguin Publishing, London England, 1987, 51.21

<sup>13</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.89.3.

<sup>14</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.49.

<sup>15</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 44-45.

peace he gave Rome was certainly better than the state of war that existed before hand, and the people were willing to accept Octavian and his peace, recognizing this was better than before.

When looking at Augustus's rule, it is important to look at the people who wrote about him at the time. While some of these writers lived close to Augustus's time, some others wrote long after Augustus had ruled. The first notable writer was Augustus himself, who wrote the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, or the "Accomplishments of the Divine Augustus." This was a list of all of Augustus's accomplishments, which was posted on two bronze pillars outside of his mausoleum after he passed away, as well as in other places around the empire. Spanning from his rise to power, to his death, it is a comprehensive list of everything he did in his lifetime, including his many conquests and victories. While this is certainly a good source of his actions and what he thought was important in his life, it does have a glaring issue. This is a list of what Augustus himself thought was important, meaning the account is biased in his favor. However, that does not take away from its usefulness in analyzing what Augustus did in his life relating to his peace bringing, including his efforts to bring peace, and his many wars and conquests which, contradicts this. Augustus's perspective on his many actions is an invaluable source for allowing a reader to try and understand what Augustus himself was thinking when he was alive.

Velleius Paterculus's *Roman History* offers the most controversial account of Augustus because of his extremely pro-Augustus and Tiberius bias. Paterculus was alive during the reign of both Augustus and Tiberius, serving as a soldier under Tiberius in many of his campaigns, the most prominent being his campaigns in Pannonia and Germania following the Varian Disaster. Following his military career, he served in the Senate under Tiberius. Paterculus wrote with the attitude of a soldier, praising war and its place in Rome. Paterculus never trusted peace, and his evidence for this was the Varian Disaster, and instead viewed Rome's rightful state of being as

war with its neighbors to preserve its position of superiority.<sup>16</sup> This makes Paterculus interesting to read when discussing peace, because he focuses much on military success and victory over all else, which contrasts with Augustus's image of a bringer of peace. Paterculus's aggressive pro-Tiberius bias came from his time serving under Tiberius, where he came to respect him fiercely for his skills as a military commander. This in turn spread to Augustus, who was the ultimate commander of the legions, and the man who gave Tiberius his position. It is also worth mentioning that had Paterculus been critical of Augustus or Tiberius, he could have lost his status given his position in the Senate and writing while both Augustus and Tiberius were still alive. However, it is possible to look through this bias and analyze the different events Paterculus mentions, such as the Varian Disaster<sup>17</sup>, which is fiercely critical of Varus, who was responsible for the disaster, and many other military activities including those in Hispania and Pannonia. Velleius Paterculus, despite his clear bias, still offers a view of Rome at the time of Augustus.

Suetonius's *De Vita Caesarum*, the "Lives of the Caesars" also contains a biography dedicated to Augustus's life, titled the *Life of Augustus*. Suetonius himself was not alive during the reign of Augustus and wrote many years later during the reign of Hadrian, who ruled between 117 and 138 AD. Despite this difference, Suetonius's work does an excellent job of narrating Augustus's reign. Starting with his family origins, and then dividing the work between his rise to power, his foreign policies, and then his domestic ones, Suetonius recounts these events with incredible detail. Suetonius claims to use many different known and lost ancient sources from Augustus's time, which give Suetonius a detailed and well-versed story on

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<sup>16</sup> Connal, Robert T, "Velleius Paterculus: The Soldier and the Senator," *The Classical World* 107, no. 1 (2013): 49-62, Accessed August 19, 2021, 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 133. 2.117-120.

Augustus using a variety of sources, such as Marc Antony's writings. Suetonius does not limit his biography to speak about the positives of Augustus alone. While Suetonius gives lots of praise to the first emperor, he also addresses, even if only briefly, negative aspects of his reign. These include his rise to power, with his lack of clemency and the proscriptions, as well as his military failures, including the Varian Disaster.<sup>18</sup> Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* is a great source to study Augustus's reign, for its well-detailed and relatively unbiased approach to Augustus's reign.

Tacitus's wrote his *Annales* at a similar time as Suetonius wrote the *Lives of the Caesars*, during the reigns of Hadrian and Trajan, who ruled 98 to 117 AD. This meant that, like Suetonius, Tacitus too was not alive to witness the reign of Augustus firsthand. However, Tacitus is able to give a well-detailed account of Augustus's reign, despite its brevity. Tacitus does have a clearer bias against not just Augustus, but the principate in general. Tacitus wished for a return to the Republic, when men had more individual power, and is bitter that the Romans allowed themselves to become subject of the emperors. Augustus, being the man who founded the principate, receives the brunt of this anger, but this does not take away from the account of his life.<sup>19</sup> Tacitus is able to give an accurate story of Augustus, without too much of his personal bias getting in the way. Tacitus also wrote *Germania*, which was an ethnographic writing on the different tribes of Germania, listing first their cultural aspects, then listing off the various tribes and what made them unique. While this is a less useful source on Augustus himself, it does give insight on Rome's view of the Germanic tribes, and their interactions which them, which while

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<sup>18</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.23.

<sup>19</sup> Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. J.C. Yardley, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, 1.2.

they could have changed over time, would have been similar to those of Augustus's time.<sup>20</sup> This is especially helpful when looking at Roman military involvement with the Germans, as Tacitus offers an interesting discussion on the effectiveness of the Roman's military efforts in Germania, discussed in chapter two. The writings of Tacitus are useful sources for discussing the life of Augustus and his many deeds.

Cassius Dio's *Roman History* offers a thorough, historical account of Augustus's reign. While most of this work has been lost over time, Dio's books on Augustus have survived remarkably well over the ages. Its main drawback, however, is that Dio wrote long after Augustus's reign, in the end of the second century AD. Despite this, Dio offers a comprehensive account of Augustus's rule, from its early beginning to Augustus's death. While Dio certainly offers a great amount of praise to Augustus, his work does not appear to have been written with much bias. This could be due to the time it was written, since there was no one remaining alive with close ties to Augustus's reign. However, lack of primary sources is its own issue, meaning that much of Dio's details did not come from people who witnessed Augustus, and instead relied on other works, including works such as Tacitus and Suetonius. That being said, Dio speaks of both the good and the bad of Augustus, including his many successes, but also his defeats, including a great account on the Varian Disaster,<sup>21</sup> which was only briefly mentioned by Tacitus and Suetonius. Cassius Dio's *Roman History* and his section on the reign of Augustus offers a great view of Augustus and his deeds, despite coming far after he had died.

Secondary scholarship on the *Pax Augusta* and Augustus's military campaigns is plentiful. Most of these sources, however, do not combine these together and instead focus on

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<sup>20</sup> Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. Harold Mattingly, Penguin Publishing, London, England, 2009, 1-46.

<sup>21</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.18-24.

just the *Pax Augusta* or Augustus's military. Sources such as Werner Eck's *Age of Augustus* offer a complete account of Augustus's life and career which allows for looking at both peace and war in the same work, allowing for considerable context to much of Augustus's actions. In chapter one, which discusses Augustus's diplomatic attempts to maintain the *Pax Augusta* focuses on the Parthian Settlement and Augustan architecture, utilizes significant secondary sources. Charles Brian Rose's article, "The Parthians in Augustan Rome" is a well-researched discussion on the Parthian Settlement, as well as Augustus's relationship with the Parthians more generally. Other sources focus on architecture, such as Stefan Weinstock's "*Pax and the 'Ara Pacis'*", which focuses on the Ara Pacis and the Temple of Janus Quirinus and Paul Zanker's *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, which focuses on Augustan architecture more broadly, show how peace was important in Augustus's architecture. In chapter two, which discusses Augustus's military campaigns, Kurt Raaflaub's "The Political Significance of Augustus' Military Reforms." deals with Augustus's military reforms and J. W. Rich's "Augustus, War and Peace." deals with many of Augustus's military actions, and the possible reasons behind them for keeping the peace. Chapter three deals with Augustus's succession plan and how this was meant to preserve peace, and sources such as Eck's novel to understand Augustus's motives. Through each of these chapters secondary sources allow for background and general knowledge on different aspects of Augustus and his reign, which when combined with primary sources allows for a detailed discussion on the *Pax Augusta* and the military's involvement in it.

All of these authors allow for a relatively accurate depiction of Augustus's life from the eyes of Romans. This permits an analysis of Augustus's peace making after he became the sole ruler of Rome, as well as the role the military continued to play in Roman peace making. Augustus's diplomacy included efforts to make peace and to represent it in architecture, but still

remained firmly entrenched in military necessity and military imagery. Augustus's foreign campaigns were not often peace-making attempts, but instead ways for Augustus to grow the empire and to expand his military glory and fame. Augustus's only set back in his expansion, the Varian Disaster, was a violent military defeat which stopped Augustan expansion not in the name of peace, but out of necessity. Finally, Augustus's succession plan was to prevent the empire from collapsing and to keep peace, but in practice involved making his successors prominent military men whose popularity was based solely on military success. These three aspects combine to define Augustus's rule as ostensibly about bringing peace to the people of Rome, but actually about the military power of Augustus's Rome.



## Chapter 1: Augustan Diplomacy

### Introduction:

While trying to achieve any lasting peace, diplomacy is a valuable tool. In Augustan Rome, this was no different. To achieve the peace he desired, Augustus did not only use war, but also demonstrated his ability to collaborate with external leaders through the Parthian Settlement, and his ability to spread his diplomatic ideals internally to the Roman people through sponsoring architecture. However, while the goal of these diplomatic measures was to spread peace, they were also inseparable from the military aspect of Augustan Rome. Wherever Augustus promotes peace, his military is either present or acting as a catalyst for the diplomacy. The Parthian Settlement in 20 BC, while about achieving peace in the eastern portion of the empire, also related to military pressures, and itself is represented by Augustus as a military victory in art, rather than a diplomatic one. While peace was achieved, it is related closely to the military activity of the east. The same can be said of Augustan architecture. Buildings such as the *Ara Pacis Augustae* and Temple of Mars Ultor contain images reminiscent of peace, but at the same time include military images or hold military function, putting both peace and the military side by side. Through both the examples of the Parthian Settlement and Augustan architecture, Augustus successfully created and marketed his goal of establishing the *Pax Augusta*, but the military remained inseparably linked to these peaceful intentions and methods, through both necessity and images of military glory.

### Parthian Settlement:

The Parthian Settlement was the foremost example of Augustus's diplomatic efforts in pursuing peace in the Roman Empire. This settlement saw the Romans receive their military

standards, which were lost during Crassus's disastrous campaign against Parthia in 53 BC, and prisoners of war from Parthia in exchange for a lasting friendship between the two empires. This was a significant development given the previously hostile relationship between the two sides, and it is the first instance of diplomacy between Augustus and the rival state. Augustus was proud of this achievement, representing it not only as a victory, but a *military* victory.<sup>22</sup> Such a military triumph would have earned him more prestige among the common people, who hoped that Augustus would engage in a campaign against the Parthians as vengeance for their past losses.<sup>23</sup> The Parthian Settlement was represented in art and architecture in Italy, in examples such as the now famous Prima Porta Statue and its breastplate, as well as the Parthian Arch in the Roman Forum. Augustus's victory in the Parthian Settlement was an important diplomatic action in maintaining peace in the Roman Empire.

The relationship between Rome and Parthia became hostile during the first triumvirate, when Crassus invaded Parthia, seeking military glory to match that of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar. The only thing Crassus won was his own death at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC, where he and his entire army were slaughtered by the Parthian forces, beginning a longstanding war between both empires that lasted for centuries. In this battle, the Parthians captured the military standards of Crassus's defeated legions, which was a major disgrace in Rome. The Parthians also captured survivors and forced them into slavery in their empire, bringing further disgrace. Julius Caesar planned a campaign to recover these lost standards, but due to his

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<sup>22</sup> Augustus Caesar, *The Accomplishments of the Deified Augustus*, trans. Christopher Francese and R. Scott Smith in *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2014, 29.

<sup>23</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 125.

assassination in 44 BC, this invasion never happened.<sup>24</sup> The Parthians continued to hurt Roman prestige through the failed campaign of Marc Antony during the second triumvirate, in 36 BC. Paterculus described the debacle Antony suffered. He recounted, “Antony entered Armenia and then Media with thirteen legions and, as he passed through these regions making for the Parthians, he encountered their kings. He first of all lost two legions along with all their baggage and siege equipment, plus his legate Statianus.”<sup>25</sup> From the beginning of his campaign, Antony had already taken heavy losses, and this continued as he went on with his war. Paterculus continued, “Later, putting his entire army at very serious risk, he on numerous occasions exposed himself to dangers from which he despaired of being delivered; and after losing no less than a quarter of his men he owed his salvation to the loyal advice of a man who was a captive, but a Roman one.”<sup>26</sup> This was Antony’s flight from the Parthians, where he continued to suffer heavy casualties. His flight further hurt Roman military prestige because he fled with no victory. A man, previously captured during Crassus’s campaign, saved Antony’s army, further adding to the embarrassment suffered because that man’s compatriots remained enslaved. Paterculus finished his account, concluding, “Even so, no less than a quarter of these men and of the army as a whole was lost, as I noted above, and a third of the camp followers and slaves, as well; and hardly any of the baggage survived. Antony, however, still called that flight of his a victory because he had emerged from it with his life.”<sup>27</sup> Antony may have survived this campaign, but he had failed spectacularly. These heavy losses were an embarrassment to Antony and Augustus used this

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>25</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.81.1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 2.81.2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 2.81.3.

against him. This history between the Romans and Parthians, which saw extreme losses on the Roman side, drained the patience of the Roman public, who were thirsty for revenge.

When Augustus gained control of the Roman state following Antony's defeat, the Parthian situation remained. Werner Eck summarizes the attitudes of the Romans to the Parthians, explaining, "Moreover Roman pride had suffered no small blow from defeats at the hands of the Parthians, first in Crassus's fiasco at Carrhae in 53 BC, and then when Antony suffered heavy losses and had to retreat in 36 BC. Romans remained painfully aware that their enemy still possessed Crassus's captured battle standards. They craved revenge and the restoration of their honor."<sup>28</sup> Unwilling to forget the disasters, Rome desired to make Parthia pay for the losses they had inflicted, and also to retrieve what they had lost. Public pressure on Augustus mounted, as he was expected to deal with the issue, especially given his recent military successes. However, the previous losses weighed heavily on Augustus. Antony and Crassus had expected victory, and they had been routed and embarrassed. Augustus, while he was confident in his forces, was not willing to suffer a potential defeat, like those before him. This could have destroyed the public's confidence in him and cause him to lose his control over the state. For this reason, Augustus opted for a diplomatic approach.<sup>29</sup> This is significant because it demonstrates a problem with Augustan diplomacy: it was still based on the military. Had Augustus been more confident in his abilities, he would have invaded Parthia and taken the standards back by force. Diplomacy was only used as a fallback to make sure that his authority was not placed in jeopardy. This makes peace only a secondary objective, sought only where it was convenient for

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<sup>28</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 125.

<sup>29</sup> J.W. Rich, "Augustus's Parthian Honours, the Temple of Mars Ultor and the Arch in the Forum Romanum," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 66 (1998): 71-128. Accessed May 29, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40310976>, 72.

Augustus. This was common in most of Augustus's military campaigns, which saw violence prioritized, and peace only achieved when convenient.

Augustus's diplomatic efforts began with his promotion of a rival Parthian king, Tiridates, against the current Parthian king, Phraates. This arrangement failed however, and Augustus was forced to try to take a different route.<sup>30</sup> In 20 BC Tiberius set off to the East with a large army and begin discussions with Parthia. Augustus himself eventually traveled to Syria to continue negotiations between the two sides. Through these negotiations, the Parthian Settlement was born. The Parthians agreed to return the lost military standards of Rome and the Roman prisoners, and in return a lasting friendship was created between the rival empires.<sup>31</sup> Augustus was proud of this achievement, which he represented as a bloodless military victory. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus proclaimed, "I compelled the Parthians to return the spoils and standards of three Roman armies to me and beg for an alliance with the Roman people."<sup>32</sup> Augustus makes it seem like the Parthians were responsible for initiating this, by offering him the standards in exchange for friendship, coming from a position of weakness. This is present in the other ancient writers. Suetonius mentions that, "The Parthians, too, readily conceded to him, even when he laid claim to Armenia, and, offering hostages as well, returned the military standards, when he asked for them, which they had taken from Marcus Crassus and Marc Antony."<sup>33</sup> With a similar tone, Cassius Dio states, "Meanwhile Phraates had become anxious that Augustus might lead an

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>31</sup> J.W. Rich, "Augustus, War and Peace," In *Augustus*, by Edmondson Jonathan, 137-64, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014. Accessed August 19, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcr9zc.13>, 144.

<sup>32</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 29.

<sup>33</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.21.

expedition against him, because he had not yet fulfilled and of the agreements concluded earlier in Rome. So now he returned that standards and all the prisoners of war.”<sup>34</sup> In both of these accounts, the Parthians were afraid of Roman aggression, and offered to return the standards for an assurance of peace. This is related to the positioning of Tiberius and his troops when he was sent to Syria. Tiberius led a large force there, which gave the impression that if the Parthians did not do as they were asked, the Romans would invade. While this was never Augustus’s goal, the Parthians could not have known this, and were in no position at the time to defend from such a large force. This meant that the Parthian Settlement was less of an agreement, and more of a forced settlement due to the Roman position of military superiority. Despite this context, Augustus did maintain peace on the eastern border with the settlement. There was no bloodshed at this moment between the two sides, and a friendship was agreed upon, which lasted for a good portion of Augustus’s reign.

Following this agreement, Augustus began to advertise the Parthian Settlement to the people of Rome in art and architecture, representing it as a bloodless military success. Examples of this military imagery surrounding the Parthian Settlement are the Prima Porta breastplate and the Parthian Arch. Looking first at the Prima Porta statue (See Figure 1 below), this statue was located in the private villa of Livia, meaning that while this specific statue would have been out of the public’s eyes, this image of the Parthian Settlement could have still been present around Rome, even if this example was not. The statue itself depicts Augustus in an almost divine state, barefoot like the gods, with a classically derived body structure. In his hand, he held either the

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<sup>34</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.8.

recaptured military standard, or a spear.<sup>35</sup> Most importantly, on his breastplate, a Parthian man, possibly a king, can be seen handing the lost military standards to a Roman man. While this figure is commonly assumed to be Augustus, there is scholarly debate about this figure's identity. Charles Rose argues that this figure is Roma, the personification of Rome. Both figures on the breastplate are similar in size. This interpretation represents the idea of a bloodless victory, because both the personification of Parthia and Rome stand on an equal position, with neither side being subservient to the other, as would have been the case if one side suffered a military defeat.<sup>36</sup> In addition to these two figures, there are two women flanking both individuals. These two figures are meant to represent conquered tribes, such as those in Spain and Germany. Rose argues that these figures represent the central message of peace in the breastplate. These regions were pacified, just as Augustus is "pacifying" the east through his agreement with the Parthians.<sup>37</sup> While a message of peace may have been intended, displaying these other areas next to the Parthian carries military implications. The idea of the east as being pacified is a military message. Even if there was no actual fighting, Augustus represented this event as military achievement, just as he did with those pacified tribes. Below these figures is a representation of Mother Earth, showing how the peace from the settlement or the military achievements are part of a global order.<sup>38</sup> The description of the Prima Porta statue shows the clear military imagery masked behind the image of the peace Augustus is promoting through diplomacy. The handing

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 1988, 189.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Brian Rose, "The Parthians in Augustan Rome." *American Journal of Archaeology* 109, no. 1 (2005): 21-75. Accessed May 29, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025103>, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 189.

over of the standards by the Parthian shows the victory of the Romans, even if both figures are on equal standing. The inclusion of the pacified tribes around them implies that Parthia too has been pacified.



*Figure 1*

Military imagery is also present in the Parthian Arch, which was erected in the Forum following the announcement of the diplomatic success. While most of the arch does not survive, using evidence from ancient coins, Paul Zanker reports that it was a traditional victory arch,<sup>39</sup>

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Figure 1 – Wikimedia Commons



similar to surviving arches such the Arch of Titus or Constantine, evidenced by the inclusion of a triumphal chariot on top. There were three different arches in this structure, with Augustus at the peak. Augustus was riding in a chariot, traditionally associated with an image of victory, and also holding the recovered standard.<sup>40</sup> This image of Augustus is clearly meant to represent him as a victorious general over the Parthians, despite no battle having taken place. The arch also portrays the image of a defeated Parthian, which became associated with the kingdom following the settlement. This is seen through the inclusion of retreating Parthian archers along the sides of the arch or returning the standards to the Romans.<sup>41</sup> The defeated Parthian adds to a military victory because they are being shown as a vanquished enemy, despite them never suffering a significant defeat at the hands of the Romans. A significant part of this arch was the inclusion of the *Fasti Triumphales*, a list of the triumphs celebrated in Rome, which was read as a Roman walked by. While triumphs will be discussed more later, a triumph was a celebration in Rome by victorious general over a foreign enemy. Triumphs had been celebrated in Republican Rome for centuries, and Augustus himself celebrated a series of them. Importantly, there was no space to add future triumphs to the list on the arch. This implied that there would be no more triumphs celebrated, and by extension no more large-scale military successes against foreign rivals.<sup>42</sup> This fit into the idea of the *Pax Augusta*, where there was no need for any military campaigns. Therefore, a pacified Parthia means an empire of peace. The depiction of victory seen at the top of the arch

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<sup>39</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 187.

<sup>40</sup> Frances V. Hickson, "Augustus "Triumphator" : Manipulation of the Triumphal Theme in the Political Program of Augustus," *Latomus* 50, no. 1 (1991): 124-38, Accessed May 19, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41535965>, 135.

<sup>41</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 187.

<sup>42</sup> Rose, "The Parthians in Augustan Rome," 33.

certainly helped this idea, because it made it seem like the Romans had beaten them into pacification through military means.

While the Prima Porta statue and the Parthian Arch likely depicted a defeated Parthian, the Romans and Parthians continued to operate on equal footing. This era of diplomatic cooperation led to the two empires growing closer, only to eventually reignite their hostilities. Before this deterioration, Augustus and the Parthian king engaged in a number of different diplomatic correspondences. After the agreement on friendship, the Parthian king went a step farther to maintain it. He sent a number of his subjects, including some of his sons, to Rome as hostages. In the classical era, hostages were sent to maintain an alliance. In theory, a subject would be more loyal if the government were in possession of a person they cared about, which would encourage loyalty. Hostages were treated with the upmost respect, and as members of the household. While they could not leave, hostages often enjoyed a higher standard of living in Rome than they had at home and would have become influenced by Roman culture. Hostages were treated fairly because this further encouraged loyalty, understanding that the government treated a cherished person to a high standard of living. While the Romans never sent any hostages to Parthia, the Parthians sent hostages to Rome. According to Tacitus, Phraates, the king responsible for the Parthian Settlement, sent some of these hostages. Tacitus explained, “Phraates (IV) had always shown the upmost respect for Augustus himself and had sent him several of his children as a means of cementing their friendship – though his motives were not so much fear of Rome as distrust of the loyalty of his own people.”<sup>43</sup> Phraates, because of his trust to Augustus, was willing to send his own children to Rome as hostages, believing his children

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<sup>43</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.1.

safer in Rome than with himself. Strabo, in his *Geography*, delved into this exchange in greater detail. He recounts that four of Phraates sons were sent to Rome, as well as these sons' wives and children.<sup>44</sup> Phraates sent a considerable amount of his family to Rome, putting not only his family, but also a possible successor to the Parthian throne, in the hands of this newfound friendship with Rome.

Along with the exchange of hostages, Augustus engaged in one more notable diplomatic engagement with the Parthians. Following the death of the king, the Parthian nobles sent envoys to Augustus, asking him to name who would take the throne next. Augustus explains this account in his *Res Gestae*, "When the Parthians and the Medes sent noblemen as ambassadors to ask that I chose their kings for them, I granted their request."<sup>45</sup> This monumental decision by Augustus showed how much respect and faith was put into the newfound friendship between the two sides. Additionally, while this was outside of the Roman Empire, this fit into Augustus's desire for a lasting peace. Had he refused to pick a successor, Parthia could have fallen into a civil war. This would have presented Augustus with an opportunity to finally deal the military defeat to Parthia, desired by the Roman people, and could have resulted in him spreading his power far into Parthian lands. However, this would have resulted in a state of war, which is what Augustus sought to avoid the most in the east. Furthermore, if the Parthian king owed his position to Augustus, he would be more likely to remain on close terms with Augustus, which would allow more diplomacy between the two empires, and a continuing of the peace between them. Augustus therefore picked a successor for the Parthians, and this was honored.

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<sup>44</sup> Strabo. *Geography*, trans. B. W. J. G. Wilson, from *The Age of Augustus*, ed. M.G.L. Cooley, The London Association of Classical Teachers, London, 2003, 16.1.28.

<sup>45</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 33.

Despite these positive aspects of their relationship, it was far from long lasting. Disputes over the kingship of Armenia, which lay between both nations, resulted in the end of friendly relations. This conflict was significant because it would lead to the death of Gaius Caesar, who was crucial to Augustus's succession plans. While there was a small-scale war in Armenia between the rival pro-Parthia and pro-Rome factions around 4 AD, diplomacy was once again used to avoid a full-scale war between the two powerful nations.<sup>46</sup> The friendly relationship did not return, and there was no exchange of hostages or any other notable agreements made between Augustus and Parthia.

Despite this hostile end, the period of diplomacy between Parthia and Rome was the most significant example of Augustus's use of diplomacy to maintain peace. Calls for a war against Parthia, to avenge the losses of the past, were resisted by Augustus and he met these demands without war. He recovered the military standards through diplomacy, and then represented this as a bloodless victory, creating a military victory without using the military. Through images such as the Prima Porta Statue and the Parthian Arch, Rome saw Augustus's accomplishment in the Parthian Settlement as a military success and believed that the losses of the past had finally been avenged. The friendly relationship between the Parthians and Augustus can be seen through the exchange of hostages, which demonstrated how the Parthians thought this peace would be a lasting one. The eventual collapse in a peaceful relationship over Armenia showed that despite how much Augustus sought to create a lasting peace, this eventually changed. Even with this aspect of diplomacy being represented as a bloodless military success, no blood was spilt in setting the dispute between them at that time. Augustus therefore must be commended for using

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<sup>46</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 136.

diplomacy to uphold the *Pax Augusta* by avoiding a large and potentially extremely deadly conflict in the east against Parthia. While this diplomacy upheld peace, it is also important to recognize that it was only conducted because a military option was unavailable. While the Parthian Settlement was the most significant example of Augustan architecture being used to maintain the *Pax Augusta*, it is equally important to recognize that there was still a clear influence of the military, both in its representation and its function.

### **Architecture:**

Augustus's diplomatic approach to representing himself as a bringer of peace and promoting the *Pax Augusta* as central to Roman political goals was also visualized in Augustan architecture. Building projects such as renovations and new construction put on display for the Roman people the importance of peace in Augustan politics. By using architecture, Augustus was also to show more people his plans, because even after his death, his buildings remained as symbols of his desire for peace for future emperors and generations. Buildings such as the Temple of Ianus Quirinus and the *Ara Pacis* were clear visual examples of architecture serving as a message of peace meant to be viewed by the Roman people. The Temple of Mars Ultor in the new Forum of Augustus served as both a symbol of peace but also as a place of significant military meaning, which links the two aspects together through Augustus's reign. These three pieces of architecture showed how Augustus used diplomacy to promote his *Pax Augusta*, by allowing the public masses to view and support his peaceful missions around the new empire.

The Temple of Ianus Quirinus, renovated by Augustus, had a special ceremony relating to peace. Originally built during the reign of the Roman kings by Numa Pompilius, it was meant,

according to the historian Livy, to serve as a “barometer of war.”<sup>47</sup> Recognizing the violent nature of Rome at the time, Numa constructed a temple which when its doors were open, the state was at war, and when they were closed, Rome was at peace with its neighbors. Hoping that this would help moderate the wars of Rome, Numa’s efforts were of vain, and the temple was only closed twice by the time of Augustus, once during the consulship of Titus Manlius in 340 BC and the next after the First Punic War, which ended in 241 BC.<sup>48</sup> By the time Augustus took power, the temple needed renovation, and Augustus happily had the temple renovated due to its relationship with peace. He even includes this in The *Res Gestae*, noting this construction with a number of other buildings he created.<sup>49</sup> Augustus used this newly renovated temple to promote his new peace.

Augustus closed the doors of the temple three times, visually advertising that he brought peace to the Roman world. He mentions this accomplishment in the *Res Gestae*, explaining that he, more than the other rulers in Roman history, had brought peace to the Roman world on all fronts, whether land or sea.<sup>50</sup> Suetonius adds further praise to Augustus’s closing of the temple, saying, “Since the foundation of the city, Janus Quirinus had been closed before Augustus’ time on only two occasions. Having obtained peace by land and sea, he closed it on three occasions in the space of a much shorter period.”<sup>51</sup> Suetonius states that not only has Augustus closed the temple more than any other ruler in Roman history, but he has also done so in a much briefer

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<sup>47</sup> Titus Livius, *From the Founding of the City*, trans. B. W. J. G. Wilson. From *The Age of Augustus*, ed. M.G.L. Cooley, The London Association of Classical Teachers, London, 2003, 1.19.1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Livius, *Foundation of the City*, 1.19.1-3.

<sup>49</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>51</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.22.

time period, showing how good of a peacemaker Augustus truly was. The first closure of the temple occurred in 29 BC, representing the end of the civil war period, and the start of a new era of peace in Rome under his guidance.<sup>52</sup> The temple was opened, and then closed once again, in 25 BC after Augustus's campaigns began and concluded in Hispania, to subdue the Cantabrian tribes in the northwest.<sup>53</sup> The temple was opened for a third time, but the exact date is not certain, it is suspected to have been closed again in 13 BC, when the *Ara Pacis* was constructed.<sup>54</sup>

However, the doors of the temple being closed did not necessarily mean that the Roman world was entirely at peace. Dio notes this in his discussion of the first closure. There were many disturbances in the Roman world at the time, including in both Germania and Hispania. However, Dio says, "But since no consequences of importance resulted from them, the Romans did not consider that they were at war that period..."<sup>55</sup> While the Roman world was largely at peace, it was a lie to state that it was entirely so. Despite this, Augustus took great pride in closing the temple doors, and the people of Rome may have not even known these small conflicts were occurring. Weinstock adds a further discussion to the closing of the doors on the temple. He believed that by closing the door three times, Augustus was admitting failure in the *Pax Augusta*. By closing and opening the doors, it meant that Augustus's peace was not lasting, because there had to be conflict to open them. After closing the doors for the first time, he had to open them three times, representing his own failure to keep his peace. Additionally, when

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<sup>52</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 44-45.

<sup>53</sup> Rich, "War and Peace," 140.

<sup>54</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 123-124.

<sup>55</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 51.20.

Augustus died, the temple doors were open, meaning that there was no peace through the entire Roman world.<sup>56</sup> Weinstock bleakly summarizes, “Augustan peace had failed, and Augustus knew it.”<sup>57</sup> He held this belief because the temple doors ended Augustus’s reign in the same state as when he began, open. The claim that the *Pax Augusta* was a complete failure because the doors had to be open again and closed multiple times is controversial. When Augustus took control of the Roman state, it had been under decades of civil war. He was responsible for ending this and improving Roman life through this peace he created. Even if the doors had to be opened and closed multiple times, this peace he created during his rule brought much needed stability and quality of life improvements to the Roman people, making it a success.

The *Ara Pacis Augustae*, or Altar of Augustan Peace, was another piece of significant Augustan architecture relating to the *Pax Augusta*. Decreed in 13 BC by the Senate upon Augustus’s return from successful campaigns in Hispania and Gaul, the altar was built in the Campus Martius and shows the Senate’s support for Augustus and his peace-making efforts.<sup>58</sup> The Senators initially wanted the altar located on the Capitoline Hill to highlight its importance as central to Rome’s image, but Augustus had it built in Campus Martius instead.<sup>59</sup> Augustus mentions this gift in the *Res Gestae*, showing how he viewed it as an important one in the architectural projects of Rome.<sup>60</sup> The altar itself is a large platform with two rings of walls covered in marble friezes. While some parts of these have been heavily damaged or lost, it is still

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<sup>56</sup> Weinstock, “*Pax and the Ara Pacis*,” 48.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>58</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 123-124.

<sup>59</sup> Weinstock, “*Pax and the Ara Pacis*,” 48.

<sup>60</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 12.



possible to infer what most of the friezes represented depending on what is around it and historical evidence.<sup>61</sup> Some of these were decorative motifs, and others depicted myths, such as the story of Aeneas or the story of Romulus and Remus. Others had friezes which were more closely related to the ideas of peace and the *Pax Augusta* and show support for Augustus.

One of these friezes, located on the side facing the main road, the *Via Flaminia*, functioned as the most public face of the altar.<sup>62</sup> One side showed the goddess Roma, seated upon a pile of armor, flanked by depictions of Honos and Virtus, acting as the personifications of bravery on war and its reward, but is heavily damaged (See Figure 2 below). Beside this was an image of the goddess Pax, resembling Venus Genetrix, the mother of the Julian Clan, with depictions of the sky and seas beside her.<sup>63</sup> (See Figure 3 below) These aspects combine into one of the important parts of the altar when discussing peace. Beginning with its placement, having this frieze on the side facing the road, and acting as the public face, shows how it was important to have as many Romans see Pax as possible, because a traveler could see Pax without having to go inside the altar. The inclusion of both Pax and the symbols of victory in war show their close relationship. The figure Roma seated atop a pile of armor, between bravery and its rewards, shows Rome's success on the battlefield. These symbols were also heavily associated with Augustus, adding more to his own status.<sup>64</sup> Pax was beside these symbols, showing how victory led to peace, and there was no peace without a military success. The symbols of the sky and sea

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<sup>61</sup> M.G.L. Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, trans. B. W. J. G. Wilson, The London Association of Classical Teachers, London, 2003, 232.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 232-233.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 232-233.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 232-233.

further show that this was a universal peace, which is an image that Augustus heavily promoted following his victory in the civil wars. Pax's depiction being similar to Venus Genetrix, who was the mother of the Julian line and therefore related to Augustus, further depicted Augustus as a peacemaker, with the idea of *Pax* being part of his family's history. The frieze of Pax and Roma is important because of their close connotations together and with Augustus.



*Figure 2*



*Figure 3*

Another important frieze is a procession of important Roman figures, including magistrates, priests, and Augustus and his entourage.<sup>65</sup> This procession contains a large number of people representing different provinces, highlighting the peace that existed between all of them under the Augustus.<sup>66</sup> This procession also contains two small boys, who stand near Augustus, and cannot have their identity confirmed. Some scholars say that these boys are meant to represent Augustus's grandsons, Lucius and Gaius, while others claim them to be representations of the east and west in the empire, or as hostage princes.<sup>67</sup> Having these boys represent the east and west gave them a similar meaning as to the images of the east and west on the Prima Porta statue, as portraying peace around the empire. These boys representing hostage princes had a similar message of peace existing throughout the state, shown through their inclusion in Roman ceremony. It is also possible that these two boys could have represented the hostage princes of the Parthian King Phraates, which further showed the success of the peaceful diplomacy between the two large empires, resulting in a friendship between both sides. This friendship could have been so important that the Senate sought to have it represented in the altar as a symbol of lasting peace.<sup>68</sup> The depiction of these boys is significant for the discussion of peace because of their possible representation of peace across the empire as hostage princes, welcomed in the imperial family and treated well.

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Figure 2 – Wikimedia Commons

Figure 3 – Wikimedia Commons

<sup>65</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 233.

<sup>66</sup> Rose, "Parthians in Augustan Rome," 38.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 41.

The *Ara Pacis*, while having peace in the name, includes many images of war. This has led the historian Kathleen Lamp to label the altar as a war memorial. She states, “The *Ara Pacis*, therefore, functioned both immediately as a war monument of sorts, but also as an enduring piece of rhetoric meant to legitimize Augustus’s rule and promote the Julian line.”<sup>69</sup> She makes this claim because of both the images on it, and the circumstances in which it was created. The altar was decreed after Augustus’s victories in Hispania and Gaul. This meant that the altar is a celebration of these victories and the resulting peace created more than it was a celebration of peace as a value, because this peace would not have existed without the successful wars beforehand.<sup>70</sup> The idea that the *Ara Pacis* was a method of legitimizing Augustus’s rule comes from the desire for the Romans to experience peace. Still exhausted of war from the decades of wars across the empire, Augustus’s search for peace is what endeared him to the people, meaning a monument to peace further showed this message, and helped to solidify this idea in the peoples’ minds.<sup>71</sup> Even with these criticisms, the *Ara Pacis Augustae* was still a monument dedicated to peace, at least in name. Given the conditions in which it was decreed from the Senate, and the images that were associated with it, it is incorrect to say the *Ara Pacis* is solely about peace but is instead tied heavily with Augustan warfare.

The Temple of Mars Ultor was another significant Augustan building project. This temple included both strong images of peace, while being heavily involved in Augustus’s wars. Augustus first vowed that he would create the temple to Mars Ultor, or Mars the Avenger, before

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<sup>69</sup> Kathleen Lamp, "The Ara Pacis Augustae: Visual Rhetoric in Augustus' Principate," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2009): 1-24, Accessed May 29, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40232573>, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 20.

the battle of Philippi, in reference to getting his vengeance upon the assassins of Caesar.<sup>72</sup> After the victory, the Senate proposed it be placed on the Capitoline Hill, but Augustus rejected this and instead built it in his forum,<sup>73</sup> using his own money from the spoils of war.<sup>74</sup> Augustus even brags about this in the *Res Gestae*, boasting that he spent 100,000,000 sesterces from his war profits building the temple.<sup>75</sup> Based on the design of the Temple of Venus from Caesar's forum, but larger, the temple was connected to public porticos containing niches and statues.<sup>76</sup> The most important function of the temple came after the Parthian Settlement. Augustus had the recovered standards interred in the temple for viewing. This extends association of the "Avenger" aspect of the temple from Augustus avenging the death of Caesar to also include Augustus avenging Rome's defeat at Carrhae against the Parthians.<sup>77</sup> While the standards of the Parthian Settlement were a symbol of peace, here Augustus was once again associating them with a military victory. Being an avenger implies that an opponent was defeated, bringing vengeance to the original defeat. This is what the temple meant at first, being built to Mars for helping Augustus get vengeance on his enemies at Philippi. This was accomplished with a military victory. However, by placing the standards in this temple, Augustus is adding on to this, by making it appear he had achieved a similar victory over the Parthians. This further shows Augustus's priority in representing his peaceful policies, showing them as a military victory.

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<sup>72</sup> Rose, "Parthians in Augustan Rome," 46.

<sup>73</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.8.

<sup>74</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 142-143.

<sup>75</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 21.

<sup>76</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 235.

<sup>77</sup> Rose, "Parthians in Augustan Rome," 22.

While the temple held the recovered standards, it also had other functions relating to war. Suetonius describes these, explaining, “Accordingly, he decreed that it was here that the senate conducted its debates as to whether wars should be waged or triumphs awarded, from here that those about to undertake provincial command should set out, to be here that victorious leaders should bring the insignia of their triumph when they return.”<sup>78</sup> M.G.L. Cooley lists more functions, adding that it is where the ceremony for young noble men were given their adult toga, signifying that they were of military age.<sup>79</sup> These new functions made the Temple of Mars Ultor central to the Empire’s war aims. All military matters were decided here, to further give Augustus the image of being central to all military matters, because it was being done in the temple he built and paid for in a forum he built on his land. This further adds to the contrast of the symbol of peace, and the military aspect of the temple. All military campaigns now began from the same place where Augustus is showing off his only instance of peaceful diplomacy. Further adding to this, the first time this military function was used was the start of a campaign against Parthia. Gaius, Augustus’s grandson, set off to settle a dispute in Armenia, which ended the peaceful relationship between the two empires, close to where the symbol of this friendship stood.<sup>80</sup> The leading role the temple played in military matters made it an important military symbol, despite the association of the standards housed within it.

Another important part of the temple were the statues and niches located on the porticos, which were viewed by the common Roman people outside the temple itself. There were two rows of statues, terminating in the same place. One side was full of the great men of the

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<sup>78</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.29.

<sup>79</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 235.

<sup>80</sup> Rose, “Parthians in Augustan Rome,” 46.

Republic, beginning with Romulus and including figures such as Pompey, Caesar's former ally and rival in his civil war, and Sulla, a former dictator of Rome during the Republic, and leading up to Augustus, listing their achievements.<sup>81</sup> Eck describes these inscriptions, stating,

“Inscriptions attached to their monuments summarizes their political and military careers and their acts on behalf of the *res publica*. The sum of their deeds, their own *res gestae*, also led up to Augustus, whose own deeds rested on their achievements but outshone them by far.”<sup>82</sup>

Augustus places his own achievements as larger than those of everybody else in the Republic, showing his importance to Rome. It is also noteworthy that he considered himself as one of the great men of the Republic, although he effectively ended the Republic. The other row included the ancestors and members of the Julio-Claudian family, beginning with the mythical Aeneas and terminating once again with Augustus, whose statue portrayed him as father of the nation and as a paternal monarch, as well as a military ruler driving a chariot.<sup>83</sup> These porticos further established Augustus as an important military leader, by weighing his accomplishments against the many great men in the Republic and portraying his as much greater. Including his family leading back to Aeneas also showed his family's importance to the history of the city, which continues with his importance to the Republic. Attaching this to the Temple of Mars Ultor further connected his family, as well as himself, to not only the military function of the empire, but also made this more visible to the everyday Romans. The Temple of Mars Ultor was significant in the Augustan architectural program because of the variety of functions it held, becoming central to the military machine of the empire, and also because it went on to hold the

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<sup>81</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 142-143.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 142-143.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 142-143.



recovered Parthian standards, putting an image of peace among the most important military structure in Rome.

Architecture in Augustan Rome was an important way for Augustus to spread his diplomatic ideals of peace for the empire to the Roman people, who only had to walk around Rome to understand what Augustus believed was necessary. This necessity, which was peace to stabilize the empire after its civil wars, was important to both Augustus and the Romans. However, this architecture is also inherently related to military success, which the Roman people held above any other success. This meant Augustus, even on monuments of peace, needed to show off his military gains to try and to keep the public support for the peace he was showing. The Temple of Ianus Quirinus and its ceremonial doors, which held significant meaning to peace, were renovated by Augustus. Augustus closed the doors more than any other Roman, showing he brought peace, but also opened them more than any other Roman. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* was an altar dedicated to peace, and included several images related to peace and tranquility, showing that Augustus wanted to advertise his peace, yet was also dedicated to Augustus's successful campaigns. Additionally, the Temple of Mars Ultor housed the recovered Parthian standards, one of the most prominent images of peace in the Augustan Age. However, the temple itself was built to commemorate Augustus's military success in the civil wars, and also held many important military functions, which seems to detract from the image of peace in the empire. Just as was true with the diplomacy with Parthia, Augustan architecture's messages of peace were inseparable with Augustus's messages of war.

### **Conclusion:**

Augustus's diplomacy with Parthia and using architecture to show off the *Pax Augusta* were successful in both of their goals. The Parthian Settlement ended the longstanding hostilities

with the rival empire and returned to Rome the standards lost in previous defeats, restoring Rome's honor. This also ushered in a period of friendship between the rivals, which saw more diplomacy occur. While peace was preserved, this was only done as a last resort. Unable to conquer the Parthians militarily, Augustus opted to use diplomacy as his second choice. Similarly, Augustus represents this as a military success, instead of a diplomatic act which preserved the peace. Using the Parthian Settlement as an example, it is clear that while Augustus did desire to create and uphold peace in the empire, he only did this as a last resort in favor of military action and continued to represent these actions as militarily related. A similar message can be said for Augustan architecture. The Temple of Janus Quirinus was renovated, and its aged ceremony of opening and closing its doors to symbolize peace or war was brought back. Augustus closed the doors a record three times in a brief period, but he also had to open these doors, showing that while he did create peace, this was unsustainable. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* was also created under Augustus, and was an altar dedicated to the *Pax Augusta*, containing many images of peace. However, this was commissioned to celebrate a military victory, and itself contained images of war to compliment those images of peace. Furthermore, the Temple of Mars Ultor housed the recovered Parthian standards, a well-known image of Augustus's peaceful policies. However, these were placed in a temple for war, which was held many of the functions for the Roman war machine, including deciding military campaigns and being the starting point for commanders heading for campaigns. Augustus's architecture, despite having functions to represent peace or containing images of peace, is not separated from images of war or military functions. This further shows the inseparability of Augustus's peace and his military. Through Augustan diplomacy, the *Pax Augusta* is linked with the military by being placed side by side in imagery or the military being used as the primary goal of peaceful missions and structures.

## Chapter 2 – The Role of the Military

### Introduction

Despite Augustus's advertisement of creating peace, the military was featured prominently in his plans for the empire. While it is an inherent contradiction to create peace through military force, the Romans did not necessarily think of it that way, considering their definition of peace. Given how the Romans viewed peace as part of military subjugation, peace and military power remained linked together in Augustus's mind.<sup>84</sup> Given this mindset, it is not surprising to discover how militarily active Augustus was. After Augustus secured power through the strength of his military in the civil war against Marc Antony, he continued to treasure his military power. This was clear given his reorganization of the military and the political structure of the empire. Augustus reformed the military to allow him to use it in his goal of achieving peace throughout the empire. This coincided with his political reforms, which occurred through the Political Settlement of 27 BC. In this settlement, Augustus was given more control over the military and individual provinces, where he was given control of the mission to make these areas peaceful and accepting of Roman rule. Another feature of Augustus's reign was the numerous military campaigns he oversaw around the empire. Through these campaigns, he forcibly subjected many different peoples to Roman authority, and reduced them to a state of subjugation, where they were unwilling or unable to continue to fight against the Romans through revolts. Areas such as Hispania and Pannonia saw near constant fighting, which demonstrated that despite Augustus's claim to be creating peace, this peace only existed if

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<sup>84</sup> Weinstock, "*Pax* and the *Ara Pacis*," 45.

Rome's enemies were not in a position to fight back. The most prolific area of military campaigning was Germania, where Augustus and his generals waged wars nearly every campaigning season. While Augustus won many victories, no lasting peace was established out of a desire from both sides to continue fighting. The Battle of Teutoburg Forest created a drastic setback in the Augustan policy. An entire Roman army was ambushed and slaughtered by Germans. The Romans, believing peace was established, were unprepared for this conflict. Through the reorganization of the military, the military campaigns around the empire, and the situation in Germania, it is clear that the military had a pivotal role in maintaining the *Pax Augusta*. While Augustus claimed to be bringing peace to the empire, he was also bringing increased warfare through his wars of expansion and pacification of rebels across the provinces, and also seeking to increase his military glory, which shows how unpeaceful the *Pax Augusta* was, even if it was in the name of creating a universal peace.

### **Military Reorganization**

When Augustus began his rule over the Roman state, it needed reorganization to fix its stability. Civil wars demonstrated how the old Republican form of government had failed, due to both the deterioration of the government's ability to rule and the rise of ambitious generals usurping power. Men like Julius Caesar, Pompey the Great, Marc Antony, and Augustus himself proved that the state was too large for the rule of the Senate, and instead the dawn of an empire under one man was necessary. However, Augustus could not simply do away with the old Republican systems, because this would only lead to more wars and instability. The downfall of Julius Caesar showed that Augustus needed to maintain the Republican framework while also modifying it to rule on his own. While creating his own form of the government, he also had to be mindful of the importance of promoting peace by making sure there were no avenues for civil

war to return. This meant removing the methods that he used to secure his rule from being used against him in the future. There were two ways Augustus accomplished these goals. He reorganized the military, transforming it from the old Republican system to a new one which directly served both him and his interests. He also began a reorganization of the political framework of the empire, giving him a much higher degree of control over the army and the provinces where they were stationed.

After Augustus became the sole ruler of the Roman state, he began his reorganization of the military, which was in disarray at the time. Many of these issues contributed to the civil wars, beginning as far back as the wars between Marius and Sulla, in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, and were due to the old traditional Republican system of the military. The most significant problem facing the military in this period was the merging of military command and political power. This meant that prominent officials were leading the armies and could use the military to grow their political power by both endearing to the public with victories and by creating a close relationship with the troops. Generals were in charge of a soldier's pay and benefits after his service was completed, making the soldiers more loyal to the generals themselves than the Roman Senate. This created a problem for the Senate, who could do nothing to stop a general with political ambitions from trying to subvert the authority of the Senate and pursue his own goals. This was why Rome became so enveloped by civil wars in the period before Augustus.<sup>85</sup> Generals with political aspirations fought for control of Rome against another general who desired to do the

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<sup>85</sup> Kurt A Raaflaub, "The Political Significance of Augustus' Military Reforms," In *Augustus*, by Edmondson Jonathan, 203-28, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, Accessed August 19, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcr9zc.16>. 207.

same. Augustus took control of the state this way, and to preserve both his leadership and his new *Pax Augusta*, he had to make sure nobody else could do this again.

Augustus therefore sought to eliminate the very method he had used to gain control of the military and state. Kurt Raaflaub explains that “When Octavian emerged as victor and the sole ruler after Actium, it was, indeed, his most urgent and important task to make sure that the soldiers and officers unlearned their political role and that the military and political spheres were henceforth clearly separated from each other again.”<sup>86</sup> Augustus had to take the politics away from the control of generals and the army, which he himself had used. He accomplished this through a variety of military reforms, which both made the army more loyal to him, and him alone, and also served to help him in his goals of peace. Through these military reforms, along with the loyalty to him helping to keep peace and stability, Augustus was able to create an army more suited to maintain internal peace and stability.

The first of these reforms were on the structure of the army itself. Through the constant warfare in the previous decades, the military had swelled in size due to the high demand for more men. Eck reports that after the Battle of Actium there were one hundred twenty legions under the control of Augustus, between his loyal troops and the defeated legions of Antony. Augustus reduced this number to twenty-six, and then twenty-eight.<sup>87</sup> Dio confirms these numbers, and lists Augustus’s use of the new Praetorian Guard in the city to keep the city safe.<sup>88</sup> Along with subtracting most of the legions, the remaining legions were increased in size, making them more

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>87</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 115.

<sup>88</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.24.

powerful as an individual force. Augustus accomplished this change by retiring many of the veterans and settling them across the empire. Raaflaub reports that in the years between 41 and 13 BC, several hundred thousand soldiers were settled across Italy and colonies around the empire.<sup>89</sup> The changes in the number and size of the legions made them more manageable.

Another Augustan change was the spreading out of the legions. Augustus deconcentrated them across the frontiers, and far from Italy.<sup>90</sup> Suetonius compounds this information, stating Augustus kept only a small contingent of troops in Italy, and even made his contingent of bodyguards smaller.<sup>91</sup> This change is significant because it did not allow one area to become too strong; doing so also protected the empire's borders. Additionally, by having the legions stationed farther from Italy, no general would be able to march his legions on Rome without great difficulty. A final change Augustus made was the introduction of a permanent standing army. Eck explains, "Augustus certainly never considered reviving the old Republican form of manning the legions, by levying them anew each year; that would have destroyed the basis of his own power. He thus became the actual founder of a standing army. That an army of this nature was necessary was no longer a point of discussion."<sup>92</sup> The Republican system of creating an army no longer worked. Augustus needed to have his men ready to fight at all times, not only to protect internal stability and prevent rebellions, but also to defend the vast borders of the empire. When this old system was created, Rome was a small city-state and had less territory to defend, which allowed them to disband and create armies as they needed them. The military was also the

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<sup>89</sup> Raaflaub, "Augustus's Military Reforms," 208.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 210.

<sup>91</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.59.

<sup>92</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 114-115.

base of Augustus's power, which meant that he could not disband it after a campaign without endangering himself and his position, and the state in general.<sup>93</sup> These changes worked together to create a more effective peacekeeping army. The armies were more mobile, meaning they were able to move around as needed to prevent uprisings and invasions. They were also positioned to help maintain peace on the borders by discouraging and defending from attacks. These administrative changes in the army worked with Augustus's goal of creating an army more suited to keeping peace.

Along with these administrative changes, the most notable change Augustus made in his reorganization of the military were the changes in leadership. Augustus had to limit the political impact of his individual generals, both to foster loyalty among the army and to give himself credit for all military success. Augustus's first step in reducing the power of generals was to remove the relationship between a general and his troops. While a general would still lead the legions, the generals would no longer be responsible for the payment and benefits of soldiers. Raaflaub explains the political benefit of this, declaring that "The previous form of army-*clientela* was thus considerably weakened. It could be expected that the inclination of the soldier toward following a general into a political revolt would henceforth be considerably weakened. Our sources mention this quite rightly as the main purpose of the reforms."<sup>94</sup> This change served to increase internal peace and stability by discouraging potential rebellions. A soldier would be less willing to side with a general in a revolt if it meant he would lose his pay and benefits if it failed. This bred loyalty to Augustus, not the individual generals.<sup>95</sup> Another change that

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<sup>93</sup> Raaflaub, "Augustus's Military Reforms," 204.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 209.



Augustus made was in the appointing of generals. He made himself responsible for this, meaning that generals owed their positions to him, not their own merit, and this also attached Augustus to every victory they achieved on the battlefield. This gave Augustus a considerable amount of control over the actions of individual generals. Raaflaub notes that, “The careers and performances of the generals were carefully planned and supervised. As soon as they became not only too successful, but too proud of themselves, too ambitious or too independent, their careers came to a quick end.”<sup>96</sup> Augustus was able to end or advance a general’s career, allowing him to remove any potential threats to himself and peace from his military commanders. Sharing in the success of any general also allowed him to grow his own power and prestige, due to Rome viewing these generals as legates of Augustus, rather than as individual generals. The changes in leadership allowed the army to better reflect Augustus’s policy of maintaining peace. He monitored the leaders of the army, limiting any possible rebellions. This favored peace in the empire, while also allowing Augustus to grow his own military prestige without risking his own name on the battlefield.

Along with a reorganization of the army, Augustus had to change the governing structure of the empire to better allow him to achieve his goals of peace. The settlement began with Augustus giving up his command. While this sounds counterproductive to gaining more power, Augustus never actually planned to give up his power. The Senate was full of Augustus’s allies, who were aware that he was not actually stepping down, but he was just giving the image of relinquishing his powers and returning it to him.<sup>97</sup> In Dio’s writing, Augustus gave a long speech about giving up of power during this time. According to Dio, Augustus exclaimed, “I lay down

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 220.

<sup>97</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 50.

my office in its entirety and return to you all authority absolutely – authority over the army, the laws and the provinces – not only those territories you entrusted to me, but those which I later secured for you. Thus my deeds in themselves shall also bear witness to the fact that from the very beginning I had no desire to rule, but in truth wished to avenge my father.”<sup>98</sup> Dio claimed that Augustus never desired to rule for his own gain, but only to avenge the murder of Julius Caesar. This served to distance Augustus from the image of a tyrannical monarch constantly seeking to grow his own power, and also to establish a basis for why he was relinquishing his command, with Caesar having been avenged and the state stabilized. Dio echoes this sentiment later on in the speech, proclaiming,

From these efforts I gained nothing for myself, save only that I helped my country to survive; for you the outcome is that you now live safe and sound. Since fortune, working through me, has blessed you by restoring a peace that knows no treachery and a harmony that knows no turmoil, you should receive back your freedom and the Republic, take over the army and the subject provinces, and carry on the government as was your custom in the past.<sup>99</sup>

Augustus is once again claiming no personal benefit for having taken complete control of the state. Despite this being false, it continued to grow the distinction between himself and a monarch. This passage also shows Augustus as being proud of the peace he created, calling himself “blessed”<sup>100</sup> for having the opportunity to do so. The desire to maintain the Republican image is also present, with his desire to return command to the rule of the people. These messages portray Augustus as a benevolent leader, who had only taken control of the state to

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<sup>98</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 53.5.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 53.5.

avenge the murder of his stepfather and for no gain to himself and was now returning to the people control out of his own desire to maintain a peaceful Republic.

Augustus also made sure to show his decisions through the lens of military success, both glorifying his choice to step down and his own achievements. Dio recounts this through more of Augustus's speech, writing,

What other achievements can be compared with this? The conquest of Gaul, the enslavement of Pannonia, the subjugation of Moesia, or the overthrow of Egypt? The victories over Pharnaces, or Juba, or Phraates, or the campaigns against the Britons, or the crossing of the Rhine? These are greater achievements than the sum of our forefathers' exploits throughout the whole of our past. And yet none of them deserves to be compared to my present action.<sup>101</sup>

Augustus outlined his numerous military accomplishments and compares them to his resignation of power. With these amazing accomplishments, greater than any previous general, Augustus is showing that his resignation of power is a monumental decision, surpassing any of the greatest military accomplishments in the entire history of Rome. Augustus does not stop here however, as Dio notes,

I have an army of surpassing strength and quality, both of Roman citizens and of allies, who are devotedly loyal to me. I rule the Mediterranean Sea to the Pillars of Hercules, save only for a few tribes. My sway now extends to cities and provinces in every continent: there is no enemy at war with me abroad, and no faction stirs up strife at home. Yet at this time, when all of you live in peace and harmony, and best of all willingly accept my rule, I choose, unprompted and of my own free will, to stand aside from this great empire and renounce these vast possessions.<sup>102</sup>

Augustus continued using military reasoning in his statement. He accounted for the vast expansions of the Roman empire and attributing them to his own accomplishments. He describes

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 53.7.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 53.8.

that despite the army being loyal to him, he was willing to return them to the loyalty of the state. He also spoke on the peace he has created, through ending both wars abroad and internal struggles between factions and individuals. Through this speech, Augustus established himself as successful commander and as a cunning politician. By speaking on both his accomplishments and his desires to step down as leader of the Roman state, Augustus represented himself as the savior of the state and at the same time established himself as the only one who had ever achieved so much. The people did not want to lose the command of such a brilliant leader, seen by their reaction to this speech. Augustus was aware of this and counted on their refusal to let him walk away.

After giving his speech to the Senate, the senators were unwilling to let Augustus step down from command. After all, Augustus rescued Rome from the chaos and instability of the previous decades and had at the same time brought further glory to the state. Eck describes the attitudes of the senators. He explains,

How could Octavian think of deserting the Roman people and allowing chaos to return? The frontier provinces were not yet completely pacified, and Rome's relationship with the Parthians remained precarious. They pleaded with him not to withdraw in a time of great need. The state needed him, preferably with all the powers he had exercised so successfully in the preceding years.<sup>103</sup>

The Senate needed Augustus in control, both due to their reliance on him for their positions and out of a desire to not repeat the civil wars of the past. The people believed he was the only man who could keep the stability he had created, in the face of not only the internal problems he had quelled, but also in external threats on the frontiers. And so, the Senate begged Augustus to remain in power and to not abandon them, while Augustus in turn refused to accept it back. In

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<sup>103</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 51-52.

the end, as planned, Augustus accepted some of their demands, which resulted in the Settlement of 27 BC. It is important to note the continuous back and forth between Augustus and the Senate further emphasized the distinction between Augustus and monarchal power.<sup>104</sup> By refusing, Augustus demonstrated that he was not hungry for power, but was instead only trying to do what was best for the state. In the end, by accepting the authority, Augustus did do what was best for the state but allowed himself to maintain the peace he created.

The settlement Augustus accepted was the creation of two different zones in the empire. Provinces were divided between being under the control of Augustus or the Senate. Augustus agreed to control areas of the empire which were not completely pacified. These areas included provinces, which had been recently annexed, and provinces, which were prone to rebellion and bordered upon hostile frontiers. This left the Senate in control of areas that mostly enjoyed a relative sense of peace. This breakdown of the provinces left Augustus in control of Aegyptus, or modern-day Egypt, the Gallic provinces, and much of the eastern border with Parthia, while the senate controlled areas such as the Mediterranean islands, North Africa, and Greece.<sup>105</sup>

The division of the provinces left Augustus in control of the vast majority of the military. As Eck notes, this was probably Augustus's main goal in receiving the provinces he selected.<sup>106</sup> Control over the legions allowed Augustus to both maintain the base of his power, and to oversee his reorganization of the army, specifically the careers of generals. Receiving the majority of the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>105</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.12.

<sup>106</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 52-53

legions also played into the second result of pacifying his provinces. Strabo, in his *Geography*, described the provinces Augustus received command of,

For himself he took all of those areas that still needed a military garrison – in effect those that were barbaric, or bordering on tribes not yet brought to heel, or infertile and difficult to cultivate and therefore inevitably prone to break loose and revolt, because whatever else they lack there is never a shortage of military strongholds.<sup>107</sup>

Augustus bet that he could achieve the same peace he created across the empire in individual war-torn provinces. He believed that he could pacify hostile tribes on the border and crush any internal revolts and attempts break free from the empire. He did this with the legions that he now had at his disposal and accomplished this through both defensive campaigns both on the borders and against revolts, while also expanding the borders of the empire to conquer neighboring tribes who could have possible threatened the frontiers, or just to create a more defensible border.

Augustus showed his desire to begin pacifying his provinces when he set out for Hispania soon after the settlement was agreed upon. Eck explains that “His journey was intended to demonstrate how seriously he took the responsibility that had been delegated to him for both provinces – namely to subdue areas in which lasting peace had still to be established.”<sup>108</sup>

Augustus expanded into the northwestern portion of the peninsula in an attempt to finally subdue the entire region. The settlement gave Augustus near complete control of the military, which he used to try to pacify the provinces he was allotted.

While Augustus received absolute control over these provinces to do what he wanted in terms of military campaigns, he did not receive permanent authority over them. This decision

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<sup>107</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, 17.3.25.

<sup>108</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 61.

highlighted the lack of monarchical gains for Augustus, but also to highlighted that he did not need an indefinite amount of time to pacify his provinces. Dio explains Augustus's decision,

And since Octavian wished even then to impress upon the Romans that his mode of government was far removed from monarchical rule, he undertook to limit his administration of the provinces assigned to him to a period of ten years. He promised that he would establish order there within that period, and added with a touch of boasting that, if they were pacified more quickly, he would return them all the sooner to the Senate.<sup>109</sup>

Had he accepted control over the provinces for his entire life, Augustus risked suffering the same fate as Julius Caesar, when he was proclaimed dictator for life. Instead, Augustus opted for periods of ten years, which, on the surface, looked like a temporary solution. However, after this initial ten-year period, his control was extended by five years, and then an additional five years, and so on. There was never any doubt when his control of the provinces ended, it would not be renewed. Dio notes each time that Augustus had his powers extended, each increment was met with the same pushback from Augustus, and then reluctant acceptance of power each time.<sup>110</sup>

While he promised to return any provinces which he completely pacified before his term ended, many of these provinces remained under the control of Augustus his entire reign. Only two provinces, Gallia Narbonensis and Cyprus, were returned in the first period of control, and he added Dalmatia to his provinces at the same time.<sup>111</sup> The inclusion of time frames also highlighted how Augustus did not believe that pacifying the provinces he controlled would be hard. Eck believes the ten-year period meant that Augustus thought these regions could be pacified, and turned into effective Roman provinces, in a relatively short amount of time.<sup>112</sup> The

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<sup>109</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.13.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 55.6.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 53.12.

<sup>112</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 71.

return of Gallia Narbonensis and Cyprus further highlighted this, even if they were the only two which were given back to the Senate to control. While trying to bring peace to the provinces was a noble idea, the practices Augustus used often were not very peaceful.

When Augustus sought to pacify his provinces, there was a difference between pacification and creating peace. Peace was an absence of war in his areas of control, where the military was a defensive force meant to dissuade any potential rebellion or invasion without having to use force. This is not what Augustus did. While in some areas he was purely protecting the frontiers and borders, in others he engaged in aggressive expansion.<sup>113</sup> While Augustus was battling for pacification, he was not fighting for the peace which he promised he was bringing to the empire, and instead bringing himself military achievement and glory through expansion.

The reorganization of the military and political systems of governing were significant parts of the Augustan military strategy. The military was changed from the old Republican system which had allowed individual generals to gain too much power and was instead modelled for the new empire. The military was reduced in size, making it more maneuverable, and was turned into a permanent standing army, which allowed it to be available at all times. A more mobile and permanent army made sure that Augustus was always ready for a potential threat, allowing him to better maintain peace within his empire. In addition to these reforms, Augustus also changed the leadership of the legions. He was made responsible for the payment of soldiers, making them loyal to him, and he also appointed the generals himself, making himself responsible for the careers of each commander, allowing him to dismiss any potential rebellious leaders. These changes created an army more loyal, reducing change for a rebellion. The

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<sup>113</sup> J.W. Rich, "War and Peace," 160.



Political Settlement of 27 BC also changed the political structure of the empire, dividing up the provinces into areas the Senate controlled and areas Augustus himself controlled. This gave Augustus control over much of the military, by allotting him provinces that needed pacification. He achieved this through the numerous military campaigns against hostile neighbors and potential rebels, which will be detailed soon. These changes to the political system and military demonstrated how Augustus changed the empire to become more peaceful, while also leading to unnecessary expansion.

### Military Campaigns



*Figure 4*

Through Augustus's military reforms, he created an army more loyal and capable for expansion and security than he had before. Augustus was prolific in his use of the army, waging hundreds of wars across the empire, expanding the empire to new areas. No other emperor

expanded the empire as much as Augustus had, and only Claudius and Trajan made notable territorial acquisitions in their reigns that compare to some of Augustus's acquisitions. Augustus himself boasted of his expansion, saying in the *Res Gestae*,

I increased the territory of every province of the Roman people that bordered on nations who were not subject to our authority. I pacified the provinces of Gaul and Spain and also Germany- all the area that Ocean encloses from Cadiz to the Elbe River. I also pacified the Alps from the area adjacent to the Adriatic Sea to the west of the Tuscan Sea, while waging no war against any nation without just cause.<sup>114</sup>

Augustus himself was proud to share that he was such a successful military commander, and his military accomplishments are mentioned the most in the *Res Gestae*. Augustus was proud to be a military commander, and it was central to his rule, whether it was for the purpose of expansion or security.

The first place Augustus travelled after receiving his new provincial command was Hispania in 19 BC. At this point, not all of Hispania, or modern-day Spain, was under complete Roman control, with the northwestern most area of the peninsula controlled by tribes hostile to the Romans, such as the Cantabri and Astures. While Augustus was not notable for his personal generalship, in this case he did lead his troops himself before he delegated leadership to Agrippa and other generals later. However, in this instance, Augustus decided to prove his devotion to his newfound command over the provinces, and personally lead a campaign against the hostile Spanish tribes.<sup>115</sup> Augustus felt it was politically advantageous to have done it himself, because

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Figure 4 – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Ancient World Mapping Center

<sup>114</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 26.

<sup>115</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 61

he would be proving to the people and the army his desire for peace. Dio chronicles Augustus's campaign against the Cantabri and the Astures. Dio said of this campaign,

Augustus opened hostilities against the Astures and the Cantabri simultaneously and led the campaign himself. However, these tribes would neither surrender, because they felt confidence in the strength of their mountain fastness, nor would they come to close quarters, since they were outnumbered by the Romans and most of their troops were javelin-throwers. Their tactics caused Augustus many difficulties... in this way they reduced the campaign to an impasse.<sup>116</sup>

The Cantabri, given their isolated location, proved to be a difficult target for Augustus, but he was determined to bring his peace to all of Hispania through conquest. Augustus's strategy was summarized by the Roman historian Florus, who says "He came to Segisama himself, positioned his camp and then, dividing his army into three sections, he encompassed the whole of Cantabria and surrounded the fierce people like wild beasts caught in a trap. Nor was there any respite on the side of the Ocean, since the fleet was attacking the enemy in the rear."<sup>117</sup> While Florus wrote long after Augustus's invasion, it is likely that his description of Augustus's campaign remains true in terms of strategy, even if the details cannot be confirmed. Augustus used his numbers to end the revolt, crushing it violently by making sure the rebels had nowhere to go besides trying to fight. Augustus proclaimed victory over the Cantabri in the coming months. However, given the scale of his campaigns against them, the peace he created came at the cost of many dead and a whole province involved in violence. Paterculus praised Augustus for this victory: "Such, then, were the provinces – provinces so widespread, so populous, and so wild – which some fifty years ago," he wrote. "Caesar Augustus brought to such a level of peace that, though never free from

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<sup>116</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.25.

<sup>117</sup> Florus, *Summary of Wars: Cantabrian and Asturian War*, trans. B. W. J. G. Wilson, from *The Age of Augustus*, ed. M.G.L. Cooley, The London Association of Classical Teachers, London, 2003, 2.33.48-53.

the most violent of wars, they remained free from even banditry”<sup>118</sup> Paterculus added more fuel to this praise by detailing how Hispania had destroyed many famous generals in the past, such as the Scipio family, but Augustus had been able to do what no other had.<sup>119</sup> After his success in Hispania, Augustus even closed the doors of the Temple of Janus, which had been opened after he set out to Hispania, demonstrating how he believed that he had brought peace to the Roman world.

However, despite this excessive praise and the proclaiming of peace across the empire, Hispania and the Cantabri and Astures would not be subdued. Dio makes this point, and mentions, “As soon as Augustus had quitted Spain, where he had left behind Lucius Aemilius as governor, the Cantabri and the Astures rose in rebellion...However, they did not rejoice for long, for their country was ravaged, some of their forts were burned...and so they were quickly subdued.”<sup>120</sup> While this rebellion was short lived, it showed that peace had not yet been brought to Hispania, as the closure of the Temple of Janus indicated. In fact, there were many notable rebellions from the Cantabri and Astures as the years continued. No matter how many times the Romans put them down and destroyed the tribes’ capabilities to fight, they continued to rebel. Dio noted that in the same year as the previous rebellion, “War again broke out with the Cantabri and Astures. The Astures rose in revolt because of the luxurious habits and cruelty practiced by Carisius [the Roman governor], and the Cantabri because they found out their neighbors had rebelled and because they despised their own governor.”<sup>121</sup> This rebellion was also quickly

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<sup>118</sup> Paterculus. *The Roman History*, 2.90.4.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 2.90.1-3.

<sup>120</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.29

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 54.5.

subdued, and the tribes were enslaved. This did not prove to be enough. Dio mentions how, a few years later, the Cantabri and the Astures had escaped their slavery and were once again planning to rebel and attack the Romans. To deal with them, Augustus sent Agrippa to lead the army that was already exhausted by constant war with the same tribes. Dio says,

Agrippa took the field against these rebels, but he also had to overcome some difficulties with his own troops... But in spite of this he suffered many reverses in his operations against the Cantabri. Not only had his opponents gained much practical experience through having been enslaved by the Romans, but they also had abandoned any hope that their lives would be spared if they were captured. However, in the end Agrippa prevailed.<sup>122</sup>

The constant warfare had exhausted the Romans, but in return it had given the Cantabri and Astures experiences which helped them prove even more formidable. With this victory Agrippa had his soldiers kill all men of military age and forcibly disarmed all of the others; yet at the same time, Agrippa claimed to establish peace.<sup>123</sup> He furthermore forced them to live on the plains, so they had less defensible positions and could contribute to society in the form of agriculture. While peace was established once again, however temporary it might have been, the peace came at a heavy price. The Cantabri and the Astures suffered greatly through their continued rebellions, losing their homes and all of their soldiers and weapons on many occasions, being enslaved, and in some cases having their hands cut off to prevent them from holding weapons.<sup>124</sup> In addition to this, even subsequent rebellion gave insight to these tribes on how to deal with the Romans, meaning that each time, despite there being fewer soldiers to fight, they were better trained and better able to deal with the legions. The Romans too experienced

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 54.11.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 54.11.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 54.11.

heavy losses each campaign due to ambushes, pitched battles, and sieges of mountain fortifications. The battle exhaustion was seen during Agrippa's campaign, where it took much convincing to get his troops to engage with the Cantabri and Astures once again. Augustus's conflicts in Hispania showed the flaws of using the military to achieve peace; while peace could be achieved for a short while, it only lasted until the tribes could build up enough strength to rebel again, or the Roman strength diminished to a point where a rebellion was possible.

While war was waged across Hispania, conflict raged elsewhere in the Roman Empire. The newly acquired province of Aegyptus was the site of notable conflict. Aegyptus was formally added to the empire by Augustus after Queen Cleopatra and Marc Antony committed suicide following their defeat at Actium in 31 BC. Aegyptus was a fabulously wealthy province, given its long and illustrious history, and also became essential because of the grain grown on the Nile River, which was used to feed Rome. Given its position near the eastern border with Parthia and that it was a newly established province, Aegyptus was placed under the command of Augustus in the Settlement of 27 BC. While in this case he was actually pacifying Aegyptus and setting up new Roman institutions in place of the old Egyptian and Ptolemaic ones, Augustus also encouraged expansion of the province with the legion stationed there. Of his three legates stationed in Aegyptus, Aelius Gallus was the one who fought purely for expansion.

Gallus's campaign in 26 BC was to strike out from Aegyptus and march into Arabia, subduing any peoples they came across. This campaign, however, was a failure and achieved no lasting effects. Dio tells the story of this campaign, writing, "At first Gallus's expedition could find no human being in sight, and yet their advance was by no means easy. His men suffered great hardship from the desert, the sun and the water, which contained some strange property, so

that the greater part of the army perished.”<sup>125</sup> Gallus’s army was not prepared for a march into the desert, or their battle with disease, which led to the army no longer being combat effective when the Arabians finally fought them. “In the midst of these hardships the barbarians also attacked them,” Dio writes, “But with the disease as their ally they recovered their territory and drove the survivors of the expedition out of their country. These were certainly the first of the Romans – and I believe the only ones, to penetrate so far into Arabia in order to make war.”<sup>126</sup> From this account of the campaign, it is clear that it was a tremendous failure both strategically and tactically. However, it was the first time that a Roman army had been in Arabia. Augustus, in his *Res Gestae*, does not mention that the campaign was a failure, and instead only tells how far the army went and claims that his troops won great victories. The *Res Gestae* says, “On my orders and under my auspices two armies were led on campaigns into Ethiopia and Arabia, which is called Eudaimon (blessed), virtually at the same time. Great enemy armies of both nations were cut down in battle, and a great many towns were captured... in Arabia the army penetrated all the way to the town of Mariba in the territory of the Sabaeans.”<sup>127</sup> Augustus represented the campaign as a success, purely because he was now able to claim that his armies had reached farther into Arabia than any other generals had. This meant that for Augustus the campaign into Arabia was purely for military glory, rather than trying to pacify Aegyptus or stabilize the region. J.W. Rich brings up the possibility that, given the proximity between Aegyptus and Arabia, this campaign could have served to make sure that there were no invasions

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 53.29.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 53.29.

<sup>127</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 26.

from the region by pacifying the frontier, but even he concedes that this is likely not the case.<sup>128</sup>

Another possible cause was the perceived wealth that was located in Arabia, as described by Strabo in his writings. He recalls how there were rumors of traders with vast amounts of gold and silver coming from the spice trade.<sup>129</sup> However, if this were entirely true, it would have made more sense for Augustus to have proved this rumor with traders or envoys rather than a full-scale military campaign into the region. Given this evidence, the campaign of Gallus was a failure that was instead marked as a victory by Augustus because it had never been done before and had nothing to do with establishing peace and stability in Aegyptus, but instead brought glory from its perceived accomplishments.

The other military campaign that was initiated from Aegyptus was an invasion of Ethiopia, which was located directly to the south of the province. This campaign was both more successful and connected to upholding peace in the area. The Ethiopians invaded Aegyptus in 22 BC, laying waste to the cities in their path until they heard that the Romans were marching out to meet them under the command of Publius Petronius. Dio describes this encounter, writing,

[The Ethiopians] withdrew, hoping that they could get away before he arrived. But they were overtaken by Petronius on the road and defeated, and so, falling back before him, they drew him up into their own territory. He proceeded to lead a successful campaign there and captured several cities, including their capital, Napata. This place was razed to the ground and a garrison established elsewhere in the territory.<sup>130</sup>

In response to the invasion, the Roman forces not only beat back the Ethiopians, but also invaded their country, destroyed their capital, and then established a permanent base there. Augustus, just

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<sup>128</sup> Rich, "War and Peace," 156.

<sup>129</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, 16.4.22.

<sup>130</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.5.



as on his campaign in Arabia, proclaimed a victory over the Ethiopians.<sup>131</sup> Rich argues that this victory also led to a more stable and lasting agreement between the two sides, stopping future conflicts in the region.<sup>132</sup> The campaign into Ethiopia aligns with Augustus's desire for peace. His agents successfully beat back an attempted invasion, and through their offensive into the Ethiopian homeland, created a more stable southern frontier in Aegyptus. However, the settlement between the two sides still was not a peaceful agreement and came as result of Roman domination over the Ethiopian army and the destruction of its capital. While Augustus achieved his goal of bringing peace to Aegyptus through the campaign against Aegyptus, his method to achieve this peace was anything but peaceful.

While there was an end to the conflict around Aegyptus, a place where Augustus did not have the luxury of a lasting peace was in the provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia. These provinces were located to the east of Italy on the Adriatic coast (see Figure 4 above). Both had a similar relationship to Rome as northwest Hispania: constant wars were fought to subdue the tribes in these regions. Pannonia was placed under Augustus's control following the Settlement of 27 BC, while Dalmatia was given to the Senate and the people. This quickly changed, and Dalmatia was placed under Augustus's auspices because the province was prone to revolts, and more importantly, rebellions from Pannonia would spread into Dalmatia.<sup>133</sup> Augustus's relationship with war in Pannonia and Dalmatia began in the civil wars against Antony. Paterculus describes these engagements in detail. "To prevent inactivity – military discipline's greatest enemy – from doing harm to his men," Paterculus writes, insisting that, "Caesar in the

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<sup>131</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 26.

<sup>132</sup> Rich, "War and Peace," 156.

<sup>133</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.11

meantime mounted frequent operations in Illyricum and Dalmatia, toughening up his army by exposing them to danger and giving them experience in combat.”<sup>134</sup> Paterculus insisted that Augustus had engaged in conflicts in Dalmatia, not out of any necessity, but to simply train his armies to become battle hardened, and prevent them from becoming weakened by a lack of fighting. This idea would be important later on, during a massive revolt in Pannonia. However, before then, there would be a series of wars and rebellions fought in Pannonia.

The Pannonian Wars, which continued from 35 BC to 9 AD sporadically, were fought most prominently under Tiberius, who arrived there to suppress revolts in Pannonia and Dalmatia following the death of Agrippa, who had initially subdued many of the tribes in these provinces.<sup>135</sup> Dio describes the initial crushing of the rebellion, saying, “It was not until he had devastated much of their country and caused great suffering to the people that Tiberius finally overcame them...He disarmed the rebels, sold most of the men of military age into slavery and deported them from their homeland.”<sup>136</sup> From this account, Tiberius not only violently shut down the rebellion, but did his best to try and stop any future rebellion by removing all of the men who could fight. This was similar to some of the actions taken in Hispania, but in both places this destruction of land and people did not work as desired. Dio mentions two more revolts in Pannonia and Dalmatia, both of which occurred as soon as Tiberius and his armies left. This proved the fickle nature of the peace that Augustus was trying to achieve there. It was on the third revolt that Augustus was given complete autonomy over Dalmatia. Eck describes the possible motive for Augustus’s involvement with the rebellious Pannonian tribes: “In both cases

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<sup>134</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.78.2.

<sup>135</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.31.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 53.11.

the campaigns may have been prompted by the fact that the traditional homelands of these tribes straddled the frontier of the empire. The unsubdued groups just beyond the frontier represented a continuing potential of unrest for the border provinces, and the Roman aim was probably to prevent uprisings before they could occur.”<sup>137</sup> Eck insists that by waging preemptive wars on the tribes of the frontiers in Dalmatia and Pannonia, Augustus sought to stop any future rebellions and invasions of the frontiers by these tribes while they were moving across their tribal homelands. Aside from this mindset being a failure because rebellions continued to occur, Augustus gave these tribes reason to fight. Augustus created wars that did not need to be fought, and instead incited multiple rebellions and created a great deal of instability in these two provinces. However, these small rebellions and wars paled in comparison to the revolt that occurred in 6 AD.

While Tiberius was marching on a campaign in Germania, or modern-day Germany, much of the military’s focus and resources were alongside him. This led to a weakening of the armies stationed in Pannonia and the mustering of a volunteer force to assist the invasion. This small event led to the greatest rebellion to occur in Pannonia. Dio describes how the situation in Pannonia had been tense over a dispute in paying tribute. Tensions reached a boiling point when the Pannonians were mustering men to be sent with Tiberius to Germania:

When they mobilized of this purpose and saw what a fine body of men of military age they could muster, they waited no longer. A certain Bato...urged them to take up arms. At first a small number responded and defeated the Romans who marched against them and following this success the rest of the people joined the rebellion.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 129.

<sup>138</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.29.

Over the coming months, this small rebellion enveloped not only all of the tribes of Pannonia, lured by victory, but also the tribes of Dalmatia. The threat was so great that Augustus was worried that the Pannonian rebels could march on Italy and reach Rome in only ten days. Eck describes the situation in Rome, saying, “The challenge to Roman authority appeared to be so dangerous that Augustus posted guards in the capital itself. New auxiliary units were formed, slaves were called up, and their owners required to free them for military service. Conscription of citizens was ordered as well, even in Rome itself, although this had not been common for a long time.”<sup>139</sup> Tiberius was recalled from Germania to deal with this threat that lasted for three bloody years.

Both sides won great victories over each other, but eventually Tiberius’s forces overcame the Pannonians and Dalmatians. The tribes continued to fight on however, even as they were ravaged by heavy losses and disease, fearing that there was no option for peace. The remaining rebels were eventually confined to a mountain stronghold and tried to seek peace with the Romans. Tiberius had other plans. Dio describes Tiberius’s thoughts, saying, “Tiberius now felt contemptuous of the force which still remained in the stronghold. He believed that he could overcome them without incurring many casualties, and disregarding the difficulties of the terrain, he made a frontal advance on the fortress.”<sup>140</sup> Ignoring the possibility of peace, Tiberius tried to take the stronghold in battle, putting both his men and the tribesmen in needless danger. The following battle waged a heavy price on both sides, but Tiberius once again emerged victorious. Dio describes the aftermath of the battle, explaining,

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<sup>139</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 133.

<sup>140</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.13.

Through his maneuver the enemy were routed and could not even withdraw into the fortress; they had thrown off their armor so as to be unhampered by its weight and were scattered all over the mountain side. Their pursuers followed them everywhere, for they were determined to finish the war once and for all, and had no wish that their enemies should regroup and offer fresh resistance. They discovered most of them hiding in the woods and slaughtered them like wild beasts, after which they made prisoners of the men in the fortress who had surrendered.<sup>141</sup>

This was the end of the Pannonian Revolt. This final battle was unnecessary. The Pannonians, in no shape to fight, were butchered by the Romans, who believed that by slaughtering all who opposed them in this battle they could finally bring peace to the region after three years of war. The rebels had already given up, but Tiberius sought one last battle for glory. This goes against the praises which Paterculus offered Tiberius following his victory. Paterculus wrote that,

I was able to see nothing in this extensive war, nothing in Germany, more important or more admirable than the following. No opportunity to win a victory ever seemed to our commander favorable enough if he had a pay for it with a serious loss of men and the course that always seemed to him to have the greatest glory was the one which was safest. He paid more attention to his conscience than his reputation...<sup>142</sup>

In this final battle, Tiberius did not express this reserve on the battlefield. He was seeking only glory, not fighting to save the lives of his men, or even to bring a peaceful resolution. He risked his men's lives fighting a heavily fortified position for no purpose. The *Res Gestae* has a similar message of glory. In it, Augustus wrote, "I subjected to the rule of the Roman people the nations of Pannonia, whom no Roman army had ever engaged before I became princeps. Tiberius Caesar, at the time my son-in-law and lieutenant, carried out the campaign and defeated them, and with this victory I extended the boundaries of Illyricum to the banks of the Danube."<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 56.14.

<sup>142</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.115.5.

<sup>143</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 30.

Augustus too is more focused on his own accomplishments in Pannonia, these being extending the borders and also being the first general to have fought them. These two boasts show no inclination to favoring creating peace in the region, but instead military success.

The rebellions and the wars in Pannonia and Dalmatia are significant when looking at peace in the Augustan Age. To begin, the rebellions were largely created by Roman involvement in the region, making a problem that may not have existed had they not began a violent conquest on the frontiers. Dio exemplifies this in the final conversation between Tiberius and Bato, one of the leaders of the Pannonian Revolt. Dio points out that, “Finally, when Tiberius asked him why his people had thought it right to rebel and to carry on the war against the Romans for so long, he replied, ‘It is you Romans who are to blame for this. We are your flocks, yet you do not send dogs or shepherds to guard us, but wolves.’”<sup>144</sup> Bato blames the Roman military involvement, describing them as wolves, for having created the rebellion through their harsh treatment of the tribes, which relates back to the treatment of rebels following the previous revolts. Peace itself could also have had a role in creating the rebellions. Dio’s account on the revolt blames the Romans having moved their troops from the region, thinking that it was safe there due to how they had suppressed the revolts beforehand. Mustering troops also showed that the Romans trusted them enough to fight alongside them in Germania. These misconceptions gave the Pannonians a chance to catch the Romans in a weakened state and rebel, which they ultimately chose to do. Paterculus in his account of the war blamed the peace in Pannonia itself. Paterculus insists, “But then the whole of Pannonia, which advantages of a lasting peace had rendered arrogant and which was now at the height of its power, took up arms together, after inducing

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<sup>144</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.16.

Dalmatia and all of the peoples of that area to support its plan.”<sup>145</sup> Paterculus believes that the peace that was created there had emboldened the Pannonians, because the Romans were confident their peace would continue indefinitely. This weakened them, because not only were they willing to move their armies away, but they were also losing the experience of battle, which would leave them less prepared to fight off a potential surprise attack and rebellion. This is notable because peace was one of the goals of Augustus, and one of his biggest supporters is blaming his peace for this violent conflict, which could have threatened Rome itself. However, Dalmatia and Pannonia would eventually be subdued, and peace existed here, because there was nobody left to fight and resist the Romans. Even so, Augustus continued to maintain control over these two provinces, just as he did in Hispania, just in case a future rebellion was to occur.

Augustan expansion occurred even closer to Italy, in the Alps, where Augustus expanded the provinces of Noricum and Rhaetia (see Figure 4 above) through wars with the Rhaeti and Vindelici tribes around 15 BC, which previously had been free of Roman control. There were occasional invasions by these tribes during the early years of Augustus’s reign, but as time passed, these incursions grew too large to be left unpunished. The most significant war against these two tribes was fought by Tiberius and Drusus working in tandem. The war here was prompted by an invasion of Roman territory by these hostile tribes. Dio explains that these tribes “Were overrunning a large area of Gaul to the west of their frontier and carrying off plunder even from Italy. They were also harassing any Roman citizens and allies of Rome who travelled through their country.”<sup>146</sup> Augustus, angered by the continued resistance and disturbances in the

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<sup>145</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.110.2.

<sup>146</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.22.

areas around the Alps, used his two stepsons to end the problem once and for all through conquest.

Tiberius and Drusus's war against these Alpine tribes was very successful. Dio states in his account,

Both commanders then invaded Rhaetia from several directions simultaneously; they led the offensive both in person and through their subordinates, and Tiberius even sailed across the lake. In this way by attacking in separate columns they struck terror into the enemy, and not only easily overcame all those they encountered from time to time in hand-to-hand combat – since the barbarians were fighting with scattered forces – but also captured the rest, who for this reason resisted less strongly and lost their martial spirit.<sup>147</sup>

By conducting two simultaneous campaigns, Tiberius and Drusus destroyed all resistance from these tribes, and added them to the empire. Tiberius and Drusus did not just add the Rhaetians to the empire, however. Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* describes a monument with the following inscription in the Alps,

To Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the Deified, Pontifex Maximus, hailed as victorious general 14 times, in his 17th year of tribunician power, the Senate and People of Rome (set up this monument) in commemoration of the fact that by his leadership and under his auspices all the tribes of the Alps stretching from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean were brought under the power of the Roman people.<sup>148</sup>

The monument continued on with all of the names of the conquered tribes, naming forty-eight different tribes. This demonstrates how widespread the conquest of this region of the Alps was, adding a considerable number of people to the Roman realm. Augustus's rationale behind the conquest of these tribes did fit in with his goals. These tribes threatened the peace and security of

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 54.22.

<sup>148</sup> Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Natural History*, trans. B. W. J. G. Wilson, from *The Age of Augustus*, ed. M.G.L. Cooley, The London Association of Classical Teachers, London, 2003, 3.136-138.



the regions around the Alps with their constant invasions and attacks, making their subjugation a necessary deed in Augustus's eyes. While the ultimate goal was in line, a violent conquest of these tribes, not all of whom had been violent to the Romans, clashes with the peaceful narrative Augustus promoted.

We can see common themes when analyzing the notable areas of Augustus's military activity. Augustus's rationale for his military involvement was often on the surface based on defense. He invaded frontiers that could have posed a threat or were controlled by hostile tribes. He also fought many wars to try to stabilize areas which were rebelling against him, violently crushing open resistance to reinstate stability and Roman authority. At the same time however, as I have shown, many of these campaigns were simply for glory and conquest. An example of this was Augustus's campaigns in Africa, which mainly focused on military glory gained through expanding to new areas. There was also nothing peaceful about the reaction to revolts in areas like Hispania and Pannonia. People in these regions continued to rise up against Roman control, and each time they were violently suppressed. Nothing was done to try and change the style of leadership, to potentially stop a revolt from occurring due to cruel treatment, but instead these problems were dealt with as they came up with the sword. It is for these reasons that the military campaigns demonstrate how the *Pax Augusta* was not peaceful, and was instead focused on military glory and control, resulting in the deaths of many.

### **The Role of Teutoburg**

The most notable region that saw extensive Augustan military engagement was Germania. The legions stationed along the Rhine River, facing the opposing German tribes, saw the most action of any legions in terms of the scale of their campaigns. While these campaigns sometimes led to marvelous victories, they often led to bitter defeats, as was the case of the

Battle of Teutoburg Forest, one of the worst defeats in the entirety of Roman history. Despite this massive set back, this did not erase all of the experience Augustus's legions gained through constant warfare. When looking at the campaigns of Germania and the corresponding failure at Teutoburg, it is clear that in Germania there was no peace. Campaigns began nearly every year, and rebellions there and in the neighboring regions were common. Additionally, any peace signed between the Germanic tribes and the Romans was often short, and barely honored by either side.

Augustus's early campaigns in Germania, beginning soon after he was in control of Rome, were often punitive measures against certain tribes. His generals crossed the Rhine to assault tribes who had murdered Roman traders and citizens passing through the area. One of these instances was notable for the victories the German tribes had. The tribes of the Sugambri, Usipetes, and Tencteri had crucified a number of Romans, and then crossed the Rhine to plunder Gaul. In this journey, they ran into and surprised the governor of the province, Marcus Lollius. Lollius suffered heavy losses from the fighting, and even lost one of his eagle standards, a great embarrassment for a Roman army.<sup>149</sup> Upon hearing this news, Augustus marched out to force the Germans back across the river. However, no fight awaited him. Dio spoke of this event, mentioning, "For the barbarians, on discovering that Lollius was preparing an expedition and that Augustus was also taking the field, withdrew into their own territory, made peace and gave hostages."<sup>150</sup> The Germans, despite their victory, fled without pushing their luck against a more prepared force or the might of Augustus himself. A peace was established and both sides tried to make sure that this would not happen again. This peace did not last however, not just because the

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<sup>149</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 128.

<sup>150</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.20.

Germans were unwilling to keep peace for long, but also because Augustus was unwilling to let the Germans get away unpunished, and campaigns continued across the Rhine against those same tribes the very next season.

Augustus was not the only man of the imperial family campaigning in Germania. His stepsons Drusus and Tiberius also campaigned there frequently. Drusus briefly led these legions first, but after his death in 9 BC from sickness, leadership was delegated to Tiberius, who experienced significant success fighting the Germanic tribes. Tiberius campaigned in Germania for many years, often alternating between Germania and Pannonia. Paterculus and Dio both recounted the many accomplishments of Drusus and Tiberius during his wars. Paterculus noted that in Tiberius's first campaign, after receiving his command from the death of Drusus, that, "He conducted the campaign with his usual courage and good fortune, and he made his way through all parts of Germany with no serious losses to the army that had been entrusted to him something that was always of particular concern to this commander. He subjugated the country to the point of almost reducing it to the level of a tribute paying province."<sup>151</sup> Paterculus glorifies Roman accomplishments, praising the military success and destruction of these tribes. Reducing Germania to a tribute-paying province was Augustus's goal was with his program of pacification, signifying a province was at peace and accepted Roman domination. Dio recounts a victory for Drusus against an invading tribe, explaining, "Next he crossed the river, entered the territory of the Usipetes, passed along the island of Batavi and from there marched southward parallel with the Rhine to the territory of the Sugambri, most of which he laid waste."<sup>152</sup> While Dio does not praise Drusus as Paterculus praised Tiberius, his recounting of Drusus's long

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<sup>151</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.97.4.

<sup>152</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.32.

campaign was notable given its scope. Crossing the Rhine and laying waste to the lands he passed was a considerable achievement. These accounts of these victories show how the Romans represented their military success against a bitter enemy.

While military campaigns were numerous, the Romans did often make peace agreements with the tribes. This occurred either out of fear of repercussions from the German tribes, or from the Roman military being needed elsewhere, not from a legitimate desire for lasting peace. Dio writes, that before one of Tiberius's campaigns, the Germans were so afraid of Tiberius due to his recent success, that they immediately sued for peace before any battles were fought.<sup>153</sup> In another instance, the German tribes once again came to the Romans seeking peace during one of Tiberius's campaigns. This came despite the Germans breaking a similar agreement earlier, which brought Tiberius there in the first place. The Romans only accepted this peace, which they knew would not last, because of the major disturbance in Pannonia and Dalmatia.<sup>154</sup> While an effort was sometimes made for peace here, clearly neither side actually wanted peace. Germanic tribes only sought peace out of survival and would often break the agreement as soon as they were able. The Romans also did not want a lasting peace here because the prospect of a victorious campaign in Germania was too great. Zoe Tan summed up the Roman desire for war in Germania, stating, "Moreover, during the course of the first century C.E. the idea of Germania became central to the military virtue of the emperors... Germania, more than any other region, was presented as the personal battleground of emperors, an enduring locus of imperial

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 55.6.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 55.28.

victory.”<sup>155</sup> Success in Germania became essential to a successful rule for an emperor, by beating back one of Rome’s fiercest enemies in a successful campaign across the Rhine. This was no different for Augustus, who pioneered this ideal with his success, which any future leaders had to measure up to.

Even with the amount of success Augustus earned in Germania, there was little lasting victory besides on the battlefield, which was one of the main ideas in Tacitus’s *Germania*, an ethnography on the Germanic tribes. Tacitus writes on the Romans’ many campaigns against the Germans and offered a bleak conclusion. Tacitus stated that in the course of Roman involvement in Germania, “Neither the Samnites nor the Carthaginians, neither Hispania nor Gaul, not even the Parthians have taught us more painful lessons. The freedom of Germania is a deadlier enemy than the despotism of Arsaces. After all, with what has the East to taunt us except the slaughter of Crassus?”<sup>156</sup> Tacitus suggests that no other enemy taught the Romans about loss more than the German tribes. Parthia, one of Rome’s mightiest enemies, did not measure up to the humble tribes. The freedom of the Germans, compared to the authority of Roman rule, was too strong to conquer. Tacitus continued,

But the Germani routed or captured Carbo, Cassius, Scaurus Aurelius, Servilius Caepio and Mallius Maximus, robbing the Roman people at almost a single stroke of five consular armies, even from Caesar they stole Varus and his three legions. Nor was it without painful loss that C. Marius smote the Germani in Italy, that Divus Julius smote them in Gaul, that Drusus, Nero, and Germanicus smote them in their own lands. But then the vast threats of Gaius Caesar ended in farce.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Zoe M. Tan, "Subversive Geography in Tacitus' "Germania"", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 104 (2014): 181-204, Accessed August 19, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43286871>, 183.

<sup>156</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 37.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

Tacitus outlines the many defeats the Romans have suffered at the hands of the German armies. He also states that each victory the Romans had was still a loss for the Romans in terms of the heavy fighting and Roman lives lost. This counters what Dio and Paterculus mention in their accounts of German campaigns, where they offer praise to the considerable achievements that Augustus and his generals experienced. Tacitus finished off this section, proclaiming, “After that ensued a peace, until the Germani took advantage of our dissensions and civil wars to storm the headquarters of the legions and claim possession of Gaul. Driven back once more, they have in recent times supplied us more with triumphs than with victories.”<sup>158</sup> The idea of the Germans offering the Romans more triumphs than victories is a poignant one. Triumphs were celebrated for victories over a foreign enemy, but Tacitus is instead offering that these triumphs, while they were for victories, were hollow due to a lack of any lasting success achieved in Germania. This shallow success is demonstrated by the setbacks Tacitus mentions in the time of peace. He believes that the peace in Germania led to these setbacks described. This is a similar idea that was expressed by Paterculus after the Pannonian Revolt, where peace hurt the Romans but gave time for the enemy to grow in strength. While peace was the ultimate goal Augustus set for himself, it appeared to be working against him. This was especially present in the Teutoburg disaster, where peace was once again cited as a cause for the misfortunes of the Romans.

In 9 A.D., word reached Rome of an unprecedented disaster which had befallen Quintilius Varus and his three legions in the Teutoburg Forest in Germania. The disaster began with Varus falling for Arminius’s deception. Arminius was a German commander of an auxiliary unit in the Roman army, making him a Roman citizen, and his loyalty was trusted by Varus and

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 37.

his other commanders<sup>159</sup> This misplaced trust led to Varus's downfall. Dio describes the plot by Arminius to lure Varus and his three legions, as well as his auxiliary units, deep into hostile territory. Dio explained,

Then an uprising broke out, the first to rebel being those peoples who lived at some distance from him. This had been deliberately contrived to entice Varus to march against them, so that he could be more easily be overwhelmed while he was crossing what he imagined to be friendly territory, instead of putting himself on his guard, as he would do in the event of the whole country taking up arms against him simultaneously.<sup>160</sup>

Varus believed that he was both marching out to quell a rebellion with friendly forces and also marching through friendly territory. While Varus marched, his German allies began to depart, and secretly took command of their tribal armies hiding out in the forests and planned an ambush.<sup>161</sup> According to Dio, the Romans were unaware and in no position to fight back. Before the fighting started, Dio recorded, "They had with them many wagons and pack animals, as they would for a journey during peace-time; they were even accompanied by women and children and a large number of servants, all these being factors which caused them to advance in scattered groups."<sup>162</sup> The Romans felt too safe, and were marching as if they had nothing to worry about as they continued farther from safety. When the Germans began their ambush, which lasted for days, the Romans offered little resistance.

When the first wave of attacks hit, the Romans were unorganized and unable to mount any effective counterattack due to the lack of an organized fighting front. Instead, the troops

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<sup>159</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 133-134.

<sup>160</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.19.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 56.19.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 56.20.

were organized into scattered groups around wagons. This continued, and even the weather began to fight the Romans, with horrible rainstorms further hindering their efforts to escape. Dio described the final days for these legions, listing the conditions in which Varus and their other commanding officers ended their own lives to save themselves from a bitter end.<sup>163</sup> Following these suicides, Roman morale and resistance was broken, and they gave up fighting. Paterculus ends his summary of the slaughter, proclaiming, “Bottled up in forests, marshes, and the German ambush, the army was butchered like cattle to the point of extermination by an enemy it had always dealt with in such a matter that it was Roman anger or clemency that decided whether they lived or died.”<sup>164</sup> Three entire legions were slaughtered, leaving both Germania and Gaul in serious danger of a reprisal by these German enemies, who could march into Roman territory with less resistance. They did not do this however, both out of a failure to retake all the Roman garrisons on their side of the Rhine, which was described by Dio,<sup>165</sup> or because they could not reach an agreement on how to proceed next, which was theorized by Eck.<sup>166</sup>

Following the news, Rome panicked. Saddened by the loss of three of his legions, Suetonius describes Augustus’s reaction in the palace. He notes, “Indeed, it is said he was so disturbed for months at a time he would let his beard and hair grow and would hit his head against the door, shouting ‘Quintilius Varus give me back my legions!’ And for years he marked the anniversary of the disaster as a day of mourning and sadness.”<sup>167</sup> While this could have been

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 56. 21-22.

<sup>164</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.119.2.

<sup>165</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.22.

<sup>166</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 135.

<sup>167</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.23.



an exaggeration, Augustus's reaction is worth noting because it shows how devastating this loss truly was. Fearing an invasion that did not come, Augustus forced the men in Rome to draw lots for conscription, because there was not enough fighting men in the city.<sup>168</sup> Tiberius was also dispatched to Germania, to begin a campaign against the Germans who had betrayed and slaughtered Varus. Paterculus explains,

He was sent to Germany; he secured the Gallic provinces; he made troop deployments; he strengthened garrisons; and, judging his prospects in the light of his own greatness rather than the confidence of the enemy...He pushed into the interior; he opened up roads; he laid waste to the countryside; he burned houses; he drove off any who faced him; and, attended by the greatest glory, he returned to winter quarters with no loss incurred by any of the troops whom he had led across the river.<sup>169</sup>

Tiberius, while he was not able to avenge Varus, launched a successful campaign into Germania. Tiberius did not seek to punish these tribes however and instead sought glory through the guise of vengeance. His treatment of those he encountered was not better than the Germans had given Varus's legions. While Varus received no peace, Tiberius made sure that the Germans received none either.

Who was to blame for this tragedy? Blame fell upon Varus, given that his actions led to his demise with his legions. This was because Varus treated the situation of Germania as if the province had already been pacified. What this means is that Varus treated the Germans as if they were Roman subjects, rather than Germans against whom he needed to be vigilant. Eck explains this idea, "Later the Romans accused Varus of having provoked the revolt on his own behavior; he had treated Germania like a province, they said, exacting tribute and administering justice.

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<sup>168</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.23.

<sup>169</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.120.6-7.

Varus was certainly entitled to do so, however, for at that time Germania indeed had the status of a province within the Roman empire.”<sup>170</sup> Paterculus has a very similar critique of Varus, blaming him for the disaster because he was acting as if he was living in a peaceful environment.

Paterculus describes,

When he was in charge of the army stationed in Germany, he imagined that its inhabitants possessed no human characteristics beyond speech and human limbs, and that while they could not be subdued by the sword they could be pacified by law. With this as his goal, he passed into the center of Germany as if he were travelling among people delighting in the pleasures of peace, and he dragged out the campaigning season with court proceedings and well-regulated judicial processes at his tribunal.<sup>171</sup>

The criticism of treating Germania as though it was at peace is notable because Varus was acting as a governor, rather than a military leader. Augustus’s goal, at least in name, was to pacify Germania and to treat it like a regular province, rather than a battlefield. While he was wrong, Varus believed that this was his job in Germania, to pacify the region through rule of law rather than by conquest and expansion. Just as was the case in Pannonia, peace was blamed for Varus’s ignorance, and by extension the disaster at Teutoburg. By this thinking, Augustus’s peace led to his greatest loss.

The Teutoburg Disaster was the worst defeat under Augustus. Suetonius’s only mention of this battle is Augustus’s reaction, and to say that this was only one of two losses Augustus received in Germania.<sup>172</sup> Tacitus does not even describe what happened at Teutoburg when discussing Augustus’s reign besides naming the event.<sup>173</sup> He instead leaves his description for

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<sup>170</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 134.

<sup>171</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.117.3-4.

<sup>172</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.23.

<sup>173</sup> Tacitus, *The Annals*, 1.3.

later when he speaks about the wars in Germania during Tiberius's reign. Paterculus does not go into gruesome detail on the battle either, except to launch attacks on Varus and a quick summary.<sup>174</sup> Dio, who wrote much later, gave the most detailed account of the battle. The three writers closest to Augustus's life were unwilling to describe it, because of the connotations that came with it. This disaster showed where Augustus's policies of peace were failing. Augustus made countless campaigns in Germania and across the empire, seeking military glory in the guise of peace, but at Teutoburg he earned none of this. In all those campaigns, Augustus still could not pacify Germania, and they were actually beating him back in a significant way. This was the biggest failure in his policy. After his death, Augustus reflected this in a letter he wrote to be read after he passed. In this letter, he wrote that future emperors should be wary of expansion, out of fear of that a similar disaster could happen to a future leader.<sup>175</sup> According to Dio, Augustus stated "He gave it as his view that they should be satisfied with the possessions they now held, and should in no way seek to enlarge the empire beyond its present limits. It would become difficult to defend, he told them, and for this reason they would risk losing what was already theirs. This was the principle which he had in fact always observed himself."<sup>176</sup> While this message against expansion seems peaceful, it was only to protect the Roman state and its leaders from embarrassing setbacks, not out of a legitimate desire for peace in the Roman world.

Germania was where Augustus's military was the most active. Augustus and his auspices undertook many campaigns to expand Roman territory into German lands, winning and losing

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<sup>174</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.117-119.

<sup>175</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.33.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 56.33.

battles along the way. Little lasting success was made in Germania besides battlefield success. Beyond the Rhine, where many generals campaigned, remained mostly in German hands. Peace agreements were often made, but these often had no lasting effects, and neither the Romans nor Germans desired this to be so. The Germans sought peace to give them time to regroup, while the Romans sought peace when it was convenient. Neither side thought these agreements would last, because both sides desired to win glory over the other on the battlefield. The Roman defeat in Teutoburg Forest was the most notable battle to come from the German theater of war. Here, the Roman general Varus, tricked by a German chieftain, was led to slaughter with his entire army. Through his actions, Varus showed that he believed he could bring peace to Germania through a more moderate government, and it was this peace that resulted in his downfall. The most important consequence that came from this defeat was Augustus's warning to future emperors. He told them that it was best for the Roman state to stop expanding, and instead focus on its current boundaries. While this was generally followed by subsequent emperors, Augustus issued this not out of a desire for his successors to rule more peacefully, but instead because he feared that they would suffer defeats and hurt Roman military pride. The German campaign demonstrated how Augustus's peaceful intentions did not always work.

### **Conclusion**

When considering the military involvement of the Augustan Age, it is clear that, despite how much Augustus publicly praised peace, it was not always his goal. The reorganization of the military created an army more capable of maintaining internal stability, both through removing avenues to civil war and being able to respond quickly to threats, but it was also an army more effective in waging war. The reorganization of the political structure into a division between Senatorial and Augustan provinces seemed to be aimed at fostering peace and stability, but this

came through forced pacification. Creating internal stability often meant expansion into neighboring areas to create a more defensible border and crushing any internal rebellions. This, while in the name of peace, was not a peaceful action. Similarly, the role of military campaigns was to accomplish this pacification. Areas like Hispania and Pannonia had near constant rebellions, exemplifying that no matter how hard the Romans tried, some areas were not going to submit willingly to Roman authority and the peace associated with it. This meant violent conquests, which left these areas devastated. The largest Pannonian revolt was arguably exacerbated by a lasting peace in the province, giving the Pannonian rebels time to build up strength, while the Romans thought they were enjoying an era of peace. This shows the shortcomings of peace in regions that did not want Roman control, because while fighting could have been over for a time, without a lasting peace nothing would change. The German campaigns were no exception, with constant fighting a lasting peace was not established. Small periods of peace were agreed upon, but these did not last due to the Roman desire for military glory at the expense of the German tribes. The Battle of Teutoburg Forest was an example of peace failing. The governor Varus thought peace had been established in Germania, and he began to govern the province not as a battleground, but as a Roman province. This peace was a deception by the Germans, feigning friendship to weaken the Romans and lead them to a trap, where Varus and his three legions were slaughtered deep in the Teutoburg woods. This setback was the biggest defeat in the Augustan Age, and it can be argued that it was because of the peaceful policies that Augustus favored. Following this disaster, Augustus, on his deathbed, encouraged future emperors, and his successors, to avoid expansion and instead focus on governing the current borders of Rome. While this looks like one final wish for peace, it was actually out of a fear for other emperors. Augustus did not want these future generals to suffer

similar losses and hurt Roman prestige, which he had worked to build up. When considering all of these factors, the military factor of the *Pax Augusta* was heavily ingrained in Roman society and Augustus's desire for peace. Despite peace being the advertised aim, there was very little peace accomplished by the military, and instead its goals were focused on expansion and military glory. The peace was usually accompanied by a violent struggle beforehand, which goes against the very idea of peace as we know it. While peace was present in Augustus's plans, there was no peace when he got the military involved.

### Chapter 3: The Role of Succession

#### Introduction:

Augustus had witnessed the problems that plagued the Roman Republic before it collapsed. Multiple men each tried to secure sole power over the state and Augustus had done this himself, being the only one who was successful. However, experiencing how devastating this was, he wanted to prevent it from happening again. This went along with his goal of creating and preserving the *Pax Augusta* by preventing the state from falling into civil war and chaos if something were to happen to him, with different men each trying to fill the power vacuum. This was especially important considering Augustus's poor health. Agrippa had been Augustus's right-hand man during and after the civil war and functioned as his successor initially. However, Augustus favored his nephew Marcellus, due to his close relationship with Augustus, but he died in 23 BC. Augustus then favored Agrippa once again as a potential successor, but he soon died in 12 BC. Augustus now had to elevate the careers of other members of his family who did not have the same popularity Agrippa had from the civil wars, or Marcellus had from his close relationship with Augustus. To do this, Augustus used primarily the military. Triumphs became a new tool to boost the popularity of members of the imperial family, and most importantly the popularity of the successors. Tiberius and Drusus were the first two men of Augustus's family to function as successors and waged many wars across the empire to grow their fame as military commanders. Eventually, Gaius and Lucius were poised to do the same, receiving proper training to make sure that they would succeed on the battlefield before their untimely deaths prevented them from doing so. Tiberius replaced them as Augustus's sole successor and continued his military success. Through all of these successors, there was a clear increase in the importance of the military and military success in growing their popularity, and therefore setting them up to be

popular enough to accomplish Augustus's wish of preventing a civil war following his death. However, this came at the expense of maintaining the *Pax Augusta* in the empire, with military success supplanting the importance of peace.

### **Triumphs**

During the Republic, triumphs were an important ceremony for military commanders returning from victory on military campaign. In a triumph, a commander could display to the public all he had accomplished and endear himself to them as a competent military man, and possibly set himself up for a political career. Cooley describes Republican era triumphs:

Its award [a triumph], properly by decree of the senate and vote of the people was the height of a Roman's ambition. Many examples can be cited of its lure affecting military objectives and the governing of provinces; and of the awarding of a triumph being a matter of political intrigue. Under the late Republic and triumvirate, triumphs proliferated (14 between 43 and 33 BC).<sup>177</sup>

However, during the reign of Augustus, there were changes in this ceremony, and by 19 BC triumphs were only celebrated by members of the imperial family, rather than by any victorious general. This highlights how Augustus wanted to use triumphs as a method to endear his family, and his successors, to the public by giving a massive public spectacle highlighting their military capabilities and victories. When looking at the role of triumphs in Augustus's plan for succession, it is clear that he saw military success and more important than peacekeeping. By connecting his successors to military victory, Augustus left no room for them to seek peace anywhere, but his successors instead prioritized achieving success on the battlefield to endear themselves to both the population of Rome and the military, who needed to support any potential successor to avoid a restart of the civil wars after Augustus's death.

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<sup>177</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 311.



When Augustus became the sole ruler of Rome following his victory in the civil wars, he marked this occasion with the grandest triumph seen yet. Eck describes the triumph, “Rome had never seen anything like the three-day celebration of Octavian’s three-fold triumph – for his victories in Illyricum, Actium, and Alexandria – held in August 29 BC. The festivities also marked the end of two decades of civil war that had begun when Julius Caesar had crossed the Rubicon.”<sup>178</sup> Three days of continuous triumph showed the Romans that Augustus was a brilliant commander, and also that Augustus had the right to rule over them. Not only was he lavishing them with celebration, but these victories also ended the civil wars that had plagued their lives, leaving them to move on under his leadership. It is important to note that two of the days of triumph, the triumphs for Actium and Alexandria, depicted Augustus not having beaten his fellow Roman Marc Antony, but has having defeated Egypt and Cleopatra. Suetonius even mentions that Augustus wanted to capture Cleopatra alive to parade around the city in this triumph, but she unfortunately committed suicide before she could be taken.<sup>179</sup> Another significant detail about these triumphs relates to the first day, the triumph over Illyricum. Dio reports that this was celebrated by both Augustus and one of his men Gaius Carrinas, who was the man who led the campaign against the rebellious tribes in the region, not Augustus.<sup>180</sup> This set a trend that became popular, where Augustus received credit for the victories of his legates because he was the supreme commander and had appointed them to their position. This also highlights the changes Augustus made in the army, with all army commanders being appointed

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<sup>178</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 44.

<sup>179</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 2.17.

<sup>180</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 51.21.

by him, which allowed him to grow his military reputation and celebrate his commanders' victories as his own.

The *Res Gestae* mentions many other military accomplishments Augustus was voted. He received two ovations and over fifty times he received public thanksgivings, which lasted over eight hundred days.<sup>181</sup> While he only celebrated those three triumphs, he was voted many by the Senate he refused to accept. While it would not appear to be the case, it seemed like Augustus was moving away from celebrating triumphs all together. This can be proved by the list of the *fasti triumphales*, which was a list of triumphs throughout the history of Rome on the Parthian Arch. However, the list has a finite end to it, with no room to add any more triumphs. That corresponded to the time of the Parthian Settlement, where diplomacy had let peace prevail between the two rival empires.<sup>182</sup> This goes along with Augustus's desire after the Parthian Settlement to promote peace around the empire, which meant that the need for any future triumph was unnecessary since the empire was presumably safe from future conflict. The last triumph on the *fasti triumphales* was Lucius Cornelius Balbus, a governor in Africa who defeated the Garamantes tribe in 19 BC.<sup>183</sup> While he was the last name on the list, he was not the last man to celebrate a triumph in Rome. However, Balbus celebrated the last triumph not belonging to a member of the imperial family. This change highlighted the important shift in the triumph that was initiated under Augustus, in an effort to try and use triumphs to promote his successors and members of the imperial family to the public as competent military men.

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<sup>181</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 4.

<sup>182</sup> Rose, "Parthians in Augustan Rome," 33.

<sup>183</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 69.

One of the reasons why the decline of triumphs outside of the imperial family may have occurred is the decline in independent command. Through his military reforms, Augustus became responsible for appointing of many of the generals, and they all reported directly to him. This meant Augustus took credit for most of the military activities around the empire,<sup>184</sup> giving him the opportunity to celebrate a triumph on their behalf. However, Augustus himself refused to celebrate any of these, either because he was embarrassed at his own ability as a commander and his limited role in these campaigns, or his lack of any desire to further promote himself to the people.<sup>185</sup> Dio reports an example of this relationship. Marcus Vinicius, a commander in Germania led a campaign to punish a hostile tribe for attacking Romans and was victorious. However, “This exploit caused the title of Imperator to be bestowed upon Augustus. Because of this expedition and Augustus’s other achievements during this period a triumph was decreed to him as well as the title. However, as he chose not to celebrate this, a triumphal arch was erected in the Alps in his honor.”<sup>186</sup> Despite Augustus having not been present, his position of supreme commander earned him the credit for the campaign over Vinicius, and he refused to celebrate the triumph that Vinicius had earned for him. Augustus had no need to celebrate triumphs himself. He had achieved everything he could politically, and his popularity with the people could be maintained simply through accepting ovations and other honors. Augustus felt that members of his family should use triumphs to endear themselves to the public, without Augustus himself getting in the way of these individuals growing their popularity themselves.

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<sup>184</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 69-70.

<sup>185</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 311.

<sup>186</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 53.26.

Throughout Augustus's reign, his adopted sons celebrated triumphs instead of him. Paterculus notes that Tiberius celebrated a triumph after his successful campaign against the Pannonians in the Pannonian Revolt, after being delayed by the situation in Germania.<sup>187</sup> Dio corroborates this, mentioning Tiberius celebrating a triumph for Pannonia, and receiving military honors.<sup>188</sup> This is significant because by allowing Tiberius to accept triumphs, with his first one in 7 BC, Augustus is letting Tiberius grow his popularity. While Tiberius was not initially his successor, he ended up becoming his successor when all other options died. The triumph allowed Tiberius to display himself to the people as a military commander. In the case of suppressing the Pannonian Revolt, he demonstrated that he was able to act decisively to end a threat against Rome itself, which set him up as a protector of the city. By growing his popularity with the masses, the people would be more likely to accept Tiberius as Augustus's successor, because he is proving that he could be as effective as Augustus was on the battlefield.

By using the triumph as a tool to improve the reputation of his successors, Augustus was making sure his succession plan would follow through peacefully. If Tiberius were popular and liked by the people, they would allow him to take over sole leadership of the state after he died, without the empire devolving into more civil war. Thus, he made the triumph an instrumental tool in keeping peace throughout the empire after his death. This shows another failure in Augustan peacekeeping efforts. Despite it being necessary to promote his successors to make sure they would be accepted, and therefore internal peace would be kept following his death, Augustus opted to do this through foreign warfare. It was therefore necessary to make sure these successors had an enemy to fight and beat, making peace around the empire impossible to

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<sup>187</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.122.2.

<sup>188</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.2.

achieve without causing a potential problem in his succession. Despite the noble goal of trying to prevent a civil war following his death, by using triumphs and warfare to promote his successors to the public, the use of triumphs highlights a failure in Augustan peacekeeping.

### **Tiberius and Drusus**

Tiberius and Drusus were Augustus's stepsons and were brilliant military men, and Tiberius himself became Augustus's successor as emperor. Augustus, even if he did not initially intend to make Tiberius his successor, did his best to establish Tiberius, and Drusus before his death, as competent military generals, and popular with the army and the public. Eventually, Tiberius, after the death of Augustus's grandsons, became Augustus's preferred heir, and he still used military success to make himself popular among the Romans. By being popular among the people, Tiberius was able to replace Augustus without any civil unrest and therefore preserved peace through the Roman world and uphold the *Pax Augusta*, but this conflict also hurt peace in the Roman world. Augustus needed war to increase Tiberius's reputation, and Tiberius waged wars in Germania, Pannonia, and Gaul nearly every year to achieve this success. This meant that in order to ensure a smooth succession for Tiberius in the case of Augustus's death, Tiberius and Augustus had to fight in near constant wars, which hurt the effects of the *Pax Augusta*.

Augustus initially designated Agrippa to be his successor, and he had functioned as his second in command for his entire reign. However, after his death, Agrippa's sons were too young, and Augustus therefore needed to look to his own stepsons to replace him.<sup>189</sup> He chose Tiberius, although Dio mentions that he did this with great reluctance, and he immediately

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<sup>189</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.31.

dispatched him to fight a campaign in Pannonia.<sup>190</sup> This established right away the importance of military success in creating Augustus's successors. If Tiberius was going to be Augustus's potential successor, he needed to have experience success on the battlefield, and he did this in Pannonia. Dio recounts, "In his campaign he made all the use of he could of his allies, the Scordisci, who were neighbors of the Pannonians and used similar weapons. He disarmed the rebels, sold most of the men of military age into slavery and deported them from their homeland."<sup>191</sup> Tiberius achieved complete success, and even demonstrated his ability to use his allies to his advantage. This skill was important in both saving Roman lives, as well as for creating alliances with tribal neighbors, a necessary trait for a leader. Additionally, after this campaign, Tiberius returned to Rome and was voted a triumph. Augustus gave him these triumphal honors without a procession.<sup>192</sup> While he did not receive a triumphal procession, the triumphal honors awarded to Tiberius began to establish him to the Romans as an important general, with few others receiving honors like this. To the Roman people, this made Tiberius the most important general, because they were hearing about his successes instead of the other generals' successes. This helped Augustus set him up as a potential successor.

Drusus, Tiberius's brother, despite not being named the true successor of Augustus, also saw his military career expand. This was because Augustus needed another option in case his relationship with Tiberius broke down. Drusus was assigned command of a campaign against the Alpine tribes around 15 BC, in which Tiberius assisted him in subduing them and taking control of the region. Paterculus describes the campaign, "They attacked many towns and strongholds,

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 54.31.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 54.31.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 54.31.

and also had great successes in pitched battle; and they crushed the tribes that enjoyed great protection from the terrain, were very inaccessible, had large populations, and were pitilessly cruel. This they did with greater risk than actual loss to the Roman army, but with much blood shed by the two enemy tribes.”<sup>193</sup> From this joint campaign, Tiberius and Drusus continued to establish themselves as excellent commanders. They were able to counteract the advantages the Alpine tribes held in terrain and numbers despite the risk in doing so, without incurring a significant loss. An important detail about this campaign was the creation of coins to commemorate it. These coins depict Augustus in triumphal dress handing triumphal honors to both Tiberius and Drusus<sup>194</sup> (See Figure 5 below) This coin is significant for a number of reasons, the first being the two commanders once again receiving a triumphal honor to set them apart from other commanders. The depiction also continues to establish Augustus as their supreme commander, just as he was with other generals. While there was no doubt that Augustus was in charge, Tiberius or Drusus were not permitted to gain too much favor and power, since all of their successes ultimately tied back to Augustus.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.95.2.

<sup>194</sup> Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, 317.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 317.



*Figure 5*

Drusus's next command in Germania continued to be successful, but it was also his last command, since he died unexpectedly at age thirty.<sup>196</sup> Before his death, however, Drusus engaged rebellious tribes, and win great victories. He beat back the hostile Sugambri tribe after it crossed the Rhine, crossed the Rhine himself and laid waste to Sugambri territory, and then did the same to the Usipetes the following year, and marched far into German territory.<sup>197</sup> For these successful actions Drusus was once again awarded triumphal honors, entering the capital on horseback, demonstrating his abilities as a commander to the people of Rome.<sup>198</sup> However, when

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Figure 5 - RIC I 165a

<sup>196</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.97.3.

<sup>197</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 54.32-33.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, 54.34.



Drusus returned to Germania, he was struck with a sickness, which ultimately killed him. Drusus was honored with statues and an arch in Rome, which showed him off to the Romans one final time.<sup>199</sup> In his place, Tiberius received command of Germania and continued Drusus's successful campaigns. Paterculus describes his success, explaining, "He conducted the campaign with his usual courage and good fortune, and he made his way through all parts of Germany with no serious losses to the army that had been entrusted to him something that was always of particular concern to this commander."<sup>200</sup> Here again Tiberius leads his campaign without any serious losses, and traveled widely through Germany. For this campaign, Tiberius was granted triumphal honors in 10 BC.<sup>201</sup> Tiberius, by this point, had demonstrated that he was a skillful commander and had made himself known among the Romans as the successor of Augustus.

However, at this point in time, Augustus did not favor Tiberius to be his rightful heir, and instead preferred his grandsons Gaius and Lucius. Sensing that he was not favored by Augustus, Tiberius resigned his command and retired in 6 BC.<sup>202</sup> Paterculus describes his motivation, "Gaius Caesar had already assumed the *toga virilis*, and Lucius was also going to assume it shortly, and he did not want his own prestige to be an obstacle to the early progress of these rising men."<sup>203</sup> While Paterculus may only be saying this to make Tiberius appear grateful and as a better ruler, it does show an important precedent. Tiberius did not want his military career to outshine the future careers of Augustus's true heirs, who likely needed time to reach the level

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 55.2.

<sup>200</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.97.4.

<sup>201</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.6.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 55.9.

<sup>203</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.99.2.

that Tiberius, and even Drusus had, considering their young age. The importance of the military for Tiberius and Drusus was evident, despite them not being the desired heir. Tiberius and Drusus both were heavily involved in military command to try to grow their reputation. Campaigns in Germany, Pannonia, and the Alps demonstrated their ability as a commander, which made them popular among the army and the people. The use of triumphs also made the two commanders more popular, because they were the only generals receiving these honors at the time. These measures were necessary to make sure that in the case of Augustus becoming incapacitated, there was an obvious choice to rule the state, preventing a civil war, and preserving peace. Even if these two men were not the preferred options, they were a necessary safeguard to protect peace and the *Pax Augusta*. However, by expanding the reputations of Tiberius and Drusus by military command, Augustus was making his succession plan reliant on the military, which took away from the *Pax Augusta* and any peacemaking Augustus was in favor of.

### **Gaius and Lucius**

The succession plan around Gaius and Lucius involved training the two men from a young age to properly fill all of Augustus's duties when he died, which ensured a peaceful and seamless transition from power. Gaius and Lucius were adopted as Augustus's stepsons from an early age in 17 BC, soon after Lucius, the younger of the two, was born. He did this, as Paternus notes, to "discourage plotters from conspiring against him."<sup>204</sup> By having successors, Augustus was preventing any ambitious men from trying to kill him, because there was reassurance that both his power did not end with him, and that there would be people seeking to

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 2.99.2.

avenge him. Unlike Tiberius and Drusus, Gaius and Lucius could grow up directly under Augustus, and could be molded however Augustus desired, allowing him to create the perfect successors.<sup>205</sup> Furthermore, by adopting both of the brothers, Augustus gave himself insurance if one of them were to die before he could receive military or political power. Augustus therefore set off to both grow their popularity and give them a proper military career. Unfortunately, however, this did not work out as Augustus intended.

Augustus first began to show off the boys around the city, growing their popularity and giving them more power as time went on. Dio speaks on this growing political power, stating, “In the following year Augustus served his twelfth consulship, and at this time he enrolled Gaius among the young men of military age. He also introduced him to the Senate, designated him as *princeps iuventutis*, and entrusted him with the command of a troop of cavalry. A year later Lucius also received the honors which had been bestowed upon his brother Gaius.”<sup>206</sup> Gaius was introduced to the Senate at a young age, which helped the Senators begin to grow familiar with him. Additionally, the title of *princeps iuventutis*, meaning a young *princeps*, showed the senators that Gaius had been clearly marked to succeed Augustus, already receiving his title of *princeps* while barely above military age. Lucius receiving this same treatment further cemented this notion. Zanker recalls that the senators, sensing this, began to shower the two young men in honors and positions of power, despite them being underage, while Augustus watched along behind the scenes, personally selecting their public appearances.<sup>207</sup> This served two functions, it gave the men experience in the Senate and awarded them honor and positions of power. With

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<sup>205</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 215-216.

<sup>206</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.9.

<sup>207</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 215-216.

Augustus selecting their appearances, it also allowed Augustus to personally mold their appearance to the public and gave him direct control over them. The senators could have even included the boys on the *Ara Pacis*,<sup>208</sup> further showing the young men in the public eye and associating them with Augustan peace at the same time. Augustus was not done giving Gaius and Lucius political positions, and as Dio notes, “When these matters had been decided, Augustus dedicated this temple of Mars. Before this, however, he had conferred upon Gaius and Lucius once and for all the right to officiate at all similar consecrations of buildings, by virtue of a king of consular power which they exercised according to established tradition.”<sup>209</sup> The power to consecrate buildings gave the boys considerable power in the city, more than any other in the city excluding Augustus himself. Augustus also built a portico named for the two men in the Roman Forum, further increasing public knowledge of them. While these efforts were done to make sure the young men had experience with political matters in the city, and therefore were apt successors, it was also necessary to prepare them for the military side of ruling.

To give Gaius and Lucius more popular among the citizens and soldiers, Augustus had to endear the young men to the soldiers and give them proper military experience to take on campaign when they were older. To introduce Gaius to the army, Augustus brought him with him to the soldiers in Gaul. Dio writes about this occasion, saying, “Besides dealing with these matters Augustus distributed a bounty to the soldiers, not for having won a victory, although he himself had taken the title of Imperator and conferred it on Tiberius, but because in that year they had Gaius posted to them for the first time to take part in their exercises.”<sup>210</sup> Eck explains the

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>209</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.10.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 55.6.

significance of this action, stating, “The legions on the Rhine received a bonus in his name in addition to their regular salary, a tried-and-true method for creating bonds of loyalty.”<sup>211</sup> Giving the soldiers extra pay, despite not doing anything besides letting Gaius come and see them, made the soldiers more amicable and loyal to Gaius. Gaius’s presence was the sole reason they were getting paid more, and therefore they accepted him as a future leader.

While Gaius had been given control over a troop of cavalry when he assumed his toga of manhood,<sup>212</sup> he needed to gain more knowledge of how the legions themselves operated on the frontiers. To do this, Dio explains, “Gaius took charge of the legions on the Danube, and his service there was peaceful. He took no part in any campaign, not because there was no fighting in progress, but because he was learning to hold command in conditions of quiet and safety, while any operation involving danger were undertaken by others.”<sup>213</sup> By taking control of the Danube legion. Gaius was able to familiarize himself with how the military functioned, and this could allow him to take control over campaigns in the future. It is important to note the function peace had in Gaius’s early military experience. Gaius, out of inexperience, was allowed to lead the legion through peacetime, which would let him later campaign with a better understanding of how the legion functioned overall, without the stress of a military threat on the legion. Additionally, by learning to operate in peace, Gaius would possibly be more likely to seek out the restoration of peace, to achieve this state of comfort one again. While this could be the case, it is also equally likely that Augustus did not want him to campaign because of a fear of failure. Gaius was not able to give expert commands and would therefore risk his soldiers’ lives. This

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<sup>211</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 154-155.

<sup>212</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.9.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, 55.10.

would hurt Gaius's popularity with the army and the people, which would have hurt his chances of success as Augustus's successor. The only role peace played in Gaius's military campaign was to spare him of potentially embarrassing himself, to save his strength to eventually wage military campaigns as Tiberius and Drusus had before him.

Despite the emperor's best efforts, Gaius's first military campaign resulted in the very situation Augustus hoped to avoid. The friendship Augustus had shared with Parthia deteriorated over the issue of Armenia's loyalty to Rome or Parthia, and military action was required to restore its loyalty to Rome. Dio writes on Augustus's situation, recounting,

When the Armenians rose in revolt, and were joined by the Parthians, Augustus was distressed and was at a loss of what he should do. He was too old for active service; Tiberius, as I mentioned earlier, had retired to Rhodes, and he did not dare send any of the prominent men in Rome, while Gaius and Lucius were still young and inexperienced in affairs. At length, driven by sheer necessity, he chose Gaius.<sup>214</sup>

Augustus did not have any other option but to send Gaius, despite his inexperience with military command. His inexperience with the overall threat Parthia posed, as evidenced by Augustus's own reluctance to campaign against them for fear of failure, made Augustus only send Gaius as a last resort. His own nervousness aside, Augustus dispatched Gaius to the east, giving him advisors to help him deal with the issue,<sup>215</sup> and appointed him governor of Syria at only the age of twenty.<sup>216</sup> Gaius became the first military leader to depart from the Temple of Mars Ultor, setting off for Armenia to reinstate Rome's control over the region.<sup>217</sup> Arriving in the region, the

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 55.10.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 55.10.

<sup>216</sup> Eck, *Age of Augustus*, 156.

<sup>217</sup> Rose, "Parthians in Augustan Rome," 46.

Armenians revolted against their Roman client king with Parthian support. However, the presence of the Roman army caused the Parthians to seek a diplomatic solution once again, which Augustus accepted, leaving the rebellious Armenians to fight alone.<sup>218</sup> While these rebels had little chance of victory, they caused a great loss to the Romans.

While a group of these rebels were under siege in the city of Artagira, Gaius was wounded and unfortunately died. How this occurred differs from each writer, with Paterculus claiming it was during a meeting,<sup>219</sup> and Dio claims Gaius was there to receive secret intelligence.<sup>220</sup> However it happened, this wound caused Gaius illness, which killed him on his way back from Rome, after giving up his military command in 4 AD.<sup>221</sup> Cruelly for Augustus, Lucius also died after falling ill on his way to Hispania to learn military tactics himself, in 2 AD, leaving both of his successors dead.<sup>222</sup> This cruel blow to Augustus's hopes for his succession plan caused him a great deal of sadness. This was especially true because both had died before they could celebrate a triumph. Lucius died before he could prove himself in the field, while Gaius was awarded posthumously as a victor over the Parthians and Armenians, as Augustus had against the Parthians before.<sup>223</sup> Augustus once again was forced to find a successor, leaving only Tiberius as a possible choice from his family.

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<sup>218</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.10.

<sup>219</sup> Paterculus, 2.102.2.

<sup>220</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.10.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 55.10.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 55.10.

<sup>223</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 222.

Gaius and Lucius were an opportunity for Augustus to mold the best possible successor for himself. He was able to, from an early age, teach them the ins and outs of ruling his empire, setting them up for success when he died. He grew their popularity in the city and the Senate by giving them the power to consecrate buildings and leaving them open to receive more positions by the senators. He grew his popularity in the military by awarding his soldiers bonuses whenever Gaius arrived and allowing them to learn to lead the army during peace time. Gaius and Lucius presented Augustus with the best chance of creating a peaceful transition of power. These boys were molded to act however Augustus had wished and were made popular in both political circles and among the military. This ensured the best chance that upon his death, civil war would be avoided in the empire and stability would be maintained. However, Gaius and Lucius died before they could gain control over the state, leaving Augustus to reevaluate his decision on Tiberius.

### **Tiberius as Successor**

Soon after Gaius and Lucius had been laid to rest, Augustus adopted Tiberius as his son. Paterculus notes that Augustus wanted to do this even before Gaius had died, but “had been held back from doing by the strenuous objections of Tiberius.”<sup>224</sup> Tiberius did not want to interfere in the career of Gaius, even if it would have given him more power himself.<sup>225</sup> Eventually however, Tiberius relented, and he was awarded the same tribunician power as Augustus, for a period of ten years.<sup>226</sup> This effectively made Tiberius an equal with Augustus, and even continued the

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<sup>224</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.103.3.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, 2.99.2.

<sup>226</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.13.



farce of Augustus's terms, which made the empire appear more as a Republic. With Tiberius as his successor, Augustus was still in a position to secure a smooth transition of power. His military success had made him popular among the people and the military. Paterculus recounts that upon the news of Tiberius being recalled from his exile reaching the people, "The joy of that day, the citizens flocking together and almost grasping the sky with their hands in making their vows, and the hopes now conceived for everlasting safety and for the permanence of the empire."<sup>227</sup> Tiberius was a popular man and Augustus continued to give him military commands to try and further cement himself.

Tiberius immediately set off to Germania and continued his dominance over these tribal forces, crossing the River Weser, and according to Paterculus, "Tiberius Caesar would claim for himself all the toughest and most dangerous theaters of the war."<sup>228</sup> He also subdued the Pannonians and the Dalmatians in the Great Pannonian Revolt in 6 AD, but his most significant military contribution during this time was his actions following the Varian Disaster in Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD, as mentioned previously. Facing the greatest threat Augustus had dealt with since the civil wars, Tiberius marched into Gaul and Germania and restored order. He first secured the territory threatened by invasion and then began an offensive campaign to lay waste to the tribes who had attacked Roman interests.<sup>229</sup> After resting for the winter, Tiberius returned and again devastated the German tribes, further cementing his military glory and popularity among the people.<sup>230</sup> After the threat had been vanquished, Tiberius returned to Rome and

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<sup>227</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.103.4.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*, 2.105.1.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid*, 2.120.6-7.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 2.121.1.

celebrated a triumph that had been awarded to him following his victory in Pannonia.<sup>231</sup> This triumph represented how Tiberius had been brought before the public eye as a military commander who brought glory to Rome on the battlefield.

Despite his popularity among the people, and the success he brought Augustus on the battlefield, it is important to mention the rift between Augustus and Tiberius. Dio speaks of the distrust both men had for each other. He writes, “However, since he [Augustus] suspected that Tiberius’s judgment might somehow desert him and feared that he might make a bid for power, he obliged him to adopt his nephew Germanicus, even though Tiberius had a son of his own.”<sup>232</sup> Augustus distrusted Tiberius enough to force Tiberius to adopt another member of his family, to try to connect Tiberius into his family more. He hoped this would breed further loyalty in Tiberius. Tiberius had distrust for Augustus too. Dio recounts, “Tiberius, I should mention, continued to conduct foreign campaigns, but also frequently visited the city whenever the occasion allowed. This was partly to attend to matters of public business, but chiefly because he feared that Augustus might, in consequence of his absence, show favor to somebody else.”<sup>233</sup> In Dio’s estimation, Tiberius feared that he would end up in the same situation before. Despite his success on the battlefield, it had become clear that Augustus planned to make Gaius and Lucius his successors. And now, with them gone and Tiberius in the same position as he was before acting as Augustus’s successor, he did not want to lose this position once again. Despite this

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 1.121.2.

<sup>232</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 55.13.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 55.13.

fractured relationship, both men coexisted and Tiberius would ultimately replace Augustus, even if he had been Augustus's last choice.

Tiberius's second time as Augustus's successor was marked by near constant warfare. Immediately upon his adoption, he was sent to campaign in Germania, and he spent much of his time here and in Pannonia, adding more to his list of many military successes. He capped off these successes with another triumph, which showed the Roman people how good of a commander he was. However, Tiberius did not get to practice ruling during peace time, as Gaius and Lucius had, which highlighted a difference between Tiberius and the young men. Tiberius was a military commander more than anything else. This did make him popular in the army and the among the people, which completed Augustus's goal of making him popular enough to be accepted as his successor when he died. However, this does not help Augustus's goals of creating peace around the empire. Tiberius's popularity came solely from this military success, and he did little else. This meant that he did not oversee the army during extensive peace time or undergo any significant diplomacy on his own. While Augustus's succession plan was successful in making Tiberius popular, hoping to prevent internal strife, this came at the cost of hurting the *Pax Augusta* as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

When it became clear to Augustus that he was dying, he sent for Tiberius, who came as quickly as he could. Upon seeing him, Paterculus writes, "Augustus then announced that his worries were gone, and enfolded in the arms of his own dear Tiberius, he entrusted to him all that he himself and Tiberius had achieved, and said he did not decline death if the Fates were calling

for him.”<sup>234</sup> Augustus left his empire to Tiberius and died without knowing if his succession plan worked. It was successful, and Tiberius was accepted as the new princeps following Augustus being laid to rest. There was a small reaction against this however, with Paterculus noting,

The army that was on campaign in Germany under the command of Germanicus, who was present there, along with the legions in Illyricum, fell prey to some kind of madness and a profound desire to create general mayhem. They wanted a new commander, a new political system, a new state. They even had the effrontery to lay down the law of the senate, and to the emperor as well, as they tried to establish their own level of pay and length of service.<sup>235</sup>

These troops’ desire for a new political system and a new state were a threat to a peaceful transition for power. Paterculus’s description of them falling prey to madness and mayhem illustrates that this was not a widespread feeling, and this sentiment did not last in the army, and was dealt with accordingly. However, this does highlight that the succession, although successful, was not perfect in preventing all internal discourse without the guiding light of Augustus’s hand. Additionally, Tiberius, although he had been popular among before taking control over the state, appears to have become less popular now. Dio theorizes that “At any rate the characters of the two men were so completely different that the suspicion was current that Augustus knew Tiberius’s nature very well, and had deliberately made him his successor to exalt his own reputation.”<sup>236</sup> While this is certainly not true, it highlights why Tiberius had been Augustus’s last choice to succeed him, but Augustus’s desire to make sure there was a proper system to succeed him and prevent civil war was stronger than his own dislike of Tiberius.

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<sup>234</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.123.2.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 2.125.1-2.

<sup>236</sup> Dio, *The Roman History*, 56.45.

When analyzing Augustus's succession plan in conjunction with the *Pax Augusta*, it is clear that both ideas share similar values, but in practice there is a conflict of interests. The succession plan's goal was to give Augustus a successor what would prevent the empire from fracturing into civil war following his death, and this was done primarily through increasing their popularity through military success. In contrast, the idea of the *Pax Augusta* was peace and stability throughout the empire, which does not coincide with using military conflict to increase popularity. Triumphs became a political tool under Augustus that he used to boost his successor's popularity. These celebrated military success over a foreign rival, and became an important part of a successor's career, using these to show the people of Rome their military command. Tiberius and Drusus, who were Augustus's successors after Agrippa died, were shown off to the people as military generals. The brothers engaged in military campaigns around Gaul, Germania, Dalmatia, Pannonia, and the Alps, winning successes that increased their popularity. Even after Drusus was killed by disease, Tiberius continued his military successes around the empire, and made himself a household name in the empire. Gaius and Lucius, who received their positions as Augustus's successors from a young age, were in a different position. Augustus was able to groom them to function as proper successors, giving them the space to grow up not as just military commanders. However, the military was still important in their brief time as successor, with Augustus doing his best to train them before sending them off to fight. Lucius never got to lead an army before he died, and Gaius was killed during his first campaign, but had they survived, it is certain that they would have engaged in many campaigns around the empire too. Forced back to Tiberius, Augustus adopted him, and once again had him wage many campaigns around the empire, further adding to his career. The common characteristic among the succession of all of these men is military success. Augustus wanted to make them as popular as

he could, and therefore had them waging war constantly. While this succeeded in creating a smooth succession following his death, with Tiberius largely accepted by the Roman people, it demonstrated a clear failure in the *Pax Augusta*. Augustus made succession reliant on war, meaning that despite its intention of preserving peace inside the empire, it required constant war, and therefore prevented peace from truly existing across the empire.

## Conclusion

After Augustus's death and Tiberius's ascension to the role of princeps, Rome continued to exist as it had under Augustus. Relative peace remained on the home front, while the frontiers continued to be in a state of near constant war. As Augustus had wished on his deathbed, there would be few instances of large amount of territory being added to Rome after his death. The exceptions were Claudius's conquest of Britain in 43 AD and Trajan's conquest of Dacia in 101 AD and large amounts of the Parthian Empire in the Middle East in 113 AD. There were still occasional civil wars in Rome, but these were brief periods of unrest. The first of these was the civil war following Nero's suicide, which ended Augustus's Julio-Claudian Dynasty in 68 AD. The resulting civil war lasted only one year and created the Flavian Dynasty after three other men claimed the position of emperor, ultimately leaving Vespasian as the first emperor of the Flavian Dynasty. Augustus's focus on peace remained, even if it did not take as much of a central focus as it had during his reign. Nero even closed the doors on the Temple of Ianus Quirinus once in 58 AD, but this would only be for a brief amount of time considering Nero's reign and how it ended. The *Pax Augusta* lasted long after Augustus died, finally ending with the beginning of the Third Century Crisis, when Rome was plunged into a long string of civil wars. From these, Rome lost lots of its territory, and only briefly recovered. Despite this end, Rome, as Augustus created it, continued to operate with Augustus as its model, and this peace would last for centuries. However, this Roman peace was distinct from our modern understanding of the concept of peace.

However, despite this long-lasting peace, Augustus's *Pax Augusta* was not very peaceful. All aspects of Augustus's peace were heavily related to some function of the military. When evaluating the effectiveness of Augustus's peace, it is important to see where he began. When

Augustus took control of the state, Rome was coming off its worst period of civil war and internal strife. Its population was devastated and tired of war, and Augustus was willing to oblige, with this giving him the power to consolidate his rule, while also allowing him to continue growing his own military reputation out of the public's eyes, on the frontier. Augustus's peace bringing was only for show, and it was what the people wanted at the time. Soon, the Roman people desired a return to what they had known before, which was Rome acting as the principal military power of the Mediterranean world. The *Pax Augusta*, therefore, was not a return to peace, but simply a more stable Roman world internally, absent from civil war, which allowed Augustus to continue ruling, out of fear that if he stepped down, there was a return to civil war. This is clear through the various aspects of Augustus's reign.

Looking at Augustus's diplomacy, the most important piece of Augustus's peacemaking was the Parthian Settlement. This avoided a large-scale invasion of Parthia, which the people wanted, to avenge for past Roman failures against them. Augustus corrected these wrongs, through diplomacy rather than warfare, and created what he hoped would be a lasting peace on the Rome-Parthia border. However, there were more military motivations than diplomatic motivations. Augustus was not willing to risk invading Parthia as his predecessors had, seeing their own failures despite their confidence. Additionally, an agreement of friendship allowed Augustus to not have to worry about a military engagement against Parthia, where he continued to remain unconfident in his chance of success. This made the Parthian Settlement about solving a potential military issue, rather than out of a genuine desire for peace. On the home front, Augustus showed this off as a military success and a bloodless victory, which the public was willing to accept, believing that Parthia had begged for the settlement to avoid a conflict, and



were seen as having been defeated, when this was actually an agreement between equals. This shows the most peaceful of Augustus's deeds was still more a matter of the military.

Augustus's architecture, which allowed him to show off to the people of Rome his values of peace was also heavily related to the military. The Temple of Janus Quirinus and the ceremonial function of its doors was revived by Augustus to show the Roman world was at peace. He closed the doors more times than anyone else, but this also meant he opened them more than anyone else. While this showed he was bringing peace, he also was continually involved in conflicts around the empire. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* was an altar dedicated to Augustus's peace, but this itself came after a military victory, which highlights the contradictions between Augustus and his peace. The altar itself included images of peace, but also of military success, showing the Roman people the connection between the two, rather than showing them the effects of his peace on its own. The Temple of Mars Ultor would do much the same. It housed the recovered Parthian standards, the biggest image of peace in Rome, but the building held military functions. It was dedicated after the Battle of Philippi, and it was the starting place for all military campaigns, and where triumphal artifacts were placed, which takes away from any images of peace contained there. Augustus's architecture, while it often showed peace, remained heavily tied with the military of the empire through its imagery. This represents the failure of Augustus's diplomacy in the *Pax Augusta* in maintaining peace, instead being related heavily to his military.

Augustus's foreign campaigns showed how he was more willing to spread his military glory through conquest and military victories, rather than showing off his peace making. When his rule began, Augustus reorganized the military. This was meant to both make the military smaller and more maneuverable to internal threats, and to give him more direct control to prevent

any sort of military rebellion. The Political Settlement of 27 BC was also meant to give Augustus more control over the Rome's provinces, allowing him to personally oversee any potential problems. While this was meant to help keep the peace in the empire, the army was also used for various offensive actions and were used to violently shut down any rebellion, rather than seek to solve it permanently through diplomacy. Augustus also expanded the empire more than any other emperor would. He was involved in military action in Hispania, Gaul, Germania, Aegyptus, Pannonia, and Dalmatia, among others. While sometimes these were defensive against rebellions, such as was often the case in Pannonia and Dalmatia, he also engaged in expansion in Aegyptus, Germania, and Hispania. Both of these scenarios are not about creating peace, and instead sought to expand Augustus's military glory. While it can be argued that some of these engagements were necessary to preserve the *Pax Augusta*, such as shutting down an internal rebellion, there are certainly other avenues to take to stopping these. Firstly, diplomacy as an option may or may not have been available, but more importantly, stopping the reasons for these rebellions from taking place would have worked better than violently shutting them down as they arose. Looking at Pannonia for example, the Pannonians often revolted due to poor treatment. Had the Romans treated them better, these rebellions may not have existed, and the empire could have remained a more peaceful place. Augustus' foreign campaigns did not support the *Pax Augusta* in any way, and instead caused Rome to remain in a near perpetual state of war with any one of its neighbors, in the name of military glory.

Augustus's plan for succession appeared to be in support of the values of the *Pax Augusta*, but to accomplish its goal it had to violate those values. Augustus wanted to have a successor who could prevent Rome from falling into civil war once he died. This would allow the *Pax Augusta* to continue. But to do this, this successor had to be popular in Rome among its

citizens and its military, to have the backing of both to remain in power. The primary tool for this was success on the battlefield. Triumphs became a tool for the imperial family to show off military success to the people. All of Augustus's successors had their military careers sponsored by Augustus, to give them the proper careers to be popular and accepted. Tiberius and Drusus, and later Gaius and Lucius, were all raised to be successful on the battlefield. Tiberius and Drusus engaged in many campaigns and were successful in bringing glory to themselves and Rome. Gaius and Lucius were in the process of getting to this stage but died before their training as military commanders could have endeared them to the Romans. Tiberius ultimately became Augustus's successor, and he was engaged in countless campaigns around the empire and was accepted as Augustus successor following his death. While this strategy kept the *Pax Augusta* alive in the empire, allowing for a smooth transition of power, its whole basis was on military success. Augustus did not have Tiberius become a cunning statesman, able to win the favor of Rome with his deeds and words, but instead crafted him a vast military career. This clearly violates the peace of the *Pax Augusta*, with the military being too important in crafting Augustus's successors.

When analyzing each of these aspects of Augustus's reign, it is obvious that that *Pax Augusta* was not peaceful. The military remained far too important in all aspects of Roman life to call Augustus's reign a reign of peace. While it is certainly true that Rome was free from the state of internal strife and civil war it had been before Augustus took possession of the state, this did not mean Rome was at peace. Instead, Augustus represented himself as a bringer of peace early in his reign to help secure his popularity, and then continued to wage many wars on the frontiers to continue to grow his popularity through the military. As evidenced by Augustus's diplomacy, foreign campaigns, and his plan of succession, the *Pax Augusta* was not an era of

peace throughout Augustus's reign, but instead Rome and Augustus remained heavily involved in war and the military.

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