AUGUSTUS' CONCEPTION OF HIMSELF

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> Ciel, à qui voulez-vous désmormais que je fie
> Les secrets de mon âme et le soin da ma vie!
> (Lord, to whom is it now your will that I entrust
> The secrets of my soul and the cares of my life?)
> —Augustus, in Corneille, *Cinna*, Act IV, Sc. 1

IT IS A RECEIVED COMMONPLACE THAT THE PERSONALITY of Augustus, who was at the center of Roman political power for almost sixty years, and bestrode the Mediterranean world as sole arbiter for about fifty (the longest hold on power in Rome's long history) is an enigma, "puzzling," "elusive," "baffling," "inscrutable."[1] In quest of definition of the psychic texture, the inner life and motives of the first *princeps*, whose acts and times are among the most extensively documented in antiquity, one may regret the loss of Plutarch's life of Augustus and of the autobiography of the founder of the Roman Empire.[2] True, we have the *ipsissima verba* of Augustus preserved in scattered quotations and in letters, and in the "queen of Latin inscriptions," the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (Achievements of the Deified Augustus),[3] that extraordinary summation of his career. But this "obituary notice" of himself compels caution because of its selectivity

[1] John B. Firth, *Augustus Caesar and the Organisation of the Empire of Rome* (New York: Putnam, 1903), p. v; T. Rice Holmes, *The Architect of the Roman Empire, 27 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), pp. 2, 73; *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1934), X, p. 590; Donald Earl, *The Age of Augustus* (New York: Crown, 1968), p. 191; Karl Loewenstein, *The Governance of Rome* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), p. 311; Meyer Reinhold, *The Golden Age of Augustus* (Toronto: Samuel/Stevens, 1978), pp. ix-xii.

[2] *De Vita Sua Libri XIII*, carried down to about 25 B.C. See Fritz Blumenthal, "Die Autobiographie des Augustus," *Wiener Studien*, 35 (1913), 113–130; 36 (1914) 84–103. It was ransacked by Augustus' contemporary Nicolaus of Damascus in his *Life of Augustus*.

[3] For the much-edited and glossed *Res Gestae* see, e.g., Jean Gagé, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. 2nd ed. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1950); P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

and calculated aim to bequeath at the end of his life a posthumous image of his place in history.

Despite Augustus' longevity, the dynamically transitional character of his times, our awareness of his consummate skill as myth maker for his age and posterity, his artful use of propaganda and symbols, the numerous crises and blows of fortune he encountered,[4] it is now possible to reexamine the evidence and elicit insights into his inner world, his conception of himself and his role—thanks, in part, to the tools at hand from the avalanche of fundamental studies in the past half century in humanistic psychology, the nature of power and leadership, the personality of power-seekers and power-wielders, and the typology of political personalities.[5] Equally important, we may in conjunction bring to bear on Augustus' words and deeds our increasingly refined knowledge of the Roman ethos, of the motives of Romans of his social stratum, and of Roman political, social, and economic institutions.

The data we possess about Augustus' earliest years, before he emerged in the political arena at the age of eighteen as Caesar's heir, are sparse, but telling. They afford us glimpses into events and circumstances that affected the emotional life of the intensely ambitious young man he was: his birth in 63 B.C. in the small Italian town of Velitrae (modern Velletri) in Latium into the family of the Octavii, of plebeian, but equestrian stock; the sudden death of his father Gaius Octavius (who married the heiress Atia, niece of Julius Caesar) when the boy was only four years old; the *ignobilitas* of the family—his father was a *novus homo*, who had risen as far as the rank of praetor and provincial governor; his upbringing at Rome in the house of his grandmother Julia (Caesar's sister) until she died in 50 B.C. when he was twelve; finally his transfer to the home of his remarried mother and his stepfather, Lucius Marcius Philippus.[6]

It is speculative, of course, to try to assess the degree of psychic damage caused by this series of personal dislocations at such an impressionable age, but we may confidently record that he was ashamed of his father's familial background and of the relatively humble rank of the Octavii within the highly stratified status-conscious Roman social and political hierarchy.[7] Stories were allowed to circulate later—not without his own connivance—that he was sired on Atia by the god Apollo, and there was even attributed to himself the statement, "Some think I was the son of

[4] Pliny, *Natural History* 7.147–150, gives a lengthy gloomy catalogue of them.

[5] E.g., Harold D. Lasswell, *Power and Personality* (New York: Norton, 1948); James D. Barber, *The Presidential Character*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977); James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

[6] On Augustus' origins and early years, Suetonius, *Augustus* 1-8.1; Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus* 2–5.

[7] On the *ignobilitas* of his family see Cicero, *Philippics* 3.6.15–17. In the *Res Gestae* Augustus was silent about his father, mother, and ancestors because he was ashamed of the family connection.

Octavius; some suspect that I was born from someone else."[8] It was therefore balm to his ego esteem when at the age of fourteen he received marks of favor from his patrician great-uncle the glamorous Julius Caesar (who lacked a legitimate male heir), and when he was adopted by Caesar's will at the age of eighteen. Shortly after the death of Caesar, when the comet known as *sidus Julium* ("Caesar's star") was seen, the young Caesar Octavian, as he was now called, declared its coming a personal annunciation for himself, and interpreted it to signify that he was "born in it."[9] Other compensatory mitigations of his low social self-esteem were his elevation to patrician status by Caesar when he was eighteen; his assumption of Caesar's name in 44 B.C.; his alliance a few years later (in 38 B.C.) with another very distinguished patrician family through marriage to his second wife, Livia.[10]

Roman youths of the higher classes naturally grew up in an atmosphere of aspirations for political and military careers. Octavian's ambitions at the age of eighteen, however, were inordinately high-flown and precocious when he plunged into the maelstrom of Roman politics as Caesar's heir. His alarmed stepfather counseled him not to accept Caesar's inheritance and not to run the risks of the stormy political arena, but he rejected the advice, for he already had his "mind on great things."[11] It was on such a high crest of the political wave that Octavian began his extraordinary career. And at the outset he already conforms to one of the classic patterns of the power-seeker, one who has experienced psychic damage in childhood and youth: determination to overcome doubts about his own worth by winning power and prestige to compensate for deprivation of self-esteem; relentless pursuit of the means to impose his will on others; the need to prove himself superior in leadership ability; compensation for damaged self-esteem by inner conviction of uniqueness and of unparalleled qualifications to succeed in great achievements.[12]

Ministering strongly to Augustus' self-doubts was his chronic sickly nature. His illnesses and disabilities are extensively documented from age seventeen to seventy-six.[13] Hypochondriacal and a lifelong valetudinarian,

[8] Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4–5; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome* 45.1; Donatus, *Vital Vergili*, ed. Reifferscheid, p. 56.

[9] Pliny, *Natural History*, 2.94.

[10] Augustus valued greatly the glamour of this highest social status in Roman society. As *princeps* later he elevated many of his plebeian adherents to patrician status both to reward them and to ensure the survival of this elite class. See Edward Togo Salmon, "Augustus the Patrician," *Essays on Roman Culture: The Todd Memorial Lectures*, ed. A. J. Dunston (Toronto: Hakkert/Stevens, 1976), pp. 3–33.

[11] Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus*, 18.

[12] Cp. Lasswell, *Power and Personality*, p. 39; Barber, *Presidential Character*, p. 100; Burns, *Leadership*, pp. 58, 101–104, 113.

[13] Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus*, 6, 9–10; Pliny, *Natural History*, 7. 148–149; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 59, 72.2, 8–82; Albert Esser, *Cäsar und die Julisch-Claudischen Kaisern im Biologisch-Ärtzlichen Blickfeld* (Leiden: Brill, 1958 = *Janus*, Supplbd. I), pp. 45–66.

he was constantly solicitious about his health, with a strong will to overcome his weaknesses: he exercised great care in his living habits, disciplining his eating, drinking, sleep, and rest periods.[14] We are reminded that the sickly Woodrow Wilson said of himself as a young law student: "How can a man with a weak body ever arrive anywhere?"[15] Augustus' physical appearance, moreover, was unprepossessing. He was short (under 5'7", according to his freedman secretary, Julius Marathus), and as a result wore somewhat high-soled shoes to make him appear taller than he actually was. His teeth were wide apart and poorly kept, and his body had numerous calluses from chronic itching and use of the strigil.[16] Eschewing the traditional Roman preference for realistic portraits, Augustus wished always to be depicted in idealized form; the approximately 150 known portraits of him in sculpture, based on authorized official prototypes, consistently show him as a handsome person, and this style was maintained even in portraits made in his old age.[17]

Yet there is little doubt that Augustus fully recognized his own limitations, not only in health but in spheres that brought fame and glory to many other Romans: He was neither a great general, nor orator, nor intellectual, nor political theorist, nor writer. No wonder that his attitude to his adoptive father Julius Caesar as role model was ambiguous. Though he owed the launching of his career to Caesar's adoption of him (Cicero mocked, "*O puer . . . , qui omnia nomini debes*, "O boy . . . , who owes all to a name"),[18] diligently performed his duty as *ultor Caesaris* ("avenger of Caesar"), and eagerly inherited his wealth, *clientela* and veterans, he studiously maintained a conscious distance from the memory of Caesar. This negative reaction to his famous adoptive father was due not merely to personality differences but to compelling ideological and tactical considerations: Caesar's liaison with Cleopatra, his monarchical aspirations, supranational cosmopolitanism, and notorious trampling on due process. True, the name "Caesar" and the patronymic *divi filius* ("son of a deified person") were both used by Augustus in his official titulature as glamorous, potent, authoritative, but little was said in the Augustan Age of the acts and memory of Caesar himself.[19]

It was rather with Alexander the Great that Augustus consciously and calculatedly associated himself, both as universal conqueror and ruler, and champion of western civilization over the East. After the deaths of Cleopatra and Antony in 30 B.C., Augustus visited the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria, touched his mummy (presumably to absorb its "power"),

[14] Cp. Esser (see Note 13, above), p. 69.

[15] Cited by Barber, *Presidential Character*, p. 101.

[16] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 73, 79–80.

[17] E.g., *Cambridge Ancient History* V. X, pp. 557–559.

[18] *Philippics*, 13.11.24–25.

[19] Mario Attilio Levi, "Ottaviano e la Memoria de Giulio Cesare," *Acme* 5 (1952) 485–491; Richard Heinze, *Die Augusteische Kultur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1930), pp. 14–15.

placed a crown on the body and strewed it with flowers.[20] Indeed, Augustus' seal ring from 30–23 B.C. bore a portrait of Alexander.[21] Moreover, in the high enthusiasm created by his victories in the East, Augustus' *imitatio Alexandri* spawned ambitious, romantic plans for massive expansion on all frontiers to achieve a dream of universal empire, *imperium sine fine*, in Vergil's classic formulation.[22] It is characteristic of Augustus' ego needs that he was determined to surpass Alexander. When he soon abandoned his grandiose dreams of world conquest, he faulted Alexander for not deeming the administration of the existing empire of greater import than winning it.[23] Moreover, he was younger than Alexander when he entered public affairs. When Alexander's father Philip II was assassinated, Alexander was twenty; on Caesar's murder, Augustus was only eighteen.[24] (It also did not escape Augustus that he attained high political power earlier than Pompey, Scipio Africanus, even Romulus—in his nineteenth year, *undeviginti natus*, he proudly tells us in the first two words of the *Res Gestae*.)[25]

Augustus' need to present himself as excelling Alexander stems from his conception of himself as an extraordinary and unique person, a man of paramount virtues and achievements, a leader unparalleled in the annals of Rome, indeed in world history. He resented being called "*puer*" in his younger upward-striving days,[26] but in later years he boasted that he was the youngest in world history to rise to power. It is true that it was through Caesar's favor that he was early brought into the entourage of the great dictator, and even elected *pontifex* at the age of fifteen. But after Caesar's death he mounted his own drive for power: at nineteen he mobilized an army (of Caesar's veterans, of course), was co-opted into the Senate, and unprecedentedly elected consul;[27] at twenty he was one of the triumvirs for reorganizing the state (with Antony and Lepidus).[28] Unprecedented as these early conquests were, Augustus took pains throughout the *Res Gestae* to parade the many unparalleled "firsts" and "mosts" in his career, including honors, victories, offices, in his private expenditures for public

[20] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 18.1; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 51.16.5.

[21] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 50. Suetonius tells us that he previously used an image of a Sphinx on his seal ring, and that after 23 B.C. he replaced Alexander's image with his own portrait.

[22] *Aeneid*, I.279.

[23] Plutarch, "Sayings of Romans," *Moralia*, 207D.

[24] On the *imitatio Alexandri* by Augustus see Emanuele Ciaceri, "L'Impero Universale di Augusto," *Nuova Antologia* 399 (1938), 164–168; Hans Ulrich Instinsky, *Die Siegel des Kaisers Augustus* (Baden-Baden: Grimm, 1962), pp. 31–36; Tonio Hölscher, *Victoria Romana* (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1967), pp. 6–47; Dietmar Kienast, "Augustus und Alexander," *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 430–456; Andreas Alföldi, *Oktavians Aufstieg zur Macht* (Berlin: Habelt, 1976), pp. 9–11.

[25] Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 56.36.3.

[26] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 12; cp. Cicero, *Philippics*, 13.11.24.

[27] It is noteworthy that Augustus arranged that his beloved grandsons (his adopted sons), Gaius and Lucius Caesar, were not to become consuls until they were twenty.

[28] *Res Gestae* Ch. 1; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 53.5.2.

purposes, in census statistics, in his building program, shows and spectacles provided for Rome, and in expansion of Roman territory.[29] Typical are such boasts as "an honor which hitherto had been decreed to no one besides myself" (Ch. 12); "I was the first and only one to have done [this] . . . in the memory of my generation" (Ch. 16); [Envoys from India came to him] "previously not seen in the presence of any Roman general" (Ch. 31); [At his election to *pontifex maximus*] "a great multitude flocked from all of Italy such as never before had been recorded at Rome" (Ch. 10). The most self-revealing phrase is *prius quam nascerer* ("before I was born"), in reference to the fact that in all Roman history only twice before was the Temple of Janus closed—to signify peace in the entire empire—but in his Principate it was closed three times (Ch. 13).

One may readily grant him his pride in his achievements and his awareness of the mark he made in history. But Augustus' need to demonstrate his uniqueness with such overkill is, one may posit, a reflection of deep-rooted incapability to abide competition with his contemporaries. Indeed, not once in his long political career did he subject himself to the normal competitive electoral chance, neither as consul (thirteen times), nor when he became a triumvir (for ten years), nor even as *pontifex maximus*. The extraordinary powers he obtained from 23 B.C. to the end of his life—the *imperium proconsulare maius* (superior proconsular power) and the *tribunicia potestas* (tribunician power) were overriding supra-magisterial innovations that removed him from the indignity of the electoral process, and assured him unique superiority and priority in decision-making without competition in both the military and civil spheres. Accordingly, until very near the end of his rule he could even tolerate verbal attacks, lampoons, and insults to himself and his kin, and counseled the touchy Tiberius not to take it to heart when anyone spoke evil of him. "It is sufficient," he said, "if we can prevent anyone from doing evil to us."[30]

In this light we may understand Augustus' longing for consensus and unanimity with regard to himself and his acts, as expressed in the *Res Gestae* by *universi cives* (the entire citizen body); *consensus universorum* (unanimous consent); *senatus et equester ordo populusque Romanus universus* (the Senate, the Equestrian Order and the Roman people unanimously).[31] Under the Roman Republic *consensus senatus* was a procedural decision-making expression signifying "sense of the senate." Augustus' extension of *consensus* to "unanimous consent" (of all the Roman people) was an extra-constitutional statement, merely his own personal

[29] Cp. Mario Attilio Levi, "La composizione della 'Res Gestae Divi Augusti'," *Rivista di filologia Classica* 75 (1947): 189–210; T. D. Barnes, "The Victories of Augustus," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 64 (1974), 21–26.

[30] Seneca, *On Anger*, 3.23.4–8; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51, 55; Seneca the Elder, *Controversies*, 2.4.12–13.

[31] *Res Gestae* Chs. 9, 34, 35. Cp. Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome*, 2.91.

interpretation of the presumed will of the entire citizen body. In the name of such declared *consensus universorum*, implying the total absence of opposition, he could interpret at will the high honors to himself and his family, and justify any of his decisions and acts.[32] In 2 B.C., when he was accorded the title *Pater Patriae* in an outpouring of sentiment by the people and the Senate ("Father of his Country" was, however, an appellation not without many precedents during the Republic, given as thanksgiving gesture to eminent Romans), Augustus interpreted this honor as vouchsafing him universal consensus and approval to the end of his life.[33]

Augustus designated his unique role as focal point of all authority, as "top man" in the Roman state, by the preferred term he adopted for himself, *princeps*.[34] Not an official title but an extra-constitutional complimentary appellation, it marked him out as possessor of the highest rank in the Roman social and political order, signifying priority and superiority in prestige and esteem, capacity to take initiative and command respect. As in the Republic, such a "first man" among the citizens was influential not as magistrate but as *privatus*.[35] Such a "private citizen" was characteristically a man of extraordinary qualifications, resources and proven accomplishments, who, without being subject to electoral process and debate, intervened disinterestedly in the public interest when governmental and social institutions proved inadequate. There were, indeed, not a few classic exemplars during the Republic as precedents, with Lucius Brutus as prototype at the very founding of the Republic.[36] Augustus' conception of himself was so in line with this tradition that he was acting out of a sense of duty and high civic mission to preserve and enlarge the state as a dedicated citizen.[37]

A similar supra-constitutional overriding personal preeminence was afforded by Augustus' *auctoritas*. After 27 B.C., he tells us, "I excelled all in *auctoritas*."[38] This "authority" did not, in the Roman sense, connote legitimated power, the right to command, but rather esteem for pre-eminent status and soundness of judgment, and recognized priority in

[32] Hans Ulrich Instinsky, "Consensus Universorum," *Hermes*, 75 (1940), 265–278; Lothar Wickert, "Princeps," in *Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, V. XXII, Part 2 (1954), col. 2264.

[33] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 58. See Andreas Alföldi, *Der Vater des Vaterlandes im Römischen Denken* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971); Jean Beranger, *Recherches sur l'Aspect Ideologique du Principat* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1953), pp. 276–278.

[34] *Res Gestae* Chs. 13, 30, 32. Cp. Suetonius, *Augustus*, 31.5, 42.1.

[35] Hendrik Wagenvoort, "Princeps," *Philologus*, 91 (1936), 206–221, 323–345; Wickert, "Princeps," cols. 2057–2071.

[36] Cicero, *Republic*, 2.46: "Lucius Brutus, a man preeminent in native ability and bravery, although a private citizen, sustained the whole burden of government."

[37] On Augustus' emphasis on his voluntary personal intervention with his help and contributions see *Res Gestae* Chs. 1, 5, 15–18; cp. Livy, *Periocha*, 118; Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome*, 2.61.1; Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 11.7.2; Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.2.3, 5; Jean Béranger, "L'Accession d'Auguste de l'Idéologie du 'Privatus'," in *Principatus* (Geneva: Droz, 1973), pp. 243–258.

[38] *Res Gestae* Ch. 34.3.

consultation. It signified a unique ethical-political relationship between himself and all others that was non-transferable. Since this quality was not constitutionally defined, its scope was unlimited; it was a fuzzy concept that enabled Augustus to act as author-initiator and to take unrestricted action in a wide range of matters.[39]

Eager to enhance his capacity to make independent decisions, Augustus embraced the enormous increase in his authoritative status that came to him when he adopted the name "Augustus" bestowed on him in 27 B.C. An alternative proposal to name him "Second Romulus" was rejected by him because of the royal status of the founder of Rome and the well-known competition and strife between him and his brother, Remus.[40] An unprecedented name, "Augustus" was pregnant with potent polyvalent implications: sanctity; heroization; divine election; mediation between gods and the Roman people; relationship with Romulus who had founded Rome *augusto augurio*, in the famous phrase of the Roman poet Ennius; association with *auctoritas* and with the sense of "increase" in the root *aug-*, as well as with augury, originally associated with rites of fertility.[41] Contemporaries among sophisticated Romans might see in the name "Augustus," he could anticipate, the divinely chosen and favored leader, preserver and increaser of the Roman state, who augmented the greatness (*maiestas*) of Rome in its territory, population, public buildings, public works, prosperity, stable order, and who mediated with the gods as augur to assure such increase for the country.[42]

At about the same time (27/26 B.C.) Augustus assisted in formulating a constellation of virtues to serve as the moral foundation of himself and his regime. The four cardinal virtues—which launched the myth of the "virtues of the Roman emperor" that endured to the end of the empire—were endorsed by him in all earnestness as model of the good ruler and as manifesto of the policies of his administration: *virtus* (military power); *clementia* (reconciliation and internal peace, replacing force); *justitia* (law and order, due process, sanctity of property); *pietas* (dedicated service to gods and country). It is self-revelatory that Augustus, in announcing such virtues, associated himself with the cardinal virtues

[39] Ernst Hohl, "Das Selbstzeugniss des Augustus über seine Stelling im Staat," *Museum Helveticum*, 4 (1947), 101–115; Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1950), pp. 112–118; Béranger, *Recherches*, pp. 114–131; Luca Canali, "Il 'Manifesto' del Regime Augusteo," *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Mediaevale*, 15 (1973), 171–173.

[40] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 7.2; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 53.16.6–8.

[41] The multi-facted association of "augustus" with sanctity, augury, and "increase" is emphasized by Ovid, *Fasti*, 1.609–616.

[42] On "Augustus" see Kenneth Scott, "The Identification of Augustus with Romulus-Quirinus," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 56 (1925), 62–105; Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), pp. 158–160; Jean Gagé, "Romulus-Augustus," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 47 (1930), 138–181; F. Muller, "Augustus," *Mededeelingen der Koninklije Akademie van Wetenschappen* Afdeeling Letterkunde, 63, Ser. A, No. 11 (1927), 275–347.

previously established (e.g., by Cicero in the *Republic*) as those of the good ruler in Stoic doctrine, that Greek and Roman virtues were intermingled, that some of the traditional Roman virtues, such as *gravitas* and *fides* were passed over, and that he did not claim for himself *sapientia* (wisdom, a high Greek virtue), nor the gentler virtues, such as *humanitas*.[43]

Thus Augustus' need for and love of unrestricted personal power are unmistakable. Yet it would be simplistic to apply without qualification to Augustus Harold Lasswell's classic formulation that the power holder displaces private "affects on to public objects,"[44] that is, that he rationalizes his private ego needs in terms of public interest. In his long career there were many inner conflicts and a fluid mix of motives, embracing demonstrations of superiority, need to excel, fear of displacement, moving with the sheer momentum of decision-making, and sincere civic duty. As an adolescent Augustus was under the instruction of a number of philosopher-teachers all of whom were Stoics: Athenodorus of Tarsus, Areius of Alexandria, Didymus, and Zenarchus. The Stoic influence followed him throughout his life, and in Stoicism he found a doctrine compatible with his ego needs: that each person has a given role to play in life, and that it is the moral obligation of the individual—even as a private person—to intervene in the public interest to restore and maintain the natural order.[45]

For about sixty years Augustus was indeed "the first servant of the State," to which he rendered "constant unwavering laborious service."[46] He rarely took a vacation from matters of state; he was one of the master toilers in world history. From Stoic teaching of the "assigned post" and Roman military language he formulated the political concept of his mission as *statio principis* ("the ruler's post"),[47] his legacy to all future emperors. Whether we view him as fulfilling strong ego needs or as proceeding out of a principled sense of public duty, Augustus was a devoted, untiring public servant with an enormous capacity for work. Painstaking, meticulous, omnipresent, he was constantly involved in decision-making, legislation,

[43] Hieronymus Markowski, "De quattuor virtutibus Augusti in clipeo aureo ei dato inscriptis," *Eos*, 37 (1936), 109–128; M. P. Charlesworth, "The Virtues of a Roman Emperor. Propaganda and the Creation of Belief," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73 (1937), 111–114; Inez Scott Ryberg, "Clupeus Virtutis," in *The Classical Tradition. Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan*. Ed. Liutpold Wallach (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 232–238.

[44] Harold D. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*. New ed. (New York: Viking, 1960), pp. 75–76. Lasswell points out that "the private motives may be entirely lost from the consciousness of the political man, and he may succeed in achieving a high degree of objective validation from his point of view."

[45] For Stoic influence on Augustus: V. Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*. 2 Vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1891), V. II, pp. 1313–1314; Henry Bardon, *Les Empereurs et les lettres latines d'Auguste à Hadrien* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1940), pp. 10-11; Béranger, "L'Accession d'Auguste," pp. 243–258.

[46] *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. X, pp. 591, 594.

[47] Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 15.7.3; Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome*, 2.124.2; Erich Köstermann, "Statio Principis," *Philologus*, 87 (1932), 358–368, 430–444.

and administration, even in the smallest details, in all spheres: military, political, religious, economic, social, cultural. Dio Cassius put the following words into Augustus' mouth:

> I have devoted myself unstintingly to you in all circumstances. . . . From all this I have derived no gain for myself.[48]

In the dedication of his work on architecture, composed early in Augustus' Principate, Vitruvius wrote: "I observe that you are concerned not only for the common life of all but also for the constitution of the state. . . ."[49] In 22 B.C., in the treason trial of Marcus Primus, Augustus attended the trial though he was not summoned to testify. When asked bluntly by Primus' attorney why he was present, Augustus replied, "In the public interest."[50] Augustus' claim of the public interest (*rei publicae causa*) is thus recorded by the jurist Paulus:

> The deified Augustus preferred that this [specific matter] be arranged through himself. . . . For he believed that the protection of the safety of the state devolved on no one more than the emperor, and that no one else was adequate for this matter.[51]

In 4 B.C., at the age of sixty, when he communicated a decree of the Senate to the Province of Crete-Cyrene, he added:

> Since it affects the welfare of the allies of the Roman people, and so that it may be known to all for whom I have a care, I decided to send it into all the provinces. From this it will be evident to all the inhabitants of the provinces how much I and the Senate are concerned that none of our subjects should suffer any impropriety. . . .[52]

Augustus made gestures of refusal of power, but it is clear that he never seriously contemplated resigning power and retiring to private life. In the *Res Gestae* (Ch. 6), he asserts that he "accepted no office contrary to the ancestral tradition." In 22 B.C., after he stepped down from the consulship (his eleventh, held nine years in a row), the urban plebs in a season of great distress in Rome took to the streets to urge the Senate to appoint him dictator for life. He thereupon made a dramatic appearance before the people: he went down on his knees before them, and bared his breast, in token of readiness to die rather than accept such an office. Augustus acted here in all sincerity regarding the dictatorship, which had been fatal to Caesar, even though we know that the gesture of refusal of power was a traditional *topos* associated with the *vir bonus*.[53] The year before, in 23

[48] *History of Rome*, 53.5.3-4.

[49] Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book, I, Preface 2.

[50] Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 54.3.2-3.

[51] *Digesta Justiniani Augusti*, 1.15.1-2.

[52] Victor Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 141; Reinhold, *Golden Age*, p. 191. On Augustus' devotion to duty see Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: University Press, 1939), p. 520; Béranger, *Recherches*, pp. 169–175.

[53] *Res Gestae*, Ch. 5; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 52; Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome*, 2.89.5. See Jean Béranger, "Le Refus du pouvoir," *Museum Helveticum*, 5 (1948), 181–185; Geza Alföldy, "Die Ablehnung der Diktatur durch Augustus," *Gymnasium*, 79 (1972), 1–12.

B.C., when he was almost fatally ill, he is said to have contemplated resigning his authority. "But reconsidering that as a private person he would not be without danger, and that the State would thus be entrusted rashly to the judgement of the masses, he continued to maintain his hold on power."[54] Seneca writes that Augustus constantly prayed for a rest and vacation from affairs of state, and for the enjoyment of leisure, and he cites a letter sent by Augustus to the Senate in which he expressed his expectation that if he retired he would not be diminished in high status, and that his fame would remain unimpaired. Then he added,

> But these matters turn on actual deeds rather than promises that one can make. However, the yearning for that most hoped for time for me had so transported me that, since the actual joy is still delayed, I get some pleasure just out of the charm of the words.[55]

The whimsy is obvious, for Augustus never seriously contemplated stepping down from his supreme status to a lower one. In 2 B.C., when he was hailed *Pater Patriae*, he said, "Having achieved my highest hopes, Senators, what more do I have to pray for to the immortal gods but that I may retain this consensus of yours to the very end of my life."[56] In his old age, when he suffered a number of severe setbacks (about A.D. 6), he did not offer to resign but, in a fit of depression, resolved on suicide by starvation.[57]

Augustus' inability to dissociate himself from his hold on power, originating in his ego needs, was in time rationalized as society's need for himself as indispensable agent of the stability of the exemplary state he had created. In an edict he once proclaimed, in memorable words:

> May it be granted to me to set the state firm in its place, safe and sound, and to reap the reward I aspire to from this, namely, that I be known as the author of the best type of government, and that when I die I may take with me the hope that the foundations of the government I have laid will remain in their original form.[58]

Augustus' conception of himself as "first servant of the state," as wholly dedicated to society's needs, is reflected in his enormous expenditures for public purposes out of his own vast private fortune, especially on distributions of food, on games and spectacles, public buildings and public works, largesses to the people of Rome, and donations and bonuses to the soldiers.[59] Moreover, since considerable sums of money tended to

[54] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 28.1.
[55] *On the Shortness of Life*, 4.2–3.
[56] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 58.2.
[57] Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.149.
[58] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 28; cp. Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome*, 2.91.2; Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 15.7.3.
[59] *Res Gestae*, Chs. 15–22 (An appendix, not part of the original document, characterizes Augustus' expenditures as *innumerabilis*); Suetonius, *Augustus*, 28–29, 41, 43, 49; Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book I, Preface 2; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 54.30,3, 56.40,4–5.

concentrate in his hands through legacies,[60] he served as a sort of economic conduit for channeling the private wealth of others into public uses. In his will he declared that he had little of his own wealth left at the end of his life, having spent most of it *in rem publicam*. There is no reason to doubt this. "In private life poor, in public life rich," wrote Dio Cassius of him.[61]

In keeping with his dedication to public interests, throughout his regime Augustus maintained a relatively frugal life style: his pleasures, food, and dress were simple and without ostentation, and he muted ceremonial gestures and did not give in to the pageantry of power. His personal home on the Palatine was not a "palace," even though hardly as small as conventionally described; we now know that his property on the Palatine was indeed vast in extent. In contrast with the luxurious estates of many of his contemporaries, his villas were modest retreats.[62]

Despite his need for uninhibited power and constant approbation throughout his life, Augustus conceived of himself as cautious and low-keyed. His aversion to eccentricity and flamboyance in himself and others, and his calculating nature are revealed by his obsession with the Greek *topos* σπεῦδε βραδέως (in Latin *festina lente*, "Make haste slowly"), which he used over and over again; and he was prone also to quote Euripides (*Phoenissae* 599) that "A cautious general is better than a rash one."[63] Caution and prudence were also Augustus' guidelines as a speaker: he never spoke extemporaneously. It was his practice to read everything from a carefully prepared speech, whether before the Senate or the people or soldiers. In important private conversations (even, it is said with his wife Livia!) he spoke with a written text before him, "so that he might not say more or less."[64]

Similarly, in confronting the possibility of death, Augustus betrayed his characteristic caution and calculation. Whereas Caesar's rhythm was fast and intense, and he faced the danger of death with equanimity, Augustus, a sickly person, lived cautiously, avoiding dangers and undue strains.[65] At the age of about thirty-five he completed his mausoleum, in 28 B.C., Rome's largest monument of the time, erected in the very heart of the city. It is true that he had hastened to erect a grand Roman tomb, for himself and

[60] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 66.4.
[61] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 101.3; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 56.41.5. For Augustus' public uses of his private fortune see Hans Kloft, *Liberalitas Principis* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1970), pp. 73–84; Robert Etienne, *Le Siècle d'Auguste* (Paris: Colin, 1970), pp. 50–56; Israel Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1975), pp. 357–371.
[62] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 53.2, 72–73, 76–77; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 56.40.4, 41.5; Macrobius, *Saturnilia*, 2.4.14; Nevio Degrassi, "La Dimora di Augusto sul Palatino e la Base di Sorrento," *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archaeologia*, 39 (1966/7), 77–116.
[63] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 25.4; Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 10.11.5; Polyaenus, *Stratagems*, 8.24.4.
[64] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 84.
[65] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 82.

his family, as counter-image to the resplendent tomb of Antony and Cleopatra in Alexandria. But having made this political gesture that was valuable at the time, he was compelled to live within sight of his own tomb for over forty years.[66] Augustus lived to the age of seventy-six. He always hoped for a non-violent, swift and painless death (*euthanasia* was the term he used).[67] On his death-bed, having attained his wish, he asked his friends whether he had passed through the *mimum vitae* ("comedy of life") well, as if it were the proper time for them to applaud. His last words were to Livia: "Live mindful of our marriage, Livia, and farewell."[68] This despite the fact that he must have endured emotional stress from the fact that their union had not produced a single child.

Augustus' characteristic restraint and moderation are also revealed by his response to the outpouring of divine honors to him throughout the empire, especially in the eastern provinces. Augustus studiously adhered to the Roman tradition that forbade public worship of a living person. Private worship of himself as a god burgeoned, and formal cults of Augustus were established in many places. But, in a policy set down in 30/29 B.C., first in the Province of Asia, official authorization was granted only to temples jointly of the goddess Roma and himself as a mortal;[69] and as an instrument of policy he permitted, even encouraged, worship of his *genius* (protecting spirit of a Roman *paterfamilias*) in the West. In Augustus' own conception of himself, there was never any question that distance between himself and the gods should be maintained, and that his proper role was that of mortal mediator between the divine and human spheres.[70] It is noteworthy that in the *Res Gestae* he makes no claim to divine honors. Tiberius followed consciously the model of Augustus in rejecting divine honors. The words Tacitus gives to Tiberius in A.D. 25 might well have been spoken by Augustus:

> You are my witnesses, members of the Senate, that I am a mortal and perform human functions, and am content to fill the role of *princeps*. And I desire posterity to remember me thus. They will pay tribute to my memory enough, and more than enough, if they deem me worthy of my ancestors, provident for your interests, firm in dangers, not timid in the face of attacks I encounter in the public interest. These will be my temples in your hearts, these my fairest and most enduring images.[71]

[66] Konrad Kraft, "Der Sinn des Mausoleum des Augustus," *Historia*, 16 (1967), 189–206; Joseph Vogt, "Caesar und Augustus im Angesicht des Todes," *Saeculum*, 23 (1972), 3–14 (= *Gymnasium* 80 [1973]: 421–437).

[67] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 99.2.

[68] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 99.1; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 56.30.4.

[69] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 52; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 51.20.5–8.

[70] Lily Ross Taylor, *Divinity*, pp. 166–167, 236–239; Christian Habicht, "Die augusteische Zeit und das erste Jahrhundert nach Christi Geburt," in *Le Culte des Souverains dans l'Empire Romain* (Vandoeuvres-Genève: Entrétiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, Vol. XIX, 1972), pp. 76–85; M. P. Charlesworth, "The Refusal of Divine Honours. An Augustan Formula," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 15 (1939), 1–10.

[71] *Annals*, 4.37–38. Augustus also forbade undue adulation of any sort, including use of *dominus* (lord) for him (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 53.1).

"Fame is the spur" that drove Augustus in his passion to leave his mark on history, so that he might win the immortality of glory in the memory of future generations. While there were doubtless not a few among his contemporaries who in fantasy condemned him to *damnatio memoriae*, Augustus himself was serenely confident that posterity would accord him fame and longlasting *laudatio memoriae*. He was explicitly aware that he was handing down many memorials of himself,[72] in his constitutional arrangements, institutional reforms, public works. Vitruvius, early in the Principate, put it thus:

> I have observed that you have built many structures and are now building, and that in the future you will make provision for public and private buildings conformable to the grandeur of your achievements, so that they may be a legacy to the memory of posterity.[73]

In the great national "Hall of Fame" which Augustus dedicated in 2 B.C. in the new Forum Augustum, he unveiled a massive portrait gallery of the most famous Roman *triumphatores* (each with inscription detailing his achievements). Pride of place was given, however, to the Julian family: to Caesar, Romulus, and Aeneas, all *divi* (deified persons). But the grandest figure in the Forum Augustum was Augustus himself, resplendent as *triumphator* on a four-horse chariot. There could be no doubt that the intention was to demonstrate that the Julian family surpassed all others, and that Augustus himself excelled all of his predecessors.[74] "Compare," the panorama suggested, "let posterity judge!" In an edict he issued simultaneously, he proclaimed:

> I have devised this so that by their lives as role models, both I, so long as I live, and the leaders of later times may be exactingly judged by the citizens.[75]

While this grandiose display of Roman achievement honored only the great military leaders (documenting, as it were, the great Temple of Mars in the Forum), the *Res Gestae*, set up on bronze tablets before his mausoleum in A.D. 14, after his death, gave a more comprehensive statement of his conception of his unparalleled contributions to Rome.

Indeed, Augustus recognized that his temperament was pre-eminently civilian, despite his quest for military éclat. His forte was that of mediator, between gods and men, past and future, Rome and Italy with the rest of the empire. We should concede to him that, for all his passion for power, his determination to claw his way to the top of the Roman social and political hierarchy in order to compensate for his damaged self-esteem and sickly

[72] Res Gestae 8.4: *ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi* (I myself handed down models in many matters for imitation by posterity).

[73] *On Architecture*, Book I, Preface 3.

[74] Henry T. Rowell, "The Forum and the Funeral *Imagines* of Augustus," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 17 (1940), 131–143; Paul Zanker, *Forum Augustum* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1968).

[75] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 31.5; cp. 71.3 ("my generosity will elevate me to heavenly glory").

nature, and his yearning for fame and glory, Augustus was not cunningly dishonest, deceitful, or hypocritical, as some have depicted him, but rather basically sincere in his aims and methods.[76] It is doubtful whether he distinguished between the young ruthless power-hungry Octavian and the benevolent statesman Augustus. His personal ego needs were inextricably fused with the work he did in tidying up the Mediterranean world, and moderating and holding in balance the great tensions of the times.

Augustus would have conceded that without the favor of Julius Caesar and the legacy of his name his own ambitions would have come to naught; and he surely understood that *fortuna* (luck), that his many loyal helpers, and his control over vast resources of wealth all contributed greatly to his success. Though "the assemblage of qualities and capacities that made up his personality are not such as to strike the imagination of the world,"[77] he remains one of the *grands hommes politiques* in world history. Yet we may still applaud Mommsen's verdict that "Augustus habe mit Geschick den grossen Mann gespielt, ohne selbst gross zu sein"[78] (Augustus adroitly played the role of the great man without himself being great).

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[76] Mason Hammond, "The Sincerity of Augustus," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 69 (1965), 139–162; Loewenstein, *Governance*, pp. 241, 315–317.

[77] *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. X, p. 596.

[78] Cited by Ernst Hohl, "Augustus," *Das Altertum*, 2 (1956), 241.

ROME: REPUBLICAN DISINTEGRATION, AUGUSTAN RE-INTEGRATION: FOCUS ON THE ARMY

HENRY C. BOREN

THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF COURSE GREW OUT OF THE RUINS of the Roman Republic. That latter political entity, once held together in classical integrity, had staggered under the weight of problems that came with the growth of the (Republican) empire and concomitant internal stress, and had collapsed under the final blows of civil war. Augustus somehow grappled with the most serious problems and neutralized some of the centrifugal forces. He devised new approaches and modified old so as to preserve some of the essence of what had been, and at length managed to reintegrate polity and society. So effective was his work that the empire he created endured with great success for two hundred years, and with less satisfactory performance for three hundred years after that. This paper will discuss the metamorphosis from Republic to Empire especially from the point of view of the army.

The Romans of the later Republic—in particular Livy and Cicero, who wrote much of what we know about the Roman Republic before its last years—may have had an exaggerated idea of how completely integrated Roman society had been prior to the tribunates of the Gracchi (133–122 B.C.) when the decline is almost universally deemed either to have begun or to have become apparent. Still, it does appear that this society was as well integrated as any that historians have had opportunity to study in any

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