



Augustus, Tiberius, and the End of the Roman Triumph

The triumph was the most prestigious accolade a politician and general could receive in republican Rome. After a brief review of the role played by the triumph in republican political culture, this article analyzes the severe limits Augustus placed on triumphal parades after 19 BC, which then became very rare celebrations. It is argued that Augustus aimed at and almost succeeded in eliminating traditional triumphal celebrations completely during his lifetime, by using a combination of refusing them for himself and his relatives and of rewarding his legates who fought under his auspices with *ornamenta triumphalia* and an honorific statue in the Forum of Augustus. Subsequently, the elimination of the triumph would have been one natural result of the limit placed on further imperial expansion recommended by Augustus in his will, a policy his successors chose not to follow. Tiberius, however, was unwilling to conform to this new order and retired from public life to Rhodes the year after celebrating a triumph in 7 BC, the first such celebration since 19 BC. Tiberius' two triumphs and the senate's repeated offers of further triumphs to Augustus himself represented a different vision of the role triumphal celebration should take in a restored *res publica* and an ongoing challenge to the *princeps*.

For Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, on the occasion of his 65th birthday

bis ovans triumphavi et tris egi curulis triumphos et appellatus sum viciens et semel imperator, decernente pluris triumphos mihi senatu, quibus omnibus supersedi.

Augustus RG 4

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iam tantus erat Caesar, ut triumpho augeri contemneret.

Flor. 2.33.53

This paper aims to reexamine the emperor Augustus' role in limiting the celebration of a traditional triumph in Rome, despite both the many military successes during his time in power and his extensive use of the imagery of victory and world conquest. After 19 BC, triumphs became rare in Rome and were only ever celebrated by members of the imperial family or household.¹ The interruption of an ancient and very public celebration must have been striking at the time, perhaps even shocking. Augustus' intervention shaped the way triumphs would be celebrated by all future Roman emperors; triumphs became rituals enacted only once or twice in a generation, even at the height of Rome's imperial reach. But what was Augustus trying to achieve? How does his decision to change triumphal practice reflect on the long history of the triumph before his own magnificent triple victory celebration in 29 BC? Why did Augustus himself consistently refuse to triumph again after 29 BC, despite repeated offers from the senate? I will first examine the republican triumph as Augustus inherited it, since this tradition forms the essential background to the *princeps*' own experience, before going on to offer a new analysis of his use of triumphal celebrations within the imperial context of his own day. Republican norms and habits shaped Augustus' expectations and policies in vital ways; his choices can be read as his commentary on the republican triumph as he himself understood it.

THE REPUBLICAN TRIUMPH AND THE CULTURE OF THE *NOBILES*

Many rich sources of ancient evidence survive to conjure up various aspects of Roman parades, games, and religious festivals.² As has often been recognized, however, the celebration of a triumph was traditionally the ultimate honor for a Roman general; and, consequently (and unsurprisingly), it provided the ultimate show for his fellow citizens, as they lined the streets of the city to hail his victory.³ Ancient city states operated as face-to-face societies, in which citizens and others interacted personally in regular ways. But no culture was as engaged with spectacle or as politically dependent on making achievements visible as republican Rome.⁴ It is within this specifically Roman context that the triumph stands out as the prime example of a celebration of community success that reflected a way of life based on war and a

1. For a tabulation of all triumphs and similar or possibly equivalent ceremonies, see Goldbeck and Wienand 2017: 588–95. There were eight triumphs after Balbus' in 19 BC before the empire reached its greatest extent under Trajan, who celebrated two further triumphs of his own.

2. Bernstein 1998 remains the fundamental treatment of republican games. For the Augustan and Julio-Claudian period, see Benoist 1999.

3. The bibliography on the triumph is extensive. I have found the following recent works especially informative: Auliard 2001; Itgenshorst 2005; Hölkeskamp 2006, 2007; Bastien 2007; Beard 2007; Hölkeskamp 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Krasser, Pausch, and Petrovic 2008; La Rocca and Tortorella 2008; Rüpke 2008; Östenberg 2009a, 2009b; Lange and Vervaeke 2014; Goldbeck and Wienand 2017.

4. See Hölkeskamp 2011 [1987]; Flaig 2003a; Sumi 2005; Flower 2014; Hölkeskamp 2017.

society defined by republican politics. Even as the career structure of Rome's office-holding elite, the *nobiles*, evolved over time in tandem with Rome's growing influence within the Mediterranean and beyond, in each new political context the triumph remained the top prize for a Roman politician, a prize that defined his ultimate status within his own community.

The unique prestige of the triumph is most clearly demonstrated in the funeral ritual—specifically during the *pompa funebris*, as practiced by Rome's political leaders. This ceremony involved wax masks (*imagines*) of those who had held high political office, as described most fully for us by Polybius in the mid-second century BC.⁵ Each deceased magistrate, represented by an actor wearing a lifelike mask, would appear in the costume and display the attributes of the highest political office to which he had been elected during his lifetime. In other words, even in death relative rank and status within the political hierarchy was preserved in a fixed pattern; not all distinguished ancestors were equal. But a man who had celebrated a triumph stepped outside this hierarchy of political office (*cursus honorum*) and wore his triumphal garb forever after, first at his own funeral and then at each subsequent family funeral.⁶ Even if, for example, he had gone on to hold the office of censor after celebrating a triumph, a not uncommon pattern for the highest achievers, that further promotion was not commemorated as his ultimate status after death. In effect, to remember him was to recall his triumph and his wearing of the special triumphal costume in perpetuity.

It is this visual prominence of the purple and gold associated with the triumph, as well as the opportunity offered by a family funeral to re-parade spoils, maps, pictures, or placards from the actual triumphal procession, that brings us face to face (as it were) with the essential paradox of the republican triumphal celebration. Whatever its ultimate origins may have been, whether in Etruria or in Rome, triumphal garb (and the whole ritual with its intense focus on the general himself) had a distinctly unrepublican, possibly monarchical aspect to it.⁷ That is to say, the ultimate prize for a *nobilis* was not actually the highest political office or a recognition of the status of that high office conferred by the citizens voting in the electoral assembly within a republican system. Rather, it was a celebration allotted primarily by his peers in the senate and thought by Romans to have originated as a way to recognize a victorious king (initially Rome's founder Romulus) as the single, highest military leader of the community, accompanied by a costume that recalled the garb of the cult statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the Capitoline temple.⁸

5. See Flaig 1995 and Flower 1996.

6. Polyb. 6.53–54. In 191 BC Scipio Nasica is represented as saying that his standing would not be enhanced by a triumph (Livy 36.40.8–9).

7. For the origins of the triumph, see Versnel 1970; Bonfante Warren 1970; Beard 2007: 305–318; Armstrong 2013.

8. Polyb. 6.53.7 is specific about the use of triumphal costume in the aristocratic funeral around the middle of the second century BC. Itgenshorst 2005: 193–200 and 2017 reads the costume as that of a king. Rüpke 2008 and Janda 2009 argue for the *triumphator* dressing like the statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Beard 2007: 225–33 is more skeptical about what we can know (but see the review of

In a triumph, therefore, the Romans defined the military success of their *res publica* through an appropriation and reapportionment of kingly powers, functions, and divine attributes. Each victorious *nobilis* could play at being king for a day; a successful republican system saw many such *triumphatores*, sometimes more than one in a year.⁹ The more victories the senate recognized, the more “republican” the celebration came to appear over the centuries. The more kings were conquered by elected magistrates, the more magistrates dressed like kings, at least on a certain specific occasion.¹⁰

Meanwhile, traditional public spectacle and performance, shared by participants and audience together in a familiar choreography, created and maintained identity, political coherence, and, at least ideally, a deeply felt sense of shared purpose within a specifically religious setting.¹¹ Far from serving simply as propaganda or publicity, a ritual such as the triumph fulfilled a wide variety of religious, social, military, and political functions, when performed in a way that met with cultural expectations. It could bestow a truly singular honor on one man (and, by extension, on his family), even as he now joined a prominent group of men who held his same status, both those alive and the many who had come before. In recognizing the achievements of a single individual, a triumph also celebrated the Roman army and the whole community that had produced these men. The victory of the *triumphator* belonged to everyone, not just to him; but that was also why the event was so special. This ritual allowed the *triumphator* to become (one of) the recognized benefactor(s) of the community as a whole. Yet his high prestige relied on a shared understanding that he would not press his advantage beyond traditional norms to create a truly unique position for himself within the political community. The triumph was supposed to be enough for him and indeed for anyone; it was the celebration that he would be remembered for.

Rituals, therefore, served both as reward and remembrance: status had meaning when it was publicly acknowledged by the community as a whole. Needless to say, this story is also about a series of fine balances: between tradition and innovation, between self-representation and exaggeration, between making a favorable impression and overplaying one’s hand. It also comes as no surprise that the triumph was a central “memory place” (*lieu de mémoire*) in itself, even as it was connected to other

Hölkeskamp 2010b). See also Bastien 2014 and Meister 2017, who offers a detailed and thoughtful reassessment.

9. For the frequency of triumphs through the ages, see the tables in Itgenshorst 2005 with sources and bibliography (on CD-ROM); Rich 2014 (more succinctly) until 19 BC; and Goldbeck and Wienand 2017: 588–95 to the year 1261.

10. Triumphal costume was normally reserved for the day of the celebration and the appearance of the actor at a family funeral: Beard 2007: 272–77 and Hölkeskamp 2017: 232. Marius offended the senators by entering their meeting in triumphal dress on 1 January 104 BC (Livy *Per.* 67; Plut. *Mar.* 12.5). See also Meister 2017: 85 for laurel crowns on festive occasions, and 92 for the care Augustus took with his dress on every occasion.

11. For the religious character of the triumph, see Rüpke 1990, 2006, and especially 2008. Versnel 2006 expresses a different point of view.

rituals (including the funeral, as we have seen) and many physical sites in the city of Rome.¹² A triumph enacted elsewhere could not be the same; rather, the celebration took its meaning from its ritual components when performed in their traditional, physical setting and in front of a Roman audience, whose enthusiastic participation was integral to the success of the event.

Much in the history of republican architecture and art was connected to the triumph, from the paintings and maps made for the procession, to the pervasive influence of artworks brought to Rome as booty from war and first seen in a triumphal procession, to the numerous temples built to commemorate battlefield victories, some along the triumphal route and others close to family tombs or other monuments.¹³ Honorary statues, arches, and other markers, such as Duilius' column in the Forum, as well as displays of enemy weapons or representations of them, all offered ways to recall those victories that had been recognized with a triumph.¹⁴ The clustering of triumphal images around the speaker's platform (*rostra*) in the Forum, which was itself adorned with the beaks of captured enemy ships (*rostra*), created a very particular setting for the public speeches (*contiones*) delivered by magistrates in office and the funeral eulogies given here by family members.¹⁵ Each ritual interacted with the topographical setting along its route, even as each triumph added its own, new layer of meaning and memory. In fact, previous triumphs remained memorable precisely because new ones were regularly being celebrated, although frequency obviously varied according to Rome's military situation in any given generation.

The triumph was never easy, however, either to ask for or to obtain, to approve or to deny, to organize or to stage.¹⁶ It raises a whole series of questions that are central to any understanding of Roman republicanism. But it also offers ways to explore and sometimes to answer those same questions. Here we see on display, as it were, the centrality of war in Roman culture.¹⁷ War fostered military habits and Rome's whole ethos. War made individuals great and created vast opportunities for family prestige and affluence, the kind of social and economic capital that could be passed on from generation to generation. The children of the *triumphator* were themselves part of the celebration and were presumably supposed to view it as the high point of their father's career, the moment to remember and to emulate,

12. For the triumph as a *lieu de mémoire*, see Hölkeskamp 2006 with special stress on the visual elements.

13. For manubial temples, see Aberson 1994; Orlin 1997; Bastien 2008. For art in the city, see now conveniently Popkin 2016; Hölscher 2017; Hölkeskamp 2017.

14. For honorific statues, see Sehlmeier 1999. For Duilius' column, see Kondratieff 2004.

15. For the republican *rostra*, see Coarelli in *LTUR*. For statues of Sulla in Rome, see Sehlmeier in *LTUR*.

16. Pelikan Pittenger 2008 brings out the complexities and controversies revealed by the triumph debates in Livy's account of the early second century BC. Lundgreen 2014 focuses on the senate as the ultimate arbiter in awarding this honor.

17. The role of warfare in Roman republican culture has been much treated. Classic discussions include Harris 1979; Rich 1993; Raaflaub 1996; Eckstein 2006.

the moment to recall on the day of their father's funeral.¹⁸ The single political career track that was considered the most desirable in Rome, the *cursus honorum*, was also celebrated and affirmed on this day; no one had more eminence than a *triumphator* on his special day, a commander (usually of consular rank) who had won many elections before his successful battles, a man whose merits and achievements were now recognized by the whole community celebrating together.¹⁹ This man was, therefore, the one to represent the Romans in their communal thanksgiving for victory to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol, and often also in honors to some other deity to whom he had made a vow on the battlefield.

The grandeur of this spectacle, therefore, served as self-verification for the entire republican political system and the role the *nobiles* played within it. It was designed to confirm the basic premise that Rome was indeed a meritocracy, whose political leaders had earned their social standing through their personal merits and with the aid of divine approval won through traditional piety. The fact that the *triumphator* was not a king in itself celebrated the very concept of a *res publica* as a public forum in which politics was practiced together by everyone in the city (although obviously not on an equal basis). The cheering crowds represented an ideal version of the happy voters, who had picked the right man for the job. The merry soldiers were loyal to their commander and shared in his success, while also themselves enacting republican principles that closely connected voting with serving in the army. Consequently, the triumph was more than a simple celebration that the Romans had won (rather than being defeated). It showed how and why they had won in battle, and suggested that they would continue to win. Peace was not the object since victory was the ultimate prize and nothing else (in theory) could equal this celebration from anyone's point of view, whether general, soldier, or audience member of whatever social status.²⁰

The triumph's glorification of war logically led to a perpetuation of fighting, which came to mean a continual expansion of Roman power and influence overseas. In earlier times a celebration of the army's return had simply marked how the Romans had survived another summer season of cattle raids with immediate neighbors that had produced a parade of livestock and a few choice enemy weapons. Whatever we may think an archaic triumph might have looked like, the *nobiles* turned the ritual into something far more splendid, more prestigious, but consequently also far more dangerous. Everyone who studies republican Rome is all too familiar with its characteristic cycle of war, plunder, and appropriation, a cycle that was self-perpetuating since the fruits of victory sustained the wealth and social position of its leaders, the *nobiles*, both individually and as a group. For obvious

18. For the celebrant's children in the triumph, see Livy 45.40 and Tac. *Ann.* 2.41 (younger children); Cic. *Pis.* 25 (older ones).

19. For the few praetors who celebrated triumphs (mostly in the early second century BC in Spain or with the fleet in the East), see Brennan 2000: 80–85 and Rich 2014: 240–41.

20. For peace (*pax*) as a concept and goal during the first century BC, see now Cornwell 2017.

reasons, talk of limiting military expeditions or of making a plan for a finite or defined empire did not appeal to ambitious republican generals.

Meanwhile, the extent of Rome's overseas commitments, its imperial role, in itself put an increasing strain on resources and on republican political culture. Extraordinary commands invented to meet the needs of overseas empire called for exceptional generals and created client armies, beginning in the late second century BC. A modern scholar is always aware that it was Roman armies marching on Rome that would bring republican government to an end, sooner or later.²¹ It is easy to see the role played by the triumph in this sorry tale, whether on the day of the celebration itself or in its later memorialized incarnations. A ceremony that was designed to "bring home" Rome's victory over a foreign enemy became a key locus for ever-fiercer internal competition between leading men. Instead of enacting harmony and assuring balance, the triumph itself evolved into a threat to the very republican culture that it was meant to embody and affirm.²² Eventually, the ritual of the triumph helped to shatter the ideal circle of equal celebrants, even as it recalled and reenacted its own monarchical past, whether we read that past as historical or legendary.

AUGUSTUS AND THE TRIUMPH

With the complex nature and development of the triumph over several centuries in mind, as it had evolved in tandem with Rome's political culture, I will now turn to Augustus, the man who made the most decisive changes to its pattern. Augustus had his eye very much both on the triumph's deep history and on its recent controversial role in repeated episodes of civil war. The man who styled himself as Imperator Caesar, even at a young age, knew a great deal about the triumph, at least as it had been experienced by a member of his own generation born in the late 60s BC.²³ It was this ritual, in both its celebration and its representation, that he used as a decisive aid in defining his new position within Roman society, particularly in relation to that of other leading men, the generals in command of Rome's armies.²⁴ After 27 BC,

21. The first republican Roman army to march on the city was Sulla's in 88 BC; the last was Julius Caesar's in January of 49 BC. See Flower 2010 for discussion of periodization and the possibility of seeing a decisive rupture in republican political culture with Sulla.

22. Flaig 2003b explores the idea that the triumph contributed to the collapse of a republican form of government.

23. Six triumphs were celebrated between 63 BC and Julius Caesar's multiple celebrations in 46 BC; see Rich 2014: 251. Augustus was two years old when Pompey celebrated his third triumph in 61 BC. The decade of the 50s only saw three triumphs before the pace picked up in the 40s after Caesar's invasion of Italy. Octavian, who was thirteen when Caesar crossed the Rubicon, took the name Imperator Caesar in 38 (or already in 40?) BC according to Syme 1939: 112–13 and Cooley 2009: 123.

24. Hickson 1991 remains the fundamental treatment of Augustus' use of triumphal imagery. See also Itgenshorst's detailed discussions at 2004, 2005: 219–26, 2008, 2009, and 2017 with a very useful chart at 80–81, as well as Benoist 2005: 195–210 and Tarpin 2009. Havener 2016: 277–362 explores Augustus' military image. Rich 2014: 240 observes, "Augustus' provincial settlement led (after two early

most of these generals would fight as Augustus' deputies—his *legati*—while he retained the ultimate *imperium* for himself, and with it the auspices that provided the essential means to communicate with the gods on whom Rome's military success ultimately depended. Triumphal imagery and practice provided a rich and recognizable repertoire of traditional cultural habits and artifacts that the *princeps* made use of throughout his long career. As a seventeen-year-old, Octavian had witnessed Julius Caesar's magnificent triumphs in 46 BC; it seems he learned several lessons from this experience about how to triumph but also about how and when not to.²⁵

Julius Caesar had celebrated four triumphs in 46 BC (over Gaul, Egypt, Pontus, and Africa), one in 45 BC (over Spain), and an ovation on the Alban Mount in January of 44 BC.²⁶ His triumphs suggested that he had conquered the world and defeated enemy kings as his opponents, such as Pharnaces in Pontus and Juba in Africa. At the same time, however, he advertised his victories over his Roman rivals, including notably Cato the Younger; their suicides were depicted in paintings paraded as part of the procession.²⁷ Yet negative reactions were voiced openly by the general populace who were watching the show. This was a rare misstep for Caesar, who was generally very popular with ordinary people in Rome. Octavian will presumably have been present for at least some of these clashes, including the angry confrontation between Caesar riding in his triumphal chariot and the tribune of the plebs Pontius Aquila, who refused to rise from his seat as the *quadriga* passed him in the parade.²⁸ The usually dignified Caesar famously lost his temper on this occasion. Octavian drew his own conclusions about the importance of creating an image of consensus on celebratory occasions. Augustus surely reacted against the way the triumph was celebrated in instances of civil war, both in the 40s and in the 30s BC, but that does not in itself explain why he would later choose to limit the celebration of the triumph overall, rather than acting as the restorer of its traditional meaning and rituals, as he did in so many other instances of Roman political and religious life.

Despite the grand displays of Caesar's conquests in triumphal settings, the dictator did allow others who were his legates to celebrate their own triumphs as well during this time. There were two other triumphs in 45, but later in the year,

exceptions) to the end of senatorial access to the triumph, which now became both an imperial monopoly and a rarity.”

25. For Octavian and Julius Caesar's triumph, see Suet. *Aug.* 8.1 with Galinsky 2012: 14–15. Similarly, Tiberius rode on the trace horse at Octavian's triple triumph of 29 BC: see Suet. *Tib.* 6.

26. In 46 BC Caesar celebrated four separate triumphs in ten days, apparently crossing and recrossing the *pomerium* for each one. See Itgenshorst 2005 nos. 262, 263, 264, and 265, followed by games and wild beast hunts. In 45 BC he celebrated another triumph (no. 266) and in 44 BC an ovation (no. 269).

27. For Caesar's celebration of his defeated Roman rivals in the civil war, see App. *B Civ.* 2.101 with Havener 2014: 170–72. More general discussions of civil war and victory can be found in Lange 2013, 2016; Östenberg 2014.

28. The confrontation between Caesar and Pontius Aquila is reported by Suet. *Iul.* 78. See also Havener 2016: 45.

presumably well after Caesar had finished his fifth celebration.²⁹ Caesar evidently did not feel he needed to monopolize the triumph or the auspices that allowed a general to apply for the ceremony; rather, his own preeminence was further highlighted by the success of his allies who were awarded only a single celebration each. In this case also, Octavian obviously chose a different policy in the long run, although he had probably not been in Rome to see every parade.

After Julius Caesar's assassination, there were two triumphs in January 43 BC and eleven awards during the triumviral period (43–33 BC), although none celebrated by any of the triumvirs themselves during their time in office.³⁰ Octavian's two ovations set him apart without putting him in a completely separate category from the crowd of other contemporary celebrants.³¹ In all of these ways, therefore, Octavian, who was not himself a military man but thoroughly dependent on the skills of his main ally M. Vipsanius Agrippa, grappled with the function of the triumph in Rome's changing political landscape. After Actium and his own triple triumph in 29 BC, triumphs of others cluster in the immediately following years with three in 28 BC (Spain, Gaul, Africa), two in 27 BC (Thrace and the Getae, Gaul), and one in 26 BC (Spain).³² There were only two more celebrations after that, one each in the years 21 BC and 19 BC, both over Africa, which remained the sphere of combat for senatorial governors fighting under their own auspices.³³ This pattern in itself suggests an orderly phasing out of these celebrations that continued to reflect aristocratic competition and Rome's imperialist self-understanding. Indeed, after Octavian accepted the name Augustus in 27 BC, strikingly few triumphs were celebrated during his lifetime.³⁴

29. Caesar's legates triumphed in 45 BC: Q. Fabius Maximus (Itgenshorst 2005 no. 267) and Q. Pedius (no. 268). Dio 43.42.2 records the mockery these awards were subject to at the time. Rich 2014: 242 notes that these were the only triumphs celebrated by commanders without their own independent auspices.

30. In the year 43 BC, two triumphs were celebrated in January by L. Munatius Plancus over Gaul (Itgenshorst 2005 no. 270) and M. Aemilius Lepidus over Spain (no. 271). The triumviral decade (late 43 to 33 BC) saw eleven triumphs. During their shared time in power, Lepidus was the only *triumvir* to have the status of a man who had triumphed. Rich 2014: 237–40 notes the frequency of triumphs in the thirty years between 49 and 19 BC (237: "a level not seen since the previous peak of the early second century BC"). Most Romans at the time, however, will probably not have perceived this parallel and will simply have experienced an increase in the frequency of the triumph.

31. Octavian's ovations: in 40 BC with Antony to celebrate their reconciliation (Itgenshorst 2005 nos. 274 and 275) and in 36 BC after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius, but designated *ex Sicilia* (no. 280). See Rich 2014: 242–43 for the history of the *ovatio*, and further discussion in Lange 2014 and 2017.

32. For the seven triumphs in the 20s BC, see Itgenshorst 2005 nos. 290–296 and now the detailed analysis in Lange 2019. Augustus himself did not opt to triumph for his accomplishments in Spain, although he seems to have chosen this campaign to serve as the ending for his thirteen-book autobiography; it was the last time he commanded troops himself in the field of battle. See Suet. *Aug.* 85.1 with Rich 2009.

33. The last two triumphs outside the imperial household were both over Africa: L. Sempronius Atratinus in 21 BC (Itgenshorst 2005 no. 296) and finally L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 BC (no. 297). See Östenberg 2009b; Havener 2016: 326; and Lange 2016: 49–50, who argues that it was a matter of chance and chronology that Balbus was the last celebrant.

34. Between January of 27 BC and Augustus' death in AD 14, a period of over forty years, there were only seven triumphs, of which the last two were celebrated by Tiberius.

After 27 BC, of course, Augustus inserted himself and his family into every aspect of Roman culture, especially public spectacles.³⁵ Parades, festivals, and celebrations, some traditional and many redesigned or invented, multiplied in the city, even as these observances populated the Roman calendar with anniversaries and special observances.³⁶ Augustus was also happy to attend local *ludi*, which included boxing matches in the *vici*, the neighborhoods of Rome.³⁷ Similarly, his restoration of the fabric of Rome resulted in a monopoly on public building in the city by the *domus Augusta* after 19 BC.³⁸ But this creation of his new role as Rome's special "patron" did not lead to less construction, only to more. Augustan Rome was surely a dazzling new city, built of shining white luna marble and labelled with many new inscriptions, including those in gilded bronze letters.³⁹ Everywhere the new Augustan Age was visible, in its processions, festivals, and games, in its remarkable new buildings and monuments, and above all in its prosperity, size, and imperial pretensions.

A similar pattern applied to the spectacular funerals of the *nobiles*. In the case of this custom, Augustus could not stop the political families from parading the wax masks and praising the fine deeds of their prominent ancestors whenever a relative died.⁴⁰ But he appropriated many of the most famous ancestors to create longer parades for his own family than for any other kin group.⁴¹ He made not only himself but also his relatives the special heirs of Roman history, already starting with the funeral of his young nephew Marcellus in 23 BC. Marcellus was also the first to be buried in the splendid new family tomb on the Campus Martius.⁴²

Yet it is against the background of this significant enhancement and exploitation of the Roman culture of spectacle that Augustus' careful and limiting use of triumphal ritual seems most striking and carefully conceived. Obviously, he succeeded in his intention to create "monopolies" in many areas of elite self-expression and public life. But all these other interventions yielded more—not less—spectacle and

35. For Augustus and his culture of festivals in Rome, see Benoist 1999 and 2005.

36. Paris, Bruni, and Roghi 2014 offer a thought-provoking introduction to time and celebration in Augustan Rome.

37. For Augustus at local neighborhood games, see Suet. *Aug.* 45.2 with Flower 2017: 261.

38. For the Theater of Balbus on the Campus Martius (dedicated in 13 BC), see Manacorda in *LTUR*.

39. Introductions to Augustan Rome can be found in Zanker 1988; Wallace-Hadrill 1993, 2008; Galinsky 1996: 141–224. Hölscher 2017 examines Rome as a triumphal space in the imperial period. Alföldy 1991 is the best introduction to the remarkable spread of inscriptions in Rome in the Augustan period. He dates the famous Augustan gilded letters used in public inscriptions to the new golden age, beginning in 17 BC (1991: 298–99).

40. A striking example of the continued vitality of the *pompa funebris* is the funeral in AD 22 of Junia, sister of Marcus Brutus and widow of Cassius, both leading figures in Caesar's assassination. According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.76) her parade included the masks of twenty families in a clear effort to rival the longer procession of Augustus' "family," notably the *princeps*' own funeral only eight years earlier. See Flower 1996: 253, 259.

41. For Augustus' funeral, see Dio 56.34 with Flower 1996: 237–46. Dio 54.28.5 likens Agrippa's funeral to Augustus'. For the funeral of Marcellus in 23 BC, see Flower 1996: 240–41.

42. See von Hesberg and Panciera 1994: 72 for a chronological list of those buried in Augustus' Mausoleum.

entertainment for a wider public, which translated into greater visibility for the *princeps* and his family group. The triumph was handled completely differently from other rituals when the frequency of celebrations changed abruptly in 19 BC. Triumphs now became very rare.

Moreover, this chronological caesura was surely a noticeable one, ten years after Augustus' own splendid triple triumph in August 29 BC. Inhabitants of Rome were accustomed to watching triumphs and had seen at least as many, if not more frequent, parades over the previous twenty-five years (which is to say since the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC) than at many other times in Roman history.⁴³ There would have been those who still remembered Caesar's own five triumphs in the mid-40s, as well as Pompey's epoch-making triumph over Mithridates in 61 BC, when Augustus was only two years old.⁴⁴ In effect, the triumph as it existed in Rome before 19 BC was very much alive and well and had a venerable history. Many at every level of society surely missed it over the coming years, whether in terms of political and military spectacle or on the more practical level of the many economic opportunities ordinary Romans will have enjoyed from large public celebrations with their streams of people coming into the city. Only two more triumphs would take place in Augustus' lifetime, in 7 BC and in AD 12, both with Livia's son Tiberius as the *triumphator*.

Yet Augustus himself, despite his twenty-one acclamations as *imperator* and a multitude of other honors, celebrated only his triple triumph in 29 BC, and that before he accepted the name of Augustus or claimed to restore a *res publica*.⁴⁵ Accordingly, he never triumphed as Augustus and consistently refused repeated offers to do so on the part of the senate.⁴⁶ Rome's preeminent leader since 31 BC was both the ultimate *triumphator* who had brought an end to civil war as well as bringing peace and prosperity to a unified empire, and, at the same time, the man who did not celebrate a triumph, while presiding over a severe limiting of the ceremony for everyone else. It also

43. Between the Ides of March 44 BC and Octavian's triple triumph in August of 29 BC, fourteen traditional triumphs were celebrated, in addition to three ovations. See Rich 2014: 252.

44. For Pompey's third triumph over Asia, Pontus, Armenia, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Syria, the Scythians, Judeans, Albania, and the pirates in 61 BC, see Diod. Sic. 40.4 with Rich 2014: 251 and Vervaeke 2014. A person who was sixty years old at the time of Octavian's triumph would have been born in 89 BC, at the end of the Social War, and would have had plenty of triumphs, both memorable and notorious, to watch in that time.

45. For Augustus' twenty-one acclamations as *imperator*, see Cooley 2009: 122 with sources and Kienast, Eck, and Heil 2017: 58. Faoro 2016 offers a different chronology. The first acclamation came in 43 BC and the last in AD 13. Only one represents the victory of a legate who was not a relative (M. Licinius Crassus in 29 BC). After 20 BC all these titles involved four men: Tiberius, his brother Drusus, Augustus' grandson Gaius Caesar, and Drusus' son Germanicus. Tiberius contributed the most with ten of Augustus' *imperator* titles recognizing his victories.

46. For refusals of triumphs, see Cooley 2009: 123 and Hölscher 2017: 308. Augustus himself refused at least four offers that are attested in our sources, in 25, 20, and 8 BC, as well as in AD 9. Agrippa refused offers in the crucial years 19 and 14 BC (Dio 54.11.6, 54.24.7) and may have done so as early as 38 BC (Dio 48.49.4). Tan 2019: 195–96 sees Agrippa as the man who first chose, of his own accord and for his own reasons, to refuse a triumph in the early 30s. For two earlier examples of refusals to triumph, see Itgenshorst 2005: 181 and 184 with Valerius Maximus 2.8, who was writing under Tiberius.

seems that the new “policy” was never explicitly explained in public or even in the senate, but gradually became a norm as time passed.

In addition, a series of contrasts emerged or was staged during this same time-period: with Agrippa’s public display of a map of the Roman Empire, with the insistent message of success and world conquest that is so evident in Augustan art and literature, with Augustus’ own multiplying acclamations as *imperator*, and with the grand inscription of the triumphal *fasti* in the Forum, probably on the arch set up to commemorate the return of Roman standards from Parthia in 20 BC.⁴⁷ This list was a truly Augustan work of scholarship, a long and inclusive catalogue that started with Romulus and integrated ovations and triumphal celebrations on the Alban Mount alongside regular triumphs in Rome. In other words, these *fasti* tended towards an expansive picture of the history of Roman victory parades; no minimization based on technicalities is to be found here. Yet the list stopped with L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 BC, and no space was left (at least in this venue) for further additions. Balbus was also the last senator to dedicate a public building in Rome, a striking achievement in itself.⁴⁸ The list of consuls in the associated *fasti* does have more room for names, but the list of triumphing generals does not.

While Augustus’ own self-definition was clearly a decisive factor in this complex set of developments, the *princeps*’ “reading” of the triumph itself should be equally significant. He saw its influence and dangers as clearly as he appreciated its advantages. He knew that future challenges to the Principate would most likely come from successful generals at the head of their loyal armies (and he was not wrong about that). He reacted firmly against the increasing rate of inflation seen in Caesar’s own celebrations during his dictatorship, the way victory parades had been used to glorify civil strife between Roman armies, and the fierce triumphal competition of the 30s BC.

For many reasons, it would not have been easy for Augustus to celebrate a triumph himself for every victory won by his legates and relatives. Not easy—but perhaps not impossible.⁴⁹ Another man might have opted for a new type of joint celebration that mirrored Augustus taking an additional *imperator* title for each notable victory won under his auspices by one of his deputies. The point is that Augustus chose not to go down this road. Meanwhile, it was not necessarily easier to limit the traditional parades either, whether in his own case (as his repeated refusals throughout

47. For the *fasti triumphales* and their original placement, see Degraffi 1947; Rich 1998; Spannagel 1999; Nedergaard 1994–95, 2001, 2004; Itgenshorst 2004; Beard 2007: 61–71, 302–305; Östenberg 2009b; Lange 2016: 49–69, 2017; Itgenshorst 2017: 69.

48. For discussion, see Eck 1984: 138–39; Rich 1998, 2014; Östenberg 2009b. Spannagel 1999: 15–85 posits a continuation of the list in the Forum of Augustus but there is no ancient evidence. Beard 2007: 302–305 notes that the last name on the *fasti Barberini* is that of L. Sempronius Atratinus in 21 BC, not of Balbus in 19 BC as on the *fasti triumphales*. Östenberg 2009b: 56 states, “Still, very little in Augustus’ policy happened by mere chance, and instead of trying to explain away the fact that the list ends with Cornelius Balbus, this article aims to show that the finishing date was deliberately chosen to signal the end of Republican triumphs.” See also Popkin 2016: 93–94.

49. *Contra* Havener 2016: 297–99 and Meister 2017: 94. Tan 2019 argues that the fading of republican honors made refusing them easier for Agrippa.

his life show) or in that of his legates, who needed to be rewarded in a meaningful way for their successes and their loyalty to him.⁵⁰ The decision to create a visible caesura, ten years after his own triple triumph, marks the way in which Augustus was implementing a strategy that was carefully planned to fit in with his overall objectives, which included his carefully crafted public image. A series of coordinated events after his return to Rome in 19 BC culminated in his celebration of the *ludi saeculares* that inaugurated a new golden age.⁵¹ The end of the republican triumph came in close association with celebrations of the multiple Roman standards returned by the Parthians and the display of the inscribed list of all earlier triumphs on the monumental arch in the Roman Forum that was topped by a statue of Augustus in a triumphal chariot.⁵² The visual message, as far as we can reconstruct it, combined that closed list of triumphal celebrations ending in 19 BC with a triumphant Augustus literally supported by this history.⁵³ In the same way that the statues in the Forum of Augustus would later surround the *princeps* in his quadriga, here he also appeared as the culminating figure in a Roman history focused on victory and conquest.

NO MORE TRIUMPHS?

But what did Augustus himself actually want to do with and about the triumph? My contention is that Augustus aimed to get rid of the triumph completely, both in his own lifetime and for the future. According to my reading, this breathtakingly ambitious long-term goal reflected his deep ambivalence about the role played by triumphal ritual in republican and post-republican Rome, a realization based on historical study but also on the harsh experiences of his own lifetime. Eliminating the triumph was one bold way to work towards breaking the relentless cycle of uncoordinated, aggressive expansion associated with extreme elite competition that had produced so much political instability for Rome in recent memory. It was not just a question of returning to a more traditional or controlled use of triumphs, precisely because the triumph in itself posed a threat to the creation of a stable *res publica*, and even (perhaps especially) to a man who was playing what could be interpreted as a monarchical role.⁵⁴

According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.11.4), Augustus left instructions at the end of his life that the empire should not be further expanded but be kept within fixed

50. Havener 2016: 332 argues that it was impossible for Augustus to get rid of the triumph.

51. See Flower 2017: 336–45 for a detailed examination of Augustus' use of anniversaries over the decades to develop and refine his leadership position in Roman society.

52. For the Parthian standards being presented as equivalent to *spolia opima*, see Flower 2014: 312–15.

53. Östenberg 2009b offers an incisive discussion. As she notes, ten years later Augustus' next return to Rome was marked in very different ways, notably by the dedication of the Ara Pacis Augustae, without any warlike or triumphal imagery.

54. See Flaig 2003b. For the restoration of a *res publica*, see now Hurlet and Mineo 2009.

borders—presumably the ones he had established by AD 14, whatever those exact boundaries may have been:⁵⁵

quae cuncta sua manu perscripserat Augustus addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii, incertum metu an per invidiam.

Augustus had written all these (documents) in his own hand and had added the counsel that the empire should be limited within its borders, although it is unclear whether (he said this) out of fear or because of ill-will.

In other words, he appreciated the potential dangers of overexpansion, especially after the challenges on the Danubian frontier and the disaster of Varus in Germany in AD 9; but surely these risks had been evident to him long before.⁵⁶ The concept of an empire that had reached its optimal size is by definition separate from a reaction to an individual crisis, however serious. If this recommendation had been followed by his successors, there would indeed have been very few opportunities for future triumphs, including those that were actually celebrated subsequently: for example, the triumphs of Claudius over Britain or of Trajan over Dacia would not have happened.⁵⁷ In effect, Augustus was proposing that future *principes* (after Tiberius) not be represented as conquerors who expanded the empire and as *triumphatores* in the way he and his immediate heir had been.

Limiting triumphs was surely not the only reason Augustus advocated a policy of imperial self-containment, but it was one outcome that would have fitted in with many of his objectives. If we imagine a situation in which triumphs were not awarded for subduing provincial revolts (as the magnificent Flavian triumph over Judaea would be), such a policy would have furnished yet another “technical” reason why no one ever really qualified for another traditional triumph.⁵⁸ Similarly, it is not hard to imagine that, once triumphs were no longer a regular part of Roman political culture, even the repelling of an incursion across a border

55. Dio 56.41.2 suggests that Tiberius’ funeral speech for Augustus dwelt on similar themes. For triumph hunting and Roman expansion, see Hölkeskamp 1993 and Osgood 2014. Eck 2018a and 2018b argues that at the end of his life Augustus was still aiming to reconquer Germany and extend Roman direct control to the Elbe. According to his reading, Tiberius changed Augustus’ policy by giving up an existing province when he recalled Germanicus in AD 16. However that may be, the advice of sticking to a fixed border for the empire overall would have been the same idea in principle regardless of the precise boundaries intended. Note that Nero apparently considered withdrawing from Britain soon after Claudius’ conquest (Suet. *Nero* 18.1). Similarly, Hadrian withdrew Roman forces from Dacia after Trajan’s death.

56. For the border on the Danube, see Eck 2010. For an outline of the military campaigns, see Eck 2018b.

57. For Claudius’ triumph over Britain in AD 44, see Dio 60.22–23 with Osgood 2011: 91–101 and Goldbeck 2017: 113–14, who gives an overview of triumphs in the Julio-Claudian period. Claudius’ celebration might have been experienced as the first for an emperor in power since Octavian’s triple triumph of 29 BC, but Octavian was not yet Augustus or *princeps* when he triumphed. For Domitian’s three triumphs and *ovatio*, see Jones 1992: 126–59. For Trajan’s two triumphs (AD 102 and 106), see Strobel 2010: 255–60 and 282–85.

58. For possible limits on triumphs in cases of provincial revolts, see Val. Max. 2.8.4 and Tac. *Ann.* 12.20 with Dart and Vervaeke 2014.

by enemies attacking a Roman province would be recognized with the now customary *ornamenta triumphalia*. The end of the triumph would obviously have enhanced Augustus' threefold celebration of 29 even further, in retrospect, but the first *princeps* will also have had strategic policy reasons for this reform, plans that went beyond pure self-aggrandizement.

The Augustan triumphal *fasti* in the Roman Forum represent the triumphal parade as an historical artifact, a fine tradition to be proud of, but something that was now firmly situated in the past, as Rome stood on the brink of a new age, soon to be inaugurated by the reinvented *ludi saeculares* in 17 BC. Whether Augustus might originally have preferred to end triumphal parades neatly in 29 BC is by now impossible to know. As it was, a type of winding down came more slowly over the next decade and then beyond. Actual parades halted in 19 BC, but the senate continued to offer triumphs to Augustus and to his closest associates throughout the *princeps*' lifetime.⁵⁹ The celebration of ovations by Livia's two sons (Drusus first in 11 BC and then Tiberius in 9 BC), and the awarding of triumphal regalia (*ornamenta triumphalia*) to a broader group of victorious generals, represent further important steps in a complex choreography whose main aim, at least on Augustus' part, was to replace the traditional triumphal parade itself with different but related honors.⁶⁰

By separating the formal status of triumphant general from the actual celebration and sacrifice on the Capitol, Augustus could provide rewards for loyal military leaders who deserved recognition for their service and success, while keeping his own position as the supreme commander fully and visibly intact.⁶¹ No evidence survives to tell us how Augustus' limits on the triumph affected the funeral processions of his legates.⁶² An award of *ornamenta triumphalia* may or may not have allowed a man to be represented in exactly the same way in the procession of actors wearing the *imagines* as an earlier ancestor who had celebrated a traditional republican triumph. At the same time, Augustus' own refusal to triumph (again and again) sent a powerful message, albeit a negative one. No one was triumphing—neither *princeps* nor general. If not Augustus, then who else? In the years immediately after

59. For refusals of triumphs by Augustus and Agrippa, see n.46. These refusals are also memorialized by Augustus himself at *RG* 4. Tac. *Ann.* 1.55 records the senate offering Germanicus and his brother Drusus triumphs already in AD 15, very soon after Augustus' death and well before the end of fighting in Germany.

60. For ovations, see Rhode in *RE* (vol. 18, 1942: 1890–1903); Eck in *BNP*; Itgenshorst 2005 catalog; Lange 2016: 31–39. The exact nature of the *ornamenta triumphalia* is not attested, but they were first awarded to Tiberius in 12 BC (Suet. *Tib.* 9.2). For discussion see Peine 1885; Eck 1999: 223; Havener 2016: 340, 354–55; Meister 2017.

61. For the recipients of *ornamenta triumphalia* under Augustus, see Itgenshorst 2005: 276. They are the following fifteen men, of whom the first four cluster in 12–11 BC and the next twelve received the award after AD 2: Tiberius (12 BC), Drusus (11 BC), L. Calpurnius Piso and P. Sulpicius Quirinius (11 BC), L. Passienus Rufus (AD 2/3), M. Vinicius (AD 4), C. Sentius Saturninus and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus (AD 6), M. Valerius Messala (AD 7), M. Aemilius Lepidus, M. Plautius Silvanus, C. Vibius Postumus and Germanicus Caesar (AD 9), C. Cornelius Lentulus and L. Aelius Lamia (AD 11/13). There is an obvious gap between 11 BC and AD 2 or 3.

62. Meister 2017: 96 argues that full regalia would have been allowed in the funeral procession.

Balbus' triumph in 19 BC, Agrippa was the crucial ally in creating a new culture of refusing to parade.⁶³ His outstanding personal accomplishments and *auctoritas* lent considerable weight to his actions. He did not seek or accept a triumph. If Agrippa had survived beyond 12 BC, the break in triumphal culture would surely have been cleaner, more definitive, and probably much easier for us to read.

After Agrippa's death, Tiberius and Drusus emerged as the main props to the regime, at least briefly until Drusus died three years later, at the end of 9 BC.⁶⁴ This time, triumphs were offered to Livia's sons by the senate but refused, on their behalf, by Augustus.⁶⁵ Who can say what would have happened if Drusus had won a great victory in Germany or had even killed an enemy commander in order to qualify for dedicating the *spolia opima*, the special dedication of an enemy commander's armor and weapons to Jupiter Feretrius?⁶⁶ The point is that he did not, although apparently not for lack of trying.⁶⁷ Augustus' gesture of laying a laurel wreath in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius upon his return to Rome after Drusus' death served as a touching tribute to his stepson's ambition to dedicate *spolia opima*, but does not ultimately tell us whether he had himself encouraged Drusus' quest.⁶⁸

Drusus was remembered as one who had wanted to restore a more traditional political system.⁶⁹ Would dedication of the *spolia opima* have been a republican gesture, perhaps even a type of independent rebellion, or a means of supporting Augustus' new regime? Did Tiberius share at least some of his brother's views in the years immediately before his first triumph? However that may have been, the extreme rarity of the *spolia opima*, which had not been dedicated in Rome since the third century BC despite so many wars, puts that special offering in a completely different category from the triumph, which had been not only the ultimate but also the most typical victory celebration.

As events unfolded, only two triumphs were celebrated in Rome between 19 BC and Augustus' death over thirty years later, and these celebrations came at an interval of almost twenty years from each other. The rarity of celebration was clear for all

63. For Agrippa's refusals, see n.46. Tan 2019 goes further by attributing the original initiative for refusing to triumph to Agrippa himself. For Agrippa's self-representation by means of his building inscriptions, see Boatwright 2014.

64. Levick 1976: 32 argues that Livia's sons were indeed the main heirs between 12 and 9 BC. See also Kuttner 1995. Buxton and Hannah 2005 present powerful arguments based on epigraphical and numismatic evidence to suggest that Gaius and Lucius were first promoted as heirs in a monarchical sense after Tiberius had arrived in Rhodes.

65. The anonymous *Consolatio ad Liviam*, which is generally dated to shortly after Drusus' death, suggests that Drusus would have triumphed if he had lived (15–28). Even if this reflects no more than the expectations of the author, it is still a suggestive piece of contemporary evidence for thinking about triumphal celebrations ten years after Balbus' parade. For the vivid memory of Drusus after his death, see Champlin 2011.

66. For the *spolia opima*, see Rich 1999; Martino 2008; Flower 2014.

67. See Suet. *Tib.* 50.1 and *Claud.* 1.4 with Rich 1999 and Champlin 2011, who sees Tiberius as an independent Claudian with republican sympathies. Flower 2014: 315–16 discusses Drusus and the *spolia opima*.

68. Dio 55.5.1 with *RG* 4.1.

69. Suet. *Claud.* 1.4.

to see. Moreover, both celebrations honored Tiberius, Livia's surviving son. But was Tiberius indeed being elevated as Augustus' potential heir, with ceremonies specifically designed to mark him out as the next *princeps*? This was certainly the case in AD 12, by which time Augustus, now in his mid-seventies, must have known that he was near the end of his life and Tiberius as his adopted son was clearly his designated successor, already in possession of many powers and privileges needed for the role of *princeps*.⁷⁰ The same had not been true in 7 BC, however, when Tiberius was not yet a member of the *gens Iulia*. Consequently, I am not persuaded by the standard reconstructions that see the triumph as the mark of imperial favor, a way deliberately chosen by Augustus to elevate his most likely successor, a ceremony appropriated by the first *princeps* for himself and for his favorites.⁷¹

TIBERIUS' TRIUMPH IN 7 BC

Let us take note of the remarkable triumph of 1 January 7 BC, celebrated by Tiberius on the opening day of his second consulship, in the twentieth year after the settlement of 27 BC and ten years after the *ludi saeculares* inaugurated a new golden age.⁷² This must indeed have been the high point in his career thus far, and a public demonstration that he had commanded under his own auspices. Yet I am equally struck by the contrast between his singular elevation and his sudden withdrawal from public life and decision to move to the island of Rhodes in the following year, on the eve of a new campaign in the East and soon after he was endowed with tribunician power, Augustus' signature attribute.⁷³ Clearly something major had changed and it

70. For Tiberius' triumph in AD 12, see Suet. *Tib.* 17.2, 20 with Hölscher 2017: 308–309. This triumph was commemorated on coins in a way that his earlier one in 7 BC had not been: see the gold coins *RIC* 221 and 223 from Lugdunum, with Mittag 2017. The *Gemma Augustea* has been interpreted as an example of the iconography associated with this triumph (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, c. AD 9–12, Antikensammlung IXa.79, <https://www.khm.at/objectdb/detail/59171>). Kleiner 1992: 69–72 dates the cameo to shortly after Augustus' death.

71. For recent traditional interpretations of the triumph as a tool of Augustus, see for example Itgenshorst 2017: 66. Rich 2014: 239–40 posits that Augustus “must” have planned more triumphs after 19 BC.

72. For Tiberius' first triumph in 7 BC, see Vell. Pat. 2.97.4 and Dio 55.6–8. This is the triumph depicted on a silver cup from Boscoreale, according to Kuttner 1995: 152–53, who offers a detailed analysis. If we read the cup's departure scene as taking place from the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol, that would go some way towards confirming Tiberius' earlier celebration. After 2 BC, generals departed from the Temple of Mars Ultor in the new Forum of Augustus, although they also visited the Capitoline temple before. See Dio 55.10 and Pliny *Pan.* 5.2–3 with Livy 45.39.11, 45.49.6. See now also Pandey 2018: 190–93 for discussion and color pictures; see also the incisive analysis of Koortbojian 2020: 90–106. Eck 2018b: 13–14 argues that this triumph shows that Augustus considered Germany to be fully conquered as a province, before Tiberius was due to go on campaign in the East. The representation of a Roman general setting off from the Capitol and returning there in triumph would presumably have struck a distinctly republican and traditional tone.

73. For Tiberius' retirement to Rhodes, see Levick 1976: 31–46, which remains the fundamental analysis, although she does not have a robust explanation for Tiberius' initial decision to withdraw from public life to Rhodes. Bellemore 2007 is convoluted and less plausible in minimizing tensions between the main players. For Tiberius' tribunician power, see Vell. Pat. 2.99.1; Suet. *Tib.* 9.3; Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.3.

cannot have been all about his strained relations with his wife Julia, the daughter of Augustus, or his role as stepfather to her children.

Tiberius was hardly the first Roman aristocrat to be in a marriage of convenience for political reasons. Similarly, Gaius and Lucius, at fourteen and eleven respectively, were still very young and untried. They cannot be seen as competitors with Tiberius at this point in his distinguished career.⁷⁴ Moreover, Augustus did not want Tiberius to step back from public life and from the tasks he had been assigned.⁷⁵ In 6 BC, Tiberius defied Augustus and (once again) refused to join in constructing his new order. The result was a genuine political crisis and the subsequent promotion of Gaius and Lucius at a young age. We cannot now recover the precise details of the disagreement, but Augustus' anger and disappointment are further revealed by the fact that he subsequently refused to let Tiberius return to Rome. Augustus proceeded to turn a voluntary retirement into a type of exile on Rhodes.

There will surely have been several factors in a rift and reversal of fortune this stark; to me the triumph looms large in its own right. Tiberius had already celebrated an ovation and had been the first recipient of the new *ornamenta triumphalia*. In these ways he already enjoyed an exceptional status amongst Roman generals of his day. But these honors were apparently not enough for him. Although Augustus himself refused to triumph again in 7 BC, Tiberius did not imitate his father-in-law. In other words, Tiberius was unwilling to play the role that Agrippa had so gracefully and consistently played. The senate apparently also expected or even wanted another triumphal celebration, presumably for their own reasons. In addition, other players, such as Tiberius' mother Livia, may well have had a role in this drama. In the end, after eight years on Rhodes, Tiberius was only allowed to return to Rome in AD 2, around the time of Lucius' death, and with no formal rank—an unparalleled demotion for a patrician Claudius, who had held two consulships.⁷⁶ If Augustus' grandsons had both survived, would Tiberius have spent the rest of his life on Rhodes? It is an alternative possibility that cannot be discounted.

Tiberius' status between 7 BC and AD 4, when he was adopted as Augustus' son and heir, invites us to reconsider the history of the triumph from a different point of view than the usual one. Augustus tried to halt the celebration of triumphs

For his *imperium maius*, see Suet. *Tib.* 11.3 and Dio 55.9.4, 9.6. Interestingly, Gaius apparently also proposed retiring from public life shortly before his death, although Lucius was already dead and Tiberius was a private citizen at the time (Vell. Pat. 2.102; Dio 55.10a.8 with Levick 1976: 48–49).

74. For Gaius and Lucius in 6 BC, see Suet. *Tib.* 10–15 and Dio 55.9 with Levick 1972. Tiberius was thirty-five at the time. Buxton 2003 offers a detailed analysis of the years from 6 BC to AD 4 when Tiberius was on Rhodes and Gaius and Lucius were presented as Augustus' sons.

75. According to Suet. *Aug.* 66.3 both Augustus and Livia were strongly opposed to Tiberius' move to Rhodes. Suet. *Tib.* 10 notes that Tiberius retired at the height of his career. Dio 55.9 gives many different explanations and is unable to make sense of the main characters' motives.

76. Levick 1976: 45–46 dates Tiberius' return to Rome from Rhodes to shortly before Lucius' death and connects it with the ceremony when Tiberius' son Drusus received the toga of manhood (Suet. *Tib.* 15). She characterizes Tiberius as a private citizen with no political prospects at that time. Suetonius stresses the private lifestyle Tiberius maintained after his return to Rome.

in Rome on several occasions, but each time without a general ban or a public explanation. The most obvious moment was in 19 BC, ten years after his own triple triumph, and at a time when Roman victories in Africa made further big successes there on the part of independent commanders relatively unlikely.⁷⁷ Other Roman generals were all Augustus' legates, who did not have the qualifications needed to apply for a triumph. Augustus, therefore, used a combination of his own refusals of the senate's repeated offers and of the alternative award for others of the *ornamenta triumphalia*, and eventually an honorific statue in the new Forum Augustum.⁷⁸ Agrippa remained a forceful ally, the preeminent general who also refused at least three triumphs. Meanwhile, other senators effectively supported Augustus by accepting *ornamenta triumphalia* as a fitting reward and enhancement of their personal standing.

If the *fasti triumphales* offer one Augustan reading of triumphal history in the contemporary context, the Forum of Augustus embodies another. Enclosing the temple of Mars Ultor, Augustus' spacious new forum was ringed by statues of leading men (*summi viri*) of Rome's past in niches all around the perimeter.⁷⁹ The central focus was on the statue of Augustus himself in a triumphal chariot in front of the temple—his ultimate triumphal portrait in so many ways. The inscription on the statue base recorded his new title of Father of the Country (*pater patriae*), the accolade he received in 2 BC at the time when the forum was dedicated. Here Romans saw the parade of Roman history culminating with the *princeps* specifically as *triumphator*, unlike in any of the other iconographic representations that were by now widespread. This forum now replaced the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol as the departure point for generals heading out to the provinces on campaign. Here also honorary statues of those men awarded *ornamenta triumphalia* were to be set up. It is worth noting that these honors for generals were different from those enjoyed by Augustus himself, since their statues showed them standing, not on horseback or in a chariot. In addition, the award of the *ornamenta* was apparently never multiplied, with the result that each man honored had the same formal status as the other recipients. A clear distinction, with the *princeps* as the sole and ultimate heir of the republican victory parade, was articulated in the iconography of the Forum of Augustus.

Augustus' refashioning of triumphal themes in past and present was more clearly displayed here than anywhere else. This visual statement that creates a hierarchy of triumphal glory is more explicit than what we see in extant texts. Past achievements and future honors for victory came together in a focal point around Augustus in his quadriga, presumably represented as the mature *princeps* in the idealized manner of his contemporary portrait type rather than by a historicizing statue

77. Osgood 2019 discusses the province of Africa and the opportunities it offered to senators.

78. For the triumphal dress of the *summi viri* statues in the Forum of Augustus, see Plin. *HN* 22.6.13; Suet. *Aug.* 31.5; Dio 55.10.3. Not all men represented here had actually celebrated a triumph, although many had. For further discussion, see now Geiger 2008 and Havener 2016: 345–51.

79. For the Forum of Augustus, see Zanker 1968; Kellum 1981: 107–156; Bonnefond 1987; Flower 1996: 224–36; Pandey 2018: 158–70.

of Octavian in his thirties celebrating his triple triumph some twenty-seven years earlier. Augustus' prominence as the hinge in triumphal history obviously makes most sense if no further triumphal celebrations were anticipated. A clean break probably seemed a plausible prospect in 2 BC, with Tiberius and Julia both on their separate islands and Augustus firmly in charge of Rome, the father of two adopted sons who were almost grown up.⁸⁰

On the other hand, the senate still voted triumphs, apparently even without the traditional request coming from a victorious general, and even continued to offer Augustus himself further triumphs despite his repeated refusals. The *princeps*, in turn, chose these refusals, which became a ritual in their own right, over a general statement of policy or preference.⁸¹ But what did it even mean to refuse a triumph? In republican terms this gesture would have made no sense, since a general himself had to request the celebration in the first place. Nobody in the past had ever asked for a triumph from the senate simply in order to refuse to celebrate it. If no request was received, the senate would and indeed could not normally have voted on the matter. Both Augustus and the senate were playing new and untraditional roles.

So what are we to make of Tiberius' triumph in AD 12? The celebration reflects Tiberius' own ambitions as well as the real achievements of his campaigns after the Varus disaster in Germany.⁸² Without that famous Roman defeat, the story would obviously have been very different and there would have been much less justification for another triumph. At this point, however, Augustus needed Tiberius and could not easily refuse his request. In turn, Tiberius knelt before Augustus during the ceremony as a tribute to his seniority and standing, the man with two triumphs publicly acknowledging the one who had celebrated three.⁸³ In AD 12 Tiberius was Augustus' adopted son and their relationship had matured in the eighteen years since the rift of 6 BC. But Augustus' advice about limiting the size of Rome's empire clearly also belongs to this same historical moment. The *princeps* perhaps agreed to Tiberius' second triumph precisely because he now imagined the boundaries of the empire as defined.

Tiberius, meanwhile, for whatever combination of personal ambition and considerations of tradition or principle, did not himself want to forego a traditional victory parade, either in 7 BC or in AD 12.⁸⁴ A single, simple status equivalent to *triumphator*

80. For Julia's exile in 2 BC, see *PIR*² 634 and Raepsaet-Charlier 1987 no. 421 with Flower 2006: 163–67. Augustus' daughter was first sent to the island of Pandateria and then allowed to move to Rhegium on the mainland in AD 3 (Suet. *Aug.* 65.3; Dio 55.13.1).

81. For refusals to triumph under Augustus, see n.46.

82. For Varus' defeat in the Teutoburg forest, see Vell. *Pat.* 2.117–120; Suet. *Aug.* 23, *Tib.* 17–18; Dio 56.18–24.

83. Suet. *Tib.* 20.1.

84. See Itgenshorst 2005: 236 for a family tree of six patrician Claudii who had celebrated a triumph. But these men were all from the branch of the Pulchri. Only one Claudius Nero is recorded as receiving this honor (C. Claudius Nero in 207 BC after the victory at the Metaurus river: Itgenshorst no. 162). By contrast, the plebeian Claudii Marcelli had four triumphs in the family. Consequently, Tiberius was the first Claudius Nero to triumph since the Second Punic War and one of very few men in Roman history to celebrate a second victory parade.

symbolized by the *ornamenta triumphalia* was evidently not enough for him. Yet over the years his relationship with Augustus had been fraught with many tensions that had political as well as personal dimensions. His triumph of 7 BC did nothing to alleviate these tensions. I would argue that this singular honor only made them worse, shortly before a stark crisis arose in 6 BC with Tiberius' sudden withdrawal from public life at the very height of his career.

CONCLUSION

But my aim is not to dwell exclusively on Tiberius the dissenter at the expense of Augustus' vision of a magnificent new Rome, the dazzling capital of a world empire, that no longer saw regular triumphal parades to celebrate Rome's victories abroad. In Augustan Rome the triumph became an unusual event, thus losing the rhythm and familiarity that had created the customary relationship between the triumphing general, his soldiers, his peers in the senate, and the Roman population at large. Repeated refusals to celebrate from the *princeps* and the man closest to him set a novel standard and tone. My contention is that Augustus would have liked to eliminate the triumph completely in its ritual form, which is to say in the ways it had been celebrated in archaic and republican Rome, under Caesar, and in the triumphal years. This bold new policy reflected the *princeps*' reading of triumphal history. It also reveals his interpretation of the basic meaning and potential of the triumphal ritual in the future. He saw traditional triumphal spectacle as a glorification of war, of continual expansionism, and of individualistic achievement that had contributed to an undermining of orderly republican government, even before his birth, and that posed similar and possibly even more serious threats to the restored *res publica* he was envisioning for the future. In 2 BC, Augustus declared his wish to be remembered by future generations as the founder of the best political order (*optimi status auctor*); I argue that the new political system he had in mind would not have included more triumphs.⁸⁵

In all of these ways, I imagine that Augustus would agree with much that has been written about the history of the triumph by modern scholars, about its centrality in republican culture, and especially about the powerful effects of its spectacle—both on the participants in the parade and on those who watched them.⁸⁶ Interestingly, Augustus did not think that this ritual could be adapted to suit his “new age” in the way that the *ludi saeculares* were in 17 BC. The triumph was too familiar. Nor do I think that his reservations about the triumph applied only to its relatively more recent versions, for example in the case of Pompey's triumph in 61 or Caesar's self-presentation as the ultimate conqueror during his dictatorship. Augustus was as engaged with the creative antiquarianism of his times and with an interest in the *mos maiorum* as

85. Suet. *Aug.* 28.2 quotes Augustus' edict of 2 BC.

86. The contributions of Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp since the mid-1980s have made an original and lasting contribution.

was anyone else. Restructuring the triumph to reflect something that could have been described as its authentic or original format might have been very appealing, especially in the context of Augustus' new golden age. Such a reconception would have fitted in with many other Augustan initiatives. But apparently this was not possible or desirable, even for the master of spectacle and celebration himself.

It was not often that Augustus opted for less rather than more. Yet, as he was rethinking Rome, he envisioned a city saturated with triumphal imagery, an imperial capital of a world empire, but one that was to be experienced without the effects of repeated victory parades within its new urban landscape. The triumph was both too republican and too monarchical: it fostered bitter competition between Rome's leading generals; it had also become too aggressively imperialistic as staged by generations of ambitious *nobiles*. According to this reconstruction, Tiberius' two triumphs were disappointing to Augustus, even as Tiberius himself was far from being the ideal successor or the *princeps*' first choice. Meanwhile, the senate's repeated offers of a triumph to Augustus himself and to his relatives can be read more as defying or challenging the *princeps* than as flattering him.⁸⁷

EPILOGUE

I would like to end by recalling a well-known anecdote about the emperor Vespasian. On the day of his triumph over Judaea with his son Titus, a grand celebration that took place almost exactly a century after Augustus' triple triumph, Suetonius (*Vesp.* 12) tells us that the new emperor, known for his unpretentious approach and plain talk, became frustrated during the parade and was heard to ask himself why he had wanted a triumph in the first place.⁸⁸ The procession was slow; he was bored and tired. Vespasian blamed himself:

adeoque nihil ornamentorum extrinsecus cupide appetivit ut triumphi die fatigatus tarditate et taedio pompae non reticuerit merito se plecti qui triumphum quasi aut debitum maioribus suis aut speratum umquam sibi tam inepte senex concupisset.

He was so detached from the desire for honors that on the day of his triumph, when he was exhausted by the slowness and boredom of the parade, he declared out loud that he deserved this punishment, he who had so foolishly

87. For the complex issue of how much opposition Augustus faced in his lifetime, see the suggestive treatment of Dettenhofer 2000. She advocates for an unusual view but one that is worth thinking about in more detail, rather than simply assuming (for example) that everything the senate did either conformed to Augustus' wishes or represented blatant flattery of the *princeps*.

88. For the Flavian Triumph, see Joseph. *BJ* 7.121–57 with Mason 2016: 19–43 and 2017. Vespasian had received the *ornamenta triumphalia* at the time of Claudius' triumph in AD 44 (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.2; Tac. *Hist.* 2.77.1, 2.78.2, 4.8.4). Beard 2003 offers an analysis. The Flavian dynastic moment in AD 71 (an older general/emperor celebrating jointly with an adult son) was obviously very different from the situation in 29 BC, when Octavian was in his mid-thirties and had no son.

wanted a triumph as an old man, as if he either owed it to his ancestors or had ever hoped for it for himself.

The two reasons why Vespasian blames himself are highly suggestive. They both relate to the simple fact that he did not come from a family that had held political office before; he was not a *nobilis* so he did not need a triumph. During his military career, he had served as a legate to each emperor and had never been technically entitled to request a triumph. A triumph was simply not on his personal horizon.

Although Vespasian had surely taken part in Claudius' triumph over Britain more than twenty-five years earlier, that event had not made him ambitious to be a *triumphator* himself. Like Augustus, he was attempting to found a dynasty after a victory in a brutal civil war and a return from Egypt. Nevertheless, a triumph did not have the same personal or even political meaning to him. It had become just an old-fashioned parade and a tedious one at that. The republican triumph had indeed died out by now. In the longer term Augustus had succeeded—at least to some degree—in creating a world very different from that of the *nobiles*, a world in which even a victorious *princeps* found a triumph tiresome and outmoded.

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